

**THE INSTITUTE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY –
CRISTOFOR SIMIONESCU’S CONTRIBUTION
TO ITS ESTABLISHMENT**

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I recall the key role of Professor Cristofor Simionescu in the creation and development of the Institute of Computer Science of the Romanian Academy.

An essential purpose of the academies is networking scientists for collaborating on tasks seen of national or global importance. This purpose was recognized at the very incept of many academies, although it may not be inscribed in their statutes. The networking function is exerted through meetings of academies’ members and is amplified by the collaborations among scientists in the research centers and institutes of, or somehow connected with the academies, whereas some of the researchers are members of the respective institution. The ideas of cross-fertilization, the ability to carry on interdisciplinary projects and the intellectual weight required for large research programs could not be achieved by academies without the participation of large numbers of investigators from universities and research centers of various affiliations, including direct or indirect affiliation to the academies. None of these actors could have a chance alone in carrying on large, national-wide and international programs. In networking research actors, the academies always played the role of interaction and collaboration agents. In this respect, academies parallel large economic structures and networks with a major role in national and international economies [1]. Beyond the horizontal networking among scientists and institutes, there is a vertical networking almost all academies materialize, namely between the older and the younger generation of scientists. Academies give prizes especially to young scientists, grow them up and pass to them knowledge through various means. In this respect, academies continue the work of the universities after the doctoral studies, sometimes in collaboration with universities. For example, the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities presents itself as [2]:

“the umbrella organisation of eight German academies of sciences and humanities [that] ... comprise a total of over 1,900 scholars of diverse subjects, all of whom are outstanding representatives of their research fields [who] ... are committed to promoting scientific exchange, excellence in research, and supporting young early-stage researchers in the sciences and humanities.”
[<https://www.akademienunion.de/en/the-union/about-us/>]

The US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has also put forward as a goal the growing up of new generations of scientists [3]:

“Objective 1c. Increase capacity in the US and abroad. Talent is always in short supply. The NAS, while representing the elite of American science, has a responsibility to nurture tomorrow’s scientific leadership. A few potential actions to achieve this objective include:

- *Build leadership skills among young scientists.”*

Networking with the society at large is also a clearly specified goal of NAS [3]:

“Goal 2: Improve public understanding and appreciation of science and the scientific method. ... Specific objectives in this area appropriate for the NAS are: Objective 2a. Expand new, diverse, and effective channels of communication.”

In the above quotation, the networking objectives are clearly stated, with mentions to both horizontal and vertical integration. The same goal is enshrined in the German Academy of Natural Scientists “Leopoldina” [4]:

“Its mission is that of promoting science in national and international co-operation..., among other things by academic events and commissions, publishing results obtained, maintaining a scientific archive and a scientific library, and by awarding honours and prizes, aimed among other things at promoting junior scientists.”

The French Académie des Sciences, in its presentation of the “Five basic missions in the Academy’s remit” [5] is equally clear, with two of the missions presented as “Promoting the teaching of science” and “Transmitting knowledge”.

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Professor Cristofor Simionescu, a former vice-president of the Romanian Academy, and its acting president (between 1977 and 1980) was a strong supporter of the connections between the Academy and the society. He was seeing the institutes of the Academy as the arms allowing the Academy to carry on its social work.

Starting on September 1, 1969, the government decided taking away the institutes from the Academy and gave them to Ministries, so that, in 1974, the Academy remained with no institutes; moreover, on February 28, 1974, the

Academy itself became a marginalized institution having all its activities supervised by the newly created National Council for Science and Technology [6]. I still remember that, during that decade of the 1980's, Professor Cristofor Simionescu privately deplored the loss by the Academy of its institutes.

Therefore, as expected, as newly elected President of Iasi Branch of the Academy, after 1990, he endeavored, together with the then President of the Academy, Professor Mihai Draganescu, to regain the institutes for the Academy and to create new ones.

Former institutes started to be reintegrated by the Academy on February 7, 1990 [6]; between 1990 and 1992, almost all [institutes] were reintegrated and several extant others were incorporated into the Academy, if they wished to and if the Academy agreed that they are scientifically viable. This process saved, at least partly, many research institutions from total dissolution and also saved the career of many Romanian researchers.

Professor Cristofor Simionescu and Professor Mihai Draganescu decided that the newly created (in 1990) Section of Information Science and Technology of the Academy needs an institute. There is no doubt that the establishment of the new Institute of Computer Science at Iasi is due to Professor Cristofor Simionescu. I had the honor to have been privately consulted by him on the opportunity of such an institution and on the scientific value of the team in the Iasi branch of an institute for computer technology (that institute had its headquarters in Bucharest and had branches in Iasi and Cluj-Napoca). The honor of being consulted on that matter was probably due to my organization and leading of a seminar on fuzzy systems and artificial intelligence (AI), where about half of the participants were young researchers from the Iasi branch of the institute for computer technology; the other participants were from the Technical University of Iasi and from the "A.I. Cuza" University of Iasi. I strongly supported the idea of the new institute, which was formally created in June 1990 by the Government decision no. 501/1990.

During the 1990's, Professor Cristofor Simionescu constantly urged me to support and contribute to the scientific activity of the Institute, and I have done so, although I was not officially affiliated with it until after 2000. He periodically asked me for external opinions and for advice regarding the institute. After my absence from Iasi (1997–2000), soon after returning from US, he and the then director of the Institute, Prof. Dan Gâlea, asked me to become officially affiliated with the Institute of Computer Science of the Romanian Academy. At the time when I joined the Institute, Professor Cristofor Simionescu had already retired from the leadership of the Iasi Branch of the Romanian Academy. However, he continued to pay a vivid interest in the Institute he created and in my work there, as the personal letter in the *Annex* shows.

Many a times I ask myself, with anxiety, if Professor Cristofor Simionescu would be contented with what I had done for the Institute. And often I would like to ask him for advice on what should be done better.

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Annex: Private letter received from the part of Professor Cristofor Simionescu

