

Serbia and Montenegro Section**Reporting Officer Bane Popadic****Section Vitality**

Please provide information about the date of last Section elections, date of next elections, and do you have the practice of Vice-Chair becoming the next Section Chair. Section ExCom meetings (list them and provide brief summary if appropriate). List the activities carried out to retain and recruit members and the results obtained.

With the uncertainty of the situation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic most of the Section activities migrated to online. Section officers were following all local measures for fighting the pandemic, which usually meant the limited travel and limitation on group activities indoor. Most of the section supported activities were, therefore shifted to online, while some had hybrid nature. The section is preparing a special event for the 50th anniversary, which will be held at TELFOR 2021 in Belgrade. Furthermore, section continued to support all of the annual section events with several successful events despite pandemic. The annual IEEEESTEC conference held in Nis by student branch Nis is in preparation, while the Ee2021 conference is about to start with significant number of foreign papers. When situation allowed for it, several chapters within the section held their activities, and the section extended support to events such as Trend, Etran, Infoteh and similar. The section is currently preparing a group membership renewal process in order to try and retain a majority of the membership.

Students

List of Student Branches (SB) in your Section, the newly formed or dissolved SBs, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). List the student meetings held and Section activities addressed to Students and Young Professionals.

Since the last report section SBs have retained their activities as usual. The membership base of 3 active SBs has been mostly retained, while some progress has been made in activating the SB in Podgorica. SB Nis is actively preparing its annual event, IEEEESTEC conference. The promotional activities aimed at increasing the membership base are mostly in progress, while several technical events are expected in the following period. The SB members have been involved in several local events, with the most prominent being the involvement of SB Novi Sad members during EV days conference in Novi Sad. SB Novi Sad organized an IEEE challenge during the event. Additionally, members of the SB Nis have more than activities reported so far.

Affinity Groups

List of Affinity Groups (YP, LM, WiE, SIGHT, etc.), list of SB AGs, newly formed or dissolved AGs/SB AGs, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). List the activities intended to support affinity groups.

Within the section there are 2 active affinity groups WIE and YP that participated in different section activities. The activities continued on forming LM AG, while the SIGHT initiative is still in notion. The members AGs participated with different events within the section. The WIE affinity group is set to take special place for upcoming IEEEESTESC 2021 conference, while members of YP affinity group also participated during EV days conference in Novi Sad. The section is continuously supporting SB, YP and WiE activities both technically and financially, but special activities need to be devised in order for YP membership to be retained and transferred over to the industry establishing the easier link for YPs between academia and the industry.

Chapters

List of Chapters and SB Chapters in your Section, the newly formed or dissolved Chapters, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). Indicate how many have reported on time and received rebate. Highlight some of the activities.

There are 12 active chapters within the Section, 2 AGs and 3 active SBs (1 inactive), and out of all of those only 2 chapters (and inactive SB) did not receive the intended rebate for 2021. For those 2 chapters, the main issue was that they did not report their activities (even when enough activities were actually held) on the vTools portal in time. This has been thoroughly discussed during the ExCom meetings and we have taken some steps in order to make sure that activities within chapters are reported regularly in order to foster the Section activity and recognition, but also avoid similar drawbacks in the future. Most notable activities within the Section are related to the support of different conferences (most of which were held or will be online or in hybrid context) such as PoweElectronics 2021, ETRAN, IEEEESTEC, TREND, INFOTEH, ZINC. Several of our chapters received the activity awards from their respective global chapter representatives, for different DL activities, support in conference organization (SymOrg, ETCS, BC, ICC LA, etc.) and others. The ED/SSC chapter has held new officer elections within 2021 and the new officers were elected (and reported). The activities on the formation of the IEEE Intelligent Transportation System Society have continued with the process currently pending the application (petition) process.

Industry

List the activities carried out to foster relations with Industry and the results obtained.

Similarly to the previous period, it is hard to foster industry relationship due to the ongoing pandemic, especially with the key events going virtual. The section is continuously being recognized as a reliable partner to the industry with several of the events strongly supported by the industry. Some events foster industry related session, in order to bring the academia closer to the industry. One such event is expected during the bi-annual Power Electronics conference in Novi Sad (going virtual), where a special session is devoted to industrial partners. Members from the IEEE S&M Section had the opportunity to engage the industry representative in the area of electrical vehicles during external events where they took participation, such as the EV days event. Future activities, in the current situation, will aim at including more industry representatives to virtual and actual events.

Activities since the last report

Highlight some of the activities in your Section, with special attention to the things that work well, and things that don't, so that your acquired know-how can be used by other Sections.

Current period of activities has been severely impacted by the ongoing pandemic and the limited availability of institutional capacities for fostering activities. The section members adapted holding most of their events online, with already mentioned conference events, chapter events, WiE, YP and SB events. One thing that worked well for the section every year, and even in these relatively problematic times has been the group membership renewal process, where academia centers have played a significant role in retaining the membership base. Equally as important, going further, will be the more active participation of section officers and ExCom in regard to activities reporting, where we noticed that vTools portal is not always used to its fullest potential. We plan to monitor more closely chapter reporting and often remind the chapters that they should submit activities reports in order to receive the rebate.

Planned activities

Highlight some of the future activities and initiatives in your Section.

Section is planning to continue the support of all of the traditional Section events and conferences that are being organized. For the 2021, several conferences have already been held (EDS MQ, Trend, Etran, etc.), while PE2021, IEEEESTEC, TELFOR are pending. The Section will sponsor these events technically, and for some of the events the Section has prepared financial support. Furthermore, one of the key activities will be the formation of the new IEEE Intelligent Transportation System Society within the Section. As a separate note, in order to retain the membership base, the academia centers will soon start the activities on group membership renewal, similar to every year during this period. By the end of the year, the section officers will monitor more closely chapter reporting and often remind the chapters that they should submit activities reports in order to receive the rebate. One major activity will be the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the section which is planned during one of the most recognizable events supported by the section - TELFOR.

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

List any challenges your Section is facing and what support is required from the Region 8. Please, also, give us your suggestions for agenda items that you want to be discussed during the R8 Committee meeting.

The main challenge going forward is to maintain the operation of the Section during the pandemic conditions. The most impactful change was in regard to travel, since the most notable activities within the section are related to different events hosting (local and international). In that regard, the most important challenge in the future could be to provide an adequate platform for knowledge and experience transfer, where people from academia and the industry could not only participate, but also establish a valuable network. Since "networking" is particularly hard in the time of the pandemic, developing a novel service that would offer a suitable alternative is not an easy task.

Any other issues of interest