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INTERVIEW

IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities

Interview with Ana Garcia Armada, IEEE ComSoc Vice

President MGA

by Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter Editor-in-Chief, IEEE Division III Director, and Ana Garcia Armada, Vice President MGA

This article opens the series of ten interviews with the Officers of the IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities (MGA) Council for the term 2024–2025, which will be published every month in the Global Communications Newsletter.

In this series of articles, I introduce the Vice-President and the six Directors of the MGA Council (namely: Member Services, Industry Outreach, and AP, NA, LA, and EMEA Regions), as well as the three Chairs of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE), Young Professionals (YP), and Sister Societies Standing Committees. In each interview, one by one they present their sector activities and plans.

In this issue, I interview Ana Garcia Armada, Vice President for Member and Global Activities. This is the third time I have interviewed Ana. I interviewed her for the first time in 2019, when she was serving as Chair of the IEEE ComSoc Standing Committee on Women in Communications Engineering (WICE), and then in 2022 when she had just begun her first term as Vice President for Member and Global Activities.

Ana received her Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the Polytechnic University of Madrid in February 1998. She is currently a Professor at the University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain, where she is leading the Communications Research Group. She has been a visiting scholar at Stanford University, Bell Labs, and the University of Southampton. She has coordinated more than 40 national and international research projects as well as 20 contracts with the industry. She has published more than 250 papers in international journals and conference proceedings and she holds six patents. She has served on the TPC of more than 40 conferences and she has been part of the organizing committee of IEEE GLOBECOM 2019, IEEE Vehicular Technology Conference (VTC) Spring 2019, Fall 2018, and Spring 2018, among others. Most recently, she has been General Co-Chair of IEEE GLOBECOM 2021, Madrid, Spain, and General Chair of IEEE MeditCom 2024, Madrid, Spain. She received the IEEE ComSoc/KICS Exemplary Global Service Award in 2022.

Stefano: Hello Ana! So, here we are again. This is your second term you are serving as IEEE ComSoc Vice President for Member and Global Activities, having been elected again in 2023.

Ana: It is a great pleasure and honor to serve as the Vice-President of MGA of IEEE ComSoc in 2024–2025. I am grateful to the ComSoc members who, for a second term, have entrusted me with this opportunity to serve them.

Stefano: What is the best news of this year?



Stefano Bregni



Ana Garcia Armada

Ana: At the end of 2023, ComSoc membership exceeded 33,000, which corresponds to a more than 12 % increase compared to 2022.

We are also proud to say that the satisfaction of ComSoc members has significantly increased according to our 2023 Member Survey. To sustain this promising development, we will continue to carry out membership satisfaction surveys and leverage the data obtained to further improve our services and the value of belonging to ComSoc.

We have set an ambitious strategic plan for the MGA team with a focus on the following four key aspects:

- Improve value and create community;
- Improve diversity and inclusion;
- Empower chapters and student branch chapters;
- Increase membership and retention.

We would like to gain a better understanding of how to best serve our members in both academia and industry, so we can design specific measures to attract more members, especially those from underrepresented groups, including women, industry, young professionals, and some geographic regions.

Stefano: Among the various services and most recent initiatives for members, what would you like to highlight in particular?

Ana: During 2022–2023 we started several important initiatives that we are planning to continue and consolidate. These include offering our members two complimentary subscriptions to a journal/magazine, a mentoring program, the creation of an industry column in *IEEE Communications Magazine* and new industry summits, a monthly membership newsletter that shares the most important information members need to know, new video and virtual offerings, and more.

New programs specific to students were also launched: the Student Tech Leadership Conference and a Student Leadership track; and the Student Recruitment Event initiated at ICC 2023. Additionally, in this new term, we aim at developing a student portal and a career center to provide job opportunities and training, and a student ambassador program to enhance ComSoc's presence at universities. Also very relevant are mentoring activities.

Recognizing that our content, and in particular video, is a key asset to engage with young engineers working in the communications industry, we hope to use video and virtual offerings to reach new audiences of engineers. We are closely working with the Online Content Board to continue updating the Media Center with the latest video offerings.

Stefano: I am well aware that you are particularly attentive to Diversity and Inclusion issues in ComSoc.

Ana: ComSoc seeks to achieve a better balance in terms of gender, geographical region, working sector, age, and several other dimensions.

We will continue with activities to potentiate diversity, by creating a welcoming environment and providing guidance and opportunities for these groups to thrive. We will support and work closely with the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) and Young Professionals (YP) standing committees to achieve this crucial goal.

Among the initiatives that we started in the last two years and aim to continue growing are: the WICE and YP activities in flagship and smaller conferences that provide training and networking opportunities; the support for childcare during conferences; the series of videos highlighting Women in Communications Engineering; and new programs addressing the digital divide, namely Internet for All developed in conjunction with IEEE's Humanitarian Activities Board and the collaboration with IEEE Smart Village.

Stefano: Chapters are the local ComSoc Organization Units, which allow Members to gather and form communities in each country, by organizing workshops, conferences, and lectures, targeting especially local needs. Do you have any new programs aimed at Chapters?

Ana: ComSoc Chapters are our best instrument to understand and better serve our members. We will continue to facilitate and potentiate their role with the help of the Regional Directors, providing fora for sharing ideas and best practices, and facilitating less complex procedures for funding and recognition.

We have simplified the procedures involved in the Distinguished Lecturer Program (DLP) that connects renowned communications technology experts with ComSoc Chapters and we are sure it will thrive even more.

We have started to provide funding to ComSoc Student Branch Chapters, so they can leverage and promote their ComSoc membership with activities for their members.

A Sister Chapters pilot program has been launched to create new relationships, facilitating the joint organization of technical

events and connecting members around the globe. All these initiatives that we started in the last two years will be further developed and improved.

Stefano: Would you like to conclude our interview by presenting the members of the MGA Council and their roles, including both volunteers and staff?

Ana: We have a wonderful team of ComSoc volunteers and staff who are committed to advancing towards these goals. Our regional leadership consists of Lingyang Song as the Director of the Asia/Pacific Region, J. Javier Berrocal Olmeda as the Director of the Europe, Middle-East & Africa Region, Yessica Saez as the Director of the Latin America Region, and Besma Smida as the Director of the North America Region. Moreover, Fawzi Behmann is serving as the Director of Industry Outreach, Ranga Rao Venkatesha Prasad as the Director of Member Services, Toktam Mahmoodi as the Chair of the WICE Standing Committee, and Virginia Piloni as the Chair of the YP Standing Committee.

I am grateful to all of them, as well as to many other volunteers who are helping improve our services and relations, including Baek-Young Choi who is chairing our Sister Societies Committee, Andres Navarro who will lead our Humanitarian Activities, Newman Wilson overseeing our Mentoring initiative, and countless others. Special thanks to Trish Jaraicie and Cindy Tiritilli, ComSoc Staff, for their invaluable help.

I am deeply honored to serve the ComSoc community, committed to listening, and to do my best to improve the member experience. Thank you for this opportunity to present our plans for the GCN.

CHAPTER NEWS

IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter: 2024 Kick-Off with Member Gathering

by Muhammad Ary Murti, Chair, and Eka Kusumawardhani, IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter

In 2024, the IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) Indonesia Chapter commenced with an energetic Member Gathering held at the Faculty of Industrial Technology Auditorium, Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

UII stands as one of Indonesia's leading private universities. Founded a month before the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945, UII is deeply rooted in nationalism and guided by enduring values. Over the years, UII has evolved into a distinguished center of learning. Situated on the northern outskirts of Yogyakarta, the heart of Javanese culture, its main campus offers a picturesque view of Mount Merapi, making it an ideal environment for academic pursuits. UII boasts a comprehensive array of educational programs, including 4 doctoral, 12 master's, 3 professional, 25 undergraduate, and 4 diploma programs. Among these is the Faculty of Industrial Technology at Jalan Kaliurang KM 14.5, Umbulmartani, Ngemplak, Krawitan, Umbulmartani, Kec. Ngemplak, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, the venue for the event.

The event started with an inaugural address by Dr. Muhammad Ary Murti, Chair of the IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter, highlighting the crucial role of innovation and collaboration in navigating the evolving digital landscape. Dr. Firdaus, Ph.D., warmly welcomed the attendees as the host, setting the tone for an engaging exchange of ideas.

Dr. Cutifa Safitriskillfully guided the proceedings, ensuring a seamless flow of activities throughout the gathering. The agenda unfolded into two distinct segments. The first segment featured a series of technical talks led by Satriyo Dharmanto, Director of Engineering at TVRI. Dharmanto's "IP Networks in Modern Public Service Media" presentation explored the



Photo Session Member Gathering.



Faculty of Industrial Technology, Universitas Islam Indonesia.

complex challenges and opportunities shaping contemporary broadcasting. Following suit, Arief Hamdani Gunawan provoked contemplation on the ethical dimensions of AI in communication. At the same time, Dr. Wiseto Agung shared invaluable insights on "Digital Innovation Ecosystem: Essential Knowledge for Digital Talents." Under the adept moderation of Dr. Alfin Hikmaturokhan, these discussions provided fertile ground for the exchange of knowledge, fostering innovative ideas and collaborative strategies.

The second segment provided a platform for the IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter to present its annual report, paving the way for dynamic discussions among participants. Topics ranged from potential collaborations to emerging technological trends, with significant contributions from representatives of various universities and industries in Indonesia, such as BRIN, PT Telkom, UII, UGM, UMY, UNU Yogyakarta, IST Akprind, UTY, ITT Purwokerto, Universitas Telkom, President University, and Universitas Tidar.

The event was concluded by inviting attendees to join the IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter as members or part of the

management committee. The current leadership team, including Muhammad Ary Murti (Chair), Muhammad Nasrun (Vice Chair), Eka Kusumawardhani (Secretary), Alfin Hikmaturokhman (Treasurer), and others, emphasized the profound benefits and impact of belonging to this esteemed community. As the curtains fell on the IEEE ComSoc Indonesia Chapter's inaugural event in 2024, the echoes of collaboration and innovation lingered, promising a future marked by technological advancement and knowledge exchange.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE TOUR

IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecture Tour of Nan Yang to East Asia

A Journey of Knowledge Sharing, Ideas Exchange, and Cultural Engagement

by Nan Yang, Australian National University at Canberra, Australia

I completed an IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecture Tour (DLT) to East Asia in early April 2024. Overall, I enjoyed the trip very much, because of the excitement gained from sharing my knowledge with scientists and research students in various universities, the highly insightful ideas obtained during the discussion with the audience, and the unforgettable experience when engaging with the historical and cultural places in the cities that I visited.

SUMMARY OF DLT TALKS

In this DLT, I delivered five talks, scheduled as follows:

- Talk 1 at Yonsei University, hosted by Prof. Jemin Lee, on 5 April 2024
- Talk 2 at Keio University, hosted by Prof. Tomoaki Ohtsuki, on 9 April 2024
- Talk 3 at Osaka Metropolitan University, hosted by Prof. Hai Lin, on 10 April 2024
- Talk 4 at National Tsing Hua University, hosted by Prof. Yao-Win Peter Hong and Prof. Chia-Han Lee, on 12 April 2024
- Talk 5 at National Taiwan University, hosted by Prof. Hsu-an-Jung Su, on 12 April 2024

All of my talks have focused on terahertz communications, a pivotal wireless technology for the 6G and beyond era. In each of my talks, I introduced the role and importance of terahertz communications for the 6G and beyond wireless networks, gave a summary of recent research advances in terahertz communications in terms of performance analysis, spectrum allocation, and hybrid beamforming, and finally discussed pressing challenges for harnessing the benefits of terahertz communications in the next decades. At the end of each talk, I promoted IEEE ComSoc to the audience.

It is impressive to see that each talk attracted 20–40 attendees, including both academic staff members and research students. At the end of each talk, I had insightful discussions with the audience on terahertz technologies and 6G, where some discussions were very inspiring. For example, I discussed the cause and impact of molecular absorption with the audience at Yonsei University, beam split and squint issues with the audience at Osaka Metropolitan University, and signal processing design in photonic-based terahertz systems with the audience at National Tsing Hua University. Such discussions have provided me with several new ideas for my research at the next stage.

EXTRA TALK ACTIVITIES

In addition to research talks, I was lucky to have two free Saturdays during this trip.

On the first Saturday, I visited historical palaces in Seoul, such as Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, and Deoksugung, as well as the War Memorial of Korea, which provided me with an insider viewpoint of Korean history.



Nan Yang before giving his talk at Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan.



Deoksugung in Seoul.

On the second Saturday, I visited the National Palace Museum in Taipei, where it was unforgettable to see the Jadeite Cabbage in front of my eyes. Also, I spent the evening in New Taipei City and watched a baseball game in the top league in Taiwan, between Fubon Guardians and Rakuten Monkeys. This was my first experience watching a baseball game live, giving me a completely different impression from watching it on the Internet.

In addition, although I have not had any time to do sightseeing in Yokohama and Osaka, I have seen beautiful Sakura (i.e. cherry blossoms in the Japanese language) on the campuses of Keio University and Osaka Metropolitan University, as well as a lot of first-year students who just started their university life there. I sincerely hope some of these students will join IEEE and become rising stars in our field in the near future.

MY VIEWS ON THE DL PROGRAM

In reflection, my DLT was not only about academic experience; it was a testament to the power of in-person connection and the great potential of collaboration. Therefore, I highly recommend the DL program to any interested researcher. If you want to become an IEEE ComSoc DL, please apply for it and I am sure it will benefit your research career profoundly! With the efforts of all DLs, we will unlock the potential of our collective knowledge and propel our field toward new horizons.

IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecture Tour of Augusto Neto to Europe

by Augusto José Venâncio Neto, IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer, Brazil

I am pleased to present this report on my recent Distinguished Lecture Tour in Europe, which took place from May 10 to 18, 2024. During this tour, I had the opportunity to deliver lectures at several prestigious institutions and engage in valuable discussions with local researchers to explore potential collaborations and joint endeavors.

SUMMARY OF DLT TALKS

In this DLT, I delivered five talks, scheduled as follows:

- Talk 1 at the University of Murcia, hosted by Prof. Antonio Skarmeta and Ramon Iborra, on 10 May 2024
- Talk 2 at École d'Ingénieurs Généraliste du Numérique (EFREI), Paris, France. Hosted by Prof. Dario Vieira, on 13 May 2024
- Talk 4 at the University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Hosted by Prof. Flávio Oliveira, on 16 May 2024.
- Talk 3 at University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal. Hosted by Prof. Susana Sargento, on 17 May 2024
- Talk 5 at Instituto de Telecomunicações, Aveiro, Portugal. Hosted by Prof. Daniel Corujo, on 17 May 2024

The tour began at the University of Murcia in Spain, where I presented a lecture entitled "Network Slicing: Concepts, Enabling Technologies, Use Cases, Challenges, and Opportunities," along with the latest advancements in my research area. The event was well-attended, and I had the chance to interact with faculty members and students, discussing potential research synergies and student exchange opportunities. Moreover, Prof. Ramon presented all 5G facilities at Univ. of Murcia, where we discussed further collaborations harnessing our strong synergies.

Next, I traveled to Paris, France, to deliver a lecture at EFREI. The audience was engaged and enthusiastic, and I received positive feedback on the content and delivery of my presentation, entitled "Predictive MANO of end-to-end Slices Across 5G Mobile Systems." Following the lecture, I met with the university's research team to discuss potential joint projects and the possibility of co-supervising student theses.

The tour then took me to Portugal, where I visited the University of Aveiro and the University of Minho, presenting our



Lecture at the University of Minho.

LANCE (Leading Advanced Technologies Center of Excellence) facilities, research skills, and projects. At these institutions, I delivered lectures that were well-received by the faculty and students. These visits also provided opportunities for me to meet with local researchers and explore areas of common interest, such as joint publications, research projects, and student exchanges.

My final stop was at the Instituto de Telecomunicações, also in Portugal. I had the chance to give a talk about "Cloud-Network Slicing: Concepts, Benefits, and Enablers," and engage in discussions with the institute's researchers. We identified several potential areas for collaboration, including joint project proposals and the exchange of researchers and students. Fig. 4 provides a view of my lecture at the Instituto de Telecomunicações.

Throughout the tour, I was able to establish new connections and strengthen existing ones with European researchers and institutions. These interactions have opened up exciting possibilities for future collaborations, such as joint publications, research projects, and student exchanges.

EXTRA TALK ACTIVITIES

On 17 May, I had the privilege of delivering a lecture to the Ph.D. class on "Communications and Autonomous Systems" at the University of Aveiro. The lecture, titled "Proactive Management and Orchestration of Network Slices," covered harnessing edge computing capabilities along with machine learning techniques to enable proactive Management and Orchestration (MANO) for 5G network slices. In the end, experimental outcomes on predicted decision-making demands to optimize slice provisioning, scaling, and migration across Open RAN domains will be discussed. The audience consisted of Ph.D. students and faculty members from the university's Department of Electronics, Telecommunications, and Informatics, and the discussion that followed the lecture was engaging and thought-provoking. I appreciated the opportunity to share my research expertise with the next generation of scholars in the field and to learn from their perspectives and insights.

MY VIEWS ON THE DL PROGRAM

My DLT in Europe was a resounding success. It allowed me to share my research with a wider audience, engage with local researchers, and explore new avenues for collaboration. I am confident that the connections made during this tour will lead to fruitful partnerships and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in our field. I strongly endorse the DL program for any researcher interested in expanding their horizons. I encourage every IEEE member to apply as it will greatly enhance their research career. Together, as a community of DLs, we can harness our combined expertise to drive innovation and advance our field to new heights.

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