

Croatia Section

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Getting Closer to Industry

- Industry members were interested in IEEE activities that provided opportunities to share achievements, learn about other business success stories, and to learn about top students and their projects.
- Developing industry relations and increasing the number of IEEE industry members is complex, and it requires dedicated resources and support from all IEEE organization levels. Industry Relation activities require a “customized” approach for each Section, since the activities depend on significant local industry branches, existing links between IEEE Section and the industry, and the opportunities that Section can provide to local industry peers.
- Section should encourage establishing a team of IEEE volunteers dedicated to the goal of identifying and implementing projects that benefit IEEE and the local industry. IEEE and the Region should support these efforts by dedicating budgets for Industry Relations projects and providing a platform for sharing ideas and success stories between coordinators.
- There were no significant changes in membership share of industry professionals and their involvement in IEEE activities.
- Croatia Section has appointed Industry Relations officer who is a member of ExCom. Networking and social events have been identified as points of interest for industry members, which will be the focus of further activities in this area in order to increase the membership share of industry professionals in IEEE.
- We will continue improving IEEE visibility through collaboration with local industry associations and develop connections with local start-up ecosystem to attract young companies that can benefit from access to international IEEE network and knowledge.

Attracting and Supporting Future Members

Activities/programs/initiatives that work well to attract and support Future Members in Croatia Section:

- Student branches organize lectures that present “success stories” from local companies. Such lectures give students the opportunity to informally network with industry representatives and to learn about future employment opportunities.
- Similar activities are organized on a regular basis by the Croatia Section Young Professionals (YP) affinity group through the IEEE Elevate program, which they themselves conceived and launched in 2013. Elevate consists of informative events, featuring guest speakers who share their views, experiences and success stories in various IEEE-related areas of interest, aiming to inspire and motivate students and young engineers to advance their careers. Elevate events are organized in an informal environment (such as local cafes), and present a great opportunity for networking.
- The annual Students and Young Professionals (SYP) congresses are great tool for team building, which enables smooth transition from Student to YP status for volunteers. The Croatian Student and Young Professionals congress (CroSYP) is organized in a different city each year, with the support of the Croatia Section, the local student branch, and the local university. CroSYP events encourage networking among student members, and provide a great venue for exchange of best practices and ideas.

Our major success since the last meeting was an event called IEEE TOPWeek (Technical Opportunities Week), organized for the first time in May 2017 by the Industry Applications Society Chapter, Power & Energy Society Chapter, and YP in cooperation with the local university, innovation centre, and alumni organization. The four (half-)day program featured 19 speakers, most of them from local companies, who presented successful projects, achievements and innovations. This event attracted about 50 students who were also introduced to IEEE activities.

To attract more members and strengthen the relationships between current IEEE members, the following events are planned by the end of 2017:

- Croatia Student and Young Professionals Congress (CroSYP) in Zagreb, where we will invite students from University of Split. This will help us revitalize local Student Branch in Split.
- IEEE Day celebration within all student branches in Croatia. Students will represent IEEE to their colleagues and take part in “Become a Member” workshop for non-IEEE members.

Section Vitality

Our success is the result of the continuous work of our Section officers/coordinators as well as the vitality of our chapters, affinity groups and student branches. We take special care of timely annual reporting of officers, meetings and finances to be eligible for the bonus.

The activities / programs / initiatives that work well to drive the vitality and sustainability in our Section include:

- meetings, workshops and conferences;
- cooperation of students and young professionals;
- Pre-University education and STEM programs;
- Section awards;
- Section annual meeting/dinner.

To improve Section vitality and sustainability volunteers train themselves using the IEEE supporting material and programs.

From the Region we expect help/guidelines and workshops for Section volunteers to improve Section operation and vitality.

To foster Section vitality in our Section we will follow our current best practices:

- member retention and recruitment (Croatia Section received “2017 Outstanding Section Membership Retention Performance” Award);
- recruitment and training of new volunteers;
- cooperation among organizational units within the Section;
- organizing meetings and workshops;

- inviting Distinguished Lecturers;
- celebrating the IEEE Day;
- organizing IEEE conferences;
- sponsoring local conferences;
- annual Croatia Section awards to recognize outstanding members and achievements;
- organizing Pre-University education and STEM programs;
- involving members from industry;
- organizing lectures/talks with well-known speakers from industry;
- launching a local IEEE Senior Member initiative - personal invitations to outstanding members to be nominated by Section.

IEEE in Africa

We currently have no specific recommendations for fostering IEEE in Africa.

Support from IEEE Office in Vienna, Austria

- We propose that the new office put some effort into devising a better member benefits strategy, which would provide members in Europe (and elsewhere) with a wider range of member benefits - specifically those currently available only to members in Regions 1 through 6 (e.g., discounts).
- We propose that the new office in Vienna serve as a EU-based distribution point for IEEE membership development and promotional material (such as MD Meeting and Event Kit), as well as IEEE products (such as stationery, banners, plaques, pins and certificates), which are currently shipped all the way from the USA. Shipping these products to Europe by sea, and customizing them locally, would significantly reduce the delivery time and cost for Sections based in Europe (and, possibly, other geographically close countries). Further on, for the EU-countries, distribution from Vienna would also obviate the additional delay (and, sometimes, hassle) related to standard customs clearance procedures required for international shipments from non-EU countries.
- It could be considered in near future that Marketing & Sales takes a larger role in Europe, rather than forwarding them to for-profit companies (such as EBSCO).

Miscellaneous / Recommendations / Feedback

New initiatives:

- IEEE SIGHT initiative has been launched in Croatia during 2016. Its project proposal "Missing Children Emergency Response System" has received funding under IEEE SIGHT programme.

Special achievements:

- Croatia Section received the 2017 Outstanding Section Membership Retention Performance Award.
- Davor Bonefacic, who served as the Microwave Theory and Techniques Society (MTT17) Chapter Chair from 2011 to 2015, received an IEEE appreciation certificate for "Notable Services and Contributions towards the advancement of IEEE and Engineering Professions"
- Igor Kuzle, who served as a Power and Energy Society (PE31) Chapter Chair from 2012 to 2015, received an IEEE appreciation certificate for "Notable Services and Contributions towards the advancement of IEEE and Engineering Professions"

Anniversaries:

- In 2017, Croatia Section marks the 25th anniversary since the 1992 petition by which it was formed under its present name (as one of the successors of the former IEEE Yugoslav Section, est. 1971).