

Editorial:

A Year Ahead Full of New Initiatives

DEAR Readers,

FIRST of all, I hope that you, your families and all yours remain healthy and safe. The thoughts of the Editorial Board (EB) of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—II: EXPRESS BRIEFS (TCAS-II) and all the staff from IEEE are with those who are facing health problems and have suffered the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first year of my term as Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of IEEE TCAS-II has run under this terrible situation which has changed the lifestyle of all of us. We have seen how almost all social and professional events, including of course most IEEE conferences, have been either cancelled or running virtual, what has precluded us from enjoying together with our friends and colleagues as we had always done. The New Year 2021 comes full of hope for humankind with the development of several vaccines and more effective drugs to fight against the coronavirus SARS-Cov-2, and I am firmly convinced that sooner than later we will be able to recover our way of living.

In spite of these difficult times, and thanks to the excellent diligence and intense dedication of all members of our EB, the performance of IEEE TCAS-II has continuously improved over the special and regular issues published in 2020 to give our readers the best possible service. We have done all our best to consolidate our journal as a rapid vehicle of publication, featuring an average time from submission to first decision and final publication below 6 and 7 weeks, respectively. These metrics place TCAS-II as one of the fastest publications of IEEE in the category of Letters, and I greatly appreciate the help of all people who have contributed to make it possible.

Moreover, thanks to the efforts of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society (CASS) Officers, and very specially CASS president, Prof. Amara Amara, and CASS Vice President (VP) Publications, Prof. Mohamad Sawan, TCAS-II budget has been notably increased. This measure, together with the hard work of our reviewers, editors and the publishing staff of IEEE, has almost removed our paper backlog. We are now in the best position to publish our papers in printed issues within a few months after they were submitted to our journal.

In this continuous effort as one of the flagship journals of IEEE CASS, we have put some initiatives in practice over the last year which will keep on going in 2021. Following the tradition initiated three years ago, we will keep the current special issues on the IEEE International Symposium on Circuits and Systems (ISCAS) – scheduled in May 2021 – and the Special Issue on the International Symposium on Integrated Circuits and Systems (ISICAS) – to be published in September 2021. These special issues are based

on a conference/journal co-publication format, so that the TCAS-II papers are the only published record in IEEE Xplore. Some other special sections will be published in 2021 based on the IEEE-CASS regional flagship conferences: NEWCAS and MWSCAS (Regions 1-7), ICECS (Region 8), LASCAS (Region 9) and APCCAS (Region 10). The first of them – LASCAS – is scheduled for February 2021, and we will continue publishing the rest of special sections synchronized with their corresponding conferences.

Another initiative started in November 2020 has been to slightly change the format of TCAS-II briefs, so that the last column, i.e. the last half page must be reserved only for references. This minor format change will give authors the chance to better place their work in context, by means of a more exhaustive comparison with prior art. Given the hard limitation in the overall paper length (5 pages), we have been working together with IEEE and CASS to increase the visibility of TCAS-II in the digital media and social networks. We launched in 2020 our LinkedIn site, in which we periodically post break news related to CASS events, or any other news which may be of interest for TCAS-II readers. We plan to increase the quality and quantity of the contents published in these media and we will see soon some videos recorded by the authors of the most popular papers recently published in TCAS-II.

Last but not least, we launched in September 2020 the first Call for Tutorial Briefs. We received some 100 proposals, from which 30 of them were invited to submit their papers to TCAS-II. We plan to publish several sections of these tutorial briefs in the first months of 2021, beginning in this issue.

None of these initiatives would have been possible without counting on the best team of editors led by our Associate Editors in Chief, Prof. Yajun Ha and Prof. Edoardo Bonizzoni. I would like to conclude this editorial by expressing my warmest and deepest gratitude to all of them, for their excellence service, professionalism and huge efforts in this very hard year for everybody. On top of all the initiatives already running and planned for 2021, the contributions of all our authors and the feedback from our readers are key to maintain and improve the quality of our journal.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of TCAS-II, I wish all of you a wonderful year ahead and I look forward to your excellent contributions!

JOSÉ M. DE LA ROSA, *Editor-in-Chief, IEEE TCAS-II*
 Instituto de Microelectrónica de Sevilla
 IMSE-CNM (CSIC, Universidad de Sevilla)
 41092 Sevilla, Spain