

Croatia Section

Ana Katalinić Mucalo

Section Vitality

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 number of IEEE members of the IEEE Croatian Section is steady over the past couple of months, with an increase of 30 members since March 2021 (621 to 652, this is 5% increase). The Future50 student action is being carried out for both previously renewed and non-renewed memberships. At this time, the Section is expected to have at least 10% increase in membership by 10% by the end of year, with emphasis on student and graduate student categories. The period is characterized with planning and re-planning of 50th anniversary of the Section, resulting in documenting of materials and testimonies. Another initiative is started 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. With new academic year started finally again in in-person form as of October 2021, we have increase of student activities.

Student activities since last report:

- Organized promotional activities in student branches to further increase student membership, achieved an increase in student memberships and maintained membership in all branches, promoted Future50 membership program among students and Young Professionals.
- Organized the IEEEExtreme competition in the student branch in Osijek with 16 teams participating.
- Student branch Rijeka organized a three-day programming seminar for freshmen. Rijeka also organized a one-week GameDev workshop.
- Student branches Zagreb and Rijeka organized a machine learning workshop in cooperation with SB Maribor and nVidia.

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Organize the IEEE Computer Society Congress in Rijeka and CroSYP (Croatian Students and Young Professional) congress in Osijek
- Continue to support all annual national IEEE Students and Young Professionals events, workshops and online activities; continue to enhance the virtual presence of our student branches and YP affinity group
- Organize lectures, workshops and programming competitions that are part of IEEE, as well as support and/or participate in non-IEEE competitions; Continue with IEEE promotional activities to promote IEEE among students and faculty members

Affinity Groups

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

Young Professionals

Activities since the previous report:

- Organized multiple online meetings with student and Young Professionals members on topics of organizing student branches, their activities and branch vitality based on the past experience
- Promoted IEEE membership values and local activities on MIPRO 2021 conference
- Attended and contributed to Croatia Section meetings and activities, promoted Region 8 Young Professionals activities to members

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Organize elections for new Young Professionals leadership
- Co-organize CroSYP Congress in December 2021
- Support and attend IEEE Croatia Section 50th anniversary
- Further promote Connecting Experts program, apply a candidate by the end of 2021
- Organize meetings with new and old leadership as a knowledge transfer, help new student and Young Professionals chairs with formal obligations, provide support in first few months
- Start a new project which will be used to connect Young Professionals members and industry

Women in Engineering

In July 2021, our WiE launched an episode of the “ŽensCast” podcast in which they introduced former Croatian student and current PhD candidate at EPFL Switzerland, Una Pale.

They co-organized workshop "Women in Science" on May 28, 2021, which promoted horizontal EU principles with an emphasis on gender equality. WiE presented their activities and international cooperation within the H2020 framework.

In August 2021, the mission, activities and plans for the next period were presented on the Women and the Media portal.

By R8 Spring meeting 2022, WiE plans to participate in the faculty Open Days to attract future girls and students, and to cooperate in the intervention of the permanent exhibition of the Nikola Tesla Technical Museum, which relates to gender equality.

Life Members

Our Life Members AG is co-organizing annual symposium “History and Philosophy of Technique” where our senior academics and industry experts report their direct or indirect personal reflections in some of the greatest national minds to preserve the technical heritage. The 2021 edition is the 10th anniversary, which will be held during November 23-25, 2021. 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

Our 2021 SIGHT plan of project "Energy poverty aid in Croatia", inspired with 2020 earthquakes in Zagreb and Petrinja, and aiming 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., was postponed due to unyielding epidemics since it greatly relies on in-person activities. Meanwhile, our SIGHT team is following the IEEE trends and has registered for IEEE HAC Global Summit.

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. This is the current focus of chapter coordination as the beginning of 2022 accompanies elections for most of the chapters.

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 cooperation with the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the Section’s Industry Ambassador organized and recorded seven online “business skills workshops” and one online lecture for our members and students since the 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, primarily but not exclusively in the technology sector, and make themselves available for our members and student members for future possible networking and cooperation. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the forms of collaboration other than online activities are hard to plan now, although some possibilities have been opened lately.

Activities since the last report

The events are currently organized mostly in hybrid form and many student activities are planned as in-person events. The ExCom carried out its regular meetings and tried to preserve steady number of members and a vibrant community. Unfortunately, our annual Gala dinner, which has been for years the most successful (networking) event in Croatia is again skipped for this year. Instead, we focus to organize a small live event to hand out the plaques to the recipients of our Section awards during November 2021.

The Section contributed to TEMSCON 2021 (TEM society flagship conference) with an AI-thematic panel to technically support technology management community.

The Section has 81 reported events at the point of submitted report, compared to 48 during the same period last year. Noticeable increase of activities is accompanied by more uniform organization throughout the year.

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

Planned activities

We will continue with well-recognized activities (workshops, lectures etc.). However, our plan is also to push some new activities and/or project which will contribute to the visibility and the recognition of IEEE Croatia Section in Croatian society. To that purpose, we plan also the following activities:

- Take more active role in technical conferences when possible, in order to establish IEEE as a liaison between industry, academia and other stakeholders
- Include more members in Sections' activities, in order to strengthen the networking within the Section. For example, we sent an open call to all members to find volunteers who would contribute to the "50th anniversary project" and several members replied;
- Promote and increase the usage of IEEE tools and programs in Croatia Section, especially Connecting Experts program
- Prepare and offer our members exclusive content when possible (for example, soft-skill workshop)
- Stimulate larger number of professional and informal networking events among members
- Strengthen the team within student and YP volunteers (support of CroSYP event and other activities, provide training when/if necessary etc).

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

- Celebration of 50 years of IEEE Croatia Section (end of 2021)
- Croatia Section Annual Award Ceremony (November 2021, instead of the annual Gala dinner)

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

Recent initiatives coming from Region are re-igniting volunteering spirit and are expected to have local impact by the end of the year.

Any other issues of interest