

Croatia Section

Ana Katalinić Mucalo

Section Vitality

The Section holds 8 ExCom general assembly meetings per year (and many more topic-focused), which are once again held as in-person events. 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 Croatia Section was increasing steadily from October 2021 to January 2022 (increase of around 5%), followed by a decrease in February which was expected due to annual membership expiration (down by 15%). All members have been individually reminded and encouraged to renew their membership status so we expect a steady increase in membership over the upcoming 6 months. The numbers are in general up compared to 2021 (e.g. 802 in January 2022 compared to 734 in January 2021) and are the highest since 2014. The period is characterized with planning and re-planning of 50th anniversary of the Section, resulting in documenting of materials and testimonies but without a dedicated event itself, which is postponed to be held in 2022.

Students

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

Student activities since last report:

- IEEE Computer Society Congress in Rijeka and CroSYP (Croatian Student and Young Professional) Congress in Osijek
- Student branch Rijeka organized several industry lectures, a game development workshop and took part in the hashcode competition
- Student branch Zagreb organized online lecture about starting and progressing in an IT career. The branch also helped connect students with potential mentors in IT.
- Other regular events such as IEEEExtreme in Osijek (16 teams), new members recruitment initiatives etc.
- Centrally coordinated FUTURE50 IEEE initiative.

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Organize promotional activities in student branches to further increase student membership.
- 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 elections for new Young Professionals leadership
- Co-organized CroSYP Congress in December 2021
- Organized online meetings with students and Young Professionals members on topics such as the organization of student branches, their activities and branch vitality based on the experience
- Attended and contributed to Croatia Section meetings and activities, promoted Region 8 Young Professionals activities to members
- Promoted Connecting Experts program

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Organize meetings with new and old leaders as knowledge transfer, support new students and Young Professionals chairs in formal engagements
- Start a new project to connect Young Professionals members and industry

- Continue to attend and contribute to Croatia Section meetings and activities
- Support future programs, such as the Entrepreneurship program, if it would be organized in the future
- Co-organize CroSYP Congress in September 2022

Women in Engineering

WiE Croatia cooperated in the intervention of the permanent exhibition of the Nikola Tesla Technical Museum, which relates to gender equality. Furthermore, WiE participated in the Open Days of Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing of University of Zagreb (FER) with new episode of podcast ŽensCast focusing on Kaja Pavlinić, former student at FER who is working as a product manager. Finally, International Day of Women and Girls in Science was celebrated by launching the interview with professor emerita Branka Zovko Cihlar about her extraordinary career. In April 2022, we plan to publish monography “Women in Innovation” about first women scientists in the field of electrical engineering at FER. Moreover, in September 2022 we plan to launch new episode of ŽensCast with intention to speak about gender equality.

Life Members

Our Life Members AG Chair Zvonko Benčić unfortunately passed away and the period was characterized by new elections and transition for new leadership, which is now successfully continuing the work. The AG, together with Section and colleagues of Zvonko Benčić, has put together an obituary for international publishing, including also the life successes of Zvonko Benčić.

SIGHT

The period was once again heavily influenced by COVID-19 wave, and later on reshaped with the new imminent crisis in Europe. The whole Section is devoted in putting together possibilities to help refugees with focus on general support, study and job opportunities, working together with local faculties, associations and industry. 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. The period was characterized with most of the chapters and AGs conducting elections, and all are in good standing, having also the minimum of 2 organized events in 2022. In total, there are 128 reported events in 2021.

There are 7 MOUs signed for conferences in 2022 and few more are additionally supported by the Section.

Industry

In cooperation with the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the Section’s Industry Ambassador organized and recorded additional seven “business skills workshops” for our members and students since the last R8 meeting. Due to a more favorable situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the events were held in-person and were not recorded. However, the recordings of the previous online events are still 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. Some of the events that include foreign guests will be held online and recorded. We plan to develop the concept by having several top-level key industry players and a wider business community. The events are expected to outgrow the host institutions. Due to the still partially unpredictable Covid situation, further 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 last two year. Instead, a small live event entitled “Ceremonial Section Meeting” including 30+ participants is organized to hand out the plaques to the recipients of our Section awards for 2020 and 2021.

The Section has total 128 reported events in 2021, compared to 90 during the same period last year. An 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
- 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:

- Croatia Section Annual Award Ceremony (March 2022, instead of the annual Gala dinner)
- Celebration of 50 years of IEEE Croatia Section (end of 2022)

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

Recent initiatives coming from Region 8 have re-igniting volunteering spirit in the 2nd half of 2021, and, after another drop in volunteering due to COVID wave, are expected to have local impact again in 2022. The SYP2022 is expected to have a positive impact on student memberships.

Any other issues of interest