

Letter from the Editors

Balancing Competitiveness, Innovation and Resilience in the Chemical Industry

The October 2026 issue of the Journal of Business Chemistry brings together three contributions that approach some of the most pressing strategic questions facing the chemical industry today: how industrial structures can combine scale with capital discipline, how emerging technologies can reconcile environmental benefits with technical performance, and how companies can make robust sourcing decisions under growing uncertainty. Although the three papers address very different areas, they share a common concern with the choices that will shape the competitiveness and resilience of chemical businesses in the years ahead. From the structure of global chemical industries to the development of bio-based technologies and the management of critical feedstocks, this issue highlights the need to balance efficiency and performance with flexibility and long-term strategic robustness.

Our first contribution by Wolfgang Falter and Kai Pflug, featured in the Practitioner's Section, takes a comparative look at the very different paths followed by the European and Chinese chemical industries over the past three decades. It explores the contrasting roles of integration, specialization, scale and capital discipline, and asks what the future of industrial integration could look like in a changing competitive landscape.

The second contribution from Moritz Gutsch, Karsten Mause and colleagues turns to bio-based materials for batteries and examines their potential to reduce environmental and supply chain burdens. Based on assessments from 35 experts, the study explores the opportunities and trade-offs associated with different bio-based battery innovations and highlights areas where further technological development and validation will be particularly important.

Our third contribution by Maria Nero and Sandra Gröne addresses the growing uncertainty surrounding industrial feedstock strategies. It introduces a scenario-based framework for assessing the robustness of bio-based, synthetic and mineral feedstocks and demonstrates how companies can use future performance indicators to better understand vulnerabilities and support more resilient sourcing decisions.

Taken together, the three contributions offer different perspectives on a common question: how can chemical companies and the wider industry make strategic choices when the conditions for doing so are becoming increasingly complex? Whether the challenge concerns industrial structures, emerging technologies or raw material supply, the papers in this issue highlight the importance of looking beyond short-term optimization and considering how today's decisions shape long-term strategic flexibility.

We hope that this issue offers valuable perspectives for researchers, industry practitioners and decision-makers, and contributes to the ongoing discussion about the future direction of the chemical industry. Should you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact us at contact@businesschemistry.org. We sincerely thank all authors, reviewers and readers for their continued support and engagement.

Warm regards,

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