University of Twente, The Netherlands:

Turkey scoops top prize in robo comp

THE FIRST Region 8 Student Robotics Contest took place on 25–29 May, hosted by the University of Twente Student Branch.

The contest was founded by the IEEE Region 8 Student Activities Committee as a method of getting Student Branches to improve cooperation, communication and knowledge/experience sharing; to motivate branches to organise international events in addition to local activities; and to increase the participation of student members to technical events in addition to social ones. The Student Branch at the University of Twente has run its own robotics contest for a long time and so was the obvious choice to organise this event.

The winning team and robot

The challenge

Teams had to build robots that could autonomously detect and extinguish fires. Five national teams participated: Egypt, Serbia, Italy, Turkey, and the Netherlands.

Over the first two days of the contest, the team members worked hard to make last-minute updates to the robots. Unfortunately, the Italian team had severe problems with their robot, and could not perform in the contest, but they gave a presentation about their robot design, which was very impressive.

The day before the official contest, the participants visited the robotics research projects that are currently active at the University of Twente, such as Dribble, microSPAM and LOPES.

The day of the contest started with a very interesting lecture on Probabilistic Robotics by Prof. Wolfram Burgard. This was followed by two lectures: one on robotics projects in the Control Engineering group of the University of Twente by Gijs van Oort, and the other on robot soccer by the University of Twente Robot Soccer Team supervisor, Albert Schoute.

After lunch, the contest began. At the end, the team from Turkey won the competition, followed closely by the Dutch team. The team from Italy won the prize for the best robot design. All wining teams received a SRC2006 trophy and a programmable robot sponsored by RBZ robotdesign. Everyone received a certificate of participation.

The contest was followed by a trip to Amsterdam and a visit to Vanderlande Industries. Lots of photos of the entire event can be found at *www.ieee.utwente.nl/gallery/albums.php*

The contest was sponsored by the IEEE R8 SAC, IEEE Robotics & Automation Society, IEEE Financial Advantage Program and local sponsors. Thank you to everyone involved for making this event a success.

Stefan Henzen
University of Twente
s.f.henzen@student.utwente.nl
Başak Yüksel
IEEE R8 SAC Robotics Contest Coordinator
basak@ieee.org

Student Activities Committee, Jordan Section:

Jordan's new SAC gets up and running

THE IEEE Jordan Section has formed a Student Activities Committee (SAC). Rana Ramadan, Hanan AlTous and Khaled Rayyan had the initiative to establish this committee in order to interconnect between student branches in Jordan, and to discuss difficulties, future plans and pitfalls which stand in the way of establishing effective and successful branches.

SAC held its first meeting on 22 June at the Industrial Outreach Unit at the University of Jordan, hosted by the IEEE University of Jordan Student Branch. Several representatives from student branches were in attendance, including those from the University of Jordan, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Balqa' Amman University, Amman Ahliyyeh University, and Yarmook University. Student Branches from the Princess Sumaya University of Technology and the Hashemite University apologised for being unable to attend.

The meeting started with a welcoming word from IEEE University of Jordan Student Branch Chair, Mohammad Kharbat, followed by an introduction to the goals and aims of IEEE Jordan Section SAC by Rana Ramadan, WIE Jordan Section Chair and SAC Chair, followed by a word from Prof. Mohammad Kamel Abdelazeez, Jordan Section Chair, in which he spoke of the history of the Jordan Section and co-operation opportunities open for student branches, and of funding abilities and new perspectives to promote the IEEE.

Afterwards, Khaled Rayyan introduced the meeting agenda. Every branch submitted an annual activity report of the academic year 2005–2006 within a given deadline and conducted a presentation of most important highlights of each and every experience.

The meeting resumed after the coffee break whereupon future action plans and the process by which the student branches would work and communicate were discussed.

The winning branch of this evaluation process will host a training workshop for the other branches on how it maintains its level of performance.

Tala Nimri
IEEE Jordan Section

Biysk Technological Institute, Russia:

SB takes part in all-Russian youth expos

BTI STUDENT Branch members took part in all six 'Scientific and technical creativity of the youth (NTTM 2006)' events held over 20–24 June in Moscow. The series was organised by the Department of Education, the government of Moscow, the state joint-stock company All-Russian Exhibition Centre, and the Moscow Chancellor Soviet.

This year, two BTI projects were awarded with medals for success in scientific and technical creativity (Sergey Terentiev and Alexander Novikov under the supervision of Evgeniy Sypin), while another two were awarded certificates (Maxim Khmelev and Sergey Levin). Also, Alexander Novikov *(pictured above)* received a First Degree Russian Federation President Grant, awarded to support talented youth. Konstantin Tunin, chairman of the Student Branch, presented an out-of-competition project, 'The participation in the international organisations as a one of a student innovation activity form'.

Evgeniy Sypin, head of our delegation, was awarded a special diploma in recognition of his tireless work in the science committee of the exhibition.

The Student Branch was also nominated for the best project in the field of IEEE. The exhibition science committee handed the Student Brand a special certificate 'For development of the student and post-graduate student science-research and experimental-design work'.

Irina Uskova, Secretary
irus@ieee.org