

Bulgaria Section

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Getting Closer to Industry

Up to now we could not find a successful approach to improve our relations with the Industry besides trying hard to recruit new IEEE members. 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 have not very attractive offers to the Industry managers and the meetings of the Section officers with higher level industrial executives are not productive enough. And as the fields of interest of different IEEE Societies are corresponding to specific industrial branches, we try 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 were to identify colleagues from industry who would agree to serve as section and chapter officers. Such officers will naturally build and strengthen the connections with the Industry. We have already one appointed officer, two Chapter Chairs and two Vice-Chairs from the Industry.

Attracting and Supporting Future Members

- To have a successful Student branch, it is necessary to have motivated Student Branch Counselor and several motivated and enthusiastic student members. Recently it is getting more and more difficult to find both. There are no volunteers for the counselor positions and we have problems in recruiting new student members as our students are not attracted by the IEEE membership benefits available in our country. Thus we have now only one really active Student Branch thanks to its Counselor Prof. Bedzev. He is now a Student Activities Officer and we expect from him to reactivate the other branches. We are expecting a considerable help from the YP AG in our efforts to increase the student membership and to re-activate some dormant Student Branches. The group is very motivated to organize different activities for students support and for social networking.
- Our Young Professionals Activity Group is quite new, but it is already well established and has a 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.

Section Vitality

- Our continuous efforts for preparation of the membership renewal and membership fees collection and transferring of more than half of our members are the best activity to drive the vitality and sustainability in the Section. These activities, together with all the year-end reporting, are taking several months of the ExCom officers, but this is the only way to retain a considerable part of our members. Our efforts produced good results last year and it was recognized with a Silver Retention Banner Award for meeting our retention goal for the 2016 membership year. We hope we shall have the same results this year.
- We are trying very hard to make our units following the rules about the terms of service and organizing elections according to these rules. The proper turnover of the officers is of crucial importance for the vitality of the organization. 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 - and thus our section met 2016 with all level officers newly elected or re-elected.

IEEE in Africa

We think that Region 8 is making enough to help our African colleagues in their efforts to establish new sections and strengthen them. Unfortunately there are many countries with a very low number of IEEE members and the only way to organize some IEEE units seems to be to start with joint sections or sub-sections, including members from several neighboring countries.

Support from IEEE Office in Vienna, Austria

Before trying to define what services and support we expect out of the new Office in Vienna, we need to know the reasons behind the establishing of this new Office and the reasons to close the similar Office we had 10 or 15 years ago in Brussels.

Miscellaneous / Recommendations / Feedback

- In 2016 we had for first time five IEEE Approved conferences in our country and the Section was doing its the best to help the publicizing and the organization of these events.
- Our Section is co-sponsoring or endorsing 7 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.
- Bulgaria Section has a long tradition 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. Last year we have implemented the changes to the National Society Agreement process and we have prepared and re-signed all Agreements and Supplements. We found that the addition of Supplements was very beneficial for all the parties and we shall renew them every year.
- We are trying to motivate our members to apply for an IEEE Senior membership, but the interest towards such elevation is low even when some colleagues are nominated by the ExCom.