

Bulgaria Section

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Getting Closer to Industry

- Bulgaria Section has agreements with three National Science & Technology Societies and we have a very active collaboration in organizing conferences and meetings. People from Industry are participating as members of the organizing committees and as contributors. Almost all conferences are inviting leading experts from the Industry for plenary talks and usually there are panel discussions and round tables to discuss the achievements and the problems of different industry branches and to plan possible joint projects.
- This year, we have three elected officers (two Chapter Chairs and one Vice-Chair) and one appointed officer (Industry Ambassador) from the Industry and it is expected that this will improve further our relations.
- Our membership from the Industry is quite a constant number and our attempts to increase it are unsuccessful. In fact there are not so many benefits of IEEE products to members from the industry besides the access to IEEE publications. We do not have also any attractive offers to the Industry managers and higher level industrial executives. 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.

Students and Young Professionals

- Our Young Professionals Activity Group is quite new (registered only last year), but it is already well established and having very active organizational life. There is a strong core of YP members, who are well networked, the officers are strongly motivated and they are organizing very successful events. Besides many other activities this year, they are very instrumental in the organization of a two-day Joint Meeting on "Computational Intelligence." The strong start of our YP AG has been noticed and this year it was one of the four runner-up Groups for the IEEE Young Professionals Affinity Group Hall of Fame Award.
- It is getting difficult to recruit new student members as students are not attracted by the IEEE membership benefits available in our country. We have problems also to find volunteers for the counselor positions. Now only one Student Branch is active thanks to its Counselor Prof. Bedzev. He is now a Student Activities Officer and we expect him to reactivate the other branches.
- It was a heavy financial burden for the Section to support two participants in the SYP Congress in Regensburg. Our suggestion is the travel expenses for these events to be covered by the Region.

Section Vitality

- Besides all the effort to advertise IEEE and to recruit new members, Bulgaria Section ExCom is very active in organizing the preparation of the membership renewal documentation and in the collection and transferring of the membership fees of more than half of our members. It is a heavy burden for our ExCom officers, but without that we may lose a considerable part of our members. Our efforts produced good results and it was recognized with a Silver Retention Banner Award for meeting our retention goal for the 2016 membership year.
- 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). Thus, 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). The training of the new officers appeared to be difficult in some chapters because of the interrupted continuity, but these officers are learning fast. It was a good lesson how important is to have regular elections at all levels.

Miscellaneous / Recommendations / Feedback

- Bulgaria Section has a long tradition (since 1999) in maintaining good relations with the local National Science & Technology Societies. The three agreements between IEEE and the National Union of the Electronics, Electrical and Communication Engineers, National Union of Automation and Informatics and the Federation of the Science & Technology Unions in Bulgaria have been regularly resigned. This year we have implemented the changes to the National Society Agreement process (the requirement for at least 3 joint events), approved by the IEEE BoD and we have prepared and signed the required Supplements to each agreement, containing the description of three joint events. We found this very beneficial for all parties, because we had to discuss and plan different types of joint events and it was broadening and deepening our collaboration.
- This year we have five IEEE Approved conferences in our country and the section is doing its best to help the publicizing and the organization of these events.
- Our Section is co-sponsoring or endorsing 5 more conferences, we are stimulating organizers to apply for IEEE Registration and we help them in the preparation of the applications and the Memorandums of Understanding.