

# Youth Contest Programme –

## young operators visit 9A1A in Croatia

**F**or a while now the Youth Contest Programme (YCP) event has been organised by the Youngsters on the Air (YOTA) group, funded by the IARU Region 1. It offers young amateurs under the age of 26 the opportunity to operate in a team during international contests from so called 'Big Gun' stations around Europe.

These big gun stations include ES5TV in Estonia, 4O3A in Montenegro, SK3W in Sweden or even 9A1A in Croatia. All levels of contest experience are accepted but a participant should have at least basic knowledge about contesting and using a transceiver. Also, the fun of contesting and the opportunity to learn new things about how to operate more efficiently in contests are important points for the event's success. This year three contests were announced on the webpage of YOTA to be in YCP 2017 [1].

On 13 and 14 May 2017, seven youngsters from all over Europe gathered at the 9A1A station to take part in the CQ-M International DX Contest. The contest takes place on all the classic short wave bands from 160m to 10m in mixed modes, CW and SSB. The special thing about this contest is that Multi-operator stations are allowed, but only one Tx signal at any time is allowed on the air. Our Croatian hosts provided a really nice PTT interlock system at the station including software (DXLog) and hardware to assure we followed the rules.

Tomi, HA8RT had asked me at the beginning of the year if I was up for participating in a contest from somewhere abroad (and I couldn't say no!), so shortly after I signed up to the YCP on the YOTA website. Florian, OE3FTA (organiser of the YOTA Youth Camp 2016 in Wagrain, Austria) was immediately ready to join us without question. After an email giving us the all clear from our hosts in Croatia, the three of us planned our travel to Zagreb.



Team 9A1A – from left to right Tomi, HA8RT, Philipp, DK6SP, Flo, OE3FTA, Mihaela, 9A7MIM, Marina, 9A5CKM, Aron, 9A7ROR and Domagoj, 9A7CDZ.

Tomi came by train from southern Hungary, whereas Florian came by car from Vienna. My journey was the shortest though: I checked in at Munich airport on late Friday evening and headed towards Zagreb by plane. At 22:30 local time Nikola, 9A5W waited for me at the arrivals and afterwards we drove together about 20 minutes to the location at the heights of Kojaca. All the other participants of the Croatian Contest Club (Marina, 9A5CKM, Mihaela, 9A7MIM, Aron, 9A7ROR and Domagoj, 9A7CDZ from the local youngsters' club 9A1RBZ) as well as Emil, 9A9A, Braco, 9A7R, Flo and Tomi were already gathered there. After a warm welcome we had dinner together. Afterwards, we felt really tired and went to our beds in the dormitory to gain some energy for the upcoming contest.

On Sunday morning we had a great breakfast and saw the impressive antennas in daylight. Four towers with a height of approximately 50m astonished us. For the contest we had switchable monoband Yagi stacks from 10m to 40m and dipoles for 80m as well as 160m. No effort was spared, because for the low bands they provided us

with Beverage antennas.

After learning the network of the logging software and the six microKEYERs, including reinstallation of their software, we had a little team meeting in the shack and an introduction to the station.

Tomi and I started on time at 1200UTC with interlocked CQ on 20m and 15m CW. Meanwhile the available mults were hunted on the other bands in CW and SSB. The interlock switching of hardware and software between all the stations prevented two stations transmitting at the same time. Using CW we managed to accumulate high QSO rates.

While we had many QSOs in the shack, the culinary side of the visit was not left out. Braco, 9A7R, our chef, always prepared delicious food, from risotto to roast pork. This way we could always fill up our energy during our breaks, before we headed back towards the radio.

After about 2 hours of operating we changed from CW to SSB. Unfortunately, we had not had pileups, as expected from last year, in this mode. Shortly before dusk the night shift began. We thought that 20m had



9A/DK6SP transmitting on 20m.



Dinner with local BBQ specialties – from left to right Emil, 9A9A, Mihaela, 9A7MIM, Philipp, DK6SP and Nikola, 9A5W.



Antenna forest at 9A1A with the shack in the background.

died but fortunately we ran on that band until around 4am. High rates on 40m and 80m were mostly only doable in CW though. But we had also a lot of attention on the DXCC multipliers on every band. On Saturday morning our two female secret weapons opened up 15m and 20m SSB. Shortly after Tomi had to leave us. Emil, 9A9A drove him to the train station in Zagreb.

But the contest was still ongoing. We had a big fight with our rivals on [www.cqcontest.net](http://www.cqcontest.net), where we uploaded our score during the contest. Until 1159UTC we fought for every QSO and for every mult and had a good reason to celebrate our result afterwards. After 2728 QSOs in 24 hours and a bit over 2 million points we were claimed in front of UA4M and RT4F, and claimed number 1 in the world. Many thanks for all your calls during the contest at this point!

After the contest we had a roundup and a cold ice cream in the shack. Despite the great effort, the positive team spirit was

emphasised, without which we would not have achieved this result.

Afterwards, we took some pictures of the awesome antenna forest outside. Flo left the group shortly thereafter, because he wanted to return home before the imminent storm. The Croatian youngsters left the location shortly after Flo.

I used the time and wanted to do some activity as 9A/DK6SP on 20m. First I had a great pileup on CW with about 200 QSOs and afterwards a pileup in SSB with about 300 QSOs put into my logbook. But because of the upcoming thunderstorm we shut down the station and unplugged all the antennas from the transceivers.

A short time later we were in darkness because a lightning bolt hit the substation in Zagreb. No more electricity around us. After a short dinner together with Nikola, 9A5W and Emil, 9A9A – with flashlights – we could all make up for the missed sleep of the previous weekend.

When we had electricity at the station on Monday morning again, all transceivers and microKEYERS were dismantled and loaded into the cars. Afterwards we left the station and Emil and I left for Zagreb. There Marija, 9A6PAX the daughter of Braco, 9A7R, was waiting for me to give me a tour of the city. From the foundation of Zagreb, the government buildings and the statue of Nikola Tesla to the new city, the history of the city was really well explained and shown to me. Mihaela, 9A7MIM joined us after her lecture at the university and we sat down in a café next to the bureau of the Croatian Amateur Radio Society (HRS), where Marija works as a secretary. Local delicacies and beer ended the wonderful city tour.

Then Emil, 9A9A picked Mihaela and me up by car to meet up with Nikola, 9A5W again for dinner in a grill just outside the airport. We had really great local BBQ specialties there and ended the very successful and eventful weekend before I was taken back to the airport by Nikola. After about an hour and a half flight I came back exhausted, but with many new impressions, in Munich.

Finally, on behalf of the entire team, I would like to thank all for the hospitality and cordiality of our Croatian radio friends during our stay. This indescribable weekend in connection with the participation in the CQ-M International DX Contest was simply incredible and definitely not the last time.

In the end, of course, only the compulsory question arises ... where do we go next?

#### Websearch

[1] [www.ham-yota.com/youth-contesting-program/](http://www.ham-yota.com/youth-contesting-program/)

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