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Europe, Africa and Middle East Region
Interview with Hanna Bogucka, Director of the EAME Region

By Stefano Bregni, Vice-President for Member Relations, and Hanna Bogucka, Director of the Europe, Africa and Middle East Region

This is the sixth article in the series started in September 2014 and published monthly in the *Global Communications Newsletter*, which covers all areas of IEEE ComSoc Member Relations. In this series of articles, I introduce the seven Member Relations Directors (namely: Sister and Related Societies; Membership Programs Development; AP, NA, LA, EAME Regions; Marketing and Industry Relations) and the Chair of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) Standing Committee. In each article, one by one they present their activities and plans.

In this issue, I interview Hanna Bogucka, Director of the Europe, Africa and Middle East Region. Hanna is a full professor on the Faculty of Electronics and Telecommunications at Poznan University of Technology in Poland. Her main research area is wireless communications, in particular flexible, adaptive, and cognitive radio. Hanna has been the Technical Program co-Chair or a committee member of a number of IEEE ComSoc conferences, and guest editor and reviewer of various ComSoc journals. She serves the IEEE ComSoc community as the Director of the EAME Region (Europe, Africa, Middle East) for the 2014-2015 term. She is a member of the IEEE Kiyo Tomiyasu Award Committee, and recently she has been elected the ComSoc Radio Communications Committee Chair for the term of 2015-2016. I am glad to interview Hanna and to present the organization and activities of the Europe, Africa and Middle East Region.

Bregni: Hello Hanna. Let us begin by presenting the EAME Region and how your Board is organized.

Bogucka: Geographically, EMEA is the largest IEEE ComSoc region. It has 52 chapters and approximately 11,800 members, about one quarter of the ComSoc members worldwide. Since the beginning of my term in January 2014, on forming the EMEA Region Board, our operating plan was to promote the development of membership, expand the distinguished lecturers tours program, implement a young researchers program, stimulate academia-industry cooperation, increase the number of ComSoc conferences, and expand social networks in the EMEA region. The EMEA Region Board is organized to implement this plan, and consists of representatives from industry, academia, governmental institutions, from Europe and Africa, men and women, with four operational members and two advisors.

Stefano: You mentioned that among your priorities you targeted membership development in the EAME Region. What are the challenges to pursue this goal?

Bogucka: Development of membership is particularly challenging in Region 8. There is visible disproportion of geographical coverage and membership percentile in our region. This is mainly due to the particularly small number of members in African and developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Bregni: I agree that Africa poses very peculiar issues not only related to membership development, but also about how to serve the specific needs of members in developing countries, while keeping membership fees low enough to be affordable in disadvantaged economies.

Bogucka: At the IEEE level, an Africa Committee is in place, which looks at this problem, negotiates prices, and offers subscription rates acceptable to African universities. In the Communications Society, we try to promote new memberships by focusing on information campaigns, by favoring Distinguished Lecturers Tours (DLTs), and by promoting the organization of conferences in Africa. It is important to identify and remove obstacles to the integration of African researchers into the IEEE ComSoc community.

Bregni: Overall, what is your general perception on the activity of Chapters in the EMEA Region?

Bogucka: In general, the situation in EMEA is very good in terms of Chapter activities and membership development. I appreciate seeing many activities at the Chapter level. Every year, we select a particularly active chapter to receive the Chapter Achievement Award. This year the award was given to the Republic of Macedonia Chapter and presented at Globecom 2014 in Austin, TX, USA.

Bregni: You highlighted the importance of the Distinguished Lecturer/Speaker Program in Africa and other disadvantaged areas. You know that I am very sensitive to this topic, having served as Expert/Distinguished Lecturer for seven years. What are your objectives and achievements in the EMEA Region in this regard?

Bogucka: The Distinguished Lecturers Program (DLP) and Distinguished Speakers Program (DSP) are important programs in the EMEA Region, allowing for cross-border knowledge and the spreading of expertise. In 2014, six DLTs and DSPs have taken place, while two more have been organized but postponed until 2015. As an example, the very successful DLT of Prof. Norman C. Beaulieu in Macedonia, Italy, Montenegro, and Serbia (March 2014) was reported in an article in the August 2014 issue of the *Global Communications Newsletter*. Every time the distinguished lecturers give their lectures, they promote ComSoc to the listeners by presenting few slides on IEEE ComSoc activities. I do hope this helps membership development, since the lectures gather a lot of interest from local researchers, not necessarily ComSoc members yet.

Bregni: Would you like to highlight any other program organized in the EMEA Region?

Bogucka: A rather unique activity in our Region is our EMEA Young

Stefano Bregni

Hanna Bogucka

Distinguished Lecturer Tour of Fabrizio Granelli in Japan, 2014

By Fabrizio Granelli, University of Trento, Italy

The Distinguished Lecturer Tour was organized in Spring 2014, and it was supported by all three Communications Society Chapters in Japan (Asia/Pacific Region 10): the Japan Council, the Kansai Chapter, and the Sendai Chapter.

The DLT started in Osaka, in the Kansai Region of Japan, on July 15, 2014. The lecture was held in a conference center near the main Osaka train station. The seminar was held in the early afternoon, with a good participation (approximately 25–30 people). The chapter expressed interest for a seminar organized in two sections: first, a brief description of my research interests, and then a longer presentation on the subject of 'Networking and the Smart Grid'. After presenting my research interests and major projects, I focused on an introductory section about what is the Smart Grid and its main expected features. Then I presented an overview of the existing communication standards related to the Grid, with specific attention to IEEE P2030 sponsored by Com-Soc, which provides an effective taxonomy of the major components of the communication infrastructure to support the operation of the Smart Grid. Finally, I decided to introduce examples of research activities where communications know-how can contribute to Smart Grid development, e.g. modeling micro-grids and studying charging station setup for electrical vehicles.

With the local organizers in Osaka.

With the lecture attendees in Sendai.

During the seminar in Osaka.

We had an interesting Q&A exchange at the end of the session, mainly focused on issues related to actual deployment issues of smart grid architecture and the relationship between Smart Grid and D2D communications.

The second seminar was held in Tokyo, at the Kinkai Shinko Kaikan Building, close to the Tokyo Tower landmark. The Japan Council organized a two-hour seminar on two topics: 'Green Wireless Networking' and 'Cognitive and Adaptive Networking'. I started the former presentation by explaining the high power consumption associated with communication equipment, supported by some figures depicting the contribution of the different modules. As of today, the major problem in green wireless networks is due to the high power consumption associated with power amplifiers and thus on the effective utilization of the RF interface. Then I described the major classes of solutions to reduce power consumption in wireless networks, and focused on some examples of how to effectively use the sleep state in WLANs and how to address power consumption in emerging technologies such as cognitive radios.

After a short break I moved to the second topic, where the focus was on bridging the gap between theory and practice in making cognitive networks a reality. Indeed, I introduced the audience to some recent advances of my research group on including reasoning and learning mechanisms able to introduce cognitive functionality in today's networks.

The seminar was attended by approximately 50 people. What was very interesting was the fact that on this occasion the audience was more mixed than usual, and included students, post-docs, and professors, as well as several researchers from industry (NEC, IBM, DoCoMo). The audience was extremely interested and they offered several comments. In particular, the latter topic spread interest among participants familiar with Artificial Intelligence and Automated Learning.

The last seminar was hosted by the Sendai Chapter, in the North Region of Japan, at Tohoku University. The topic was again 'Green Wireless Networks', and based on the audience feedback during the presentation, I provided additional details on greening WiFi extensions and some ideas on how to measure the actual power consumption of real systems.

There were approximately 20 attendees, mostly Ph.D. and M.Sc. students. The audience was extremely interested and the follow-up discussion was fruitful. I received several questions and requests for pointers to further details on several topics I covered.

The Republic of Moldova is Preparing for the EU!

An Interview with Pavel Filip, the Minister of Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Moldova

By Nicolae Oaca

Oaca: How is your ministry contributing to the EU integration process?

Filip: According to the Association agreement between Moldova and the European Union, signed on 27 June 2014 in Vilnius, our country has to harmonize its legislation in order to be in line with the EU telecommunications regulations. So we already have started to transpose EU's regulations for telecommunications to our legislation. However, there is a long way to go as we have to deal with several issues. We need to revise and complete the electronic communications services regulations according to the universal services Directive. Also, we have to implement the EU Regulations concerning international roaming, net neutrality, personal data protection, the level of confidentiality of electronic communications, etc.

To be in line with the EU, our Ministry, MITC, has developed a national strategy called 'Digital Moldova 2020' aiming to create a national broadband network, to provide our citizens and our businesses with high speed connections, at least 30 Mb/s, and therefore enable information society development. 'Digital Moldova 2020' was developed according to the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020, and the best world practices being publicly presented in 2013. In fact, 'Digital Moldova 2020' is based on three pillars: broadband infrastructure and access for all citizens; digital content and electronic services; and finally, people's capacity for general use of the Internet and information technology. In order to implement this strategy, MITC proposes a plan that aims to develop the national broadband network until 2020; to establish at least one presence point for optical fiber on the territory of every locality: to provide buildings with broadband infrastructures; and to update the existing cable network for broadband access. We hope 'Digital Moldova 2020' will be a driver of our national economy and welfare.

In 2013 we also developed a program for spectrum management that will last until 2020 aiming to ensure better management of the existing spectrum and to provide enough spectrum for high speed networks and new technologies. Another goal standing behind this program is the harmonization between our regulations and practices and those of the EU. Our program is based on three pillars: technology neutrality that allows the usage of any technology able to create business oriented networks; spectrum auctioning as a clear and transparent way to award frequency licenses; and crystal clear auction conditions on prices and terms. We already awarded frequency licenses in the 800, 900, 1800, 2100, 2600 and 3800 MHz bands in 2014 for the next 15 years, and it is time for the operators to use them and to comply with the new rules.

Oaca: What are your plans for the analogue TV switchover and digital dividend band usage?

Filip: We elaborated on a program regarding analogue TV switchover planned for 17 June, 2015. Its aim is to improve TV quality, and mainly to free up the digital dividend band, the 800 MHz band, to be allocated to mobile communications in 2014 after a competitive and transparent contest, aiming to attract a new competitor.

Oaca: Who are the main operators In your telecommunications market?

Filip: As in other countries in our region, our mobile communications and Internet markets are continuing to grow while fixed telephony is decreasing. The number of active SIMs reached approximately 3.7 million, and our mobile network operators, Orange, Moldcell, and Moldtelecom, cover about 99 percent of the territory. Also important to mention is that Internet usage reached 13.5 percent of the population and continues to grow, fueled by investments in optical fiber and 3G and LTE networks.

Oaca: Can you please speak about competencies of different bodies in telecommunications area?

Filip: MICT is the national strategy body for electronic communications in Moldova, in charge of developing political and strategic documents. It does not own or operate any telecommunications operator. NRFC is a state entity subordinated to MICT, in charge of frequency monitoring. Also, ANRCETI is an independent authority responsible for regulating, monitoring, and developing the telecommunications market. ANRCETI also issues spectrum licences. Our national telecommunications company, Moldtelecom, is owned by an entity subordinated to the Ministry of Economy.

Oaca: What are the MITC's medium-term challenges and plans?

Filip: We could face a complex and fragile political and economical context, which could hamper faster development of our market or delay investments. However, we are able to face all these challenges, to develop the informational society in Moldova via 'Digital Moldova 2020' and to regulate our market as efficiently as possible. Stable and predictable rules are very important for market development, so we are thinking of a medium-term strategy to attract investments, to protect end-users, and to use our scarce resources in a better way. Moldova has to find its own way to meet the European Union requirements, bearing in mind the ability of our national market and industry to adjust to dynamic changes. We have to accelerate the institutional reform process in order to increase confidence and to attract investments in our telecommunications market to accelerate our economic growth.

Nicolae Oaca's note: In the Republic of Moldova, a significant evolution is occurring with the Internet. Cable and optical fiber technologies provide Moldova's citizens with up to 1 Gbps speeds. In 2013, thecountry had a 13.2 percent penetration of Internet users. The mobile Internet is quickly expanding as well, reaching 7.29 percent penetration in December 2013. And finally, last year the country successfully launched fixed and mobile telephony number portability, aiming to increase competition, service quality, and end user churn. A total of 44,720 numbers were ported and changed networks, made up of 40,376 mobile numbers and 4,344 fixed telephone numbers.

Pavel Filip, the Minister of Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Moldova.

2014 IEEE Sections Congress in Amsterdam

By John F. Pape, Director of Marketing and Creative Services, IEEE Communications Society

The 2014 IEEE Sections Congress was held in Amsterdam, 22-24 August, 2014. The IEEE Member and Geographic Activities (MGA) Board partnered with Region 8 to create an ambitious program themed 'Inspiring Our Leaders of Tomorrow.' The three main program tracks covered enhancing member satisfaction, improving the volunteer experience, and reaching globally with the local touch.

Over 1,000 section officers, volunteer leadership, and staff convened to attend training sessions, network with colleagues, learn about new and existing IEEE programs, and make recommendations to guide the future of IEEE.

Thirty-five Learning Labs Sections were aimed at attendees wanting to learn more about a particular IEEE tool. These 10- to 25-minute sessions gave live demonstrations on resources from MGA, Technical Activities, Educational Activities, and other IEEE organizational units. These included How Your Section Can Benefit from IEEE-ETA KAPPA NU (IEEE-HKN)—the IEEE Student Honor Society, vTools, and the IEEE Awards Program.

The exhibit space offered attendees the opportunity to share a cup of coffee, investigate IEEE programs, chat with Society staff, explore career development resources, consider IEEE.tv, discuss publication and conference issues, meet old friends, and establish new relationships. There were over 40 IEEE exhibitors. If attendees were trying to locate the Young Professionals booth or a session room, the Sections Congress smartphone app made planning, scheduling, communicating, and connecting easy.

The exhibit floor also featured over 30 IGNITE sessions of five-minute presentations on specific topics intended to spark interest in the subject, such as Women in Engineering, Section/Chapter Sponsored Conferences, TAB/MGA Collaborations, and the IEEE Consultants Network.

The IEEE Communications Society staffed a booth and featured recorded presentations on the ComSoc society overview, the online training program, and social media activities. Many current ComSoc Chapter officers and members stopped to confer, from places as diverse as Kerala, Hyderabad, Bahrain, Ottawa,

Cedar Rapids, and several from Region 5, including Scott Atkinson, who avidly promoted IEEE GLOBECOM 2014.

Among the many highlights, previewing the Professional Productivity and Collaboration Tools (PPCT) – now known as IEEE Collabratec? – was a favorite. It is an integrated suite of online features and productivity tools that facilitate communication, collaboration, and networking. Scheduled to launch in 2015, it will create new opportunities to engage and interact for sections, chapters, volunteers, members, and affinity groups.

At the closing ceremony, the results of voting for SC recommendations are presented. The top recommendations included: increase access to the IEEE Digital Library as a member benefit; develop an incentive program for companies that support employee membership dues; and introduce loyalty awards for continued membership. The next Sections Congress will be held in 2017.

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Researchers Award program. Every year, the Young Researchers Award Program Committee evaluates the applications of many candidates and then assigns one IEEE ComSoc Young Researcher Award of EMEA Region (consisting of a plaque and 500 $US) and two runner-up Outstanding Young Researchers Awards (consisting of a plaque and 250 $US each). Awards are presented at one of the two flagship IEEE ComSoc conferences, ICC or Globecom. The applications are collected every year in November. The winners are selected in January of the following year. We believe this is a particularly valuable initiative, as we have the pleasure to recognize so many outstanding scientific achievements of young researchers in our region.

Bregni: Is there any particularly successful ComSoc conference in EMEA? And what about regional conferences?

Bogucka: We support the organization of many conferences in EMEA, especially conferences from the ComSoc portfolio, as well as dedicated events at major IEEE Region 8 conferences, for example Africon or Sibircon, which are an opportunity to present ComSoc programs. Moreover, IEEE BlackSeaCom (IEEE International Black Sea Conference on Communications and Networking) is a new series of ComSoc Regional Conferences held in the countries surrounding the Black Sea, with the goal of bringing visionaries in academia, research labs, and industry from all over the world to the shores of the Black Sea.

The 2015 edition of BlackSeaCom will take place on May 18-21, 2015 in Constanta, Romania. I believe it is important to have such a cyclically organized conference in that area. It can be a nice driver to increase Chapter activity and integrate scientific research in the region of South and Eastern Europe. Let me take this opportunity to invite everyone to this very special conference in EMEA, listed in the IEEE ComSoc conference portfolio.

Finally, there are many other important events happening in EMEA beyond scientific conferences. In 2013 at ICC in Budapest, Hungary, the EMEA Regional Chapters Chairs Congress was organized by the former EMEA Director, Fambirai Takawira. In August 2014, the Krakow Chapter, Poland, hosted the IEEE Region 8 Student & Young Professional Congress. Also in August 2014, a particularly nice ceremony took place in Warsaw: the IEEE Milestone in Electrical Engineering and Computing to commemorate the First Breaking of the Enigma Code by the Team of Polish Cipher Bureau, 1932-1939. These are just a few good examples.

Bregni: What are your plans for 2015?

Bogucka: Our operating plan for the next year remains the same as for the whole term of my directorship, mentioned at the beginning. It is an ambitious long-term plan that I hope will be continued by our successors. We just wish to achieve intermediate goals as much as possible on this long-term vision for ComSoc in EMEA.

Taking the opportunity of being invited to do this interview at the beginning of the New Year, let me wish the GCN readers and our ComSoc community a successful realization of their professional and private plans in 2015!