



A LETTERS JOURNAL EXPLORING  
THE FRONTIERS OF PHYSICS

## SECTION 1 - GENERAL



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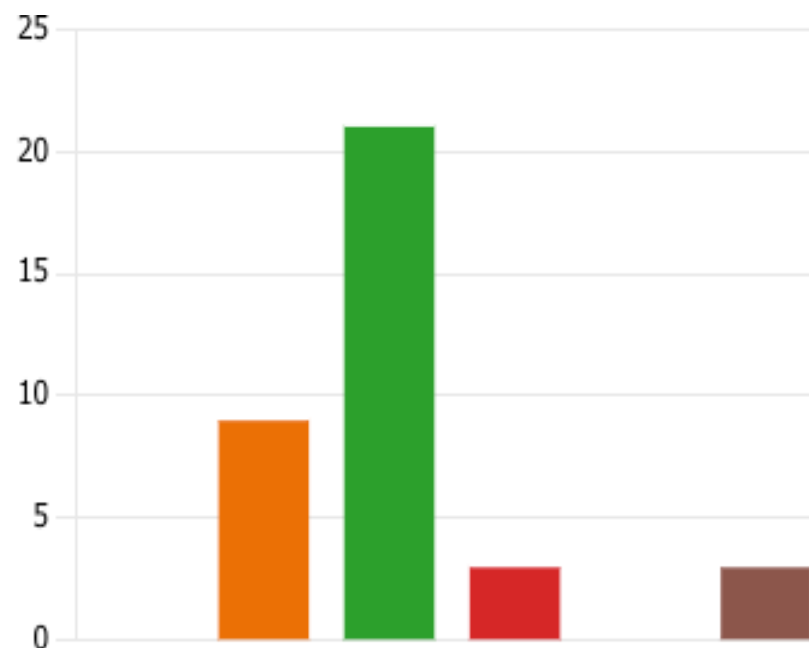
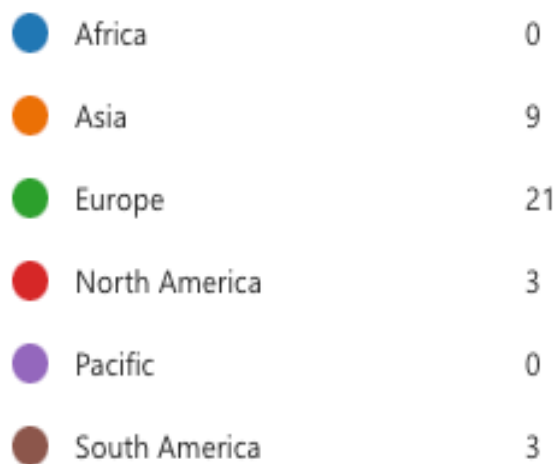


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## Where are you based?

**36 replies / 55 Co-Editors**

Asia 9 / 12 - Europe 21 / 33 - North America 3 / 5 - South America 3 / 5



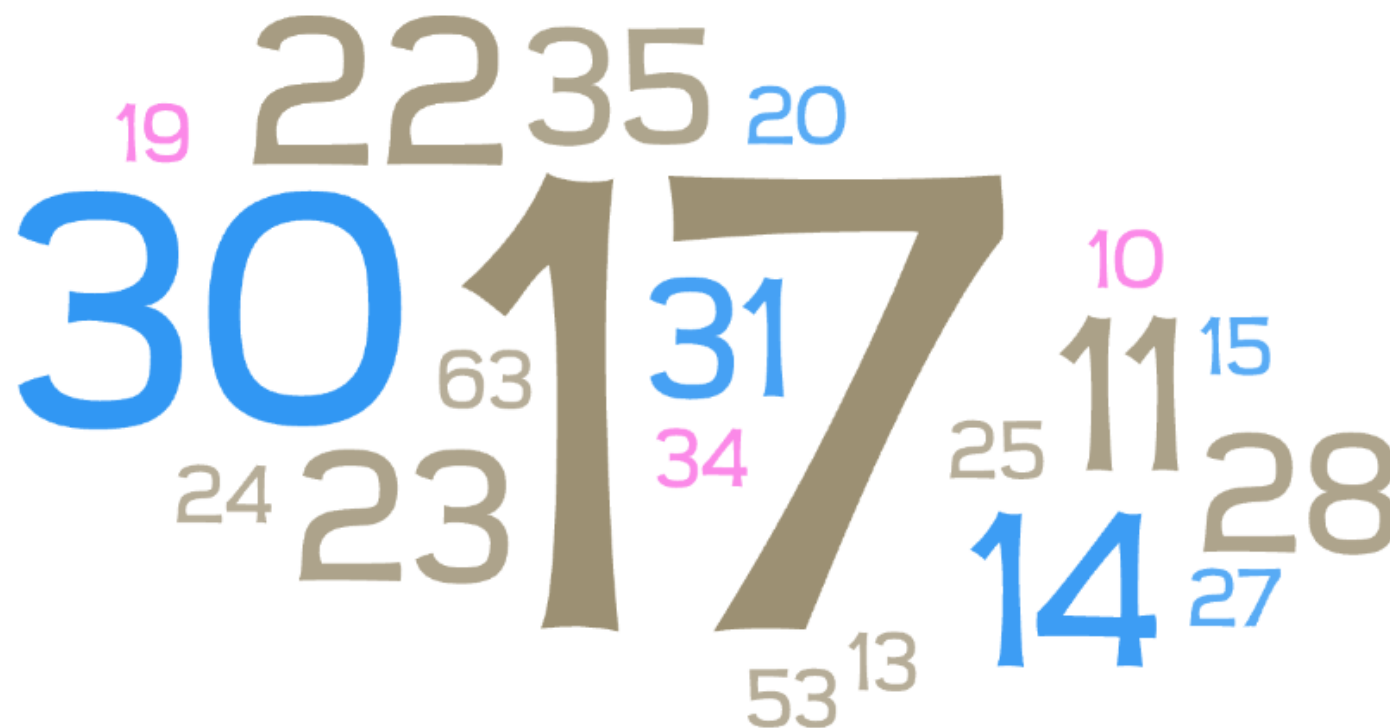
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How many years of professional research/industry experience do you have?



5 to 63 years - 4 x 17 years - 3 x 30 years - 2 x 11 years - 2 x 14 years... - Average 23 years



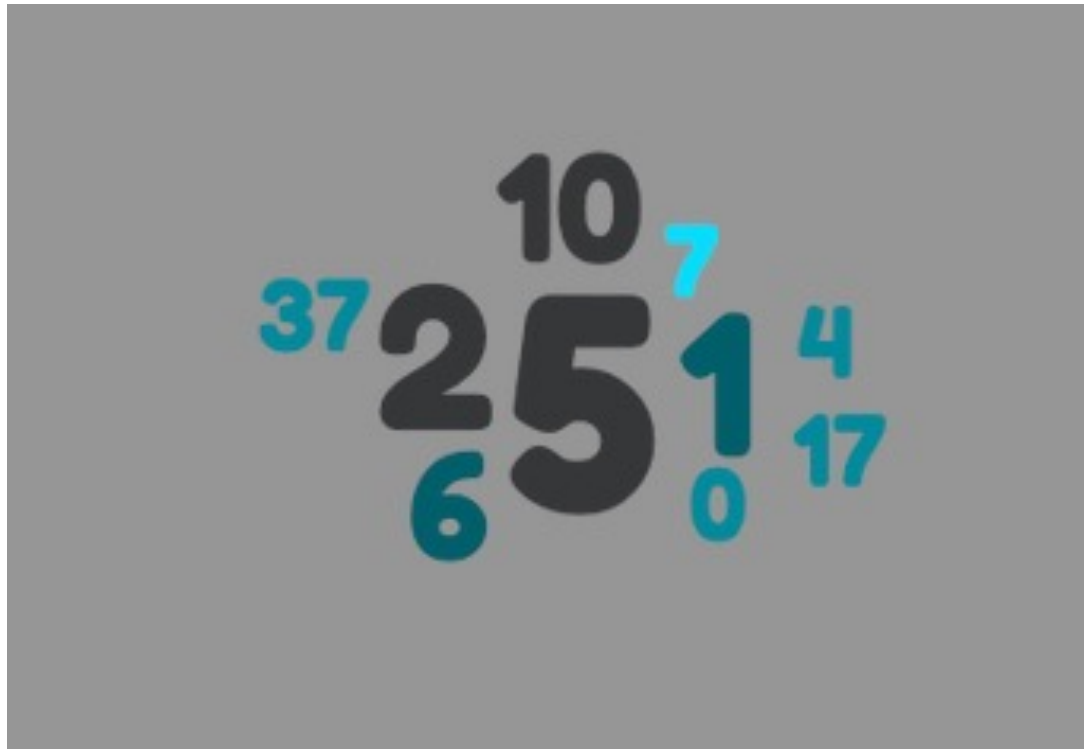
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**How many years of experience do you have of being on an Editorial Board?**



*0 to 37 years - 9 x 5 years - 6 x 1 year - 7 x 2 years - 5 x 6 years... - Average 5-6 years*



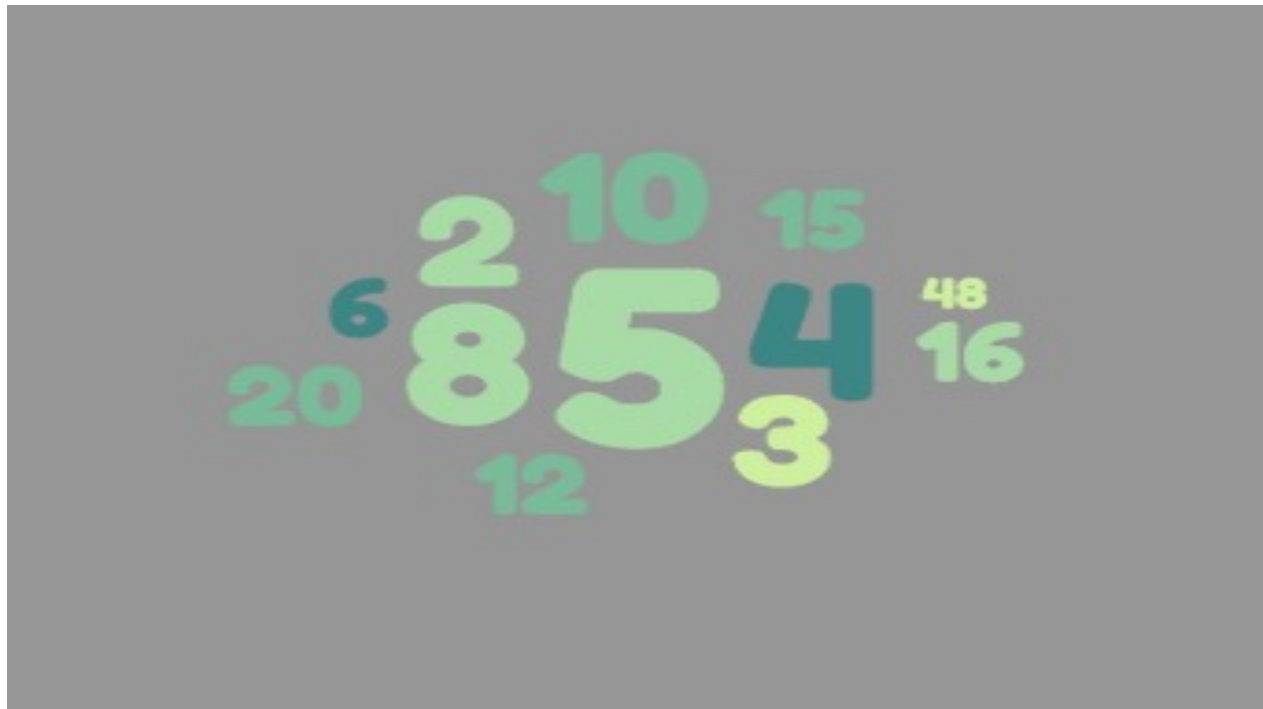
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During a typical month, how many hours do you spend on EPL-related activities?



*2 to 48 hours - 7 x 5 hours - 6 x 4 hours - 6 x 8 hours - 4 x 2 hours... - Average 8 hours*



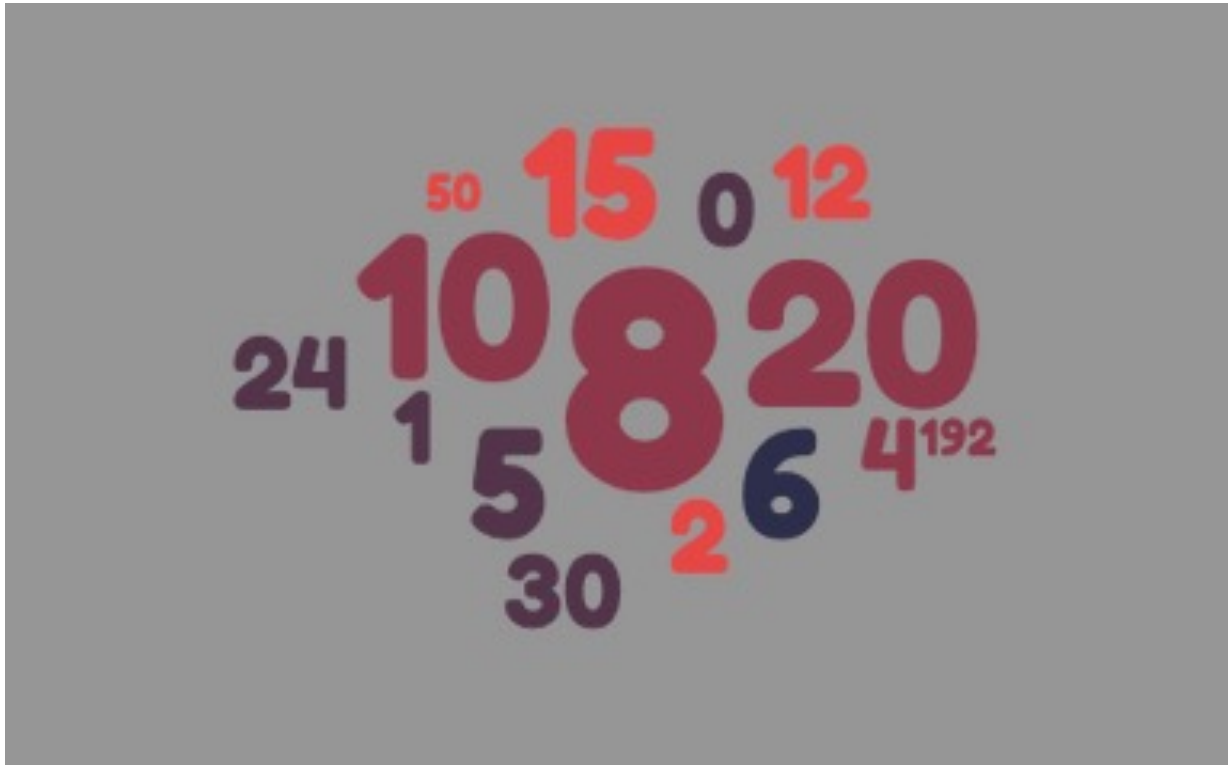
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**During a typical month, how many hours do you spend on other journal-related activities? (including reviewing)**



*0 to 192 hours - 7 x 8 hours - 5 x 10 hours - 5 x 20 hours - 3 x 5 hours... - Average 17 hours*



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## SECTION 2 – YOUR ROLE AS AN EDITOR



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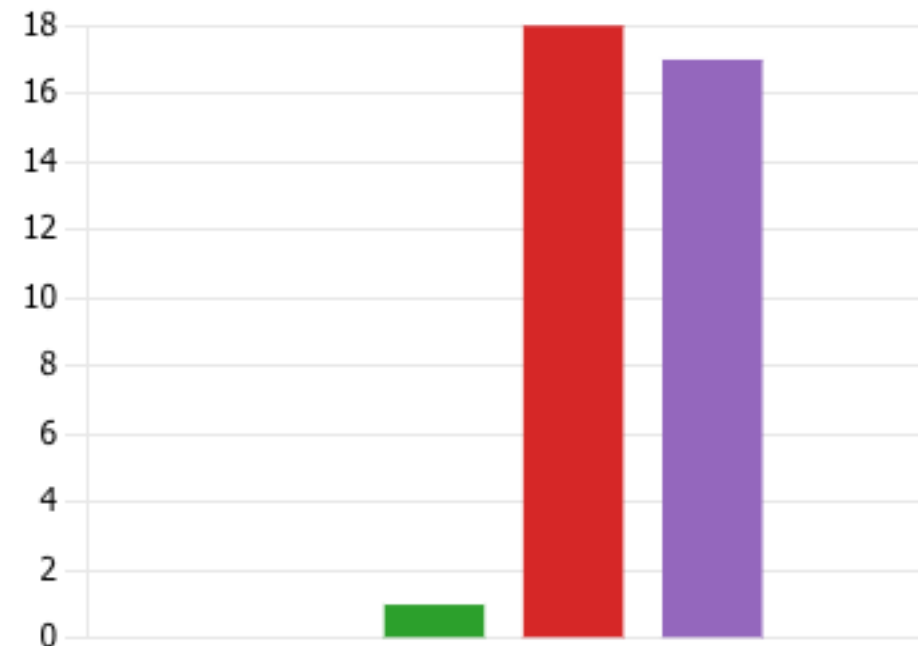


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The expectations of my role are made clear to me by EPL



Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	0
Neutral	1
Agree	18
Strongly agree	17
N/A	0



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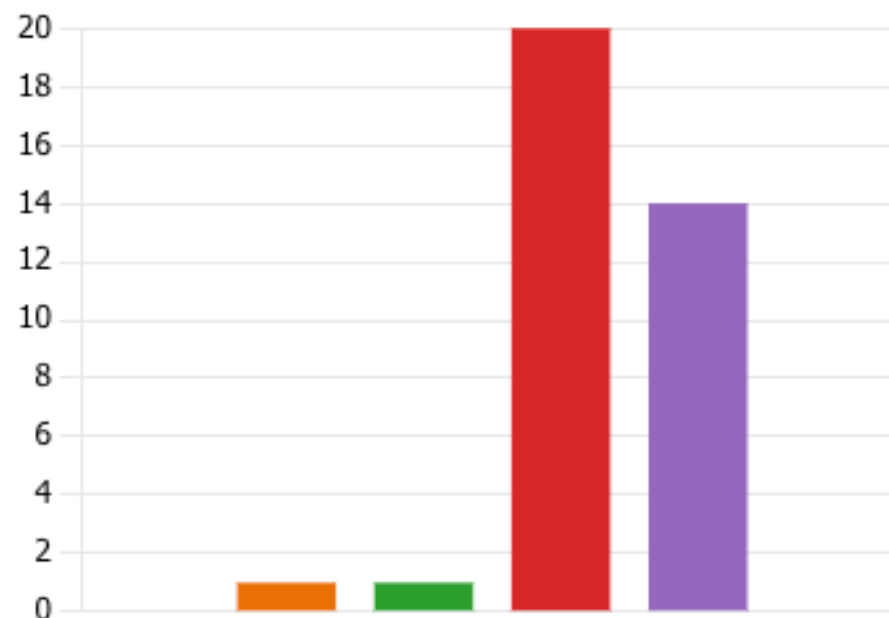
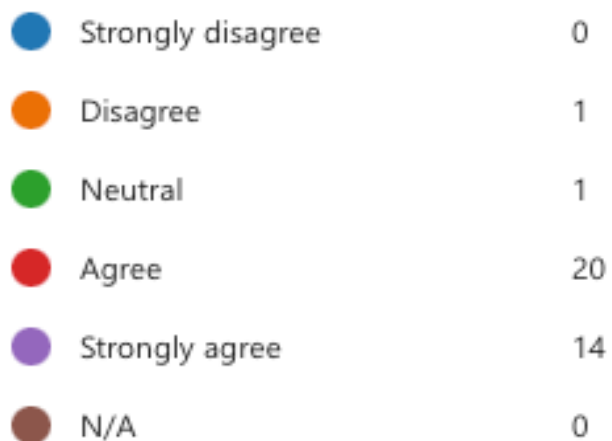




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**I have the necessary skills to carry out my role**

TRAINING



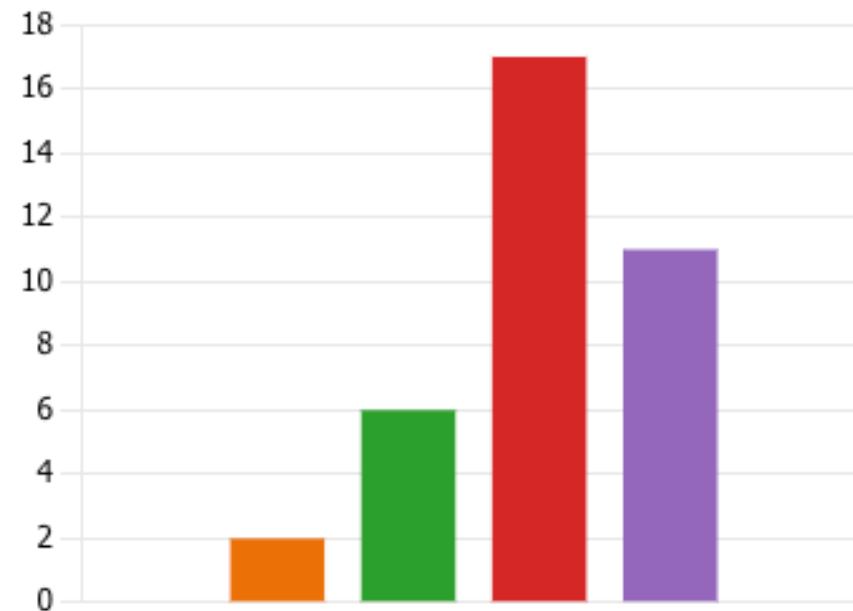
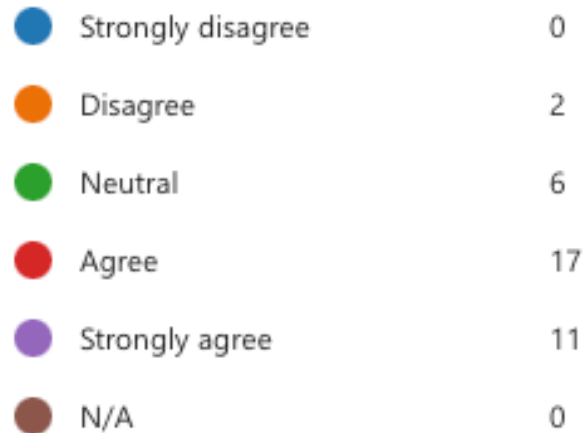
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I have enough time to carry out the role to my satisfaction



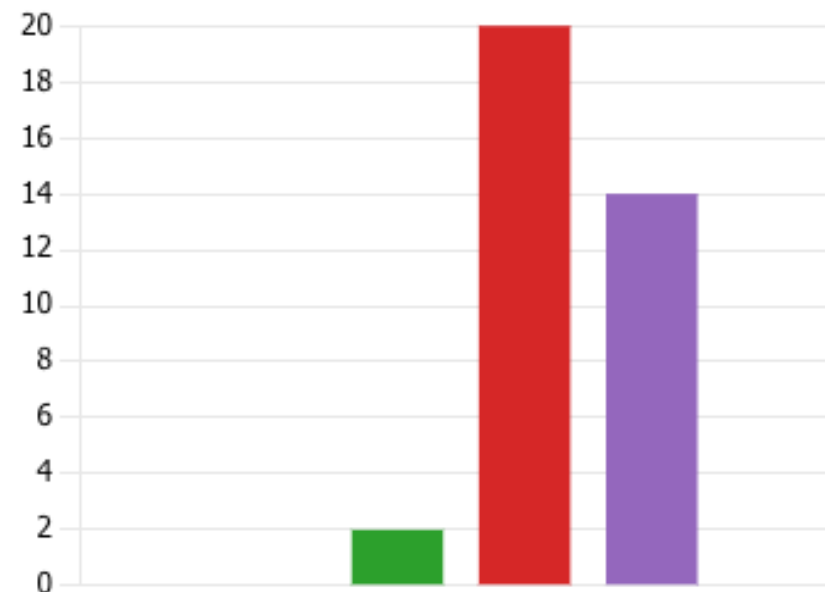
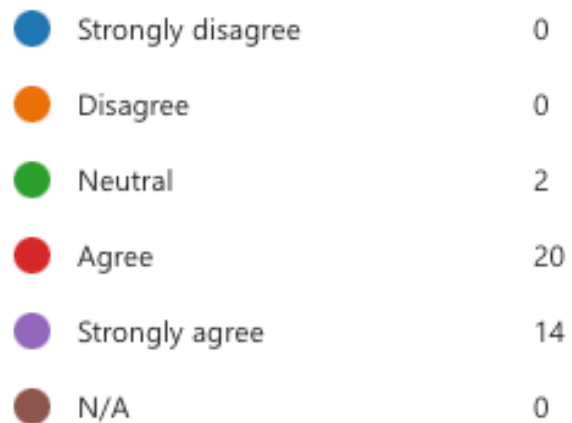
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## I understand the acceptance criteria for EPL



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## Comments on « Your role as a Co-Editor »

- My time availability changes drastically throughout the year, with one semester where the teaching activities limits drastically any other activity
- is the acceptance criteria dependent on how many manuscript is submitted?
- The time dedicated as EPL co-Editor is very depending on the number of incoming papers, therefore the number indicated for hours/month is only an estimate.
- Up to now, I have had a very satisfactory experience being an associate editor of EPL.
- The problem is the low impact factor of EPL, this should be improved.
- I enjoy working with the EPL team. I just wish EPL's fame goes up than its present state.
- Some more guidance on what criteria warrant a desk rejection I think could be useful. Manuscripts that are borderline are hard to find reviewers for and tend to take an inordinate amount of time. Similarly, for manuscripts on controversial topics. Ideally, it should be clearer when we can reject those although it is not obvious how this could be done.



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## SECTION 3 – THE REVIEW PROCESS



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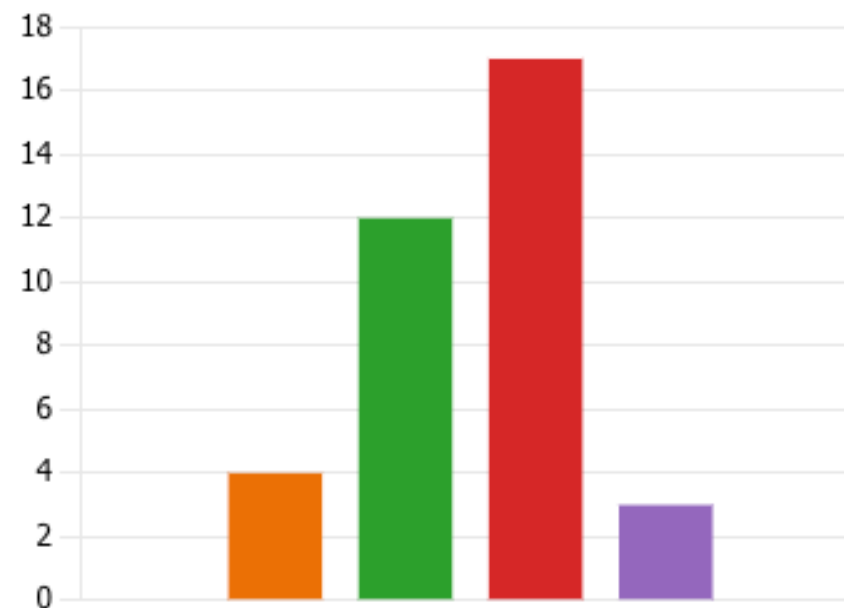
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The papers I receive are well matched to my subject expertise



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

0  
4  
12  
17  
3  
0



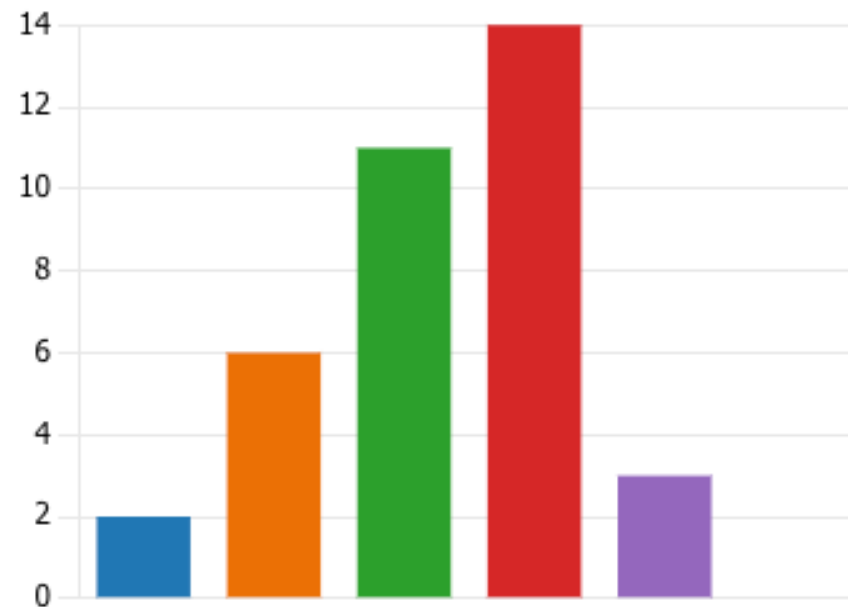
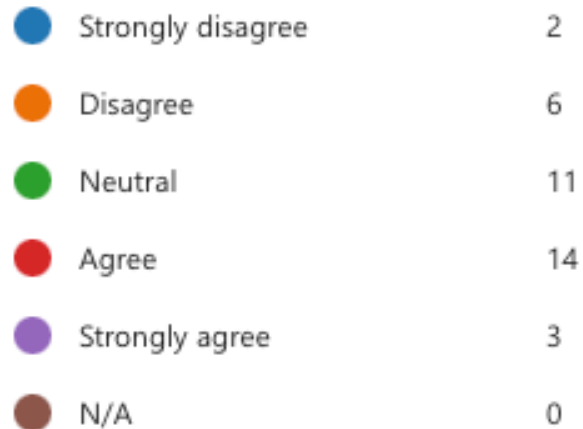
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I find it easy to identify appropriate reviewers for manuscripts



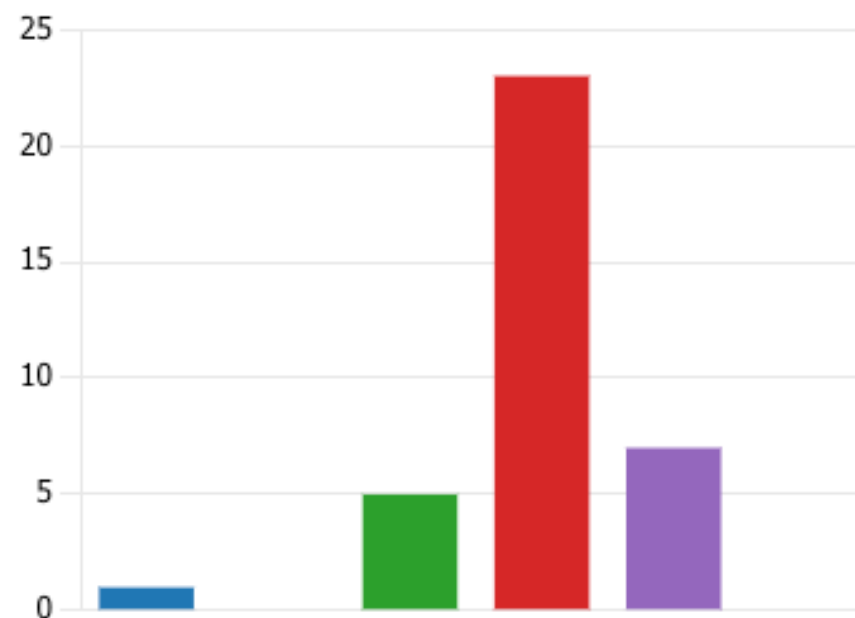
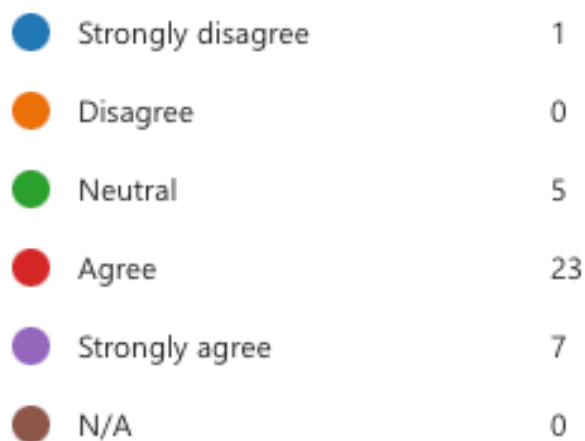
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The reviews I receive are helpful in reaching a decision on a manuscript



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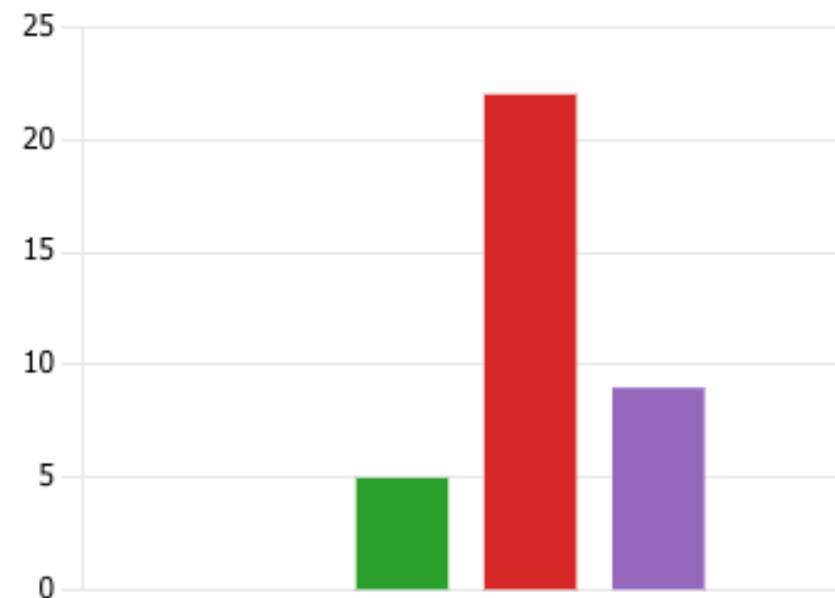


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## I feel confident giving advice to authors on improving their manuscripts

Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	0
Neutral	5
Agree	22
Strongly agree	9
N/A	0

Confident  
✓✓



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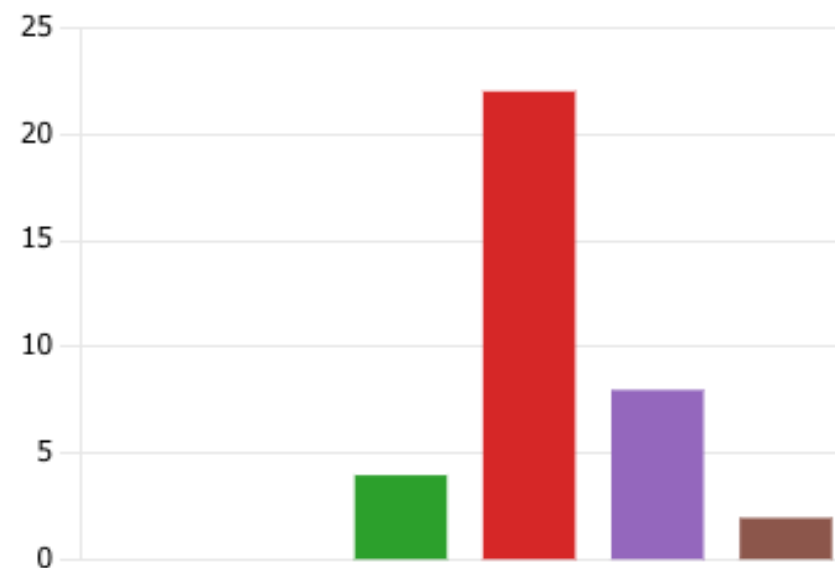


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## Authors engage well with the review process



Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	0
Neutral	4
Agree	22
Strongly agree	8
N/A	2



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## Comments on « the review process »

- It is difficult to make any general statement about the referees' work. Some of them do an excellent job, and some other do not care at all (and there are many who do not respond to any kind of invitation).
- As I've already stated, I've just started at EPL, hence all these "I agree" are based on solely 2/3 papers that I've handled for the Journal so far...
- The reviewer suggestion system is not very helpful.
- While I can identify suitable reviewers, it is difficult to find people who would agree to review. Most reviewers do not respond to our review requests, even after second reminder. This delays the process.
- The answers above were given based on not so many papers. I had faced one very difficult process where the author did not accept well the reports - in this sense in this case he did not engage well with the review process. I did not consider this case when answering the question because I think it was not a typical process. In general finding reviewers to a paper has been harder than I could expect, because many people refuse the invitation to review. Sometimes I need to invite around 10 people (!) to finally manage to receive one or two reports on a paper.
- While it is true that the papers I receive are well matched to my subject expertise, most of the times they are so just in a loose sense (which is normal, since subject areas are quite broad), and unfortunately the level of submissions is rather low, or on topics that were in fashion twenty years ago but not anymore. As a consequence, when I do not directly reject the manuscripts myself, I find it sometimes hard to find appropriate reviewers willing to write a report or to do a good job.
- I find difficult to find a referee not in the EPL database. The search engine should be simplified.
- Sometimes authors collaborate and the paper is improved
- I think that a main problem is the very weak EPL Co-editor webpage. The automatically proposed referees are mostly useless and the webpage is in general mostly useless to help finding referees. It often takes a lot of independent research on arXiv etc. (and time) to find suitable referees for papers. Another problem is that the papers are often more on the less stronger side. It seems also that often people are not very willing to act as a referee for EPL.
- Sometimes it is hard to get referees. Many of them do not agree to review. But, this is a universal problem.
- It is always very difficult to find suitable reviewers who would accept to review the article. Identifying people with the right expertise to review a given submission is usually not a problem, but finding one among them who would accept to review is often tough.





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## SECTION 4 – SUPPORT ON HANDLING MANUSCRIPTS



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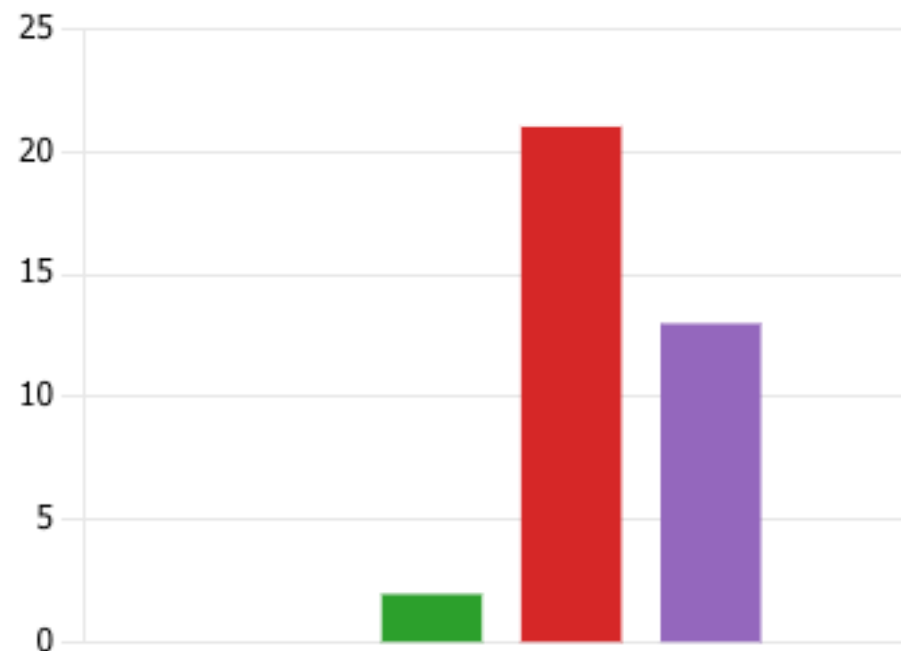


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I know who to ask if I have a problem handling a manuscript



Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	0
Neutral	2
Agree	21
Strongly agree	13
N/A	0



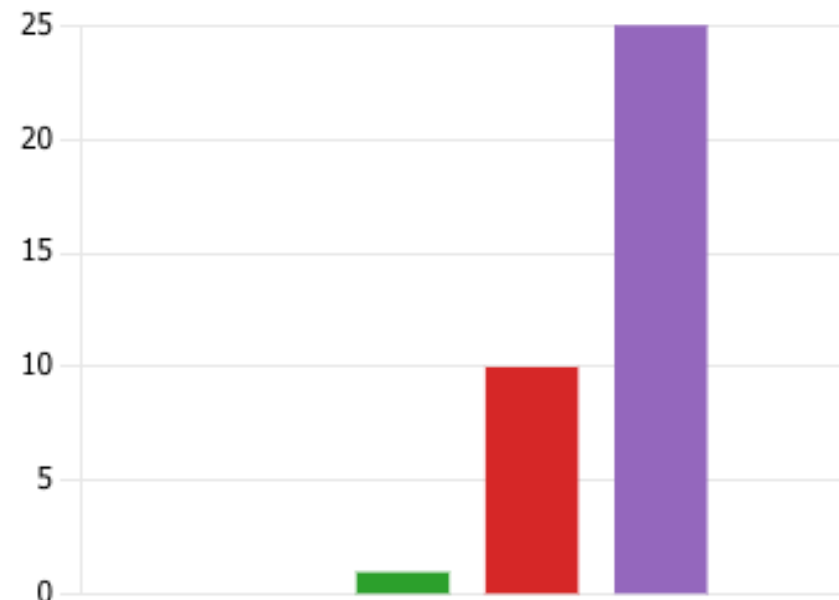
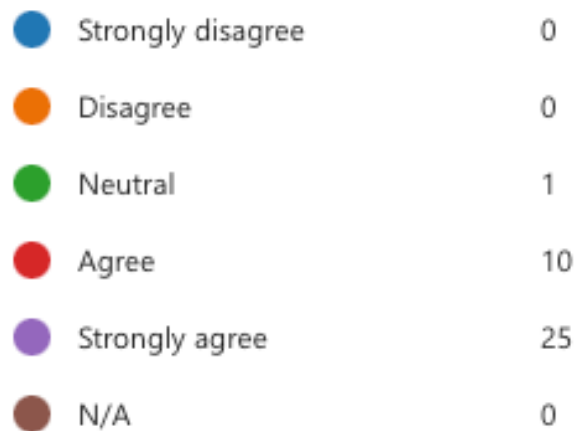
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I receive prompt and informative answers to questions about the editorial process



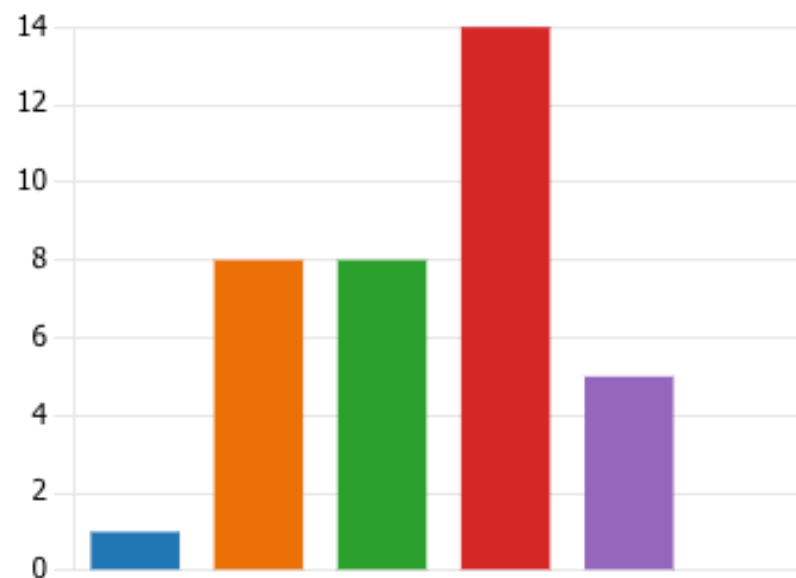
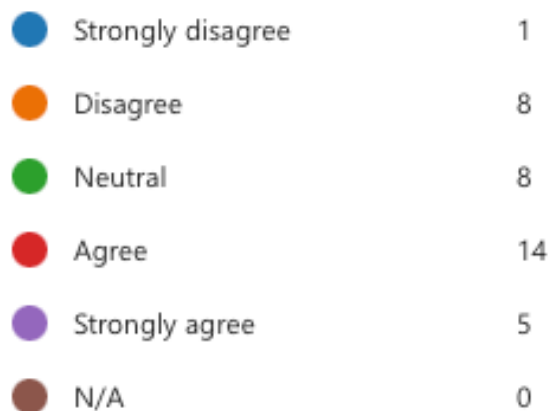
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I find the editorial software easy to use



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## Comments on support on handling manuscripts

- The EPL staff is extremely well performing: I do not write explicit names, but their reply time has always been almost immediate. The present system is the standard one for several of our Journals, yet, I find the Springer&Nature one(s) to be easier if I have to be honest.
- The web interface is very intuitive and very good.
- I don't think the Reviewer Locator system is good. I would like to have access to a system to detect plagiarism or overlap with previous literature.
- The software is ok, but it seems hard/impossible to find my past history of handled manuscripts. In particular, sometimes I feel it would be useful to find out who have I already contacted before as reviewer, in order not to ask the same person too often. Or also to check what happened with previous submissions by the same author.
- The role of the editor-in-chief has always been important in my editing process
- It is not easy to find reviewers if the recommended ones are used up
- I prefer to communicate with the editorial staff. The software intended to help find a reviewer is not very helpful.
- The Editorial software is not convenient when I need to introduce the data for the referee of my own suggestion. For instance, when I type the referee name and go to another window to copy the email address, the name disappears and it is necessary to type it once more.







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## SECTION 5 – EDITORIAL BOARD AND STRATEGY



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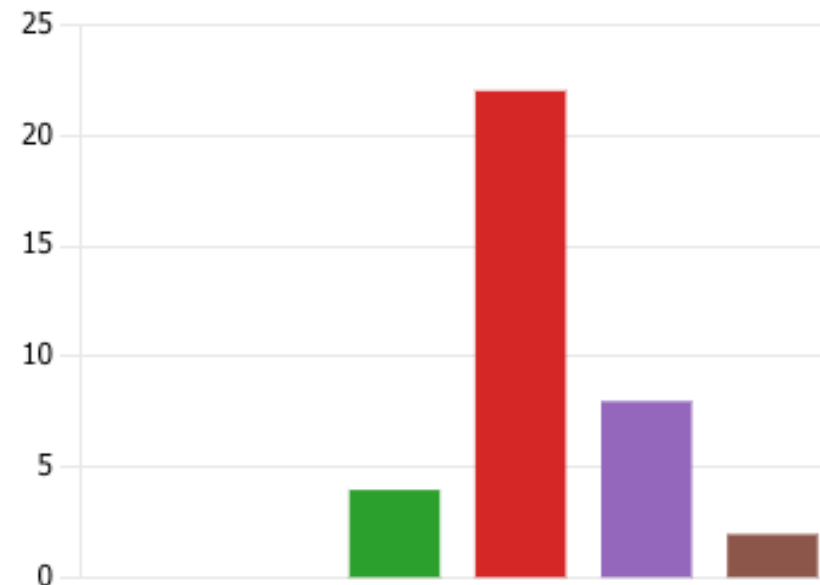
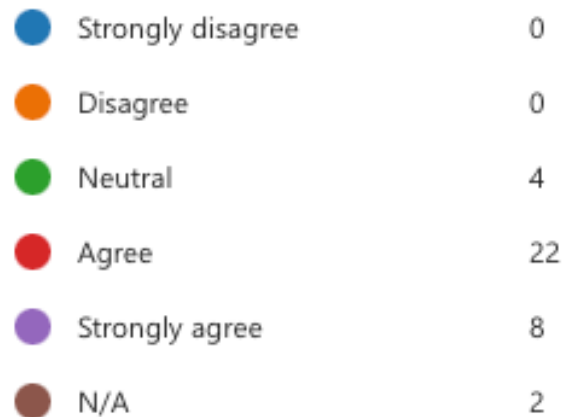
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I believe EPL's editorial board is representative of the community we represent

Celia Anteneodo	Vladimir Dobrovolskiy	Guku Long	Zhaoyan Sun
Matheus Araújo Marques	Laura Fariello	Maria Rosa López González	Giampaolo Tassinato
Martina Bachholm	Marie Christine Fippo	Yongge Ma	Basilio Vacchetti
Adriano Barta	Elena González Ferrero	Philipp Maass	Dix-Jan Van Marlen
Dario Benedetti	Andreas Hermann	Dmitri Melnikov	Mahendra K. Verma
Micol Benetti	Jun Jiang	Hui Khoun Ng	Patricia Vignolo
Valerio Capraro	Tomasz Kapitaniak	Jae Dong Noh	Frank K. Wilhelm-Mauch
Iacopo Carusotto	Sabine Klapp	Maria Raposo	Chengxin Wu
Andrey A. Chubarev	Galina L. Klimchitskaya	Francisco A. Rodrigues	Zhi Xie
Sakuntala Chatterjee	Eva Kovacic	Édgar Rosón	Junxin Zhong
Alessandra Continenza	István Kovács	Andreas Ruschhaupt	
Pablo S. Coraglia	Yun Lai	Elena Santopinto	
Sebastian Deffner	Paola La Rocca	Peter Schlegel	
Fernando Delgado	Xi Lin	Izabela M. Sosnowska	
Maria Carolina de Oliveira Aguiar	Harmut Löwen	Holger Stark	



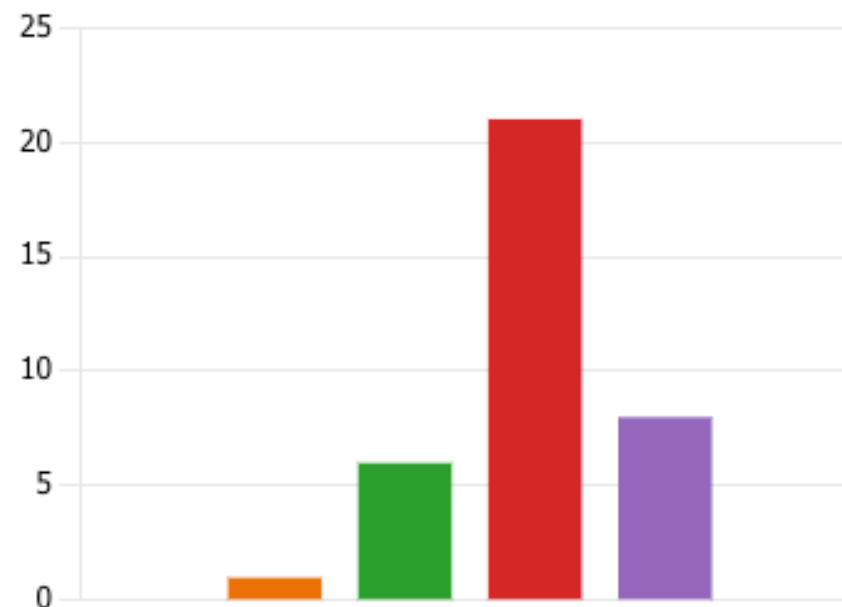
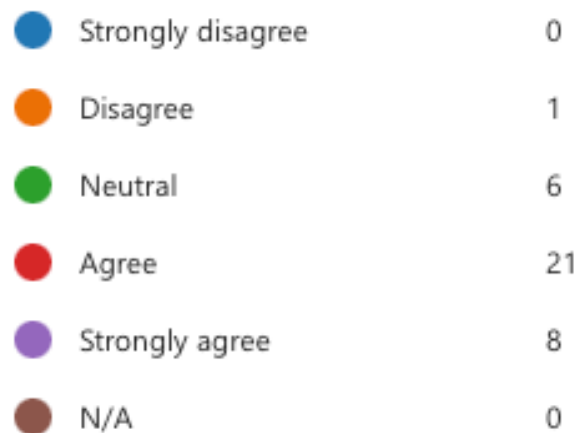
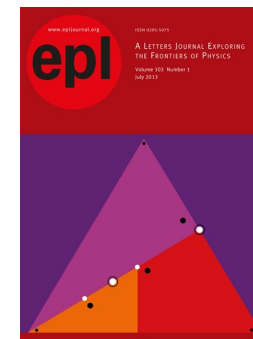
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## I feel a sense of belonging to EPL's editorial board



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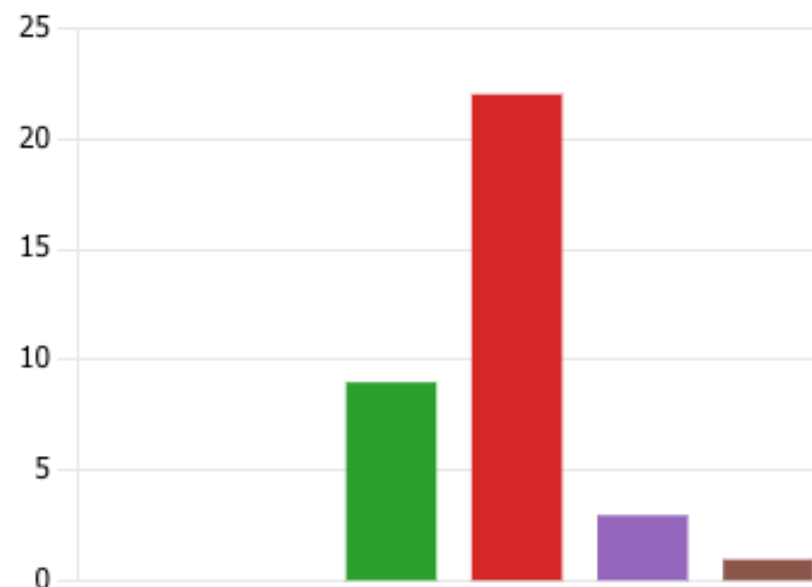


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## I feel able to contribute to EPL's strategy



Strongly disagree	0
Disagree	0
Neutral	9
Agree	22
Strongly agree	3
N/A	1



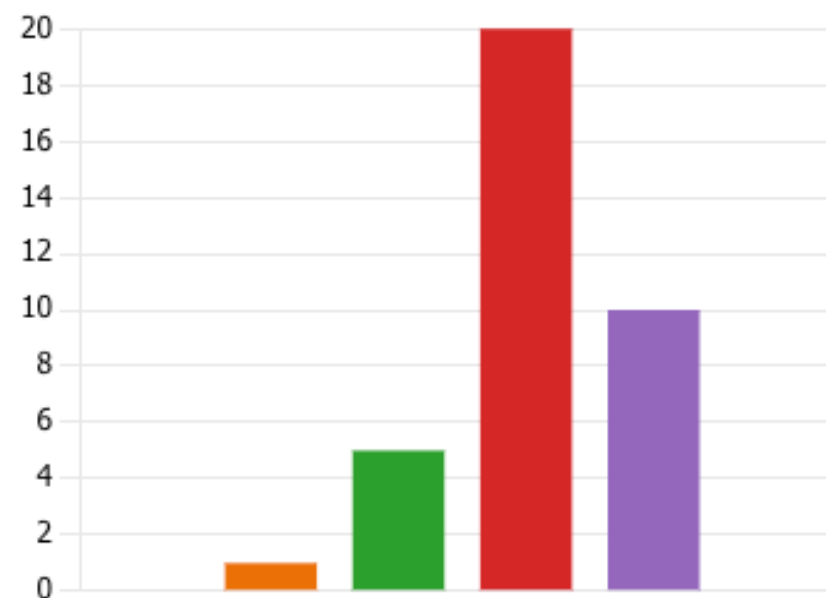
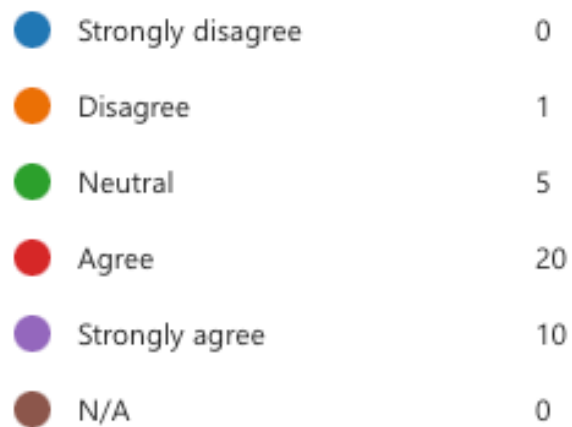
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## EPL is a good journal



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## Comments on Editorial Board and strategy

- Part of the problem is getting into a bad loop. The impact factor and perception of researchers is going down, so many of potential authors decide to send their job to alternative journals. In addition, we get those works with lower profile, many times without complying a minimal quality, making the situation more complex for the journal.
- Eventually, as I've just started, I do not feel to be a part of a broader group right now, an "EPL-family-like", however I do not have this feeling neither in Journals where I play as editor by years (and, by the way, I do believe that the idea of a general meeting in Edimburgh in 2025 is a very good one).
- I am not sure about how to increase the impact factor.
- In terms of community representation, I feel that the hep-th, gr-qc and math-ph communities are slightly underrepresented, and EPL struggles to attract good papers from these areas.
- Impact factor of EPL is too low!
- I do believe that EPL publishes good articles; at least, I have strove to do so during my time on the editorial board. Nevertheless, because of the journal's declining citation indices, as well as increasing competition from other journals in my specific field, I have been finding poorer and poorer quality submissions especially in the last couple of years. At this moment, I find it difficult to classify EPL as a good journal, at least for my specific subject.
- I feel part of the challenge facing EPL is its very wide scope. I suspect that this means that it can be hard to find suitable editors for every manuscript resulting in papers that are far from an editor's expertise. It is not clear how the scope could be narrowed, however.
- I feel that EPL has a potential of increasing its impact factor



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## SECTION 6 – STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES



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## Please state any particular strengths that EPL has

- A general sense that it is a journal of the physics society, **not** just for **making business**.
- To me, truly speaking, EPL is the European PRL and letters are pivotal as it is (even historically) pivotal PRL. **Perspectives**, an EPL's golden niche, are also important: I deeply appreciated their role for the Community.
- EPL is a **well-established** journal which has a long **history** and a **good reputation**.
- Long history and fame, and **good quality papers**
- Its **broad interest** on different field of Physics
- The EPL has a good reputation, and it also seems to me that the **publication delay** is generally **good**, which is an important criterion for a journal of letters. EPL is a well-known European journal, even if in my opinion, it would be better off reverting to its original name of "Europhysics Letters".
- **Concise** articles; breadth of covered topics; existence of Perspectives
- It does not restrict the editors to only consider papers on certain 'hot topics'. **Most papers are sent out for review**, which allows the **authors to receive useful comments** and a chance to improve their manuscript even if in the present form it is rejected.
- Good reputation in the physics community, **high standards of peer review**, broad scope, is under the **responsibility of a physical society**
- The content of EPL covers various fields of physics, and it publishes short papers, which helps to quickly disseminate the latest research findings.
- **Reliable editorial and review process**. Many publications have high scientific quality inspite of the low impact factor of EPL.
- It is a well recognized journal, where we can find high quality papers.



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## Please state any particular strengths that EPL has (part 2)

- The Editorial Board made of active researchers is a plus. The broadness of the topics covered makes it interesting and easy to choose. Moreover, the letter format is captivating, and there are not many interesting competitors in this format.
- Format; quality of articles; prestige; speed of proofs
- Strengths are: the honest and professional editors' work helps to choose or improve the best paper.
- A journal with history and quality
- Good and short letters.
- Diversity and independence
- Simple and fast
- EPL has a good editorial board, rigorous review process and very nice staff.
- It is a journal of the European Physical Society
- I have always liked the letter format that forms the basis of EPL, as this to me is the best approach to getting the scientific impact out and to help both authors and readers crystalize the important points of the work.
- Large variety of research fields covered
- EPL is a pretty selective journal.
- Relatively fast turn-around time
- The members of the Editorial Board are highly qualified experts (as opposed to Associate Editors of some USA Journals).
- Broad coverage of topics



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## Please state any particular weaknesses that EPL has



- Low position within bibliographic data bases, which also affects in a negative way the financial support of the institutions paying the research activities.
- The impact factor: we should raise the impact factor at first to me. ...and a realistic way is Prof Blythe suggestion to start to pick up cleverly selected potential contributors.
- I find that EPL is losing its position nowadays due to the growing numbers of various new magazines and journals. Especially for the evaluation system of some universities, they pay more attention to the impact factor of the journal than the reputation and importance of the journal to the readership. Maybe we should do something to improve the IF of EPL, for example, publishing some specific issues.
- Impact factor, aesthetics need to improve
- The low appeal of the journal: I think that some strategy should be undertaken in order to attract more interesting and frontier research paper. This, of course, concerns all perspectives (of author and editors); I know it is a crucial point even though I do not have "good" suggestions on actions to undertake.
- American physicists do not seem to be very interested in EPL (both as readers and as authors). Meaning that if you want to reach a large audience, including the American physics community, this is not a good option.
- I have the impression that some authors tend to publish only on EPL providing incremental advancements on the same topic
- As an editor my biggest challenge is finding willing reviewers. In my opinion, EPL gives too long time to accept or decline a review request. Within 3 days of sending the review request a reminder should be sent, not after 7 days. Rather, more time should be given for reviewing, once somebody agrees to review.
- Impact factor and other indicators may lead to a perceived lower prestige than is actually the case, or make the EPL unattractive to submit a paper or attract some low-quality submissions





## Please state any particular weaknesses that EPL has (Part 2)



- EPL's influence is somewhat limited, making it difficult to receive high-quality manuscripts, and it is also challenging to invite reviewers.
- Format of publications is not nice. Too many publications are accepted with low quality - editorial decisions should be more strict, even if number of publications would decrease. ScholarOne for submission and editorial work is a very bad system. The system implemented by APS is much better.
- From my perspective of an author working in a country very much attached to numbers (when deciding about grants, funding agencies look at number of papers and impact factors of journals where the papers were published rather than possibly quality), it is unfortunate that EPL has an impact factor smaller than PRB, for example. In this sense it would help if we could have strategies to reach more readers for EPL papers.
- Unfortunately the low impact factor generates a vicious cycle in which EPL does not attract the best manuscripts and thus it struggles to raise the impact factor, and thus to attract good papers, and so on.
- Too many journal competitors in the same field, maybe EPL should highlight its mission, strongly different to newly established journals with expensive publication fees
- Not many Authors working e.g. in material science see the possibility of publishing in EPL. Perhaps we have to search for good scientists in these fields and give them a bonus when they send a paper to EPL
- The weakness is taking too long with the review process.
- Impact factor too low
- From the reviewing process, I feel that there are not many very strong papers submitted to EPL.
- Not able to compete with other top letters like PRL. I believe some new ideas are needed for the same.
- The impact factor is low compared to its reputation
- Insufficient impact





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## Please state any particular weaknesses that EPL has (Part 3)



- I believe EPL could make a specific section for Particles and Fields in the journal. It could attract more people in the area.
- EPL's impact factor is low.
- As mentioned earlier, I have seen a **decline in quality of submissions** over the years. And this is a vicious cycle as poorer papers give fewer citations and a lower prominence of the journal, further suppressing strong submissions.
- **Some fields are less present**
- Submitted papers could be stronger on average. We do not get many submissions from esteemed authors; of course, this should be earned. Not all the areas are well represented by current co-editors.
- **Too wide scope** at risk of becoming a catch-all journal
- As an author, I feel that the submission system is a little bit too complicated. As an Editor, I would suggest to **speed up the proof preparation process.**
- The reputation in the community is not high; top authors prefer to publish in different journals



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Would you like to meet online with any of the following people to discuss the journal or your editorial work in more detail?



● Editor-in-Chief (holds overall sci...	14
● Deputy Editor (responsible for s...	11
● Staff Editor (manages the review...	10
● Other Co-Editors (handle manus...	15
● N/A	15



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## Would you prefer to meet separately or together?



*Together = 16*

*Separately and together = 1*

*Separately = 1*

- Together. A meeting about what type of papers EPL would like to publish would be useful.
- I am not particularly a fan of videochats: barely I see people really interested when they interact on-line, yet I will be honoured to participate, should we plan some online meeting.
- I think it could be a good practice to meet all together (also remotely, much easier; once-twice/year) in order to: 1) strengthen the collaboration among all the actors involved in the review process 2) exchange ideas/initiatives (also best practices) to improve the review process and increase the visibility of the journal 3) motivate and increase participation to the journal life
- At regular editorial board meetings
- Together - it would be good to have the opportunity to share experiences.
- Separately, for discussing the special topics. Together for general topics.
- Together is fine, there is no real strong need for a meeting in any case.
- As a group - I am happy to hear also from others on the Editorial board.
- A virtual general meeting of the editorial board and staff once or twice a year could be a good idea. This could help foster a sense of being a part of a family or a team. However, it is important that someone in a leadership position takes charge of creating the meeting agenda and collecting suggestions from the editor-in-chief, co-editors, and staff. While different time zones present a challenge, there may be a solution that can accommodate everyone.



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## Would you prefer to meet on an ad-hoc basis, or schedule regular meetings?

*Ad-hoc* = 9

*Scheduled* = 8



- No regular meetings
- Schedule basis with enough time in advance to organize ourselves
- I would not suggest regular meetings truly speaking
- I enjoyed the former one-day meeting in Bilbao. That was a very nice day to focus on EPL and develop a sense of belonging and reflection on how to push EPL. I have noted that another meeting is planned for 2025 in Edinburgh and am looking forward to gather there.
- Regular meetings - perhaps two per year?
- I prefer to meet on an ad-hoc basis for specific problems.
- Schedule regular meetings, one or two per year!, These meetings would be more to create group spirit and improve our performance.
- Just meetings from time to time (one per year or so), regular meetings are not required.
- Ad-hoc basis - I would be interested at the current moment in trying to understand how to raise the profile of EPL.



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## If there is one thing about EPL you would most like to change, what would it be?

- It is extremely difficult to answer blindly to this question for me. Do we have a budget for some improvement? Do we have people? Clearly if we invite someone to write a Perspective and we can even pay, we could select potentially very important targets (important people is very busy so, the only point about improving the Perspectives is that I have fear that the "right names" will reply "thank you but I'm too busy", hence the need for some extra effort from our side). Anyway I really know very little for the moment to give a clever answer (and it is also very likely that, even if you provide me with all the information, still I will not have a clever answer at all
- I think the cover design of the journal could be updated in a more fashionable way. As a traditional journal, an old-style cover will make people nostalgic, but new-style covers will attract more people to read it, especially for some young scientists. In addition, the time for the first decision and also the reviewing stage is quite long (Sometimes I also did not handle the submission on time, and sorry for that). So we should improve the readability and the timeliness of our journal.
- Better access for graduates. They are future authors.
- Make EPL papers visually more attractive and invite more famous scientists to contribute papers.
- I suggest developing, like the journal of Plasma Physics (JPP), regular online seminars inviting authors of papers published in EPL to speak. For the journal JPP, the creation of a weekly online colloquium has been accompanied by a rise in the journal's impact factor.
- I have no clear definite idea
- The gap between sending the review request and first reminder should be reduced.
- Nothing in special
- I hope EPL can introduce full-time editors, similar to what "Nature" has done.







## If there is one thing about EPL you would most like to change, what would it be? (Part 2)

- Try to actively win very good scientists as authors by announcing that EPL will change its review process with updated guidelines that allow only high quality papers to get accepted (and maybe an announcement that also the paper format/appearance and submission system is changed ...). Accompany this with an active request to excellent scientists to publish in EPL.
- It would be good that EPL papers reached more readers, which I know is not easy to be achieved.
- Enlarge the scope of the published sciences in EPL.
- I would like the article to be sent to 4 reviewers immediately and when 2 responses arrive, we could immediately make a decision.
- Impact factor
- Better, more supporting system for choosing referees.
- Get top researchers to submit papers to EPL. hard thing though.
- To make it comparable to PRL
- Try to improve its impact factor by inviting more reviews on work at the frontiers of the research
- To raise the profile of the journal.
- More uniform coverage of research topics
- Extra guidance on criteria that warrant desk rejection
- It would be good to speed up the proof preparation
- REFEREES: Attract good referees. Perhaps nominate each year "distinguished referees" with acknowledgments of their contributions in the form of presenting free books published by IOP. Each co-editor might nominate 1-2-3 referees whose contribution was most valuable. Similar to how it is done by EPJ. [Maybe this opportunity exists but I just don't know about it.]

