



Melecon 2024 – Porto, Portugal

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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Introduction

- ▶ MELECON 2024 Overview

- ▶ Emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration.
- ▶ Conference goals: sharing research, fostering innovation.

Societies and Chapter Involvement

- ▶ Active Participation of IEEE Portugal Section Chapters
 - 16 IEEE chapters contributed: ensured multidisciplinary representation.
 - Role: Attracting diverse paper submissions and organizing special sessions.

General Organization Timeline

► Key Milestones

- Initial proposal (Jan 2022) to announcement of Porto as host (Jun 2022).
- Timeline: Kickoff meeting (Sept 2022), calendar and committee setup, detailed planning.

Submission and Deadline Overview

► Important Deadlines

- Special Session and Workshop Proposals: Dec 31, 2023
- Paper Submission: Extended to Feb 7, 2024
- Tutorials Submission: Feb 25, 2024
- Notification of Acceptance: Mar 22, 2024
- Camera-Ready Papers Submission – April 10, 2024
- Early Registration – April 17, 2024
- Conference – June, 25-27, 2024

Website and Publicity Strategies

► Website Challenges and Solutions

- Initial issue with Google indexing due to IP setup.
- Solution: Added public IP and multiple domain redirects for broader reach.

► Promotion Channels: IEEE eNotices, LinkedIn, Instagram, targeted mailing lists.

► External supporters

- Brochure with the support opportunities was posted on the website since the beginning. The support obtained included two Gold Patrons and two Patrons.

IEEE Region 8 and Portugal Section Initiatives

- ▶ Special Sessions and Collaborative Workshops
 - Themes: IoT, Women in Engineering, Young Professionals.
 - Highlights of joint efforts for knowledge sharing and networking.

Workshops and Special Sessions

- ▶ In addition to regular scientific papers, Workshops and Special Sessions were organized using EDAS for reviewer assignment and session management:
 - **Special sessions** were fostered to allow the possibility of the Chapters and other groups to share specific knowledge. A total of 20 Special Sessions were accepted and 11 of the accepted ones reached the minimum number of papers to run (5 papers). The papers were reviewed following the same policies of the general tracks and included in the conference proceedings.
 - **Workshops** were mainly focused on presentations and demonstrations without papers. Seven workshops were held, covering many aspects of key interest for R8, including industry, women in engineering, humanitarian, soft skills, enhancing the networking opportunities and involvement of different realities, from startups to large industries, as needed in a R8 flagship conference. Three workshops were organized by European project consortiums.

Awards and Competitions

- ▶ IEEE R8 Student Paper Contest 2024
 - Special presentation session, award at Gala Dinner
- ▶ Best paper on each Technical Track - 4 papers were distinguished and announced during the Gala dinner.

Tutorials Overview

► Focused Tutorials

- Four tutorials on diverse topics, aligned with conference tracks.
- Included in conference fees for broader participation.

Keynote Speakers

- ▶ Four distinct keynotes were organized to align with the technical scope of each track:
 - **Industry** Track: Francisco Lobo, Critical Manufacturing
 - **Health** Track: Paolo Bonato, Harvard Medical School
 - **Energy** Track: Vladimiro Miranda, University of Porto
 - **Digital Transformation** Track: Kathleen Krammer, University of San Diego, IEEE President Elect

- ▶ Speaker Selection Criteria
 - Based on chapter recommendations
 - Balanced representation of gender
 - Mix of academic and industry experts

Remote and In-Person Arrangements

- ▶ Focus on In-Person Engagement
 - Primarily face-to-face; remote options allowed only in exceptional cases (e.g., visa issues).
 - Ensured continuity via pre-recorded video presentations when needed.

Volunteers and Affinity Groups

- ▶ We have invited the Portuguese Student Branches to assist the conference activities and 25 students were involved.
- ▶ Additionally, 15 more students from the University of Coimbra and Instituto Politécnico do Porto assisted with the conference activities.
- ▶ The WiE AG Portugal and WiE Region 8 organized a workshop about WiE activities and best practices.
- ▶ The YP AG Portugal jointly with YPs Region 8 organized a workshop about the recent advances in Internet-of-Things and their impact in urban development.

Social Events and Networking Opportunities

- ▶ Social Activities:
 - Coffee breaks, lunches, a conference dinner.
- ▶ Cultural Highlights:
 - River cruise with live performances by student groups.
- ▶ Objective:
 - Foster networking in an engaging, locally inspired setting.

Key Lessons Learned

- ▶ Start planning early for smooth logistics. Have a conference organizing company that handles logistics.
- ▶ Regular meetings (at least once a month since the beginning, every week in the last months).
- ▶ Involve your crowd, your country is a source of people eager to participate
- ▶ Ensure a strong online presence and consistent updates.
- ▶ Highlight the importance of engaging activities for attendee experience.
- ▶ R8 gives huge help, use it

Key Lessons Learned

- ▶ **Start Early for Smooth Logistics**
 - Engage a professional conference organizing company for effective logistical support.
- ▶ **Hold Regular Meetings**
 - Meet monthly from the start, increasing to weekly in the final months.
- ▶ **Leverage Local Enthusiasm**
 - Involve local participants who are eager to contribute to the event's success.
- ▶ **Ensure a Strong Online Presence**
 - Provide consistent updates across platforms to keep attendees informed.
- ▶ **Prioritize Engaging Attendee Experiences**
 - Plan activities that enhance engagement and satisfaction.
- ▶ **Utilize IEEE R8 Resources**
 - Take full advantage of the support available from IEEE Region 8.



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