

Croatia Section

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What activities/programs/initiatives work well in your Section to foster Industry Relations? What changes would be required by IEEE/the Region/your Section to improve Industry Relations? What were major successes since the last meeting in terms of Industry Relations? How are you going to continue to foster Industry Relations?

- Our Section arranged the 2nd Technical Opportunities Week (TOPweek) event in Zagreb on June 4-7, 2018. Following the first edition in 2017, this event has been jointly organized by Industry Applications Society and Power and Energy Society chapters, and very actively supported by Young Professionals Affinity Group and the University of Zagreb student branch. This year's TOPweek program featured 21 speakers from local companies who presented their engineering achievements, such as products, projects, and technology innovations and solutions. The four (half-)day program featured 18 presentations, and a networking social event. It attracted a total of 80 participants, which is a significant increase from the year before and is expected to further facilitate the industry involvement in the Section.
- Croatia Section has appointed a Section Industry Ambassador (SIA) to act as a link towards Action for Industry in 2018 - IEEE Europe South Area. A Section's Industry Ambassador team was established, which also includes young professionals.
- As reported previously, the main contributing factors to the relatively low number/percentage of IEEE members from industry in our Section include high cost of membership relative to the benefits, as well as competition from local and long-established professional organizations which are deeply rooted in the industry communities.
- We will continue improving IEEE visibility through collaboration with local industry associations and develop connections with local start-up ecosystem to attract young companies in technological sector that can benefit from access to international IEEE network and knowledge. We believe that the new industry players, who are more globally oriented business-wise, can be attracted to IEEE with more success than the "traditional" industry players who already have established long-time relations with other professional organizations.
- IEEE and the Region 8 should support efforts of local SIA teams by dedicating budget for Industry Relations projects and providing a platform for sharing ideas and success stories between SIA team coordinators.
- Industry involvement in our Section is further planned to increase by potential hosting of industry representatives at the Section's Annual Gala Dinner.

What activities/programs/initiatives work well in your Section to Attract and Support Future Members, e.g., Students and Young Professionals? What changes would be required by IEEE/the Region/your Section to better Attract and Support Future Members? What were major successes since the last meeting in terms of Attracting and Supporting Future Members? How are you going to continue to support Students and Young Professionals?

- Student branches organize lectures that present "success stories" from local companies. Such lectures give both students and young professionals the opportunity to informally network with industry representatives and learn about future employment opportunities. Similar activities are organized on a regular basis by the Croatia Section Young Professionals affinity group through the IEEE Elevate program, which was designed and launched back in 2013 and is active ever since. IEEE Elevate consists of informative events, featuring guest speakers who share their views, experiences and success stories in various IEEE-related areas of interest, with focus on novel and upcoming technologies, 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), often in cooperation with a local student branch, and they present a great opportunity for the networking.
- The annual Students and Young Professionals (SYP) congresses are known to successfully motivate student volunteers and enable smooth transition from Student to YP status through networking and team work. On the local level, the Croatian Student and Young Professionals Congress (CroSYP) is organized annually, by a different students branch in a different city, with the support of the Croatia Section and the local university. CroSYP events encourage networking among student members, and provide a great venue for the exchange of best practices and ideas, as well as meeting industry representatives.
- Membership promotion events, with half-price membership as an incentive, are organized in March by the student branches throughout Croatia. In the Universities of Zagreb, Osijek and Rijeka, the student branches promoted IEEE and their local activities to their fellow students.
- The University of Rijeka Student Branch organized the Computer Society Congress (CSC) in Rijeka on July 14-15, 2018, with the support from both the IEEE Croatia Section Computer Society Chapter and the Young Professionals AG. The Congress included sections on work experience in start-up companies, session on ethical issues related to artificial intelligence, and a microbit workshop. It also provided opportunity for networking between students, Young Professionals and industry representatives in the field of computer science.
- Young Professionals Affinity Group organized several events: IEEE Elevate event featuring Blockchain Technology in May 2018; IEEE TopWeek, mentioned above (with support from the YP Seed program); IEEE STEP event, as a part of the previously mentioned CSC in Rijeka (with support from the YP STEP program); and YP Croatia Meet-Up event (with the support of YP Meet-Up program), as a part of the 26th Mediterranean Conference on Control and Automation (MED 2018), which took place in Zadar, Croatia, on June 19-22, 2018. The Meet-Up was arranged as a social networking event in the evening of the second day of the conference, and it attracted participants from 13 countries.
- Regarding the potential changes by IEEE and the Region 8 to better Attract and Support Future Members, there is a lack of knowledge for current members on how IEEE operates on regional and higher levels. Communication between regional committees and section committee could be better. Information that comes from various committees is not displayed in an appropriate way. It is hard to find the relevant information on committee website, which is why additional effort is required

to obtain information about events/actions/promotions/funding that are active within IEEE. It seems that committees too often rely on social media and other platforms rather than their website, which is, in our opinion, not suitable for such purposes. The only events that can connect students and Young Professionals with Region are regional, and sometimes Cross-sectional, SYPs.

- In the next period we are planning to organize following events:
 - IEEE membership promotion activities, as the new academic year starts. This includes IEEE Day events and promotions organized by all three student branches and YP AG;
 - The Croatia Student and Young Professional (CroSYP) Congress will be organized in October by the student branch of the University of J. J. Strossmayer in the city of Osijek.

What activities/programs/initiatives work well to drive the vitality and sustainability in your Section? What changes would be required by IEEE/the Region/your Section to improve Section vitality and sustainability? What were major successes since the last meeting in terms of Section Vitality? How are you going to continue to foster Section Vitality?

Our success is the result of the continuous work of our Section officers and 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:

- taking care of members ? the number of members has increased (700 in August 2018, compared to 647 in August 2017);
- member retention and recruitment ? Croatia Section has achieved very good results in both retention (98.6% goal achieved) and recruitment (147.6% goal achieved), for which we received 2018 Outstanding Section Membership Recruitment Performance Award);
- recruitment and training of new volunteers;
- cooperation of Section units;
- organizing meetings and workshops;
- inviting Distinguished Lecturers;
- celebrating the IEEE Day;
- organizing IEEE conferences;
- sponsoring local conferences;
- Section awards;
- organizing Pre-University education and STEM programs;
- involving members from industry;
- organizing lectures/talks with renowned people from industry;
- launching local IEEE Senior Member initiatives - personal invitations to outstanding members to be nominated by Section.

What are your recommendations to IEEE Region 8 and the Africa Area Chair Gloria Chuckwudebe to foster IEEE in Africa? How does your Section support IEEE Activities in Africa?

- With the start of a new academic year in October, we will consider involvement of ERASMUS exchange students from Africa in our student branch activities and volunteering, and encourage our IEEE members to mentor the students in technical and organizational manners to bring back the experience and implement the knowledge in their local community. The process of student branch activities idea and knowledge transfer seems to have already begun at the SYP congress in Porto.
- We see the most significant contribution of IEEE in Africa by means of technical education of the students and young professionals, and encouraging the local volunteers to transfer the knowledge within their communities.

What services and which kind of support would you expect for Region 8 and/or your section out of the new IEEE office in Vienna, Austria? How has the existence of this office influenced your section since its inauguration last year?

- The Croatia Section currently has no need for staff support from the new IEEE office in Vienna. We expect administrative and financial support to be provided for the Region 8.
- The existence of this office has not influenced our Section since its inauguration.

Outstanding new initiatives, Special Achievements, Anniversaries.

Special achievements include:

- Croatia Section received the 2018 Outstanding Section Membership Recruitment Performance Award,
- Power and Energy Society Croatia Chapter received the 2017 IEEE Region 8 Chapter of the Year Award,
- Ana Katalinic Mucalo received the 2018 IEEE Region 8 Clementina Saduwa Award (Women in Engineering),
- Predrag Pale received the 2018 IEEE Education Society Outstanding Chapter Leadership Award,

- The IEEE Mobile Applications Development Contest (IEEEmadC), a proposal to further develop an annual global contest for students to develop mobile applications, has been awarded funding by IEEE Board of Directors per recommendation of the New Initiatives Committee (NIC).

Anniversaries:

- In 2017, the Croatia Section celebrated 46 years of existence and 25th anniversary of operation under its present name.