Letter to the Editor: Official Platform for ALAEQ

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Dear Editor,

As the current President and the founding President of the Latin American Association of Chemical Ecology (ALAEQ), we are writing to you to bring our association to a broader attention, and to approach you with a vital request concerning Chemical Ecology in South America.

The formation of a second regional association after the Asia-Pacific Association of Chemical Ecologists (APACE) has been discussed since the second half of the 2000's¹ and ALAEQ was finally founded in December 2009. The main goal of ALAEQ is fostering interactions between researchers and other actors who are active in the field of Chemical Ecology in Latin America. Accordingly, the purpose of ALAEQ is to promote the interactions between scientists of the subcontinent, who are dedicated to the study of the role of naturally occurring compounds which mediate interactions between organisms and their environment.

ALAEQ aims at establishing Chemical Ecology as an important part of Latin American science. To reach this goal, we wish not only to strengthen the interaction between Latin American researchers, but also need to rely on contacts with scientists from outside the subcontinent. Given the immense geographical, ecological, and social diversity of Latin America, there is much space for existing and future collaborations, and ALAEQ intends to be a platform for regional collaborations and a bridge into the subcontinent for ISCE and APACE members.

ALAEQ has about 200 members, and the meetings regularly have 200–250 attendants, including outstanding researchers from Europe and the U.S. The first ALAEQ meeting was held 2010 in Uruguay, and was followed by meetings in Argentina (2012), Colombia (2014), and Brazil (2016). The 2018 meeting is scheduled to be held in Chile. As one of the highlights in the short history of ALAEQ, the 2016 meeting was realized as a joint meeting with the International Society of Chemical Ecology and was attended by ca. 400 researchers.

We now like to ask you to kindly consider the possibility that the *Journal of Chemical Ecology* could be the official platform for ALAEQ, just as is the case for the sister regional association APACE. This status would enormously strengthen the position of ALAEQ in national scientific communities; it would substantially augment the visibility of our research field, add more weight to grant applications, and help fundraising.

In short, we regard a partnership between ISCE, APACE and ALAEQ decisive for the future of Chemical Ecology in South America and hope for a positive decision.

Sincerely,

Paulo H. G. Zarbin, current ALAEQ president
Jan Bergmann, founding ALAEQ president

¹ Bergmann J., González A., Zarbin P.H.G., *J. Braz. Chem. Soc.*, **2009**, 7, 1206

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