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ISSN 1519-8774 FAPESP

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PRINTER MaisType

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FUSP – FUNDAÇÃO DE APOIO À UNIVERSIDADE DE SÃO PAULO

PESQUISA FAPESP Rua Joaquim Antunes, nº 727, 10º piso, CEP 05415-012, Pinheiros, São Paulo-SP, Brasil

FAPESP Rua Pio XI, nº 1.500, CEP 05468-901, Alto da Lapa, São Paulo-SP, Brasil

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Constant vigilance

Alexandra Ozorio de Almeida | EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Amazon has been in the public eye this century. As one of the most important remaining biodiversity reserves, its value for life on Earth is incalculable. The region also has an essential role in climate regulation, with an influence that extends far beyond the frontiers of this biome. Fears regarding the destruction of the rainforest motivate debates on its occupation and preservation, taking into account the perspectives of the indigenous peoples that inhabit the region and its population of close to 30 million.

A key issue for conservation is the capacity to monitor the region by satellite. Brazil is widely recognized for its monitoring capacity. Data are collected and analyzed by qualified specialists in the public sector and NGOs. The information that stems from constant surveillance allows for immediate action to avert real-time deforestation. It also supports policy-making, provides grounds for international negotiations, and feeds scientific and technological research that in turn fuels the production of more and better data.

The cover feature presents five different ongoing initiatives that monitor the deforestation of the Amazon, highlighting their traits, methodological distinctions, and uses (*Page 6*). It also discusses the TerraClass initiative, which maps the use of deforested land in the region (*Page 14*). Developed by Inpe, the Brazilian National Institute for

Space Research, and Embrapa, the Brazilian Crop and Livestock Research Company, the project resumed operations after a period of inactivity. The recently released radiography for the year 2020 shows that 14% of the land in the Amazon is occupied by pasture and agriculture.

The current international edition includes a collection of features published in Portuguese between July and December 2023. They cover a wide variety of themes, such as a project to develop a vaccine to treat cocaine addiction (*Page 30*), a survey that points to a higher incidence of suicide among indigenous peoples (*Page 35*), the origin of bees 120 million years ago in Gondwana (*Page 38*) and the Brazilian prototype of a sodium battery as an alternative for electric mobility (*Page 46*).

This edition's interviewee took office as the president of the Brazilian National Library in 2023. Over 200 years old and holding more than 10 million items, the institution safeguards the country's bibliographical heritage. Professor of comparative literature at UFRJ, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Marco Lucchesi, defined his mission as making the Library more accessible. Poet and writer Lucchesi spoke of his work at the institution and the importance of research in Literature and History for the translation of authors to Portuguese. Lucchesi himself is a translator, speaking more than 22 languages fluently (*Page 16*).