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DSP talent blossoms in Romanian region

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Foreign companies have been partnering with Politehnica University of Timisoara in Western Romania, bolstering the pool of digital signal processing specialists coming out of the region.

Timisoara in Western Romania, bolstering the pool of digital signal processing specialists coming out of the region.
In 1999, Motorola partnered with the university to provide development tools and financing for student training. The partnership is continuing through Freescale Semiconductor.

Alcatel-Lucent, which also runs an R&D center in Timisoara, has long cooperated with the university on telecommunications engineering, which includes some DSP work, said Mihai Micea, director of the DSP Applications Lab at Politehnica University of Timisoara.

DSP curriculum has been part of the university since 1990. "I took DSP courses when I was a student," Micea said.

Since then, a DSP Application Lab has blossomed through foreign cooperation and various European Union R&D grants. Roughly 100 students study DSP curriculum, which next year will include more advanced work at the master's degree level.

The DSP Lab is within the computer software and engineering department, which also has a PhD program in computer engineering.

The university recently received funding from the government in Bucharest, which enabled Micea's department to significantly upgrade laboratory and network infrastructure, he said.

A typical Politehnica graduate goes to work at one of several foreign companies set up in Timisoara. Siemens VDO (now Continental), for example, runs an R&D center for automotive-related embedded programming that employs some 2000 engineers.

The demand for engineers is high and local universities alone cannot satisfy it, he said. Timisoara's unemployment rate is around 1%.

However, Timisoara-based companies have been able to attract graduates from other Romanian cities such as Cluj Napoca and Iasi, which is on the other side of the country, Micea said.

"Even though demand for graduates is strong, there is room for more foreign companies here," he added.

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