

## Slovenia Section

Urban Burnik

### Getting Closer to Industry

- For the past years, we have practiced personal contact with outstanding engineers from successful companies. As a result, we've been able to promote the success stories of Slovenian electrical and computer engineers at our annual conference ERK, thus achieving 2 goals: demonstrating the benefits of IEEE community to established professionals and promoting the potentials of engineering career to students and younger professionals. The pool was carefully created from established industry players to propulsive start-up businesses.
- Our membership consists of ca. 30% members from the industry, which is relatively a good number, however, there is a potential to increase membership by promoting IEEE benefits at a larger scale. So far, we've experienced low response from the industry to local IEEE events.
- To continue with mainstream and enlarge the possible industry cooperation we may target chamber of commerce and be present as IEEE on chambers' special events.
- A communication channel targeting specifically IEEE members from the industry should also be created (LinkedIn, mailing list).

### Students and Young Professionals

- Young Professionals have always had good support from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Ljubljana, which also hosts the Slovenian Section headquarters. This year, a successful event has been organised for, a lecture by Tim Baxter on Leadership development for engineers, following by workshop opened exclusively to YP members. Student Branch Ljubljana is extremely active organising social events for members and a broader reach out by professional tutorials, student competitions, lectures and excursions.
- 4 delegates of active volunteer student members have been present at the IEEE R8 Student and Young Professional Congress SYP2014.
- Promotional events are being organised in conjunction with important student days at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering.
- SB Maribor is however less active, which is to be improved by inviting them to joint events.
- Students and Young Professionals should be offered a clearer incentive for joining IEEE, which is also one of our duties as local IEEE representatives.
- For the young professionals support from IEEE like STEP and similar mechanisms is crucial. More awareness of these programs should be made at regional level, as YP officers have only learned about some of the mechanisms by personal discussion with IEEE representatives and colleagues from various sections and chapters.

### Section Vitality

- IEEE Slovenia Section maintains a relatively constant number of members throughout recent years. Most members take membership as a commitment to international engineering community, but their presence at IEEE events is low and it seems even the existing members could benefit more from their membership.
- In modern information era, many communication channels are available to foster engineering knowledge and exchange of information, many of them free of charge. IEEE's membership fee for regular members is high compared to an average engineering salary in Slovenia, and there is little visible benefit from being a member on a first sight. There are naturally social and other local events organised by volunteers, which doubtfully justify the membership fee.
- There is a lot of ongoing projects like Collabratech; for the 60% of academic members in Slovenia such actions are a benefit to them. Members from the Industry can hardly see any benefit of these bonuses and they need strongest support of the engineering community to enhance their presence in local society at a national level. Here, membership in IEEE should become more influential. An additional challenge outside USA is that, despite good formal cooperation, IEEE somehow competes with national engineering societies for members.

### Miscellaneous / Recommendations / Feedback

- With more than 30 events organised by IEEE Slovenia Section and its chapters in 2014, the presence of IEEE is getting broader recognition in public. IEEE members are being present and actively participate in organisation of technical meetings, symposia and conferences in Slovenia.
- We've been active in organisation of 2 large multi-day events (ERK conference and Seminar) with more than 100 participants each.
- Especially, I would like to emphasise on a successful row of student events; a series of lectures given by IBM fellows. This year, a lecture was given by Aleksandra Mojsilovi, who talked about Big Data, Watson Computer and the Trends of the future computers. These events are always extremely well attended.
- The later could be a challenge for IEEE itself, to prepare a series of "distinguished lectures" oriented towards popular science, and to be used to promote engineering among younger population.