

Republic of Macedonia 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 has a continuous problem with lower number of members coming from the industry. This number is around 10% of the total members, leaving the other 90% with academia background. The main reason for this lays with our humble industry capacity, as well as because of the ever increasing brain-drain that is happening in Macedonia. In order to foster the industry relations, we are still looking for a suitable industry relation ambassador who has an industry involvement at the moment and who will hopefully find a practical means to get the Section closer to our industry. The very first step will be to determine the actual needs of the colleagues from the industry, and to identify their benefits in joining and actively participating the IEEE society. Then, our plan is to organize meetings with the industry managers and higher level executives to present the IEEE benefits and to recruit more members and volunteers among them. Our extended plan includes signing MoU agreements with companies for internship programs, which will result in IEEE-aware young people within the industry.

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?

The work of our new MD officer started to give results. According to the December 2018 MD report, our Section takes the second place in recruitment and we have reached 133.3% of our goal. Our MD officer gives a special attention to the student membership recruitment and retention by informing targeted students about the IEEE and by providing instructions and practical help for the students so they can easily pay the membership fee in our local currency. The Young Professionals are very active in our Section, organizing several activities per year. The Section supports all these events. Our Facebook page is continuously updated with the forthcoming events and all interested colleagues are invited to join regardless they are member or not yet. Over 1000 people follow our posts about Section's activities. Finally, we have also appointed a Life Member Coordinator and an Education Activities officer who will help in our goals to attract and support our future members. We have already asked and received a membership development kit from the IEEE central.

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?

This is the second year of our section's officers, so the things are going easily now. Our past officers are helping as well, providing valuable experience in many aspects related to the Section Vitality. We are continuing with regular ExCom meetings where all the activities are planned. Section Facebook page is regularly updated with information about our efforts and activities. In order to achieve an increase in the visibility of our Section among the general public and in particular to foster the importance of our IEEE members' achievements, we have proposed an IEEE milestone named as "First control of a robot using brain signals", an event that has happened in 1988 at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Skopje (http://ieemilestones.ethw.org/Milestones_Status_Report). We have also prepared suitable gifts for our members as a part of our Member Loyalty Program recognition, including IEEE jacket pin for every member.

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

Maybe the IEEE R8 could organize and sponsor selected members and volunteers from Africa to visit and participate some of the IEEE events organized in Europe (e.g. flagship R8 conferences). Also bringing some R8 events to Africa could foster IEEE in Africa, as more members from there can participate the events without significant travel expenses.

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?

So far we didn't have any contact with the Vienna office. We expect that they can serve as a more accessible liaison to support us in the communication with the appropriate IEEE staff members and in getting more timely support when needed. For example, many of our valuable volunteers upgraded to Senior member level, are waiting for their plaques for years. Maybe Vienna office can help with this kind of geographically related problems.

Outstanding new initiatives, Special Achievements, Anniversaries.

Our COMSOC chapter has been selected winner of 2018 Communications Society Chapter Achievement Awards. Winning COMSOC chapters are selected by Regional Directors and the Membership Services Director and have received a plaque and honorarium (\$1,000), which were presented at the IEEE GLOBECOM conference in Abu Dhabi in December 2018. On the other hand, our Section once again supports the biggest student event in the area of robotics called RoboMac which will take place in March 18-21, 2019 and will be organized by our student branch. We have successfully obtained a sponsorship (\$3,000) from the US Embassy for this international competition for robotics and artificial intelligence. The vision of this event is to popularize robotics among students and young people in the region.