

**BULLETIN OF ENGINEERING GEOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF PROGRESS REPORT TO THE IAEG EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE, COUNCIL AND EDITORIAL BOARD – SEPTEMBER 2020**

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1. Background

Louis Wong was appointed to the post on 1st January 2018 and worked with Martin Culshaw as Co-Editor-in-Chief until the end of 2018. After the retirement of Martin Culshaw from the BOEG, Reşat Ulusay took over the mission from him as the Co-Editor-in-Chief with Louis Wong on 1st January 2019. Since only a few international associations have their own scientific and technical journals, the value of the Bulletin increased day by day. Starting as a simple artisanal publication, the Bulletin became a scientific reference among the most respected journals in the fields of engineering geology, the environment and other geoscience. This year, we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Bulletin. It has been great honor and pleasure for the two Editors-in-Chief of the Bulletin to have written this progress report in its 50th Anniversary.

In this report, information on the Editors-in-Chief and Editorial Board, Hans Cloos Medal Lecture papers published in the Bulletin, impact, management of submissions, paper progress, contribution of submissions from different countries/regions between 1 January 2019 and 30 June 2020, and future plans are given and briefly evaluated.

2. Editors-in-Chief and Editorial Board

Over the past 50 years, the Bulletin has had only eight Editors or Editors-in-Chief, one of whom was a temporary appointment lasting less than a year (Table 1). Among the past Editors, two editors served 15 and 14 years, respectively. As seen from Table 1, until 2018 only one Editor took the responsibility. In the most recent years, as submissions to the Bulletin have exceeded 1000 per year, on 1st January 2018, the Bulletin began to have two Editors-in-Chief.

Table 1. Editors-in-Chief and Co-editors of the Bulletin (1970-2020)

EDITOR(S)-IN-CHIEF	PERIOD
Marcel Arnould (<i>France</i>)	1970 - 1973
Richard Wolters (<i>Germany</i>)	1974 - 1981
Karl-Heinrich Heitfeld (<i>Germany</i>) (<i>for Bulletin No. 24</i>)	1981
Louis Primel (<i>France</i>)	1982 - 1997
Brian Hawkins (<i>UK</i>)	1998 - 2012
Martin Culshaw (<i>UK</i>)	2013 - 2018
Martin Culshaw (<i>UK</i>) & Louis Wong (<i>Hong Kong</i>)	2018 - 2019
Louis Wong (<i>Hong Kong</i>) & Reşat Ulusay (<i>Turkey</i>)	2019 - present
CO-EDITORS	PERIOD
André Peter (<i>France</i>)	1982 - 1987
Roger Cojean (<i>France</i>)	1997 - 2015
Jean-Alain Fleurisson (<i>France</i>)	2015 - present

From 1970, the Editor (who was the Secretary General of the IAEG) was supported by an Editorial Board that consisted of the editor and four members. By the time of the publication of Bulletin No. 2, this Board had expanded and it continued to evolve until Richard Wolters took over as Editor-in-Chief in 1974. There was no mention of an Editorial Board in 1974 but in 1975 the editorial structure changed. An editorial committee was introduced, consisting of members responsible for English- and French-language papers. The editorial board was called “Representatives of National Groups.” The “Representatives of National Groups” disappeared from the Bulletin at the end of 1985. At the 1986 a formal Editorial Board was re-established. Initially, this had 15 members but it eventually grew to 18.

After 1997, the new Editor-in-Chief, Brian Hawkins (UK), was supported by a co-editor, Roger Cojean (France), who dealt with French language papers and provided French abstracts for English language papers. There is no record of use being made of the original Editorial Board but from 2007, a new one was created, which, initially, had eight members. In 2014 this had grown to having over 25 members, reflecting the increase in submissions to the Bulletin and the need to have a reasonably rapid and auditable turnaround of papers. Members of the Executive Committee also act as Editorial Board members when paper submission rates are very high.

Martin Culshaw (UK) became the Editor-in-Chief in 2013 and significantly expanded the Editorial Board. Since 2018, the Bulletin began to have two Editor-in-Chiefs in view of the continually increasing number of submission. Each Editor-in-Chief is responsible for half of the submissions. Louis Wong (Hong Kong) was appointed as the other Editor-in-Chief. After the retirement of Martin Culshaw from the BOEG, his Editor-in-Chief role was taken over by Reşat Ulusay (Turkey). Due to retirement of some members and remarkable increase of the number of submissions in the last three years, some changes were made to the Editorial Board in mid-2019 and in the first half of 2020, leading to a steady increase of the number of the Board members. The current Editorial Board (as in June 2020) comprises 94 members (three Assistant Editors and 91 Board members). Before this modification, 24 countries/regions were represented on the Board, and now the number of represented countries/regions has increased to 32 (Table 2). The list of the Editorial Board members is given in the website of the Bulletin.

Table 2. Geographical distribution of the Editorial Board members (June 2020)

Country	No.	Country	No.	Country	No.	Country	No.
Argentina	1	Germany	1	Nepal	1	S. Africa	2
Australia	2	Greece	3	New Zealand	2	S. Korea	2
Canada	3	Hong Kong	3	Norway	1	Sweden	1
China	21	India	2	Pakistan	1	Switzerland	2
Croatia	1	Indonesia	1	Portugal	2	Taiwan	1
Czech Rep.	2	Italy	12	Russia	2	Turkey	8
Denmark	1	Japan	1	Serbia	1	UK	7
France	2	Kazakhstan	1	Singapore	1	USA	3

3. Hans Cloos Medal Lecture Papers Published in the Bulletin

In the Bulletin, a further important development took place in 2003. Since 1977, the IAEG had awarded its most prestigious medal, the Hans Cloos Medal, approximately every two years. From 2002, it was decided that the medal winner should present a Hans Cloos Lecture and that a paper, resulting from the lecture, would be published in the Bulletin. The first Hans Cloos Lecture paper, written by John Knill, was published in 2003. A list of the Hans Cloos Lecture papers is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Hans Cloos Lecture papers published in the Bulletin

Year	Hans Cloos lecturer	Title of the paper	Publication details (year, volume, pages)
2002	John Knill	Core values: the first Hans Cloos Lecture	2003, V.62, 1-34
2004	Vincenzo Cotecchia	The Second Hans Cloos Lecture. Experience drawn from the great Ancona landslide of 1982	2006, V.65, 1-41
2006	Robert Schuster	The Third Hans Cloos Lecture. Urban landslides: socioeconomic impacts and overview of mitigative strategies	2007, V.66, 1-27
2008	Wang Sijing	The 2008 Hans Cloos Lecture. Seismic geo-hazard assessment of engineering sites in China	2009, V.68, 145-159
2010	Martin Culshaw	The 2010 Hans Cloos Lecture. The contribution of urban geology to the development, regeneration and conservation of cities.	2011, V.70, 333-376
2012	Victor Osipov	The 2012 Hans Cloos Lecture. Physico-chemical theory of effective stress in soils	2014, V.73, 903-915
2014	Roger Cojean	The 2014 Hans Cloos Lecture. Engineering Geology—some feedback regarding the practice of a scientific and technical discipline	2015, V.74, 1087-1103
2016	Resat Ulusay	The 2016 Hans Cloos Lecture. Geo-engineering aspects on the structural stability and protection of historical man-made rock structures: An overview of Cappadocia Region (Turkey) in the UNESCO's World Heritage List	2018, V.77, 457-488
2018	Runqiu Huang	The 2018 Hans Cloos Lecture*	Not yet published
2020	Faquan Wu		Not yet published

* Not submitted to the Bulletin by its author yet

4. Impact

Bulletin of Engineering Geology and the Environment is currently covered by the following (A&I) services:

AGRICOLA, CAB Abstracts, CNKI, Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), Current Contents/Engineering, Computing and Technology, Current Contents/Physical, Chemical and Earth Sciences, Dimensions, EBSCO Academic Search, EBSCO Discovery Service, EBSCO Engineering Source, EBSCO Environment, EBSCO STM Source, EI Compendex, GeoRef, Geobase, Google Scholar, INSPEC, Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China, Japanese Science and Technology Agency (JST), Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, Naver, OCLC WorldCat Discovery Service, ProQuest Agricultural & Environmental

Science Database, ProQuest Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA), ProQuest Central, ProQuest Civil Engineering Abstracts, ProQuest Earth, Atmospheric & Aquatic Science Database, ProQuest Engineering, ProQuest Environment Abstracts (Module), ProQuest Environmental Science, ProQuest Materials Science and Engineering Database, ProQuest Meteorological & Geostrophysical Abstracts, ProQuest Natural Science Collection, ProQuest SciTech Premium Collection, ProQuest Technology Collection, ProQuest Water Resources Abstracts, ProQuest-ExLibris Primo, ProQuest-ExLibris Summon, SCImago, SCOPUS, Science Citation Index Expanded (SciSearch), Semantic Scholar, UGC-CARE List (India)

Since its foundation, another very important change for the Bulletin was the agreement that the Bulletin should receive an “impact factor (IF)”. In any given year, this is defined as *the number of citations, received in that year, of articles published in that journal during the two preceding years, divided by the total number of "citable items" published in that journal during the two preceding years*. The Bulletin first received an impact factor in 2007. The IFs for the Bulletin between 2007 and 2019, together with those of other three main competitors during the same period, are shown in Table 4. It is interesting to note that since the Bulletin received an impact factor, the number of papers submitted, and the number of papers published have increased significantly. At the first beginning until 2012, the IF for the Bulletin remained at just under 0.7, which was relatively low. However, only one of the three main competing English-language engineering geological journals had an impact factor over 1.0 at that time. In 2014, it slightly rose to 0.764, and then a clear increase in the IF was observed and it reached 2.138 in 2018 (Table 4). After one year, in 2019, the IF jumped to 3.041 with an increase of 0.903 as compared to that in 2018.

Figure 1 graphically presents the percentile rank in category. While the Bulletin was ranked 18 in the list of “top 20 journals in the Engineering, Geological” in 2017, it dropped to rank 22 in 2018. Due to the remarkable increase of IF from 2.138 to 3.041 in 2019, the Bulletin is now in the top 10 for Engineering, Geological journal category (Table 5).

Table 4. Impact factors for the Bulletin and three other English-language engineering geological journals (2007-2019)

Year	Impact Factor			
	BOEG	QJEGH	EG	E&EG
2007	0.463	0.685	0.951	0.271
2008	0.627	0.919	1.197	0.360
2009	0.342	0.877	1.212	0.372
2010	0.648	0.859	1.442	0.273
2011	0.667	0.797	1.242	0.340
2012	0.617	0.757	1.403	0.630
2013	0.721	0.568	1.757	0.596
2014	0.760	1.013	1.744	0.977
2015	1.252	1.058	2.196	0.500
2016	1.901	1.102	2.569	0.739
2017	1.825	0.818	3.100	0.318
2018	2.138	1.171	3.909	0.844
2019	3.041	1.897	4.779	0.755

Note: QJEGH = Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology; EG = Engineering Geology; E&EG = Environmental and Engineering Geoscience

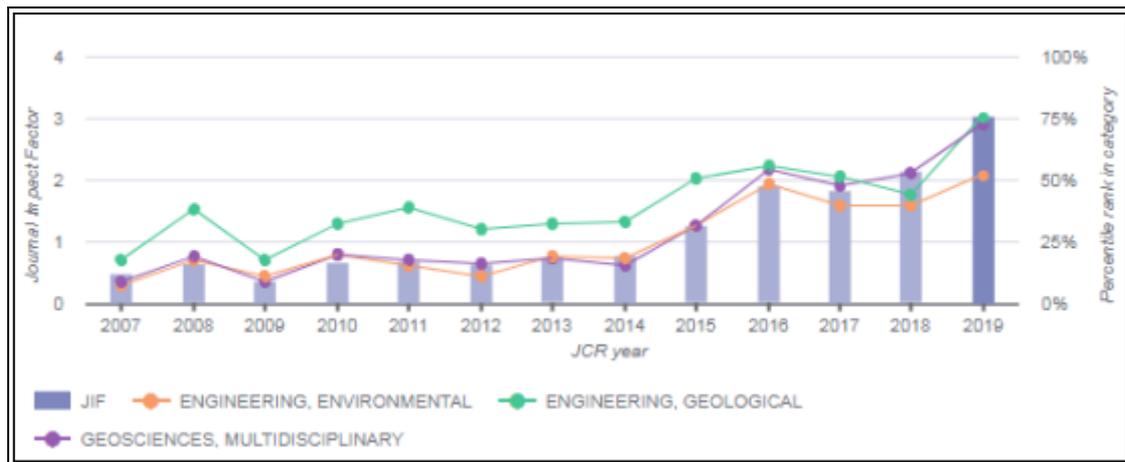


Figure 1. Variation of IF and percentile rank in category

Table 5. Comparison of the Bulletin with other high performance Engineering, Geological journals for the year 2019.

Rank	Full Journal Title	Impact Factor
1*	ENGINEERING GEOLOGY	4.779
2	Landslides	4.708
3	Acta Geotechnica	4.350
4	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ROCK MECHANICS AND MINING SCIENCES	4.151
5	ROCK MECHANICS AND ROCK ENGINEERING	4.140
6	GEOTECHNIQUE	3.830
7	COMPUTERS AND GEOTECHNICS	3.818
8	EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING & STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS	3.414
9	GEOTEXTILES AND GEOMEMBRANES	3.400
10*	Bulletin of Engineering Geology and the Environment	3.041
11	Journal of Rock Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering	2.829
12	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR NUMERICAL AND ANALYTICAL METHODS IN GEOMECHANICS	2.814
13	CANADIAN GEOTECHNICAL JOURNAL	2.802
13	GEOSYNTHETICS INTERNATIONAL	2.802
15	JOURNAL OF EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING	2.779
16	JOURNAL OF GEOTECHNICAL AND GEOENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING	2.714
17	SOIL DYNAMICS AND EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING	2.637
18	Bulletin of Earthquake Engineering	2.602
19	International Journal of Geomechanics	2.589
20	Geomechanics and Engineering	2.485
26*	Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology	1.897
37*	ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING GEOSCIENCE	0.755

* Refer to Table 4 for yearly IFs

Apart from the IF, the status of the Bulletin can be assessed by a number of other metrics. For example,

1. SNIP 2019: 1.569 (Source Normalized Impact per Paper measures actual citations received relative to citations expected for the serial's subject field)
2. SJR 2019: 0.770 (SCImago Journal Rank measures weighted citations received by the serial. Citation weighting depends on subject field and prestige (SJR) of the citing serial)
3. TAT - Average Turnaround Time Submission to Accept 2019: 214 Days
4. Annual number of Full-Text Article Requests (downloads): 202,494 requests in 2019 (Figure 2). It increases by 68% as compared with that in 2016.

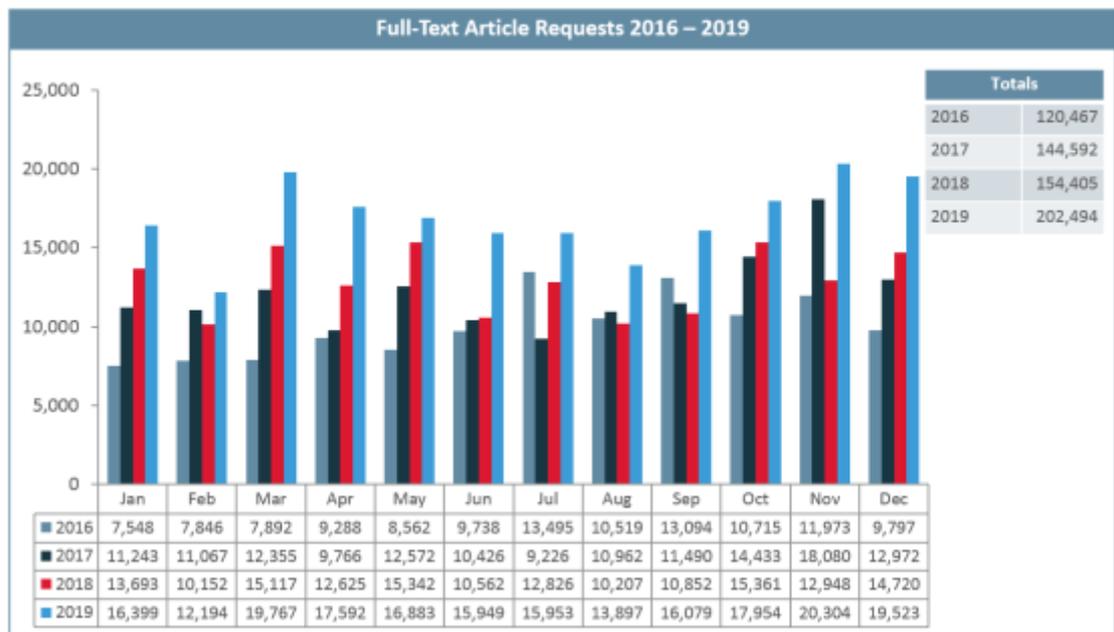


Figure 2. Number of Full-Text Article Requests for the Bulletin during 2016-2019.

5. Management of Submissions

Prior to 2012, papers were submitted to the Bulletin by authors direct to the Editor or one of the Editorial Team. Though it may have been the intention in the early days that all papers would be reviewed, this was not necessarily the case. This was particularly true when a large number of conference papers were to be published (for example, from the 1979 conference on 'Engineering Geological Mapping' held in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK). The reviewing procedure was that, once the Editor had received a paper, it would be sent to a member of the Editorial Board, or an external reviewer, who would comment on the scientific quality. The editor might also review the paper and edit it as necessary.

A major change came in 2012 when Springer insisted that all papers must be submitted via their online Editorial Management system. This change coincided with the appointment of a new Editor-in-Chief, Martin Culshaw. To make the new system work, a much-expanded Editorial Board was needed. Since 2012, papers have been sent electronically to a relevant Editorial Board Member (EBM), who then passes it to two or more reviewers based on the single blind policy, whose service is entirely voluntary. Once a paper has gone through the process of review, revisions, re-review etc. the paper is either accepted or rejected, and the accepted papers are then proof-read to ensure that the French/English language is of a publishable standard. The paper then moves to publication online and, ultimately, publication in the printed version of the Bulletin with the issue number and page numbers. The same system is generally followed by the current EiCs who oversee the overall review process and make the final decision. Below are additional details about the evaluation procedures before assigning the manuscripts to an EBM.

- A paper is first evaluated in terms of language and format. If it is poorly written and/or not properly prepared based on the "Instructions for Authors" stipulated by the Bulletin, it is rejected without invitation of EBM.
- If the paper offers nothing scientifically new (without any novelty and/or contributions) or does not present an unusual case study, it is rejected without invitation of EBM.

- If the subject matter of the paper lies outside that usually covered by the Bulletin, the paper is rejected. Sometimes, recommendation is provided to the author(s) to submit the paper to one of the other relevant journals.
- The Bulletin is committed to maintaining the highest level of integrity in the content published. The journal is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and subscribes to its principles on how to deal with acts of misconduct thereby committing to investigate allegations of misconduct in order to ensure the integrity of research. A similarity check of the submitted papers is performed by the publisher using iThenticate, a plagiarism detection software. If the paper is indicated to have substantial parts similar to those from other works, it is rejected. If plagiarism is identified, the COPE guidelines on plagiarism will be followed.

6. Production

6.1. Paper Progress

Table 6 summarises how papers are progressing through the system. The monthly submission rate has sharply increased from 16.7 papers/month in 2012 to 118.2 papers/month in 2019. However, for the first five months of 2020, the average monthly submission rate now stands at 166.8. That submissions are both numerous and sustained is heartening but creates a huge work-load for all involved. Based on the current submission rate, around 1700 submissions are expected (20% increase as compared with that of 2019).

Table 6 also shows paper acceptances and rejections as a percentage. From around 25-30% acceptances in 2013-14, acceptances have dropped to 22-23%. Rejections are running around 70-80%.

Table 6. Paper progress statistics from 2012 to Jun 2020 provided by Springer

Submissions	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
									(Jan-June)
Total Submitted	200	291	471	608	898	988	1,100	1,418	852
Submission Rate (monthly)	16.7	24.3	39.3	50.7	74.8	82.3	91.7	118.2	166.8
Total Decided				562	826	972	1,033	1,210	718
Accept		89	138	123	153	220	225	261	191
Reject	26	225	349	439	673	733	792	900	510
Withdrawn		2	7			17	16	49	17*
Acceptance Rate		27.50%	29%	22%	19%	23%	22%	22%	26%*
Rejection Rate		73.50%	71%	78%	81%	76%	77%	74%	70%*
Withdrawal Rate							2%	4%	4%**
Average Days to First Decision	251	75	50	43	42	42	46	79	78*
Average Days to Final Disposition Accept		249	208	184	184	181	180	214	247*
Average Days to Final Disposition	133	125	57	35	35	29	37	55	69*

Reject									
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Disclaimer:

* Official figures up to end of May 2020

Please note that the term “Reject” is used for the calculation of the acceptance and rejection rates, which includes all terms that may exist for rejection decisions. For example: Reject before review; Reject after review; Reject, but resubmit; Reject, out of scope; and so forth. In addition: Only the papers for which the ‘Final Disposition Date’ has been set are taken into account. Final disposition date means that a manuscript is fully completed.

6.2. Contribution of submissions from different countries/regions

As summarized in Table 7, close to 80% of the papers in 2019 and 2020 (up to June) came from Asia, followed by Europe. The top four countries were China, Iran, India and Turkey. Most notably, more than half of the submissions came from China.

Table 7. Number of papers submitted to the Bulletin in 2019 and 2020 (up to June) with respect to countries (the top 20 countries) and the Continent (all submissions)

Number of papers submitted to BOEG for the top 20 countries/regions (2019)			Classified by continent (2019)	
Rank	Country/Region	Percentage (%)	Continent	Percentage (%)
1	China	56.10	Asia	79.75
2	Iran	12.95	Europe	11.05
3	India	5.17	Africa	4.34
4	Turkey	4.42	N America	1.79
5	Italy	1.47	S America	1.56
6	Australia	1.46	Aus.NZ	1.52
7	Nigeria	1.29	Total	100
8	Brazil	1.20		
9	Egypt	0.95		
10	USA	0.94		
11	Iraq	0.87		
12	Spain	0.84		
13	Algeria	0.84		
14	Japan	0.76		
15	Canada	0.69		
16	United Kingdom	0.58		
17	Pakistan	0.56		
18	France	0.53		
19	Poland	0.53		
20	Vietnam	0.51		

2019

Number of papers submitted to BOEG for the top 20 countries/regions (2020)			Classified by continent (2020)	
Rank	Country/Region	Percentage (%)	Continent	Percentage (%)
1	China	51.32	Asia	76.60
2	Iran	10.35	Europe	12.78
3	India	5.48	Africa	5.05
4	Turkey	5.22	N America	2.20
5	Pakistan	1.97	S America	1.96
6	Brazil	1.49	Aus/NZ	1.41
7	Malaysia	1.45	Total	100
8	Egypt	1.39		
9	Australia	1.11		
10	Germany	1.03		
11	Canada	0.97		
12	USA	0.96		
13	United Kingdom	0.95		
14	Poland	0.93		
15	Nigeria	0.92		
16	Algeria	0.90		
17	Taiwan	0.78		
18	Italy	0.72		
19	Vietnam	0.61		
20	Japan	0.60		

2020
(up to June)

7. Future

In 2020 (Volume 79), 360 papers across 10 issues, each containing 36 papers, will be published.

Springer planned that CAP (Continuous Article Publishing) will be implemented in 2022. It means that each article, after peer-review and acceptance, will be published immediately within the monthly issue, including a digital object identifier (DOI) and page numbers. Due to this special structure each article starts with page 1.

The Bulletin continues in very good health with the number of submissions and impact factor still increasing. However, this puts pressure on the Editors-in-Chief and the Editorial Board. The composition of the Editorial Board is constantly under review by the Editors-in-Chief, and a restructuring of the Editorial Board is under way. At the same time, we still need to ensure that the quality of published papers improves and that the time taken to make a decision on papers can be shortened.

8. Final Comments

The Bulletin continues very good health with a sharp increase in the number of submissions particularly since 2018 and remarkable increase in IF from 2.138 to 3.041 in 2019, which carried the Bulletin into the top 10 for Engineering, Geological journal category. However, this puts tremendous pressure on the two EiCs and the entire EB. In addition, we need to work hard to shorten the time taken to make a decision on papers. One of the difficulties, which increases the time taken to make a decision, is finding at least two reviewers for each paper. As the number of papers submitted to all international journals increases, it becomes more and more difficult to find reviewers willing to review papers and then deliver the review to time. In such cases, although the EBMs are encouraged to act as the second reviewer to provide a comprehensive review, it is sometimes not successful. The EiCs have provided feedback to the publisher on this issue and have suggested the publisher to look for ways to motivate reviewers.

It is clear from Table 7 that close to 80% of the submissions in 2019 and 2020 (up to June) came from Asia, followed by Europe with a small percentage, although there are more than 40 countries in Europe. The top four countries were China, Iran, India and Turkey. Most notably, more than half of the submissions came from China. This unbalanced geographical distribution and how to motivate colleagues in different parts of the world to submit high

quality manuscripts to the Bulletin should be carefully assessed and deliberated by the IAEG Executive Committee and the different IAEG national/regional groups in other continents.

As the EiCs of the Bulletin, we always welcome comments, suggestions and questions from IAEG Executive Committee / Council and EBMss and, indeed, the profession as a whole.