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The Balkan Physics Olympiad –a little piece of history

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Founded in 1985, the Balkan Physical Union (BPU) strives to actively promote Physics, science, education, and cooperation between the Balkan countries. In accordance with these aims, as well as the goals of the Balkan Physics Olympiad, the BPU Council which was held in Sofia, in 2018, agreed that it should organize the First Balkan Physics Olympiad, which would function as a platform where the gifted high school students of the participating countries could participate. The first edition took place in Thessaloniki (Greece), in 2019, while the other two editions which were held in 2020 and 2021 were organized online, under the organization of Romania and Bulgaria.

The organization of the Olympics provided a very appropriate framework for dialogue on the teaching of physics and the curricula in the Balkan countries. Thirty seven participants from a total of eleven countries attended the first contest in Thessaloniki, while 47 participants from 12 countries participated in the second edition, which was organized by the University of Craiova, Romania. The third edition of the contest, which was organized by the University of Sofia, Bulgaria, had a total of 15 participating countries, out of which 10 were BPU member countries, and 5 novel ones.

With notable results after the three editions so far, and with an increasing number of participating countries, it can be said that the Olympiad wins in recognition, prestige and interest. This paper aims to provide an overview of the previous history of the competition as well of its development, and to compare the results of the high school pupils from the Balkans at the IPhO, before and after the BPO1-3, alongside the perspectives of the BPO.

References

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