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Front cover: Life cycle thinking (LCT) and assessment (LCA) are of growing importance in European policy towards sustainability. Developments are being directly supported by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). The front cover presents the location of the 7 institutes of the JRC, which is distributed across the European Union's 27 Member States. The JRC provides customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies. As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre of science and technology for the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national. More information on the JRC is available at <http://www.jrc.ec.eu.int/>. A special corner, launched in this edition (pp. 458–460), will regularly present and discuss life cycle developments in European policy and the related support activities. David W. Pennington

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