



May 2025

ISSN 2374-1082

## INTERVIEW

## ComSoc Industry Outreach

## Interview with Fawzi Behmann, IEEE ComSoc Industry Outreach Director

by Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter  
Editor-in-Chief, IEEE Division III Director, and Fawzi Behmann,  
IEEE ComSoc Industry Outreach Director

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

In this series of articles, I introduce the Vice President and the six Directors on 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, they present their sector activities and plans one by one.

In this issue, I interview Fawzi Behmann, IEEE ComSoc Director of Industry Outreach.

Fawzi is the founder and president of TelNet Management Consulting Inc., specializing in smart networking solutions across industries like healthcare, mobility, and smart cities. With over 35 years of experience, Fawzi has held executive positions in leading companies like Motorola, Nortel, and Teleglobe. He has contributed extensively to telecommunications, IoT, 5G, and AI technologies. He was the chief architect for Telecom Network Management systems and directed strategic marketing for SoC semiconductor products. A distinguished lecturer and keynote speaker, Fawzi has co-authored the book *Collaborative Internet of Things* and has published over 50 papers. He co-founded the IoT in Healthcare Consortium and is a Texas State University faculty advisor. Fawzi holds a BSc in Mathematics, a Master's in Computer Science, and an Executive MBA. He has received several prestigious awards, including the IEEE USA Regional Professional Leadership Award (2018) and the Freescale CEO Diamond Chip Award (2008).

**Stefano: Hello Fawzi! Would you like to begin by introducing the ComSoc Industry Outreach Board to our readers?**

Fawzi: IEEE Industry Outreach encompasses various initiatives connecting the IEEE community with industry, including industry engagement, standards development, and professional development opportunities. It aims to advance technology for the benefit of humanity.

The Industry Outreach (governed by the Industry Outreach Board) is responsible for assuring a comprehensive and cost-effective outreach program of Society products and services to industry and governmental communities. It is also responsible for developing liaisons with communications and networking-related enterprises to promote ComSoc products and services and attract industry and government leaders into ComSoc's volunteer community.



Stefano Bregni



Fawzi Behmann

The board consists of seven voting members and up to four Members-at-Large, who may be appointed by the Director to represent external industrial and governmental interests. The seven voting members are representatives from several boards: Industry Communities Board, Technical Committees Board, Educational Services Board, PUB-C, CON-C, Standardization Programs Development Board, and MGA-C.

**This is your first time serving as IEEE IOB Director. What were the first challenges you faced?**

I started serving as IOB director in 2024, following a successful year chaired by Dr. Zhu. Industry engagement is always challenging regarding getting traction and developing and executing opportunities that bring results.

Generally, we are capitalizing on and growing opportunities such as the publication of the Industry column. It takes a lot of effort for the team to select topics that pertain to and generate value for the Industry community. Such a team can change from one issue to the next. The second challenge is the publication venue; in this case, the ComSoc Magazine was found suitable. Typically, we executed two publications in 2024, "The European Vision for 6G Smart Networks and Services" and "IOWN Global Forum."

Second, we strived to support local chapters, Affinity Groups, and consortiums on 6G. Examples: Kolkata and Kerala. Typically, many of these require funding.

As activities on 6G increased, we have delivered value through a signed MOU. We have signed an MOU with Brooklyn 6G Summit, IMS, and one6G. Our level of engagement has gradually increased. For example, at the most recent Brooklyn 6G summit – the 11th edition – 6G From Vision to Action (<https://b6gs.com/agenda2024/>), ComSoc was given the opening address slot, which over 380 experts attended.

**What is the best news of this year?**

One of the other major steps taken is to combine the Industry Outreach with the Corporate Loyalty Program to report under IOB.

This year, we are adding an Industry Advisory Group to support the industry and Loyalty programs.

These two programs are now unique at IEEE, and we are working to strengthen and add value to them.

**What other membership activities in this domain do you consider most significant and would like to highlight in particular?**

ComSoc is currently the lead society among eight others managing the Future Network Technical Community (FNTC): <https://futurenetworks.ieee.org>. Key highlights include Education with relevant advanced technology courses, distinguished Lecture programs, webinars, and flagship forums.

A foundation asset is leveraging the FNTC International Network Generation Roadmap (INGR). The program is supported by 15 working groups. The INGR roadmap has become a great attraction for panel sessions at Flagship conferences and ComSoc/IOB.

**What are the challenges that you face in achieving higher participation by industry?**

We are witnessing great growth in membership, which stands at 36,983 and has the highest retention rate of 65.7%. The growth is a very positive challenge, but it must be accom-

panied by an action plan to ensure that opportunities are made available and encourage participation, although there is always a tight budget for having the needed resources to execute.

That is where having a strategy, soliciting volunteers, building strong networks, and collaborating are essential.

For example, having a high number of industry and student participants creates opportunities to organize panels and mentoring sessions. This was exemplified last year by holding joint chapter events, say, between Austin and Dubai, for a student leadership event leveraging the sister chapter approach instituted by ComSoc. This was repeated among other Paris chapters. Similarly, this created opportunities for mentor sessions with industry.

Similarly, the following are a few diverse examples of panels and events in 2024:

- IEEE Webinar on "Paving the path: Advancing 5G towards 6G"
- IEEE World Forum on Public Safety Technology (WF-OST), Washington, DC
- IEEE Inaugural Life Member Conference, Austin
- IEEE INGR Roadmap panel, Globecom, Capetown South Africa
- IEEE Future Networks World Forum, Dubai, UAE
- IEEE ComSoc 6G Brooklyn Summit, N.Y
- IOB Special Sessions at ICC and Globecom
- IEEE Future Networks Steering Committee monthly meetings
- TAB Membership and Engagement Committee presentation

Currently, we are exploring participation at the NOMS 2025 conference to usher Working Group on Next Generation Network Management supported by ComSoc, TE&I Panel on 6G at ICC, Industry panels / Student Leadership at Future Networks (Dubai), and Globecom (Taipei)

Finally, engaging with the Industry Engagement Committee (IEC) helps societies re-examine the employer type in the member database and resolve unassigned types to achieve completeness and accounting of members.

Also, there is a proposal to add a new 'Distinguished IEEE Industry Member' category to recognize exceptional achievements by industry members.

#### **And what about Students? Do you regularly organize any specific activities for them?**

Students are integral to industry programs. For example, a whole day was set aside for the student industry at ICC 2023 for career recruitment, covering soft skills, job interview skills, and mentoring sessions. I'm currently on the YP board repre-

senting IOB and have participated in the YP special session on Industry Fireside Chat at the ICC conference.

Future Network World Forums typically allocate YP leadership sessions, which has been very successful.

We recognize Students as future leaders and strive to ensure a vibrant leadership team, availability of resources, and support system

They have been actively participating in and developing YP career planning and mentoring sessions at conferences.

Earlier this year, the Central Texas section and Comsoc joint chapter celebrated the long-overdue success of WCNC, which was recently held in the area. Students and YP attended the celebration as future leaders.

#### **To conclude, what are your plans for 2025?**

The IOB program has gradually progressed over the years since starting around 2022 as an Ad Hoc committee on Industry Engagement. It is fueled by the advancement of 5G and now 6G technology, along with IOT and enabling technologies such as AI and Generative AI. The IOB program budget has increased, enabling traction, connecting, and leading in several initiatives. Currently, more MOUs have been signed, and other consortiums have been added. More planned activities in 2025 and beyond include flagship conferences and other 6G forums.

Thank you, Stefano, for helping us share our work and ideas. Also, thank you to the VP-MGA, Ana Garcia Armada, and the President, Robert Schober, for their strong support.



Feb 1, 2025 — The Central Texas-ComSoc Joint chapter Celebrated the successful execution of WCNC. Not in the picture, I'd like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Semih Aslan. He was the Operations Director for WCNC, provided support to the ComSoc chapter, and guided and coordinated student competitions and young professionals. Dr. Aslan is an Associate Professor at Texas State Ingram School of Engineering.

#### **COMSOC CHAPTER REPORT**

## **Achievements in IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter Competitions: A Testament to Innovation and Collaboration**

by Luae A. F. B Al-Tarawneh, IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter Chair

During 2024, the IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter made significant strides in fostering innovation and nurturing creative talent among Jordanian university students through competitions in cutting-edge technological fields. These included the Wireless Data Transfer Rate Measurement Using Deep Learning competition and the Jordan IoT& AI Challenges. These events showcased young minds' ingenuity and demonstrated the power of academia-industry collaborations in addressing real-world challenges.

### **WIRELESS DATA TRANSFER RATE MEASUREMENT USING DEEP LEARNING COMPETITION**

One of the standout events was the **Wireless Data Transfer Rate Measurement Using Deep Learning** competition, organized in collaboration with the IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter and MathWorks under the auspices of the IEEE Jordan Section. MathWorks provided MATLAB software licensing and online and offline training on communication, signal processing, and AI toolboxes, significantly enhancing the competition's technical quality.

This competition saw participation from 12 student teams across Jordanian universities, who were tasked with developing deep learning algorithms to estimate wireless data rates using pre-processed synthetic signal datasets. The competition comprised two stages:

- Communication Signal Processing and Feature Extraction: Teams submitted MATLAB code to demodulate wireless signals and extract raw in-phase and quadrature (IQ) samples, showcasing expertise in signal processing.
- Deep Learning Algorithm Design: Teams trained and tested algorithms using IQ samples, demonstrating proficiency in AI techniques applied to wireless communication systems.

The results were as follows:

- First Place: A joint win for the German Jordanian University and the Hashemite University, whose projects achieved high precision in estimating wireless data rates and optimizing network performance.
- Second Place: Princess Sumaya University for Technology, recognized for its deep learning algorithm's precision.
- Third Place: Al-Zaytoonah University was commended for a solid understanding of the task.

Participants hailed the competition as a transformative experience. Mahmoud Al-Sharji from the PSUT team remarked, "This competition gave us a unique opportunity to face real engineering challenges and develop innovative solutions for the communications sector." "This competition was a remarkable

opportunity for me and my team. It taught us the true value of teamwork and cooperation, showing us how collaboration is key to achieving our goals and delivering impactful results."

The IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter thanks Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) for hosting the competition, the IEEE Jordan Section for their critical support, and Math-Works for their invaluable contributions.

#### JORDAN IoT & AI CHALLENGES

To promote innovation further, the IEEE Jordan **ComSoc Chapter** collaborated with the University of Jordan to organize the Jordan IoT & AI Challenges. The competition showcased 12 teams from various Jordanian universities, each presenting their projects to a distinguished panel of experts.

The results were as follows:

- First Place: "Neuro Touch," an innovative project by students from the University of Petra, designed to manage Parkinson's disease symptoms using reinforcement learning for personalized treatment.
- Second Place: "AI-powered Failure Prediction for 3D Printers," developed by students from the German Jordanian University, aimed at enhancing 3D printing reliability.

The winning teams represented Jordan in the Arab IoT Challenge at GITEX 2024 in Dubai. Competing against 14 teams from across the Arab world, the University of Petra's "Neuro Touch" project secured second place, cementing Jordan's position on the global innovation map. Additionally, Dr. Luae Al-Tarawneh, the chapter's chair, was recognized as Best Local Representative for his exceptional leadership.

#### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

These competitions underscore the IEEE Jordan ComSoc Chapter's



Highlight from the closing ceremony competition on wireless data transfer rate measurement using deep learning.

unwavering commitment to fostering innovation, empowering young talents, and bridging the gap between academia and industry. By equipping students with practical skills and opportunities to tackle real-world challenges, these initiatives spark creativity and inspire the next generation of engineers and innovators.

Through these efforts, the chapter is nurturing a culture of excellence and positioning Jordan as a hub for technological advancement and innovation on the global stage. The success of these events highlights the transformative power of collaboration and vision in shaping the future of technology.

Building on this momentum, the chapter will continue preparing for more competitions in the coming year, aiming to inspire innovation and foster excellence among Jordanian students.

#### COMSOC MGA PROGRAM

### Fostering Innovation and Collaboration: Highlights from the IEEE ComSoc Sister Chapters Program 2024

by Mohab Mangoud, RR Venkatesha Prasad, Ricardo Veiga, Ana Garcia Armada, Trish Jaraicie, IEEE Communications Society

The IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) Sister Chapters Program (SCP)-2024 has demonstrated itself as a highly successful and efficient platform for promoting global collaboration among chapters. Driving technological advancements and enhancing professional development within the communications engineering community. With 200+ chapters worldwide, the ComSoc SCP fosters local engagement and global collaboration by connecting chapters from diverse regions and cultures to strengthen international ties and professional growth. The program started in 2023 and continued in 2024, and it received an excellent response. There were 10 chapters in 2023; in 2024, 23 chapters worked together in pairs.

The SPC Committee is composed of the following individuals:

- Mohab Mangoud, Chair
- Ana Garcia Armada, Vice President, Member and Global Activities
- Ricardo Veiga, ComSoc BoG Member-At-Large
- Ranga Rao Venkatesha Prasad, ComSoc Member Services Director
- Trish Jaraicie, Director of Membership and Marketing

#### THE PROGRAM

The initial idea was proposed by Ricardo Veiga and Ana Garcia in 2023 and coordinated by Mohab Mangoud. It was successfully piloted in 2023. The program is to bring geographically diverse chapters together for almost one year continuously. The idea is to encourage cross-cultural interactions and cooperation. Usually, the activities are held with the local challenges and issues in mind. However, opening to the world stage will make

learning, especially soft skills (interactions, presentation to different audiences), highly fulfilling. We allowed the chapters to come up with their counterpart and apply them; we also asked the chapters with no counterparts to use and propose their ideas for interactions. We then paired the chapters, ensuring that the chapters were geographically apart and that diversity was embedded in making the pairs. Except for one group, all the chapter pairs were geographically far away.

#### FUNDING

Initially, ComSoc supported chapter pairs with funding based on various criteria and the programs they had conceptualized. Additionally, a reserved amount was allocated to recognize and reward pairs that demonstrated exceptional collaboration and provided a comprehensive account of their activities, encouraging chapters to go the extra mile.

#### THE TARGETS

The chapters were briefed at the beginning about the program, and the participants were asked to keep an eye on the following: (a) Exchange information about the problems, challenges, and unique issues that are geographically rooted. (b) Bring resourceful persons to the fore and help members in the chapter pairs to benefit. (c) We instructed the chapter chairs not to get into the technology trap and devise programs different from the usual technical talks. (d) We also asked the chapter pairs to dedicate a few minutes to building friendships and exchanging the best practices. (e) The idea is to foster cross-learning and to learn how to interact on a highly diverse platform/stage.

With the above targets in mind, the chapters were provided with small funding, and all the chapters were brought on one platform. To support each other, we established a WhatsApp group to disseminate the programs, enabling faster communication and providing answers to the chapters, which can also help other chapters.

#### AWARDING

The awards subcommittee developed a selection system to recognize the best five-chapter pairs based on diversity and impact, granting achievement awards and additional funding.

The process prioritized activity variety and diversification. For evaluation, the Sister Chapters Awards Subcommittee will collect reports by December 1st, covering joint technical activities (meetings, conferences, training programs), public relations efforts (media engagement, public meetings, student outreach), student branch activities (engagement and professional growth), and membership development (growth and recognition, including IEEE Fellow and Senior Member elevation).

In the 2023 pilot program, only 10 chapters were selected to participate, divided into two groups, with each group collaborating internally. However, in 2024, the program format evolved to enhance global cooperation. The 2024 Sister Chapters Program (SCP) introduced a new structure by pairing chapters directly to foster closer collaboration. A total of 11 sister chapter pairs (23 chapters) were formed, uniting chapters from diverse cultural and geographic backgrounds. This new approach also allowed chapters to form partnerships across different IEEE regions. Each sister chapter pair actively engages in research exchange, professional development initiatives, and community-driven projects, further strengthening the global ComSoc network. The program promotes cross-cultural exchange and drives innovation by encouraging knowledge-sharing and joint activities. Below is the list of 11 sister chapter pairs participating in the IEEE ComSoc Sister Chapters Program 2024:

#	Chapter # 1	Chapter # 2	
1	Bahrain Chapter	Karachi Chapter	
2	Italy Chapter	Nebraska Chapter	
3	Malaysia Chapter	Sri Lanka Chapter	
4	Bangalore Chapter	Spain Joint Chapter	
5	Morelos Chapter	Bolivia Chapter	
6	Central Texas Joint Chapter	United Arab Emirates Joint Chapter	
7	San Diego Chapter	Kerala Chapter	
8	Delhi Chapter	Lebanon Chapter	
9	Northern Australia Joint Chapter	Indonesia Chapter	
10	Ecuador Chapter	Chile Chapter	
11	Argentina Chapter	Colombia Chapter	Trinidad and Tobago Joint Chapter

The following are some snippets from the program activities.

**Bahrain-Karachi Sister Chapters: Harnessing AI for Network Innovation**  
The Bahrain-Karachi partnership delivered six webinars on AI in Communication Networks, covering Digital Twin Networks and Generative AI in 5G. Their IEEE vTools Training Workshop enhanced volunteer engagement and chapter management, fostering academic and industry collaboration.

The Austin and UAE chapters spearheaded projects on Large Language Models (LLMs) in Telecommunications, co-hosting the IEEE ComSoc competition with MathWorks. Their collaboration during the Future Networks World Forum (FNWF) included panels on Smart Cities and 6G technologies, complemented by a Student Leadership Summit and Women in Engineering sessions promoting inclusivity and leadership. A November hybrid Distinguished Lecturer (DL) event further solidified their knowledge exchange.

#### **Argentina-Colombia-Trinidad & Tobago Sister Chapters: Empowering the Next Generation**

This tri-nation partnership ignited student engagement through Café Científico sessions in Argentina, highlighting ComSoc benefits and projects. The Scientific Paper Expo on Communications in Colombia attracted over 150 participants, while workshops in Trinidad & Tobago explored emerging communication technologies. Their combined efforts resulted in new student branches and a significant increase in membership.

#### **San Diego-Kerala Sister Chapters: Pioneering 6G Research and Professional Development**

The San Diego-Kerala collaboration focused on the 6G Summit: 6G & Beyond, emphasizing secure, resilient communication networks for disaster management. They hosted a lecture series on achieving IEEE Senior Member and Fellow status and organized a Young Professionals (YP) meet, fostering mentorship and cross-regional professional growth.

#### **Bangalore-Spain Sister Chapters: AI Driving the Future of Communications**

Bangalore and Spain chapters held AI-centric events, including the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) event on AI in Communications and a hybrid event on AI's Role in the Telecommunications Sector, bridging academia and industry through collaborative research.

#### **Chile-Ecuador Sister Chapters: Innovating for Societal Impact**

The Chile-Ecuador collaboration emphasized societal resilience via technology. TELECOM 2024 celebrated World Telecommunication and Information Society Day while research on IoT-based Early Warning Systems aimed at improving disaster preparedness in seismic regions, highlighting technology's role in public safety.

#### **Malaysia-Sri Lanka Sister Chapters: Advancing V2X and ITS Technologies**

Malaysia and Sri Lanka chapters hosted webinars on V2X Technologies and 5G/6G Spectrum Strategies. Their Virtual Distinguished Lecturer Program featured prominent industry leaders, sparking global conversations on mobility's future and telecommunications innovations.

#### **Delhi-Lebanon Sister Chapters: Exploring the Frontiers of 6G and Cybersecurity**

Delhi and Lebanon explored emerging 6G technologies and cybersecurity through workshops like *Unlocking the Potential of 6G* and lectures on *Dark Web Anonymity Networks*. Their LaTeX Scientific Writing Workshop enhanced academic writing, while student branches at key universities bolstered membership.

#### **FINAL WORDS**

The above collaborations exemplify the transformative power of the IEEE ComSoc Sister Chapters Program. By fostering cross-cultural partnerships, promoting professional excellence, and nurturing technical innovation, the SCP continues to shape the future of global communications engineering. The IEEE ComSoc Sister Chapters Program 2024 brought together a dynamic group of chapter chairs whose leadership was pivotal in fostering international collaboration and innovation. The program featured Jacques Demerjian, Román Lara, Zhensheng Zhang, Miguel Gutierrez Gaitan, Vivek Ashok Bohara, Muhammad Ary Murti, Diana Dawoud, Wafeeq Ajoor, Fawzi Behmann, Stefano Giordano, and Umair Ahmed Korai Baloch. Their efforts were complemented by Mohamad Yusoff Alias, Yasitha Harshanath, Anindya Saha, Tao Huang, Javier Prieto, Massimiliano Pierobon, Jesus Vazquez, Romeo C. Velarde, Diana Briceño, Manoj BS, Sachin Ganpat, and Milton D. Marche. These chairs were crucial in spearheading groundbreaking research, professional development initiatives, and community-driven projects, significantly contributing to the program's success and reinforcing the global IEEE ComSoc network.

Looking forward to 2025, the program aims to broaden its reach, engage more chapters, and deepen international partnerships. With a steadfast commitment to diversity, innovation, and community-building, the SCP is poised to keep IEEE ComSoc at the forefront of advancing technology for humanity.

For more information on participating or exploring upcoming collaborations, visit the [IEEE ComSoc Sister Chapters Program page] (<https://www.comsoc.org/membership/chapters/sister-chapter-program>).

## IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer Tours in Austria and Oman, 2024

by Tamer ElBatt, IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer,  
American University in Cairo, Egypt

It is a pleasure to give an overview of my recent distinguished lecture tours in two different regions, Central Europe and West Asia, in Oct. and Nov. 2024.

The tours involved lectures at multiple leading institutions spanning four cities, which raised important questions and inspired interesting discussions. The meetings also raised interest in exploring collaboration opportunities and visiting and learning about historical and cultural sites, which I very much enjoyed.

In these two tours, I delivered five talks, scheduled as follows:

DLT in Austria (Oct. 2024):

- Talk one at Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien), hosted by Prof. Christoph Mecklenbräuker, Oct. 8th, 2024.
- Talk two at Graz University of Technology (TU Graz), hosted by Prof. Kay Römer, Oct. 9th, 2024.

DLT in Oman (Nov. 2024):

- Talk three at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Muscat, hosted by Dr. Naser Tarhuni, Nov. 25th, 2024.
- Talk four at the Military Technological College (MTC), Muscat, hosted by Dr. Inam Bari, Nov. 26th, 2024.
- Talk five at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Suhar, hosted by Dr. Mohamed Sadiq, Nov. 27th, 2024.

The focus of my talks revolved around active research directions along 6G/NextG, namely, machine learning over networks and edge intelligence for IoT, edge computing and communications, and, finally, energy harvesting wireless networks. In each talk, I introduced the topic, reviewed the state-of-the-art, presented samples of recent research, and gave an outlook on future research.

Seeing the talks well-attended by faculty members, peer researchers, and undergraduate and graduate students was rewarding. The talks were typically followed by interesting discussions about research challenges and technology trends. For instance, the growing role of machine learning over networks, especially in healthcare, among other sectors, and the associated privacy preservation benefits and tradeoffs were discussed with audiences at multiple institutions. Also, the future of edge computing and communications and their key role in complementing cloud computing was discussed at the Military Technological College, Oman. Some of these questions led to follow-up discussions related to potential collaboration.

In addition to the research talks, I got a glimpse of the rich history and culture of the two regions visited. The first tour was my very first visit to Austria, where I came to learn about the "Empire of Austria,"



Tamer ElBatt and the participants gave their talk at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Suhar, Oman.



A View of Mutrah Corniche, Muscat, Oman.

which was a multinational European power in the 19th century. I got to visit the two largest cities in Austria, Vienna and Graz. Vienna is commonly known for its palaces and museums and is famed as the "City of Music" due to its musical legacy. I visited the historic Belvedere Palace in Vienna and attended a musical performance.

Graz is known as a college and university city, with four colleges and four universities. The historic center of Graz was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1999 due to the harmonious coexistence of typical buildings from different epochs and architectural styles. The two-and-a-half-hour train ride between Vienna and Graz was a unique, relaxing experience. I also got the chance to try different types of typical Austrian Chocolates, including the famous Mozart Chocolate, locally known as "Mozartkugel."

My DLP tour and visit to The Sultanate of Oman, on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula in West Asia, was also the first. Overlooking the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, Oman is famous for its mountainous terrain, scenic landscapes, and diverse, rich culture, connecting south and east Asia to the Middle East. Despite the short visit, I had the chance to get a glimpse of Suhar, close to the border with the United Arab Emirates, and visit the old city in Muscat, namely Mutrah, and "Souq Mutrah," showcasing souvenirs, handmade crafts, spices, and fragrances. I also had a unique chance to taste Omani coffee and typical sweet "Omani Halwa" and dates.

My DLT experience in Fall 2024 was a remarkable success, and I had memorable experiences. It was not only about sharing my research with a broader audience and having a fruitful academic exchange but also an unmatched chance to directly connect with researchers in different parts of the world, learning about the technical challenges in those areas, and, equally important, learning about the people, rich culture and history. I strongly recommend the DL program for researchers interested in growing their research network. I encourage peer researchers to apply to the IEEE ComSoc DL program, and, indeed, it will positively impact your career. With the collective efforts of the DL and ComSoc communities, we can network better and share our research thoughts to drive innovation for the good of humanity.

In summary, the two tours spurred interesting discussions on research, higher education, and, most importantly, culture and history. In fact, the networking activities during the visits gave rise to follow-on communications, leading to potential collaboration initiatives on multiple fronts that will hopefully yield tangible outcomes in the future.

### GCN GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS NEWSLETTER

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