

## Bulgaria Section

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### Getting Closer to Industry

Besides recruiting new IEEE members from the industry, up to now we could not find a successful approach to improve our relations with the industry. Since most of our volunteers are from the academia, it is very difficult for us to find out what can we do for the Industry. In fact there are not so many benefits of IEEE products to members from the industry besides the access to IEEE publications. Thus we do not have any attractive offers to the Industry managers and meetings of the Section officers with higher level industrial executives will not be that productive. And as the fields of interest of different IEEE Societies are corresponding to specific industrial branches, we have to engage our chapters in building relations with these branches. Unfortunately, our members from the industry are very reluctant to participate in our activities, especially as volunteers. Our recent efforts are to identify colleagues from industry who would agree to serve as chapter officers. Such officers will naturally build and strengthen the connections with the Industry. We have already promising results in this direction: since our last Committee meeting we have two new Chapter Chairs and one Vice-Chair from the industry.

### Students and Young Professionals

- Last year a Young Professionals AG was registered in our section and they started very well - they have nominated and elected very quickly their officers and they have now a very active organizational life. There is a strong core of YP members, that are well networked, the officers are strongly motivated and they are organizing very successful events: for the past year our YP AG is reporting 7 such events. Our problem now is that the Section does not have sufficient resources to finance all possible activities that the Group would initiate. We have to help them also to focus their activities to what is expected an YPAG to do - to serve all YPs belonging to different Professional Societies, because for now they are planning mostly events typical for the Chapters and covering very narrow technical fields.
- We have been expecting a considerable help from the YP AG in our efforts to increase the student membership, to attract new motivated Student Branch Counselors and to re-activate some dormant Student Branches, but up to now the YPs are not showing any interest in such kind of activities.

### Section Vitality

- The best activity to drive the vitality and sustainability in your Section, besides all the effort to advertise IEEE and to recruit new members, is what the section ExCom is doing to help the preparation of the membership renewal documentation and in the collection and transferring of the membership fees of more than half of our members. These activities, together with all the year-end reporting, are taking about 6 months of the ExCom officers, but this is the only way to retain a considerable part of our members.
- Last year we have succeeded to revitalize several almost dormant chapters by taking the entire initiative in organization elections of their committees - from nomination to the voting procedures (in some chapters these were the first elections in the last ten years). Thus, our section started 2016 with all level officers newly elected or re-elected (according to the rules about the length of service at given position).
- We could not realize our plan to increase the number of the senior members in the section. In the recent years the interest towards such membership elevation is very low even when some colleagues are nominated by the ExCom.

### Miscellaneous / Recommendations / Feedback

- In order to implement the changes to the National Society Agreement process (the requirement for at least 3 joint events), approved by the IEEE BoD, for 2016 we are planning four cooperative activities (technical conferences) between our section and the National Union of the Electronics, Electrical and Communication Engineers. In fact we are having very active collaboration with this Union in the last 16 years and we are going to expand it now.
- In 2016 we shall have for first time five IEEE Approved conferences in our country and the section is doing its best to help the publicizing and the organization of these events.
- We continue supporting different conferences at national and international level organized in Bulgaria by participating in program committees, helping with reviewing, sessions planning, keynote speakers, and using the opportunity to advertise IEEE membership and other activities. In 2015 we have supported also financially 7 conferences.
- Last year we have succeeded, after almost two years of negotiations, to prepare an acceptable Intercompany Agreement for all and now the Bulgaria Section is officially re-registered.