



Dear Readers,

MAXPLANCKRESEARCH has developed into a highly esteemed scientific magazine. And as the subscriber figures show, its popularity continues to grow: there are now more than 50,000 readers who follow current developments in modern basic research with keen interest. The vast majority of them – namely 75 percent – come from outside the Max Planck Society. In the early 1970s, we became the first scientific organization in Germany to begin publishing not only regular news bulletins, but also journalistic factual and background reports on our research work. The magazine bore the title MPG-SPIEGEL up until 1997.

But just as research itself is subject to change, with high-powered computers and sequencing devices now proudly positioned where Erlenmeyer flasks and Bunsen burners once stood, a magazine such as MAXPLANCKRESEARCH must evolve to cater to new reading habits, and adopt a modern visual language. In time for 2009, the Year of Science that will see Germany celebrate some notable anniversaries, our magazine has now acquired a new look.

The focus of this first issue is on what the future holds – after all, it is research that will help shape what comes next. This issue presents new plant breeding tools that will make an important contribution to feeding the world's growing population. Readers will also see in-

side a laboratory in which scientists are using cells to manufacture new kinds of materials, and meet robots that fathom their own environment.

The subjects have also been chosen to accompany the *Science Express*, the 300-meter-long exhibition train for which the Max Planck Society played a lead role in the design and development process. After nine successful Years of Science, each dedicated to specific subjects, fields or personalities, this concept is also undergoing a change: the coming Years of Science will now address interdisciplinary topics and show how researchers are looking beyond traditional boundaries in their quest for future-oriented solutions to what are sometimes quite mundane problems. The *Science Express* will be stopping off in more than 60 German towns and cities. A dozen cars dedicated to specific themes illustrate how scientific and technological developments affect our lives – from basic research carried out at scientific institutions and universities to product development in cooperation with business enterprises. I would thus like to cordially invite you to take a glimpse into the future – and of course into this magazine as well.

Peter Gruss,
President of the Max Planck Society