

## Croatia Section

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### Section Vitality

The Section holds 8 ExCom general assembly meetings per year (and many more topic-focused). The number of IEEE members of the IEEE Croatia Section was increasing steadily from October 2024 to February 2025 (increase of around 10%), getting to the peak number of 789 members before the terminator date. Elections are successfully conducted and new ExCom is in place since 1-Jan-2025: Vinko Lesic (Chair), Tomislav Jagust (Vice-Chair), Ana Milas (Secretary) and Mirna Grzanic Antic (Treasurer), together with appointed officers, newly elected leadership of three chapters and leadership of student branches, all updated in vTools.

The Section conducted membership renewal actions (reaching ~80% retention rate) and is now focused on recruitment of new members, tied with half-year membership action with focus on students. Chapters coordination meeting is planned for May. Coordinated action of membership elevation resulted in 25 new successful elevations to Senior Member and Life Senior members as a noticeable peak in usual membership vitality. Annual Gala dinner with Section awards, which has been for years the most successful networking event in Croatia, was held on 13 November 2024.

### Students

The Section has 2 active student branches (SBs), in the cities of Zagreb (SBZG) and Osijek (SBOS). Student activities since last report:

- SBOS: Organized a one-day event consisting of a series of lectures on technical and soft skills in engineering followed by a panel discussion titled “Between the code and the mind: how AI changes the rules of IT careers”. Details at: <https://www.instagram.com/ieee.osijek>
- SBZG:
  - Visiting SBOS for lecture and networking
  - Applied for EPICS project grant at the end of 2024
  - Organized industrial computer programming workshop PLC+ in collaboration with industry
  - Organized workshop on computer graphics and procedural modelling
  - Organized membership recruiting activity attracting new actively volunteering members
  - Hosting IEEE Budapest University of Technology and Economics Joint IAS/PES Student Branch Chapter in Zagreb

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Revitalize membership and strengthen student activities.
- Organize local SYP congress (CroSYP) in Zagreb
- Strengthen collaboration between SBZG and SBOS
- 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:

- Held workshop on embedded programming for packaging and transport (Smart Stickers)
- Applied and was granted Local Activity Funding for a whole day student workshop in robotics

Plan for the upcoming period:

- Coordination of IEEE Croatia Section SYP Congress based with sectional SB officers meeting
- Continue to support workshops related to the industry for students and young engineers
- Collaborate with industry relations team in organization of professional activities

### Women in Engineering

Held technical lecture on business communication in modern office culture in collaboration with local Technology and Engineering Management Society Chapter. Plans for continuation of the podcast series “ŽensCast” focusing on success stories of women scientists and professionals

### Life Members

Our Life Members AG maintained their activities on recording and reporting historical accomplishments of our members and distinguished Croatian technical experts.

### **Chapters**

The Section has 20 chapters, 2 joint chapters, 10 student branch chapters, and 3 affinity groups. Last year 18 chapters and joint chapters as well as all affinity groups elected chapter officers for the term 2023-2024 and the remaining ones, and AGs, held elections for 2024-2025. In 2023, a total of 86 events are reported for the whole Section, majority of which accounts to the chapters. In 2024, the trend was followed and 82 events are reported. The most active ones were Instrumentation and Measurement Chapter and Engineering in Medicine and Biology Chapter. For 2025, the plan is set to organize the chapter chairs meeting in May to further enhance activities of chapters.

### **Industry**

For years, the main focus of activities has been organizing public lectures called Business Skills Workshops in cooperation with the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER), and the student association Financial Club. The guest lecturers are notable business professionals from Croatia. The primary aim of these events is to expose students to business-related content in an interactive manner, giving them the opportunity to listen to and engage with experienced managers from the technology and financial sectors. Additionally, these events help introduce IEEE not only to students but also to guest lecturers. The lectures are open to the general public, and invitations are published on the websites of the IEEE Croatia Section, FER, and Financial Club, as well as occasionally on LinkedIn.

In 2024 and early 2025, 8 such workshops. The general level of attendance is satisfactory, ranging from approximately 20 to 200 attendees. In 2025, we plan to continue organizing public business workshops. However, under the new Section leadership, the Industry Relations team has been expanded with four new members, and proposals for new forms of engagement will be discussed in the coming months.

### **Entrepreneurship**

In 2024, Section has participated in IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Week and held an intensive fundraising bootcamp in collaboration with American experts, designed to help nine Nuqleus startup alumni improve key skills in the areas of fundraising, go-to-market strategies, marketing and sales. The bootcamp was held as part of the "Deep-Tech in the Business Arena" project, supported by the US Embassy in Croatia, with the aim of preparing Croatian startups for entering the American market. Best 3 teams will hopefully continue their journey in IEEE R8 entrepreneurship program (Pitch and Mentorship).

### **Visibility**

The section is maintaining its internal visibility of events and sharing information with members on regular basis. From 2025, the section is also working to enhance external visibility and has introduced LinkedIn account in English, available at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ieee-croatia-635217346/>. Furthermore, plan is set to introduce periodic e-mail newsletter, similarly as IEEE examples of YP Scoop, HTB periodic announcements or e-mail newsletters of societies.

### **Activities since the last report**

The ExCom carried out its regular meetings and succeeded in preserving a steady number of members and a vibrant community. In 2024, Section was a technical co-sponsor of 9 conferences: ELMAR 2024, ICCNS 2024, IDSTA 2024, ICMAE 2024, SISY 2024, SST 2024, SpliTech 2024, SoftCOM 2024 and MIPRO 2024. In addition, our PES Chapter leadership organized

also the IEEE Power and Energy Society flagship conference ISGT Europe 2024. For 2025, 10 conferences received technical co-sponsorship of the Section: ACIT 2025, SMAGRIMET 2025, BCCA 2025, iMETA 2025, DTIP 2025, EDPE 2025, ELMAR 2025, SoftCOM 2025, SpliTech 2025, MIPRO 2025. Full list is available at <https://www.ieee.hr/ieeesection/konferencije>.

### **Planned activities**

More details on the planned activities are reported under individual categories above. Significant focus is again put to students and revitalization on number of student members, and student branches in general. This is starting to give results in revitalization of SBZG and new leadership is very active and being mentored by success stories of SBOS. New leadership introduced new plan and formed KPIs for 2025 including regular section vitality, proven activities, and many new initiatives. We continue our plan to stimulate larger number of professional and informal networking events among members (including student members).

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

Keeping the role of facilitating information and opportunities from various OUs directly to local leadership in sections in timely manner, mainly the opportunities for students and young professionals.

### **Any other issues of interest**

The main obstacles to increasing non-academic membership in the IEEE Croatia Section are the high membership fees and the active presence of other similar organizations (such as CIGRÉ, CIRED, etc.). These organizations have a long-standing presence in Croatia, cater primarily to large industry players, and offer much lower membership fees.