

## Croatia Section

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### Section Vitality

The Section has newly elected ExCom starting with 2021 where the former Vice-Chair and Secretary are now new Chair and Vice-Chair. The Treasurer is re-elected and Secretary is former ExCom member so the strong continuation is maintained. All the chapters and affinity groups held their elections where required and all the officers are reported in vTools. The Section holds 8 ExCom general assembly meetings per year (and many more topic-focused), which are currently performed online. The activities carried out to retain and recruit members have been linked to various events (co)organized by our technical chapters, affinity groups, and student branches. The Future50 student action was carried out for both previously renewed and non-renewed memberships. At this time, the Section has negligible change in membership compared to the same period last year. In the next six months, we plan to continue activities related to the half-year recruitment. We have started another initiative on potential Senior Member and Fellow elevations by personal invitations to outstanding members to be nominated by the Section.

### Students

The Section has 3 active student branches (SBs), in cities of Zagreb, Osijek and Rijeka.

Student activities since last report

- Member recruitment activities in all SBs, with Future50 emphasized among students and Young Professionals
- IEEEExtreme competition in Rijeka and Osijek
- Co-organized 12<sup>th</sup> edition of "Breaking the Surface", an annual international interdisciplinary field workshop of maritime robotics and applications as a hybrid event (more info: <http://ieeoesunizg.fer.hr/>).
- Startup Bootcamp as a two-day event to promote faculty spin-off strategies among young researchers, as part of Entrepreneurship Week of IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative, together with Young Professionals
- Training and knowledge-transfer session for new SB and SB chapter chairs, with annual activity and financial plans for each SB, together with Young Professionals

Plan for the upcoming period

- Support all national annual IEEE Students and Young Professionals events: CroSYP Congress, Zagreb Energy Conference and Computer Society Congress in Rijeka
- Further develop entrepreneurship focus with enhanced Startup Bootcamp edition as a training program
- Support section activities: 50th anniversary, YP events, conferences, industry workshops, Gala dinner and other

### Affinity Groups

The Section has 3 affinity groups and a SIGHT group. Their status is listed separately.

### Young Professionals

Activities since last report:

- Startup Bootcamp as a two-day event to promote faculty spin-off strategies among young researchers, as part of Entrepreneurship Week of IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative, as a YP Local Activity Funding event
- Co-organized student events: training of new SB and SB chapter chairs, with annual activity and financial plans, Future50 action, lectures and other online activities

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Further develop Startup Bootcamp: organize and prepare two additional workshops, mentorship sessions and participation in Entrepreneurship Week 2021 with experts lectures and pitch competition
- Participate in YP programs: STEP, Meet Up and Local Activity
- Support student and section events: CroSYP Congress, Zagreb Energy Conference and Computer Society Congress in Rijeka, Section's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, industry workshops and other
- Promote IEEE among students and facilitate transition to Young Professionals. Young professionals, as experienced members of IEEE, will observe the events mentioned above and help the student branches to achieve a better reach with their activities. The main focus is to create a positive environment for all young members and to attract new members.

### Women in Engineering

The “ŽensCast” podcast of the WiE AG has been launched. The main goal of the podcast is to present successful women in the academia and IT sector as role models to high school and university students through interesting interviews. Furthermore, we would like to sensitize students of technical and natural sciences to social topics related to the position of women in society, existing stereotypes and ingrained prejudices.

### Life Members

Our Life Members AG is co-organizing annual symposium “History and Philosophy of Technique” where they held three lectures. The 2021 edition is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary where the Life Members plan to hold 3-5 papers and lectures on the topics of: 1. From Telegraph to Internet in Croatia, 2. Technical Education in High Schools, Universities of Applied Sciences and Faculties, 3. Present and Future of Power System, 4. Inventions and Their Background.

### SIGHT

A SIGHT panel is held to form the plans for 2021, which include preparation of a SIGHT project with the general title "Energy poverty aid in Croatia". This project is inspired with recent earthquakes in Zagreb and Petrinja and aims at improving the energy usage including for example several LED lights, water perlators (faucet aerator), sealing tapes, reflective foils, electrical extension cable(cord with a switch) etc. Furthermore, the aimed community of the project would be in the poorest region of Croatia, Sisačko-moslavačka County, near Sisak and Petrinja and surrounding villages, where there are a number of houses currently without the electricity due to devastating earthquake at the end of 2020.

### Chapters

The Section has 22 chapters and 9 student branch chapters. The success of the section as a whole depends on the continuous work of our Section officers/coordinators, as well as the vitality of our chapters, affinity groups, and student branches. We ensure timely annual reporting of officers, meetings and finances to be eligible for the bonus. We also keep track that all the elections are conducted on time and within the adequate timeframe to allow the smooth transition between the past and upcoming chairs. The chapter chair meeting was held in Feb 2021. Industry Application Society Chapter of Croatia Section was awarded R8 Chapter of the Year Award in the small chapter category.

There are 8 MOUs signed for conferences in 2021 and few more are additionally supported by the Section.

The activities planned in the next 6 months include:

- To recognize outstanding members and volunteers with section-level awards;
- To share the best practices regarding virtual events and thus increase the number of virtual events in the Section;
- To technically cosponsor meetings, workshops and conferences in the Section and assist them in moving the events to hybrid and virtual format;

### Industry

In co-operation with the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the Section’s Industry Ambassador organized and recorded nine online “business skills workshops” and one online lecture for our members and students since last R8 meeting.

The recordings are available at the Croatia Section’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ieeehr>.

In the upcoming months, we intend to continue this practice. We plan to invite notable industry players to present their business experiences, mostly but not exclusively in the technology sector, and to make themselves available for our members and student members for future possible networking and co-operation. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the forms of collaboration other than online activities are hard to plan now.

### Activities since the last report

All the events are currently organized in online form with exception on several student activities. The ExCom carried out its regular meetings and tried to preserve steady number of members and a vibrant community. Unfortunately we had to cancel our annual Gala dinner, which has been for years the most successful (networking) event in Croatia. Despite the cancelation, we awarded our annual award to the most distinguished individuals in our Section. We plan to organize a small live event in order to hand out the plaques to the recipients as soon as the situation permits.

More details on the held activities are reported under individual categories above.

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### Planned activities

Since it is expected that most events in 2021 will also be virtual, it is our plan to use this as an opportunity to launch several major projects with the focus on strengthening the position, the role and the visibility of IEEE Croatia Section in Croatian society. To that purpose, we plan to focus our activities to the following:

- At least one technical conference with IEEE as a liaison between industry, academia and other stakeholders. The chosen topic will be of a broader interest. At this point, we plan to organize a panel on artificial intelligence within TEMSCON 2021 (TEM society flagship conference), which will be held in May as a hybrid event taking place in Croatia, and a stand-alone technical event on the future of education in October 2021.
- At least one soft-skill workshop exclusively for IEEE members (May or June)
- Promote and increase the usage of IEEE tools and programs in Croatia Section (e.g. PEA Speakers program, Collaboratec etc)
- Stimulate larger number of professional and informal networking events among members

Furthermore, steps are already taken to organize two significant events:

- Celebration event of 50 years of IEEE Croatia Section
- Croatia Section Annual Award Ceremony

### How Region 8 can be of help to your Section, members, and activities

The Region could help us with more consistent information about upcoming activities in our Region that our members could participate in with or without financial support from IEEE.

Students would largely benefit the possibility of local (sections) decisions on IEEE travel grants and reimbursements instead of general IEEE travel ban.

### Any other issues of interest