NEWS

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1 EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

CRORS News Continues to Inform OR Community

Dear CRORS members and all interested readers, this is the 2025 issue of CRORS News, in which we inform Society members and all other interested researchers and practitioners about the activities of the Croatian Operational Research Society and some international OR events that have happened since our last issue in December 2024. In this issue, we bring you reports and information from the EURO 2025 and SOR 2025 conferences, as well as information about other conferences, activities of our members, PhD defenses, awards, recognitions, and notable professional achievements.

We are pleased to announce that our guest interviewee in this issue is Professor Ivana Ljubić, as the Keynote Speaker at the KOI 2026 International Conference on Operational Research.

We are also pleased to announce that two issues (Volume 16, Numbers 1 and 2) of the Journal *Croatian Operational Research Review* (CRORR) have been published.

This issue of CRORS News concludes with a call to all CRORS members and other interested researchers to participate in the KOI 2026 conference, which will be held in Brela, Croatia, September 23-25, 2026.

I would like to thank all CRORS members who contributed with their stories, as well as the editorial team of this issue. I would also like to invite all other members to join us with their stories and suggestions in future issues. I wish you all happy holidays and a successful new year!

Karmen Vrhar Šušnjara, Editor, karmen.vrhar@efst.hr

2 CRORS ACTIVITIES IN 2025

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2.1. Annual Meeting of CRORS

The 32nd Annual Meeting of CRORS was held on December 5th, 2025, online.

President of the Society: Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović

Vice-President of the Society: Prof. Snježana Pivac

Secretary of the Society: Senior Assist. Tea Kalinić Milićević

Treasurer: Asist. Prof. Marija Vuković

The Board presented the Report on the work in 2025 (participation of CRORS representatives in the conference EURO 2025 and SOR 2025), financial and operational reports, as well as the Report on the work of the CRORR (Croatian Operational Research Review).

32nd Annual Meeting of CRORS, online
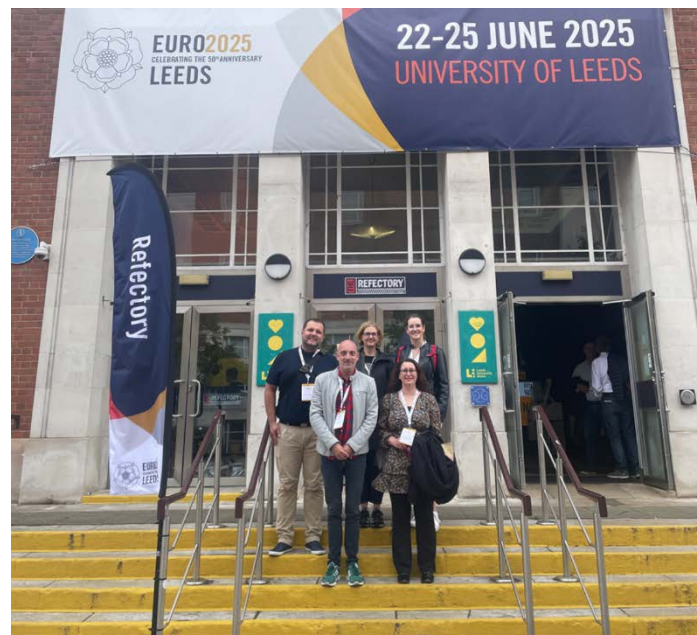
2.2. Conferences

EURO 2025

The 34th European Conference on Operational Research was held from 22nd to 25th of June 2025 at the University of Leeds, UK. They offered a warm Yorkshire welcome, while celebrating the 50th Anniversary of EURO and making a memorable experience for all.

From left to right: Nikolaos Matsatsinis (GR), Dario Pacino (DK), David Simchi-Levi (US), Sean McGarraghy (IE), Luis Gouveia (PT), Erwin Pesch (DE), Paolo Toth (IT), Roman Słowiński (PL), Dolores Romero Morales (ES), Greet Vanden Berghe (BE), David Pisinger (DK), Leonidas Sakalauskas (LT), Rudolf Vetschera (AT), Josef Jablonský (CZ), Ulrike Leopold-Wildburger (AT), Marta Szachniuk (PL), Marc Sevaux (FR), Joanna Józefowska (PL), Gerhard Wäscher (DE)

Two representatives of CRORS in the EURO association, Prof. Josip Arnerić and Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, participated in the conference as well as in a joint meeting with other representatives. The meeting took place on Sunday, June 22, 2025, starting at 9:30 a.m. The meeting voted on the President's report, the EURO-k conferences, the next of which will be held in 2027 in Athens, Greece, and 2028 in Munich, Germany. We also received reports on holding EURO mini-conferences, EURO summer and winter institutes (ESWI), EURO schools for PhD students, EURO working groups (EWG), forums and IFORS. The new EURO President was elected for the 2027/2028 term, i.e., Prof. Dolores Romero Morales from Copenhagen Business School (Denmark). We warmly congratulate her on this achievement! Prof. Josip Arnerić also participated in the CEJOR editors' meeting, where he received a report on CEJOR's work and the editors discussed ways to improve the journal in terms of citations and visibility.

Prof. Josip Arnerić and Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović at EURO 2025

The EURO 2025 conference retained the character of a large and successful operational research conference. A total of 2128 participants from all over the world were registered, presenting 2028 papers in 469 sections, 46 streams, 12 tutorials, and 1 Memorial session. Additionally, 3 plenary and 12 keynote lectures were organized along with social and satellite events. It is worth mentioning the total of 685 registered students.

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During the Opening Ceremony of the 34th European Conference on Operational Research (22 June 2025, University of Leeds), we celebrated the extraordinary leaders who helped shape the success of EURO-k conferences over five decades. Before honoring the former EURO Presidents in attendance, we proudly recognized the truly indispensable **Chairs of Program Committees (PC)** and **Organizing Committees (OC)** from all 34 EURO-k Conferences - from the inaugural event in Brussels in 1975 to this year's 50th anniversary edition. These individuals have been the backbone of EURO's success. Their leadership, energy, and passion have made each EURO-k conference a success - and as masters of Operational Research, they have always known how to bring everything together **optimally** ☺.

EURO at 50: Honoring Its Presidents

From left to right: Richard Eglese (UK), Paolo Toth (IT), Martine Labbé (BE), Immanuel M. Bomze (AT), Anita Schöbel (DE), Marc Sevaux (FR), Alexis Tsoukias (FR), Maria Grazia Speranza (IT), Gerhard Wäscher (DE), Laureano Escudero (ES), Frits Spieksma (NL)

Among our members, the following participated in the conference with papers:

- Bojan Žugec: An instrument for assessing the digital maturity of schools
- Nikolina Žajdela Hrustek, Nenad Perši: Indices and models for monitoring the spread of information, communication and digital technologies - an overview
- Tea Šestanović, Josip Arnerić, Klara Luketa: DCC-MGARCH and wavelet coherence analysis in exploring the contagion effect between cryptocurrencies and fiat currencies

Contacts were established for potential cooperation with presidents and representatives of other operational research societies and other participants.

SOR 2025

The 18th International Symposium on Operations Research in Slovenia (SOR'25) was held from 24th to 26th of September 2025 in Bled, Slovenia. It was organized by the Slovenian Society INFORMATIKA (SSI), the Section for Operational Research (SOR), and co-organized by the University of Maribor, Faculty of Organisational Sciences, Kranj, Slovenia (UM FOV), and Rudolfovo – Science and Technology Centre Novo mesto, Novo mesto, Slovenia.

The opening at SOR'25 was moderated by Prof. Mirjana Kljajić Borštnar, Co-Chair of SOR'25 PC, and speeches were given by Prof. Lidija Zadnik Stirn, President of SSI-SOR, Prof. Slavko Žitnik, President of SSI, Prof. Polona Šprajc, dean of UM FOV, Prof. Janez Povh, director of Rudolfovo – Science and Technology Centre Novo mesto, Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, President of the Croatian Operational Research Society (CRORS), Assoc. Prof. Tomasz Wachowicz from the University of Economics in Katowice, Poland, and presidents/representatives of several other operational research societies from abroad.

SOR'25 participants in front of the conference venue

SOR'25 is the scientific event in the field of Operational Research, another in the traditional series of biennial international OR conferences organized by SSI-SOR in Slovenia. It is a continuation of the seventeen previous symposia.

Prof. Lidija Zadnik Stirn, Assist. Prof. Marija Vuković, Karmen Vrhar Šušnjara, Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, and Assoc. Prof. Tomasz Wachowicz at SOR'25

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The main goal of SOR'25 is to promote knowledge, interest, and education in the field of OR in Slovenia, Europe, and worldwide to build the intellectual and social capital that is essential for maintaining the identity of OR, especially at a time when interdisciplinary cooperation is proclaimed as particularly important for solving problems in today's challenging times.

SOR'25 was highlighted by five distinguished keynote speakers:

- Prof. Tamás Terlaky (Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, USA)
- Prof. Sanja Petrovic (Nottingham University Business School, Division of Operations Management and Information Systems, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham, UK)
- Prof. Josip Arnerić (University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business, Department of Statistics, Zagreb, Croatia)
- Assist. Prof. Milica Maričić (University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Department of Operational Research and Statistics, Belgrade, Serbia),
- Assoc. Prof. Drago Bokal (University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Laboratory for Natural Science and Mathematical Applications and Research, Maribor, Slovenia)

Prof. Ksenija Dumičić, Prof. Josip Arnerić, and Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović with the symposium participants from Belgrade (Veljko Jeremić, Milica Maričić, Veljko Uskoković and Nikola Drinjak)

The conference Proceedings include 105 short papers or extended abstracts by 213 authors. Among these authors, 55 come from Croatia, while 25 authors are CRORS members. A new part of the Proceedings is the OR Personalities (5 papers) covering the curriculum vitae of 5 distinguished plenary speakers.

Several social events were organized at SOR'25:

- a walking tour around Lake Bled
- the gala dinner with a quiz on Wednesday
- a social event with traditional Bled cream cake

These events provided an opportunity for further networking while being extremely fun. Also, the winners of the SOR quiz held at the gala dinner showed enviable knowledge, especially in OR and Slovenia.

The winners of the SOR quiz held at the gala dinner

Traditional Slovenian dance during a social event

2.3. Other activities of CRORS members

PhD defenses in 2025

Tea Kalinić Milićević successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on July 18, 2025, as part of the Postgraduate University (Doctoral) Program in Economics and Business Economics at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split. The dissertation titled "Assessment of Bid-Ask Spread in the Bond Market with Machine Learning" proposes a novel machine-learning framework for modelling the bid-ask spread of government bonds, using both daily and intraday data for German, French, and Italian sovereign bonds. Over 800 models were estimated, including linear, tree-based, and neural-network approaches. Results showed consistently superior predictive performance of linear and neural-network models compared to tree-based ones, particularly in periods of distributional shift. The most influential predictors include autoregressive terms, yield-curve measures, volatility indicators, time-to-maturity, and macroeconomic surprises, while the parallel modelling of bid and ask prices proved

especially effective for intraday forecasting. The dissertation was supervised by Prof. Branka Marasović, from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, as mentor. The defense was conducted before the Committee composed of:

– Prof. Roberto Ercegovac, OTP banka d.d., Croatia,
– Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia,
– Assist. Prof. Ivana Lolić, Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Tea Kalinić Milićević and the Committee at the PhD defense

Tomislav Korotaj successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on June 2, 2025, as part of the Postgraduate University (Doctoral) Program in Economics and Business Economics at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb. The dissertation titled "Analysis of the Impact of the Minimum Wage on Income Inequality and Youth Labor Market Outcomes in EU Countries" examines the impact of minimum wage levels on income inequality and youth labor market outcomes in EU member states, with a particular focus on the NEET population. Using panel data for 16 EU countries from 2005 to 2020 and applying CCEMG and AMG estimators, the study investigates the relationships between minimum wages, income inequality, NEET rates, and labor force participation, separately for countries above and below the EU average GDP per capita. The results suggest that minimum wages are not the main drivers of income redistribution or youth (non)participation in the labor market. The findings highlight the importance of broader structural factors, such as education policy, institutional efficiency and labor market conditions, and the dissertation concludes with policy recommendations aimed at improving school-to-work transition, activating young people, and reducing social and economic exclusion among NEET groups. The dissertation was supervised by Prof. Nataša Kurnoga from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics, as mentor. The defense was conducted before the Committee composed of:

– Prof. Jurica Šimurina, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics, Croatia,
– Assoc. Prof. Anita Čeh Časni, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics, Croatia,
– Assoc. Prof. Saša Jakšić, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics, Croatia.

Tomislav Korotaj at the PhD defense

Congratulations to our new doctors on this remarkable achievement! Wishing you continued success in all your future endeavors.

First thesis defense in the new postgraduate specialist study program

Ivana Mravak successfully defended her specialist thesis on October 14, 2025, within the Postgraduate University Specialist Study Program "Management of Healthcare Organizations" at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split. Her thesis, titled "The Impact of Health System Productivity on Population Health Status in European Countries: A Spatial Panel Analysis," was supervised by Prof. Blanka Škrabić Perić, as mentor. The defense was conducted before the following Committee:

– Assoc. Prof. Lana Kordić, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia,
– Prof. Blanka Škrabić Perić, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia,
– Prof. Silvia Golem, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia.

We are proud to highlight that Ivana Mravak is the first student to defend a thesis in this newly launched study program. Our warmest congratulations to Ivana on this important achievement, and sincere thanks to her mentor for her guidance and support.

Ivana Mravak and the Committee at the defense

New edition of the university textbook and University Awards by Prof. Đula Borozan

The Faculty of Economics in Osijek has published the newly updated edition of the university textbook "Makroekonomija" (*Macroeconomics)* authored by Prof. **Đula Borozan**.

The textbook is intended for students of the Faculty of Economics at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, as well as students from related faculties and higher education institutions studying macroeconomic theory and applied economic analysis within their academic programs.

Covering nearly five hundred pages, the book addresses key macroeconomic topics and models, combining theoretical frameworks with real-world economic examples. This approach encourages readers to develop deeper understanding, make comparisons, and critically reflect on different perspectives and interpretations of contemporary macroeconomic issues.

Therefore, the textbook represents a valuable contribution to the understanding of the dynamic field of macroeconomics and serves as essential reading for all those wishing to engage more deeply with today's economic realities.

Published University Textbook cover

Prof. Borozan has also been recognized with two major awards from the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. She received the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek Award for highest overall citation impact, as public recognition for her inclusion among the top 2% most cited scientists worldwide according to Stanford University and Elsevier. She was also awarded the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek Award for outstanding scientific achievements in the social sciences, in recognition of her scientific publications, leadership and engagement in research projects, and internationally acknowledged scientific excellence.

Best Paper Award at ISCBE 2025 – Second place

Assist. Prof. **Katerina Fotova Čiković** participated in the ISCBE 2025: 8th International Scientific Conference on Business and Economics "Economic resilience and sustainability: Contemporary challenges", held on 8–9 May 2025 in Tetovo, North Macedonia.

She presented the paper *"Application of Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Concept: A Review and Bibliometric Analysis"* (authors: Ivana Martinčević, Katerina Fotova Čiković & Vesna Sesar).

The paper received the Best Paper Award – Second place, recognizing its contribution to the conference theme.

Assist. Prof. Katerina Fotova Čiković at ISCBE 2025

DINAMIC DANUBE: EU Interreg Project co-led by Prof. Kristina Šorić

Our member Prof. **Kristina Šorić**, together with her colleague from RIT Croatia, Martin Žagar, is co-leading the EU Interreg project DINAMIC DANUBE on behalf of the project leader, RIT Croatia.

The main idea of the DINAMIC DANUBE project is to strengthen small family farms in the Danube region through lifelong learning, peer mentoring, and technological innovation, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, gender equality, and rural development. The project includes the implementation of pilot activities in the field of precision agriculture, the development of policy recommendations, and the establishment of a regional support network.

RIT Croatia coordinates the work of 17 partner institutions from across the Danube region, including Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

The project aims to create a curriculum that will help small farms acquire knowledge in business management and digitalization, with the goal of improving their processes. The curriculum will also include tools and methods for optimizing business operations and short agri-food supply chains.

The project runs from April 2025 to March 2028, with a total budget of €2,396,950, of which Interreg funds €1,917,560.

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Kristina Šorić at the 14th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

2025 ISI Service Award for Prof. Ksenija Dumičić

At the World Statistics Congress 2025, held from 5 to 9 October 2025 in The Hague and organized by the International Statistical Institute (ISI), Prof. **Ksenija Dumičić** received the 2025 ISI Service Award.

This recognition honors her leadership, commitment to ISI and the global statistical community, as well as her work as Chair of the ISI Committee on Women in Statistics during two terms from 2021 to 2025.

Prof. Dumičić has been an Elected Member of ISI since 2012 and is currently a member of the ISI Public Voice of Statistics Consortium.

Prof. Ksenija Dumičić at the World Statistics Congress 2025

Croatian Economic Association Award for Assist. Prof. Zvonimir Kuliš

The 33rd Annual Conference of Economists, one of the most prominent Croatian professional and scientific events in the field of economics that brings together the academic community, the business sector and economic policy makers, was held in Opatija, Croatia, from 5 to 7 November 2025.

We are pleased to highlight the success of our researcher Assist. Prof. **Zvonimir Kuliš**, who, together with colleagues Prof. Josip Mikulić, Assist. Prof. Vanja Vitezić, and Assoc. Prof. Stjepan Srhoj, received the award of the Croatian Economic Association (CEA) for promoting scientific research in the field of national economics. The award was granted for the paper "Tourism boom, housing doom: Excessive tourism and international emigration," published in the leading international journal Annals of Tourism Research, Elsevier, vol. 109(C), 2024.

Prof. Josip Mikulić, Assist. Prof. Zvonimir Kuliš, Assoc. Prof. Stjepan Srhoj, Assist. Prof. Vanja Vitezić at the 33rd Annual Conference of Economists in Opatija, Croatia

IIA Honorable Recognition Award for Prof. Tina Vuko and Assoc. Prof. Marko Čular

Long-standing members of the Croatian Operational Research Society from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split, Prof. **Tina Vuko** and Assoc. Prof. **Marko Čular**, received an honorary recognition from the global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) in July 2025 for their contribution to the Internal Auditor journal. The honorary "Ted Keys Honorable Mention 2025" was awarded for their professional article "Cybersecurity Assurance" (Issue 12/24; Drašček, M.; Slapničar, S.; Vuko, T.; Čular, M.), which stood out for its exceptional quality, clarity of presentation, practical orientation, and relevance for professional internal audit practice. The awarded article builds upon their scientific research and published work in Q1 journals: "Effectiveness of cybersecurity audit" (International Journal of Accounting Information Systems) and "Key drivers of cybersecurity audit effectiveness: A neo-institutional perspective" (International Journal of Auditing).

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Hanfa Award mentorship excellence by Assist. Prof. Marija Vuković

Assist. Prof. **Marija Vuković** demonstrated exceptional mentoring in supervising student Roko Lukačević, who won 2nd place in the competition held as part of the Annual Student Award for the Best Scientific and Professional Papers organized by the Croatian Financial Services Supervisory Agency (Hanfa). As a mentor, Assist. Prof. Vuković provided guidance in defining the research aim and scope in accordance with Hanfa's competition requirements, as well as in designing the research, developing the methodology, and offering continuous support throughout all stages of the work, all of which contributed to achieving this excellent result.

The paper is publicly available in the Faculty repository. Additional information about the award can be found on Hanfa's official website, including the list of award recipients and the summary of the paper.

Assist. Prof. Marija Vuković with Hanfa-awarded student Roko Lukačević

New CRORS Members at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split

Two new CRORS members joined the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split in 2025.

Karmen Vrhar Šušnjara began working as a teaching assistant at the Department of Quantitative Methods in April 2025, while **Ante Toni Vrdoljak**, PhD joined the Department of Economics in September 2025 as a senior assistant and as a researcher on the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) project "Production Network: Topology, Change and Transmission".

Both colleagues bring strong academic interest in quantitative methods and applied economic analysis, and are actively involved in teaching and research activities at the Faculty.

These new colleagues strengthen both the teaching and research capacities of the Faculty and represent valuable additions to the CRORS community.

Workshop: Financial Econometrics in R

On December 12th 2025, Prof. **Josip Arnerić** held a workshop on the topic "Financial Econometrics in R." The workshop was held online via the Zoom platform, making it easier for members across the country to participate. The workshop gathered 17 participants and lasted almost 180 minutes, combining theoretical explanations with exercises in the R programming language using RStudio.

Full Professor Josip Arnerić, CV

Josip Arnerić is a Full Professor at the Department of Statistics at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb. He teaches several courses, including Statistics, Business Statistics, Econometrics, Financial Econometrics, Statistical Methods for Economic Analysis, Stochastic Processes, and Time-Series Analysis and Forecasting. He holds an MSc in Operational Research and a PhD in econometrics and financial time series analysis from the University of Split, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism. Prof. Arnerić's research interests include financial econometrics, time-series analysis, stochastic processes and neural networks, with extensive work on volatility modeling, high-frequency data, and realized estimators. He has published numerous scientific papers in prestigious journals and contributed to multiple research projects, including leading research projects on volatility measurement and financial market analysis. He was Editor-in-Chief and Section Editor of the Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR). He is Editor-in-Chief of the Croatian Review of Economic, Business and Social Statistics (CREBSS), Associate Editor of Central European Journal of Operations Research (CEJOR) and head of the R Club at the Croatian Statistical Association (CSA). He is the president of the CSA. He has reviewed more than 100 scientific articles and participated in numerous international conferences and workshops. Prof. Arnerić is a member of the CSA, CRORS, American Statistical Association (ASA), and Croatian Biometric Society.
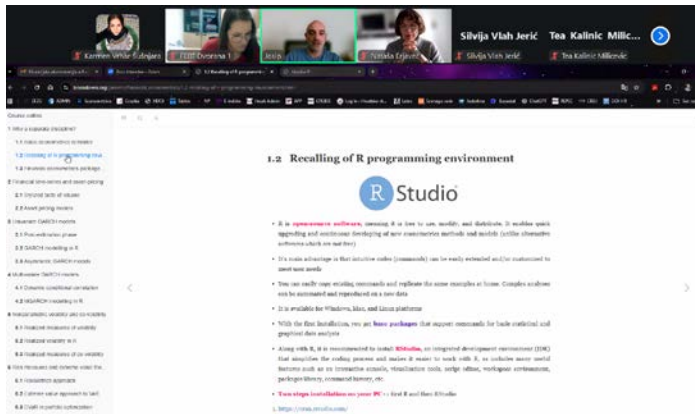

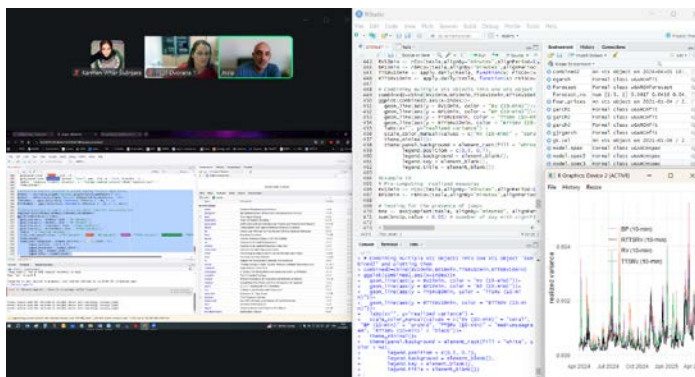*Workshop "Financial Econometrics in R", online*

Workshop summary

The workshop offered a comprehensive introduction to financial econometrics, with a focus on understanding and modelling financial time series using R. Participants followed detailed instructions and worked through examples based on the carefully prepared open-access

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material. The workshop began by exploring the properties of financial returns and log-returns, stylized facts, and the behavior of asset prices. Through guided examples, participants learned how to analyze time series, identify model structures, and estimate different GARCH-type models. The workshop was conducted using RStudio, and for participants who did not have the software installed, the professor provided clear guidance on how to work in Posit Cloud, an online R environment that allowed everyone to follow the practical exercises.

Workshop instructions for RStudio

A significant and central part of the workshop focused on volatility modelling, including ARCH and GARCH frameworks, their interpretation, and their application in empirical finance. Participants implemented these models in R, examined parameter estimates, and interpreted volatility patterns in real datasets. The workshop further introduced modern approaches to measuring and modelling market volatility, including realized volatility and realized covariance constructed from high-frequency data, as well as nonparametric measures of volatility and co-volatility.

RStudio workshop exercises on real datasets

Additional topics included unit root testing, random walk models, simulation of financial processes, and basic principles of portfolio risk. Throughout the session, participants alternated between conceptual explanations and practical coding exercises, enabling them to directly apply each method to real-world financial data. The interactive structure of the workshop ensured that even advanced econometric tools became accessible to attendees from different academic backgrounds. The workshop provided a solid foundation for further work in financial econometrics and demonstrated the value of R as a flexible and powerful environment for applied economic and financial research.

3 CRORS PRIZES AND AWARDS

Since 2013, CRORS grants two awards:

- CRORS Distinguished Service Award (CRORS DSA) - for recognition of distinguished service to the Croatian Operational Research Society and to the profession of OR, for the benefit of science and society in general.
- CRORS Best Young Researcher Paper Award – Marijana Zekić-Sušac (CRORS BYRPA) for recognition of young researchers who made a valuable contribution to the OR research through their paper presented at the KOI conference or published in the CRORR Journal.

We encourage all CRORS members to apply for these awards in the upcoming year.

4 SPECIAL GUEST INTERVIEW

In this issue, we bring you an interview with one of the Keynote Speakers at the KOI 2026 International Conference on Operational Research – Prof. Ivana Ljubić. You can find the highlights of her distinguished CV in the following section.

Full Professor Ivana Ljubić, CV

Ivana Ljubić is a Full Professor of Operations Research at ESSEC Business School, Paris, France, where she leads the Operations Research and Decision Analytics Group. She obtained her PhD in Computer Science from the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien) in 2004 and her Habilitation (Venia Docendi) in Operations Research from the University of Vienna in 2013. Before joining ESSEC, she held academic positions at the University of Vienna, the University of Paris-Dauphine, and the University of Maryland, College Park. Her main research interests include combinatorial and bilevel optimization, as well as optimization under uncertainty, with applications in network design, logistics, telecommunications, and social network analysis. Prof. Ljubić has published extensively in top OR journals such as *Mathematical Programming, INFORMS Journal on Computing, European Journal of Operational Research*, and *Computers & Operations Research*. She is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including the Glover-Klingman Prize (2021) for the best paper in *Computers & Operations Research* and the Best Paper Award of the INFORMS Telecommunications and Network Analytics Section (2018). She also serves on the editorial boards of *Computers & Operations Research*, *Networks*, and *TOP*.

Interview with Prof. Ivana Ljubić

Dear Ivana, thank you for accepting the invitation to be the Special Guest in our Interview section in CRORS News 2025. We are so pleased to have you in this edition and delighted that you will be one of the keynote speakers at KOI 2026.

Something to start with, could you please tell us a bit about your academic and professional background? What experiences in your work and personal life do you think helped you the most in reaching the position you are in?

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I earned my MSc in Mathematics (specialized in Optimization and Numerical Analysis) at the University of Belgrade in 2000, then my PhD in Computer Science from the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien, Austria) in 2004. After my PhD, I spent about two years working for a company specializing in portfolio optimization in Vienna, which gave me a valuable perspective on real-world decision problems beyond academia. I then moved back to academia in 2007: I held positions at the University of Vienna (post-doc, assistant, then associate professor), eventually completing a habilitation in Operations Research in 2013. In 2015, I joined the ESSEC Business School (Paris, France), where I'm now a professor in the Department of Information Systems, Data Analytics & Operations.

Beyond the industrial experience, which helped me most to find a good balance between theory and practice, I was also quite open to mobility and cooperation. I was a visiting scholar in different countries (including Chile, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the US), which helped me build broad collaborations while working in quite diverse environments. Finally, the leadership roles (like the one of the Academic Director of the ESSEC & Mannheim EMBA program) taught me a lot about management, coordination, and how to align academic values with educational and institutional goals.

You have built an impressive international career from your PhD in Computer Science to your current position as Professor of Operations Research at ESSEC Business School in Paris, and your research covers a lot of interesting areas. Which of these areas do you find most challenging or rewarding, and why? Are there any new trends that you would single out as the most important ones in the development of these fields?

My research spans combinatorial optimization, network-design problems, optimization under uncertainty, and bilevel optimization, often using mixed-integer (non-)linear programming, or matheuristics. Problems in combinatorial optimization and network design are particularly rewarding because they combine deep mathematical structure with very concrete real-world applications, for example, in telecommunications, logistics, transportation, or infrastructure design. Many of these problems are NP-hard: obtaining exact solutions at a real-world scale is nontrivial, and despite the significant practical advances in the past 50 years, these problems remain challenging for practitioners. Thus, we still need to further innovate on modeling and algorithmic approaches. Bilevel optimization and optimization under uncertainty are especially intellectually stimulating (but also even more challenging). They aim to model hierarchical decision-making processes or parameter uncertainty in a more realistic manner, thus, they are much closer to real-life applications.

As for emerging trends: I see the integration of optimization (OR) with data-driven methods, AI, and business analytics as one of the most important trends in our field. Big data and machine learning generate an abundance of data and predictions, and this provides a great opportunity for OR to turn these data/predictions into robust, optimized decisions. This "AI + OR + Analytics" synergy is, I believe, shaping the future of decision-making in logistics, supply-chain, urban planning, or healthcare. In addition, besides traditional business applications, I believe our discipline can help policy-makers, authorities and companies to better integrate sustainability, fairness or equity aspects in their decision-making processes.

In sustainable logistics, for example, thinking about network design or delivery systems that minimize environmental impact is an important question that needs to be addressed. In my recent research, I have studied questions related to last-mile delivery, in order to reduce pollution, congestion and under-utilization of delivery vehicles in the urban areas. For example, I have studied questions on (1) how to leverage existing public transportation services during off-peak hours, when the vehicles are typically under-utilized, to help logistic service providers deliver packages in the urban areas; (2) how to route e-vehicles while optimizing dynamic charging and energy consumption; or (3) how to optimize last-mile delivery with drones or robots.

You are recognized for significant contributions, such as your award-winning work on the Steiner tree problem, and many of your works combine rigorous theory with real-world applications. How do you approach balancing methodological relevance and practical impact in OR research and teaching?

When approaching a new optimization problem, for me, striking a balance between rigorous theory and practical relevance is a must. Before tackling a new problem, I always ask myself: Is this problem relevant in a real-world context (for instance, in telecommunications, routing, facility location, sustainable logistics, or last-mile delivery)? Then I ask: can I develop rigorous and formal OR techniques to address this problem (for example, by using decomposition techniques to achieve good computational performance or to improve the state-of-the-art)?

Using mixed-integer programming combined with decomposition techniques, I aim to build solutions that are both mathematically sound and practically implementable. In teaching, I apply the same philosophy by exposing my students to both the mathematical core and the real-world modeling challenges.

You have collaborated with numerous international teams and institutions. In your opinion, what are the most valuable aspects of international cooperation in advancing the OR field?

Indeed, international cooperation has been fundamental in my career and remains so. I have benefited from international collaborations in many ways - I got to know different academic cultures, and I have been exposed to different problem applications. In addition, academic mobility improved my collaborative skills, my intercultural communication, and my openness. Some collaborations allowed me to improve my theoretical modeling skills, others improved my knowledge of practical applications. For example, being a visiting scholar in many different countries broadened my view on which problems are "urgent" or "impactful" in different regions. Eventually, I believe that international collaborations also positively impacted my innovation capability and creativity.

In my opinion, co-supervising international doctoral students, hosting visiting PhD students, and contributing to joint grants and projects are among the most valuable aspects for advancing the OR field.

Finally, as one of the keynote speakers at KOI 2026, could you give our readers a short preview of the topic you plan to address in your presentation?

The full title and abstract of my KOI 2026 keynote are still to be finalized. I plan to discuss how modern combinatorial and bilevel optimization methods can support sustainable, fair and resilient logistics and network-based infrastructures, while drawing on my recent work on applications in urban logistics.

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5 COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SOCIETIES

Hungarian Operational Research Society (HORS)

At the 30th Annual Meeting of CRORS in 2023, the members voted to sign an agreement between the Croatian Operational Research Society (CRORS) and the Hungarian Operational Research Society (HORS) in order to collaborate with the objective of promoting and developing operations research as a scientific and professional field. Our president Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, and HORS president Prof. Boglárka G.-Tóth have signed the agreement.

The Hungarian Operations Research Society (HORS) is a society for the scientific field of Operations Research in Hungary, established in 1991. The main aims of the society are to provide information relevant to the scientific public life in operations research (OR), spread the OR culture, to build and maintain ties with similar scientific societies at domestic (Bolyai János Mathematical Society, John von Neumann Computer Society) as well as at international (EURO, IFORS) level and to organize domestic as well as international conferences, workshops. HORS organizes/co-organizes two series of conferences: since 2004 every other year VOCAL (Veszprém Optimization Conference: Advanced Algorithms) an international conference co-organized with University of Pannónia (Veszprém, HU), and in the gap years Hungarian Conference on Operations Research.

The Hungarian Operations Research Society (MOT), in collaboration with the János Bolyai Mathematical Society and Society for Economic Modelling (GMT) organized the 36th Hungarian Operations Research Conference, held from June 4-6, 2025, in Szeged, Hungary.

Croatian Statistical Association (CSA)

At the 30th Annual Meeting of CRORS in 2023, the members voted for a cooperation agreement between the Croatian Operational Research Society (CRORS) and the Croatian Statistical Association (CSA) to promote and develop operational research as a scientific and professional field. Our president, Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović, and CSA president Assoc. Prof. Anita Čeh Časni have signed the agreement. The aforementioned goal is planned to be achieved through cooperation in the organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other activities related to the exchange of research results and education in the field of operational research.

The Croatian Statistical Association was established in 2005 and is committed to actively contributing to the development of statistical theory and practice, the advancement of statistics, and the promotion of general statistical culture. The association, in line with its objectives, operates in the areas of education, science, and research. They are also the publisher and the owner of the Croatian Review of Economic, Business and Social Statistics (CREBSS) journal, which is an open-access and free journal published semiannually since 2015. The journal aims to provide high-quality scientific articles that contribute to theoretical and applied statistics. Published articles can be written in English or Croatian.

Given the significant growth in R users and its applications in both academia and practice, they have decided to establish the Club R for CSA members. This club aims to exchange and expand knowledge about the use of R, as well as to organize workshops and professional meetings, which is the primary goal of the club. The last two workshops took place in June and November 2024, while potential upcoming workshops can be found here.

CSA organizes the International Statistical Conference in Croatia (ISCCRO), which brings together statisticians, econometricians, and data scientists to discuss current trends, research, and applications in these fields. The latest conference was the 5th International Statistical Conference in Croatia (ISCCRO'24), held in Opatija, Croatia, in 2024. Announcements regarding upcoming conferences, as well as all relevant information about CSA, can be found on their official webpage.

Collaboration with Croatian societies

Many CRORS members are also members of relevant societies, academic institutions, and seminars in Croatia, with whom CRORS has a great collaboration. Their activities and lectures are organized in the field of operations research.

HMD Engineering Section Seminars

Croatian Mathematical Society

The Engineering section of HMD mainly consists of mathematicians working in economic practice (but not only them), who apply OR methods in their work, and who participate in the KOI conference. The majority of CRORS members are on the mailing list of the engineering section of HMD and actively participate in its seminars. The list of lectures presented at the HMD Engineering section can be found on their web page.

Mathematical Colloquium

School of Applied Mathematics and Informatics, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek

The Mathematical Colloquium in Osijek has been active since 1993, as an activity of the Scientific Section of the Osijek division of the Croatian Mathematical Society and the Institute for Applied Mathematics in Osijek, with the help of the Central branch of the Society in Zagreb and the Department of Mathematics, University of Zagreb. Since 1999, the Mathematical Colloquium has been organized by the Department of Mathematics, University of Osijek, later School of Applied Mathematics

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and Informatics. Lecturers of the scientific colloquium are researchers from Croatian universities and abroad who report on their research, PhD theses, or give an overview of recent trends in mathematics and its applications. Lecturers of the educational colloquia are teachers from Croatian universities and secondary schools. They usually present their ideas and approaches to teaching or discuss a historical topic connected to mathematics and mathematicians. This year, the following scientific lectures were held:

- Jayme Vaz, University of Campinas, Brazil: *A Generalization of the Fox H-function*, 25th of November 2025
- Andreas Buchinger, Institut für Mathematik,Technische Universität Hamburg: *A (Rigorous) Discussion on Numerics for Evolutionary Equations*, 20th of November 2025
- Tessa Uroić, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Zagreb: *Multigrid Methods for Linear Systems Stemming from Computational Fluid Dynamics Discretisation Procedures*, 26th of June 2025
- Petra Žigert Pleteršek, University of Maribor, Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering: *Recent development regarding the root-indices of graphs*, 8th of May 2025
- Tobias Hofmann, Technische Universität Berlin: *The expressivity of sparse maxout networks*, 3rd of April 2025
- Maja Jolić, Department of Mathematics and Informatics, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad: *On linear and quasilinear control problems with fractional derivatives*, 20th of March 2025

Upcoming seminars have also been announced, including those by Erna Kovač Begović from the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology, University of Zagreb (12th February 2026), and Tobias Breiten from Technische Universität Berlin (15th January 2026), with the seminar topics to be published on the webpage in due course. Further information about the Colloquium can be found on the web page.

Professional colloquium in Osijek

Association of Mathematicians Osijek

As part of the professional colloquium of the Association of Mathematicians in Osijek, on November 11th, 2025, a lecture entitled "Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Using School Mathematics" was held by Tvrtko Tadić (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond) in a hybrid form, at the School of Applied Mathematics and Informatics and online. The lecture focused on the growing demand for data literacy and foundational knowledge of artificial intelligence among students at all educational levels. The presentation explained what statistics, data science, and artificial intelligence are, and demonstrated how real datasets, mathematics, and technology can be used to illustrate core concepts in these fields. The lecture was based on a series of articles published in journals. It reflected the speaker's experience in the AI industry and higher education, as well as insights gained through communication with individuals of diverse educational backgrounds.

Optimization and Application Seminar

School of Applied Mathematics and Informatics, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek

Organized by the School of Applied Mathematics and Informatics, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, the Optimization and Application seminar covers topics such as mathematical modelling, problems of identification and estimation of parameters in mathematical models, statistical aspects of the problem of identification and estimation of parameters in mathematical models, optimization of mechanical

systems, and applications in natural, technical, and other sciences. The basic seminar outline is a presentation of original papers, a presentation of papers from the literature, and guest lectures. Lectures presented so far can be found here.

Seminar for mathematical programming and game theory

Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb

The Seminar for Programming and Theory of Games was established within the Institute of Mathematics, University of Zagreb, in 1966, with the aim of intensifying scientific work in the field of practical mathematics. The Seminar brings together scientist and topics in mathematical programming and game theory, their applications in mathematics, statistics, mathematical economics, but also practical applications in various fields of business and economics. The list of presented lectures can be found on the seminar's webpage.

6 OR AREA IN FOCUS

In memoriam: Luka Neralić (1943-2025)

Our professor, colleague, and friend Professor Emeritus Luka Neralić left us on September 25, 2025 at the age of 82. He was a respected researcher, a dedicated professor, and a good man. His legacy comprises not only numerous scientific publications but also many generations of students, postgraduates, and assistants who, thanks to his guidance, have grown into respected professionals, recognized researchers, and university professors. His contribution to operational research and the inspiration he provided to many researchers are profound.

From the Professor's CV

Text prepared by Tea Šestanović and Karmen Vrhar Šušnjara based on Lexicon of the Faculty of Economics and Business – Zagreb: Luka Neralić, Zagreb: Faculty of Economics and Business

Professor Emeritus Luka Neralić was born on October 16, 1943, in Brezine, Croatia. He attended primary school in his hometown and Lipik, completed high school in Daruvar in 1962, and graduated in Theoretical Mathematics from the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Zagreb, in 1966. He obtained his master's degree in 1971 with the thesis *Dimension of Normal Spaces* and subsequently reoriented his research to mathematical programming within the field of operations research. As a scholarship holder of the Republic Fund for Scientific Work of the SR Croatia, he spent 1973/74 at the Central Economic-Mathematical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He defended his doctoral dissertation, *Augmented Lagrangians and Optimality with Respect to Cost Function*, at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb in 1979 under the supervision of Professor Ljubomir Martić. In 1985, he received a Fulbright grant for postdoctoral research at the University of Texas at Austin, where, under Professor Abraham Charnes, he began working on data envelopment analysis.

Prof. Neralić began his academic career in 1967 as an assistant at the Zagreb School of Economics, and in 1968 continued as an assistant at the Department of Mathematics at the Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb. He advanced from assistant and senior assistant (1974) to research assistant (1978), assistant professor (1980, re-elected in 1986), associate professor (1991), full professor (1997), and full professor with tenure (2002). He retired in 2014 and was named Professor Emeritus by the University of Zagreb Senate in 2015.

During his work, he introduced numerous new courses at all study levels. He headed the 2nd and 3rd generations of the postgraduate study *Operations Research* at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb, and established and led the specialist postgraduate program *Operations Research and Optimization*. He supervised many graduate, master's, and doctoral theses at the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Science in Zagreb. For many years, he led the Scientific Postgraduate Seminar in Programming and Game Theory at the Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. Throughout his career, he also taught at several other institutions: the Faculty of Foreign Trade and Tourism in Dubrovnik, the Faculty of Economics in Split, and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in Zagreb.

Prof. Neralić authored numerous scientific books, university textbooks, research papers, professional publications, translations, and participated in many international and domestic conferences, including as an invited lecturer at two international conferences on operations research. He was also a guest researcher at McGill University (Canada), SUNY Stony Brook (USA), RWTH Aachen (Germany), and the University of Pittsburgh (USA).

He led the national research project *Models and Methods of Operations Research in Economics and Business Decision Making* (1997–2013) and was involved in other research projects: *Quantitative Methods in Economic Theory and Practice* (1986-1996), *Project 4-99-146* (1991-1996), *Quantitative Methods of Economics and Their Application in the Mechanism of Socio-Economic Development* (1981-1985), and *Multi-Criteria Programming* (1976-1980).

As one of the founders of the Croatian Operational Research Society (CRORS), he served as its first president (1992–1996) and as its representative to IFORS and EURO (1994–2014). He organized the first five national KOI conferences, several international OR conferences, and served for many years as Program Committee Chair and editor of conference proceedings.

His professional service included presidency of the former Society of Mathematicians and Physicists of the SR Croatia (1989–1990), membership in the Croatian Mathematical Society (Assembly member 2002–2010), long-standing membership in INFORMS, and organizing roles in international conferences such as PARAOPT VI (Dubrovnik, Croatia, 1999) and PARAOPT VII (Puebla, Mexico, 2002). He also organized the 20th Meeting of the EURO Working Group on Financial Modelling (Dubrovnik 1997).

He received numerous recognitions, including the *Mijo Mirković* Award (1980, 2003), commemorative recognition from the Mayor of Puebla at PARAOPT VII (2002), a certificate from the Faculty of Economics and Business for the most cited paper in Web of Science (2014), the University of Zagreb Commemorative Medal (2014), the William V. Cooper Life Time Contribution Award at DEA2017 in Prague, and IFORS recognition at its 50th anniversary (2008). KOI 2014 hosted a special session marking his 70th birthday with 15 international and domestic contributions. Articles in the IFORS Newsletter and the

INFORMS OR/MS Newsletter highlighted his contributions to CRORS and the KOI conference series.

Prof. Neralić receiving the William W. Cooper Life Time Contribution Award

Prof. Neralić was also Associate Editor of *The Data Envelopment Analysis Journal* (from 2011), Co-editor and Associate Editor of *Central European Journal of Operations Research* (2007–2017), member of the Editorial Board of *Croatian Operational Research Review* (since 2014, editor 2010–2013), member of the Publishing Council of *Glasnik Matematički* (1990–1994), Guest Editor of a special issue of *Optimization* (2001), editor of KOI proceedings (1991–2013), and reviewer for around fifteen international journals.

Besides academic success, from October 18, 1991, to April 10, 1992, he participated in the Homeland War and was awarded the Homeland War Memorial Medal. He was married, with two daughters, one granddaughter, and five grandsons, spoke and wrote English and Russian, and used German and Spanish.

His influence lives on through his students, collaborators, and the institutional foundations he helped build. We express our sincere condolences to his family and deeply sympathize with their loss.

Ljubomir Martić Award

For the purpose of stimulating scientific research and application of mathematics in economics, the Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb (FEB) established the award for doctoral dissertations, scientific monographs, and scientific papers in the field of economics, branch of quantitative economics, under the name "Ljubomir Martić Award". Following the great contribution of the scientific and teaching work of Professor Ljubomir Martić at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb, as well as his rich professional work, the purpose and goals of this award are:

a) promotion of scientific research work in the social-humanistic field, the field of economics, the branch of quantitative economics,
b) developing and encouraging scientists and doctoral candidates to work in the social sciences and humanities, economics, and quantitative economics.

Only publications whose authors are teachers and associates of faculties, scientific and research institutes, or universities in the Republic of Croatia, and which have been published and made available to the scientific and professional public at least three months and not more than two years before the opening of the competition of the award procedure for the current year, can be awarded. Papers must belong to the scientific field of social sciences, the field of economics, branch of quantitative economics, by topic and scope.

One prize is awarded once a year for works in one of the following three categories:

- *Category A*: doctoral dissertations in economics, branch of quantitative economics (university postgraduate doctoral thesis),
- *Category B*: monograph books or university textbooks covering current topics in the field of economics, the branch of quantitative economics,
- *Category C*: scientific papers in economics, branch of quantitative economics, published in journals and proceedings, or otherwise made available to the scientific and professional public.

The proposal for a publication to be awarded is determined by a majority vote of the members of the Award Committee, and only one (first) Prize is awarded in each of these groups, consisting of a diploma and a sum of money.

EURO Instruments

EURO supports a number of conferences and education initiatives, such as EURO PhD Schools (EPS) (more information can be found here) and EURO Summer and Winter Institutes (ESWI) (more information can be found here).

EURO also supports *Mini Conferences*. The latest Mini Conference was held on 8-10 September 2025 in Rotterdam, Netherlands. More information on Mini Conferences can be found here. Proposals for organizing a EURO Mini Conference can be made by any member of a member society of EURO. Application forms are available from the Guidelines pages. For further advice or information, please contact EURO VP1 (VP1@euro-online.org).

EURO Prizes and Awards

EURO has created the following prizes to acknowledge outstanding activity in the development or application of OR. The call for Applications for the EURO Doctoral Dissertation Award 2026 is open until January 31, 2026. We encourage CRORS members to apply. More info can be found here.

EGM - EURO Gold Medal

The EURO Gold Medal is the highest recognition in Europe for scientific activity in OR. It is conferred on a prominent person or team, or institution, for an outstanding contribution to the development of the discipline of OR. The information about the prize, previous winners, and the information about nominations for the 2027 EGM can be found here.

EDSA - EURO Distinguished Service Award

The EURO Distinguished Service Award (EDSA) is the highest recognition in Europe of distinguished service to the European Operational Research community or to the profession of Operational Research. The 2025 EURO Distinguished Service Award is awarded to: Gerhard-Wilhelm Weber (Willi) from Poznań University of Technology. Congratulations for the award! The information about the prize and previous winners can be found here. The period for nominations for the 2027 EDSA is not yet open. It will be announced in October 2026.

EPOCG - EURO Prize for OR for the Common Good

The EURO Prize for OR for the Common Good (EPOCG) was introduced in 2020. This prize honors outstanding accomplishments of OR for solving socially oriented problems. Contributions with a global scope and a wide range of potential applications are preferred. A shortlist of finalists is invited to present their work in a special session of the EURO-k Conference. The information about the prize and previous winners can be found here. The period for nominations for the 2028 EPOCG is not yet open.

EDDA - The EURO Doctoral Dissertation Award

The EURO Doctoral Dissertation Award (EDDA) recognizes the OR contributions of PhD students or scientists having less than two years of research experience since completing a PhD. Short-listed finalists are invited to present their work in a special session of the EURO-k Conference. The winner is determined by the jury at the end of the special session(s) and is announced by the chairman of the jury during the closing session of the EURO-k Conference. The information about the prize, previous winners, and the call for nominations in 2026 can be found here. The call for Applications for the EURO Doctoral Dissertation Award 2026 is open until January 31, 2026. We encourage CRORS members to apply.

EEPA - The EURO Excellence in Practice Award

The EURO Excellence in Practice Award (EEPA) is the recognition of outstanding accomplishments in the practice of OR. All interested candidates are invited to submit a description of an application of OR with a real impact on practice, with original features, whether in methodology, application, or implementation. Short-listed finalists are invited to present their work in a special session of the EURO-k Conference. More information can be found here. The period for applications for the 2027 EEPA is not yet open.

Center for Service Learning at FEBT

In cooperation with the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split (FEBT)/ Center for Service Learning, Professional Internship - Service Learning was realized within our Society. The students have enrolled in this optional class of the Faculty within the study programs of FEBT, and they have fulfilled their obligations by working in the Society. Students of the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism in Split in the academic year 2024/2025, under the mentorship of Assoc. Prof. Tea Šestanović and Assoc. Prof. Marko Čular helped in preparing promotional materials for the KOI 2026 conference, carried out several marketing activities for KOI 2026, and participated in LinkedIn posts related to HDOI and the CRORR journal. The same practice continued with the presentation of CRORS at the Day of Professional Practice – Service Learning at FEBT, which took place on October 17, 2025. Equal interest of students is expected in the academic year 2025/2026.

7 LOOKING FORWARD TO KOI 2026

The 21st International Conference on Operational Research (KOI 2026) will be held on September 23-25, 2026, at Blueson Hotel Soline in the city of Brela, Croatia, in the organization of Croatian Operational Research Society (CRORS) in cooperation with Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, as co-organizer.

International Conference on Operational Research (KOI) brings together scientists and academics as well as practitioners from various aspects of OR with the aim of establishing contact networks, presenting research ideas, and sharing the most valuable experiences.

The conference is focused but not limited to the various disciplines and topics, which are grouped in the following main sections:

- Mathematical Programming
- Applied Statistics and Econometrics
- Multicriteria Decision Making
- Machine Learning and Data Mining
- Behavioral Operational Research
- Optimization in Human Environment

There will be plenary lectures of 45 minutes, contributed lectures of 15 minutes for presentation and an additional 5 minutes for discussion.

Three keynote speakers at the conference who confirmed their participation are Prof. Ivana Ljubić, Prof. Yurii Nesterov, and Deputy Business Director Andrej Bregar, PhD.

Ivana Ljubić is a Professor of Analytics and Operations Research at the Department for Information Systems at ESSEC Business School in Paris, France, where she leads the Operations Research and Decision Analytics Group. She obtained her PhD in Computer Science from the Vienna University of Technology and her Habilitation in Operations Research from the University of Vienna. Her research interests include combinatorial and bilevel optimization, and optimization under uncertainty, with a variety of applications in network design, telecommunications, and logistics. She is widely recognized for her work on the Steiner tree problem, for which she received the Glover-Klingman Prize (2021).

Prof. Ivana Ljubić

Prof. **Yurii Nesterov** is a globally recognized expert in convex optimization and numerical mathematics. Since February 2024, he has joined Corvinus University of Budapest in Hungary as a Research Professor. He holds a PhD in Applied Mathematics and since 1993 was affiliated with UCLouvain (Belgium) and its Center for Operations Research and Econometrics (CORE). Prof. Nesterov is best known as the inventor of the "Nesterov accelerated gradient" method and one of the founding fathers of modern convex optimization. His outstanding contributions have been recognized by prestigious international awards: Dantzig Prize (2000), the John von Neumann Theory Prize (2009), the EURO Gold Medal (2016), and the WLA Prize (2023).

Prof. Yurii Nesterov

Andrej Bregar, PhD is the Deputy CEO of Informatika d.o.o., with more than two decades of experience in IT, R&D, and the energy sector. He holds a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Maribor and has worked extensively on decision support systems, multicriteria decision-making, robustness analysis, and cybersecurity in energy-related infrastructures. Andrej Bregar has authored several scientific papers in these fields and regularly participates in international conferences. In his managerial role, he leads complex digitalization, interoperability, and cybersecurity projects, focusing on the integration of advanced IT solutions in the energy industry.

Andrej Bregar, PhD

Authors who wish to present a paper at the conference KOI 2026 should submit the extended abstract up to 250 words using the online submission system here. Accepted abstracts by the Program Committee that are presented at the conference will be published in the KOI Book of Abstracts (print version only).

After the conference, authors are welcome to submit full papers at any time, for possible publication in the Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR journal), indexed in ESCI (source of WoS Core Collection), SCOPUS, and other relevant scientific citation databases. Full papers can be submitted to the CRORR Journal through the online system here. There is no submission fee or publishing fee for accepted papers in this journal.

The KOI 2026 conference will offer Special sessions. The researchers are welcome to submit their **Special session proposals** by February 15, 2026, to koi.conference.croatia@gmail.com.

The KOI 2026 conference also includes a special **methodological Workshop for students** enrolled in Postgraduate study programs. Within the section, students can present their results so far and get the opinion of an expert on the methodology they would use. In addition, they can present the problems they encountered, and methodological experts will try to solve them together. On the other hand, if students are just at the stage of creating a theoretical model and cannot decide upon which methodology is the most appropriate, this section is the ideal place to expand their methodological perspectives.

Experts from the following fields will participate in this special methodological section: operational research, statistics and econometrics, panel methodology, neural networks, SEM methodology, and others. Postgraduate students who apply for the special methodological Workshop have to submit a summary/abstract of their research.

Important dates:

- June 14, 2026 – Submission of abstract
- July 1, 2026 – Notification of acceptance
- August 25, 2026 – Registration & fee payment

More information about the conference can be found here. Abstracts for the conference can be submitted using the online submission system, and full papers can be submitted to the CRORR Journal through the online system here.

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8 CROATIAN OPERATIONAL RESEARCH REVIEW (CRORR) JOURNAL

CRORS continues to publish its scientific journal, Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR).

CRORR journal, Volume 16, Numbers 1 and 2

Two issues of the journal – the first issue, Volume 16, Number 1, 2025 was published in February 2025 and the second issue - Volume 16, Number 2, 2025 was published in July 2025.

The winter and summer issues each contain eight original scientific papers covering operational research and related areas, including machine learning, multicriteria decision-making, input–output modelling, and various mathematical models such as inventory models, non-cooperative inventory games, variational inequalities and fixed point theorems. This year, the editors introduced the online first issues for accepted publications before assigning them to issues. So far, two journal issues were published in 2025 as online-first – Volume 16, Number 2 (8 papers published in 2025) and Volume 17, Number 1 (so far 9 papers with date of publication in January 2026).

All scientific papers were sent to at least two independent reviewers for a blind peer review process. Full papers are published and available online.

The aim of the Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR) journal is to provide high-quality scientific papers covering the theory and application of OR and related areas, mainly quantitative methods and machine learning. The journal is indexed in relevant databases. You can find more about CRORR here.

Authors from any area of operational research are welcome to submit their manuscripts by using the online submission system. All published issues are available online at the Hrcak database - Portal of scientific journals of Croatia, with full-text search of individual papers.

9 CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

- **May 25-29, 2026 - 28th International Conference on Multiple Criteria Decision Making (MCDM 2026), University of Wuppertal, Germany.** Find out more here.

- **July 12-17, 2026 - The 24th Conference of the International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS 2026), Vienna, Austria.** Find out more here.

- **September 23-25, 2026 - The 21st International Conference on Operational Research (KOI 2026), Brela, Croatia.** Find out more here.

Please visit the EURO calendar for a detailed list of upcoming OR-related conferences.