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INTERVIEW

Europe, Middle East and Africa Region

Interview with Adlen Ksentini, Director of the EMEA Region

By Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter Editor in Chief, Vice-President for Conferences, and Adlen Ksentini, Director of the EMEA Region

This is the fifth article in the series of nine, started in May 2018 and published monthly in the IEEE ComSoc *Global Communications Newsletter*, which covers all areas of IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities. In this series of articles, I introduce the Vice-President and six Directors on the Member and Global Activities Council (namely: Sister and Related Societies; Membership Services; AP, NA, LA, EMEA Regions) and the two Chairs of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) and Young Professionals (YP) Standing Committees. In each article, one by one they present their sector activities and plans.

In this issue, I interview Adlen Ksentini, Director of the EMEA Region.

Adlen is a ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in computer science from the University of Cergy-Pontoise in 2005. From 2006 to 2016, he worked at the University of Rennes 1 as an Assistant Professor. Since March 2016, he has been working as an Assistant Professor in the Communication Systems Department of EURECOM. He has co-authored over 100 technical journal and international conference papers. He has been awarded the 2017 IEEE ComSoc Fred W. Ellersick (best *IEEE Communications Magazine* paper). Adlen has been acting as TPC Symposium Chair for IEEE ICC 2016/2017, IEEE GLOBECOM 2017, IEEE Cloudnet 2017 and IEEE 5G Forum 2018. He has been acting as Guest Editor for the *IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communication* (JSAC) Series on Network Softwerization, *IEEE Wireless Communications*, *IEEE Communications Magazine*, and two issues of *ComSoc MMTC Letters*.

Stefano: Hello Adlen! Would you begin by outlining the main characteristics of the EMEA Region?

Adlen: The EMEA Region covers a vast geographical area stretching from Cape Town, South Africa in the South, Lisbon, Portugal, in the West, through Hammerfest, Norway, in the North, to Vladivostok, Russia in the East.

The Region is served by 51 local chapters having together about one quarter of the ComSoc members worldwide. Chapters provide a local connection for our Society members. Their activities include: talks organized within the Distinguished Lecturer Tour (DLT) or Distinguished Speaker Program (DSP) frameworks, social events, workshops, seminars, special events, etc.

Stefano: The current EMEA Board, which you chair, was formed not many months ago in January 2018. On what activities has it been focused so far?

Adlen: The current EMEA Board works to implement our operating plan. The Distinguished Lecturer Program (DLP) and Distinguished Speaker Program (DSP) are coordinated by Prof. Nidal Nasser from Saudi Arabia. What is important is that most of these tours were or are to be organized in areas with a rather low ComSoc membership, such as the Middle East or Africa. We do hope to encourage more professionals from these areas to join our Society.

Stefano: Yes, I do agree that the DLP and the DSP are particularly appreciated by our members. I can say that from direct personal experience, as I have served as a DL for many years beginning 15 years ago. During my previous term as Vice President for Member Relations, we increased the budget allocated to these programs, to allow more and better DLTs in all regions.

On another topic, does the EMEA Board assign Awards to recognize the contributions of outstanding members?

Adlen: Yes, this is another important facet of the EMEA activities, coordinated by Prof. Hassine Mounjla from France. Our Award Program includes the EMEA Young Researcher Award and the EMEA Region Distinguished Service Award. Every year, we also select a particularly active chapter to receive the Chapter Achievement Award.

Stefano: What are the major challenges that you currently see in the EMEA Region?

Adlen: We have two major challenges: one is membership growth in our Region, and the other is increasing industry/academia cooperation. The coordination of the membership activities is the responsibility of Prof. Periklis Chatzimisios from Greece and Prof. Abdellatif Kobbane from Morocco, while the industry and academia cooperation is led by Dr. Konstantinos Samdanis from Huawei Germany. The task is not easy in the current business environment, taking into account industry restructuring, growing competition, and changes in the overall markets, but I do hope that we will be able propose working initiatives strengthening cooperation between the industry and the academia within the EMEA Region.

Stefano: What about students?

Adlen: One of the issues that I would like to address as well is ComSoc's role in helping students in our region benefit from the advantages of membership. We are discussing with local chairs of low income countries how to launch initiatives to help students to be IEEE and ComSoc members. One of the initiatives under discussion is to include membership in the registration fees of conferences organized by IEEE in these countries.

Stefano: Any specific initiative aimed at membership development in the EMEA Region?

Adlen: To increase ComSoc membership, we are supporting the Membership and Global Activities (MGA) Contribution Award launched this year by Prof. Nei Kato (ComSoc VP MGA) and Prof. Song Guo (ComSoc MGA Director). The MGA award recognizes members who helped recruit at least 50 new ComSoc members for their local chapter in an interval of one year and that their local chapter had a net gain of at least 50 in membership during that interval.

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Stefano Bregni



Adlen Ksentini

The Scientific Association for Infocommunications: the Hungarian Sister Society of IEEE ComSoc

By Csaba Simon, Rolland Vida, Péter Nagy, Hungary

Building on its rich heritage, the Scientific Association for Infocommunications (HTE), the Hungarian Sister Society of IEEE ComSoc, continuously works to serve its community, and the last two busy years were no exceptions to that. Continuing the tradition of organizing prestigious conferences in its area of expertise, HTE organized numerous events during the past years and is already active in the preparation of new ones in the immediate future. Furthermore, its key members took active roles in the governing bodies of IEEE ComSoc and other IEEE entities. HTE also supports the activities of the IEEE Hungary Section, the synergies of this cooperation strengthening the presence of IEEE in Hungary. Last but not least, HTE is proud to present the HTE Thesis Awards in cooperation with IEEE ComSoc, an important gesture toward the new generation of members of our organization. In this article some aspects of HTE's activities will be highlighted.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

For HTE it is a strategic objective to support conferences on topics that fall into its fields of interest, attract prestigious international audiences and high quality contributions, and offer at the same time an affordable opportunity to the community members from the region to join and interact with the international community. That is why HTE is proud to be able to continue its tradition of organizing relevant conferences during the last two years as well.

In August 2016 Budapest welcomed the international research community working in the field of computer based speech technology at the 18th International Conference on Speech and Computer (SPECOM'16). This was a joint organizational effort of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), and the prestigious Russian research institution Géza Németh was acting both as the chief representative of the related Hungarian research community and as leader of the organizing team. The keynote speakers of the event were Ralf Schlüter (RWTH Aachen University, Germany), with a presentation on neural networks based speech recognition; Attila Vékony (NNG, Hungary), talking about the role of speech recognition in car navigation; and Nick Campbell (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland) with a talk about machine processing of dialogue states.



Gábor Magyar (left), President of the HTE, and Eszter Udvari (right), local ComSoc Chapter Secretary, present the 2016 Thesis Award to Szilárd Attila Nagy for his thesis entitled "Implementation of Virtual Network Functions for SDN Networks on Top of the Click Platform."



Lajos Hanzó (right), representing European Association for Signal Processing, offers thanks for the work of Rolland Vida, the Operations Chair of EUSIPCO2016.



Tibor Cinkler, the General Chair, during his welcome speech of the 21th International Conference on Optical Network Design and Modeling (ONDM).

The following month HTE organized the European flagship conference of the signal processing community, the European Signal Processing Conference (EUSIPCO'16), which also covered the field of IoT and sensor networks. The more than 600 participants had the chance to follow a comprehensive technical program addressing all the latest developments in research and technology for signal processing. Additionally, tutorials covering various areas like deep learning, 5G wireless optimization or applied statistics were offered to the interested colleagues. Respected scholars presented keynote talks during the conference, as follows. Urbashi Mitra (University of Southern California, USA) talked about biological communication networks; Moe Win (MIT, USA) discussed the signal processing opportunities in the field of network localization and navigation; Asoke K. Nandi (Brunel University London, UK) talked about consensus clustering paradigms; Petar M. Djuric (Stony Brook University, USA) spoke about recent advances in the sequential Monte Carlo methods; and an overview of future directions in video coding was presented by Thomas Wiegand (TU Berlin, Germany).

The 21th International Conference on Optical Network Design and Modeling (ONDM) was also organized by HTE

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in Budapest, in May 2017. This conference is intended for researchers active in the field of optical networking and optical systems, focusing on new network architectures for the Cloud/Data Center and SDN/NFV developments in optical networks. The organizers invited Ari Sorsaniemi (DG Connect, European Commission) to present the current state of optical communications within the 5G framework under the European Commission's H2020 program, and Daniel Kilper (University of Arizona, USA) to talk about the use of SDN to make networks transparent.

Last autumn HTE also welcomed the 18th SDL Forum, the flagship conference of the SDL Forum Society, providing a framework for discussions about the evolution and use of system design languages and modelling technologies. One of the keynotes, titled IoT & 5G: Opportunities and Technologies, was offered by the host of the conference, Gergely Seres (Ericsson, Hungary), while the other keynote speaker, Ferhat Khendek (Concordia University, Canada), president of the SDL Forum Association, talked about model driven engineering.

In good accordance with its national role and as an answer to the needs of its institutional members, HTE is also regularly organizing its own national flagship conferences that established themselves as strong brands in the region. In 2016 HTE organized the 20th edition of the HTE Infokom conference, a traditional forum for the industrial, academic, policy maker and regulatory actors, with 350+ attendees. In line with the international trends, the main technological keywords during this year's edition were 5G, Big Data, IoT and cloud. Since at the level of the European Commission the digital single market is of key priority, dedicated sections evaluated the prospects and local implications of this policy.

In 2017 HTE organized the 15th edition of MediaNet, a prominent media technological event of the Hungarian infocommunications community. The 250+ attendees discussed the latest stages of technological development (e.g. new media production and broadcasting technologies and digital radio), the impact of social media on day-to-day life, and regulatory issues triggered by new technologies.

HTE is also supporting the European-wide research interest in Future Networks and it is an organizing partner of the annual Hungarian Future Internet Conferences. The 2016 and 2017 editions of the conference had a special focus on Smart City applications, had an international participation and offered a panorama of current trends in Future Internet research. These events are always a regional meeting point for potential partners seeking international research project cooperation targeting EU H2020 open calls.

Finally, although HTE as an organization is not directly involved, we must mention here that the prestigious ACM SIGCOMM 2018 conference occurred in Budapest in late August this year, and several individual members of HTE were among the main members of the organizing committee.

THE COOPERATION OF HTE WITH IEEE COMSOC

HTE is proud to have several members who undertake responsible tasks in the global IEEE ComSoc organization. Lajos Hanzó is a member of the Board of Governors, Roland Vida and Péter Nagy are members of the GLOBECOM and ICC Management and Strategy Committee (GIMS), while Csaba Simon is a member of the Sister and Related Societies Board.

An important aspect of HTE, IEEE relations is the local cooperation with the IEEE Hungary Section. The presence in Hungary and the successful local operation of IEEE are important and desirable for HTE. Joint operation increases the awareness of the technical areas that are important for the HTE member organizations, and mobilizes the stakeholders to work as volunteers in different joint projects, e.g., organizing conferences



Gábor Magyar (right), President of the HTE, and Eszter Udvarý (center), local ComSoc Chapter Secretary, present the 2017 Thesis Award to Tamás János Boczán for his thesis entitled "Embedded firmware analysis with the Avatar framework."

and holding public seminars. HTE helps the IEEE Hungary Section with its event organizing and logistics capabilities when required and gains increased visibility.

HTE traditionally supports outstanding young professionals as well, through a series of awards, e.g., the Pollák-Virág Award and HTE Thesis Awards). The goals are manifold: offering incentives to increase the quality of work, providing feedback to young researchers, expressing public support for technical research, and rewarding excellence. HTE allocates dedicated tracks for young scientists at its flagship conferences, and supports their access, through volunteering programs, to the international conferences it hosts or supports. All these efforts also help to build around the organization a community of young professionals who will be its human resource in the future.

IEEE ComSoc helped HTE to raise to the next level its Thesis Awards program by kindly accepting to support it. As a result, during the last two years the IEEE ComSoc community welcomed the first recipients of the Annual HTE Best English-Language Thesis Award. The Thesis Award is an important part of the new membership recruitment strategy of HTE; proper attention and efforts will thus be allocated to keep this activity on track.

ABOUT HTE

HTE, the Scientific Association for Infocommunications, founded in 1949 (formerly known as the Scientific Society for Telecommunications), is a voluntary and autonomous professional society of engineers and economists, researchers and businessmen, managers and educational, regulatory and other professionals working in the fields of telecommunications, broadcasting, electronics, information and media technologies in Hungary.

In addition to its more than 900 individual members, HTE has more than 50 corporate members. Among them are large companies and small and medium enterprises with industrial, trade, service-providing, research and development activities, as well as educational institutions and research centers.

HTE is a Sister Society of the IEEE Communications Society and as such it channels its members toward IEEE Societies and IEEE activities and leverages its local and regional organizational know-how to support the IEEE vision to come true.

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The Saudi Arabia ComSoc Chapter Participated to the International IoT Conference and Exhibition

By Abdullah Almuttiri, Saudi Arabia Chapter Chair

The International IoT Conference and Exhibition is an annual event that takes place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This year's event, from 28-30 January, attracted over 17,000 visitors including high profile industry professionals, engineers, entrepreneurs and academicians. The IoT conference also showcased an exhibition of products and services from over 80 key-brand exhibitors and industry drivers including Ericsson and ABB, and operators, service providers, and developers. The ComSoc Saudi Arabia Chapter co-organized workshops at the conference. The steering committee members presented a keynote speech and two workshops.

Dr. Abdullah Almuttiri, chapter chair, delivered a workshop entitled "Innovation through the marriage of IoT, Big Data, Cloud and 5G." In his workshop he presented an overview of the Industrial Revolutions from the first to the current 4th revolution. He then defined what Internet of Things is followed by interconnected technologies. He then delved into what Big Data is and what cloud computing is before he explained the integration of those two technologies to leverage IoT advancement. He then described the technology that will leverage IoT connectivity across all level of networks and bands, from SigFox and LoRa to the revolutionary 5G cellular network. He closed the workshop with the definition of Internet of Everything (IoE) and the factors that will contribute to implement IoT at a massive scale.

Prof. Muhammad Khurram Khan, chapter vice chair, participated as a keynote speaker with a topic entitled "Establishing trust in the Internet of Things: challenges and solutions." The abstract of his speech is: "The agglomeration of embedded intelligence and Internet connectivity plays a key role in upheaving the paradigm of Internet of Things (IoT). It is estimated that there would be approximately 100 billion connected devices with a total economic impact of USD 3.9 trillion to USD 11.1 trillion by 2025. Consumers embrace potential advantages of IoT products and applications because of the benefits and services they get. However, when these smart IoT devices collect and share personal information, consumers become very concerned about the security of devices and privacy of their personal information. If reasonable security is not provided and consumer's personal information is exploited for criminal acts, then trust upon adopting these IoT devices could be compromised. Hence, the



The Saudi Arabia ComSoc Chapter Steering Committee at the International IoT Exhibition and Conference in Riyadh.

prosperity and wide adoption of IoT devices are highly reliant on establishing consumer's trust. In this talk, we will firstly provide a definition of the consumer trust upon adopting IoT technology. Secondly, we will present a conceptual model to reflect the influential factors that stimulate consumer's trust, so that they could willingly adopt, purchase and use IoT products. Furthermore, we will highlight the security requirements to be considered while developing IoT products and applications. Moreover, we will also shed light on 'five acts', which could violate security and privacy of IoT consumers. In addition, four W's of privacy to engage consumers with high-level of satisfaction in adopting IoT products and applications will be discussed. Finally, we would identify a number of future challenges that need to be resolved in IoT products and services, and some recommendations would also be addressed to preserve consumer's trust in IoT."

Dr. Imad ben Dhau, chapter vice chair, delivered a workshop on the "Internet of Things for Smart Grid: challenges and opportunities." The summary of his workshop follows. Smart-grid is an emerging technology, which aims at making the utility grid intelligent, reliable, secure, efficient, sustainable, green, etc. The smart-grid is a system of systems, which is composed of, among others, distributed microgrid, transmission and distribution system, substations, feeders, advanced metering infrastructure, bulk-power generator, and market services. Communication and information technology is believed to be the central topic of the smart-grid. This talk discusses the challenges and opportunities of using the Internet of Things as an ICT technology for the establishment of the smart-grid. The architecture of a modern smart-grid along with the various communication and security solutions is described in depth using the latest research results.

The ComSoc Saudi Arabia Chapter promotes ComSoc activities and values their members, striving to deliver activities on state-of-the-art technologies that are trending nowadays. The Chapter has developed a promising plan for their members for 2018 and will work hard to achieve those defined goals. For any inquiries please do not hesitate to contact the chapter chair, Dr. Abdullah Almuttiri, at SaudiArabia_Chapter@comsoc.org or a.s.a@ieee.org.

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Regarding the activities specifically run in the EMEA Region, we are preparing a newsletter, which will be available to all EMEA Comsoc members, describing the activities in our region, in terms of scientific events, such as conferences and workshop, as well as DLT tours organized in our region.

Stefano: When will you have your next Regional Chapter Chair Congress?

Adlen: Last but not least, we are preparing the organization of the EMEA Regional Chapters Chairs Congress (RCCC). The Congress will be hosted at GLOBECOM 2018 in Abu Dhabi. The RCCC will be an excellent opportunity to share information and feedback from the Chapter Chairs, staff and ComSoc officers, on the challenges that we want to address in the EMEA Region, and how we can improve our communication with our ComSoc members to understand their needs and expectations.

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