

PRESS RELEASE

Contact Anne Wendel
Phone +32 2 70682-22
e-mail anne.wendel@eu-nited.net
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The first joint EURON/EUROP annual meeting – a success story

Brussels, 22 March 2010 - From March 10 to 12, 2010 more than 245 robotics researchers from industry and academia met in Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain, for the first joint EURON/EUROP annual meeting. The motivation for the European Robotics Technology Platform (EUROP) and the European Robotics Research Network (EURON) to organise the shared event was to improve cooperation of industry and academia and enhance technology transfer. The participants discussed challenges faced by industry concerning the advancement of European Robotics and explored academic solutions to tackle them. Given the positive feedback and the high attendance rate at the meeting, the European robotics community seems ready for a closer interaction which will boost European robotics product developments and innovations.

The EURON/EUROP event was enabled by the European Commission through the Coordination Action euRobotics. Local host organisation was FATRONIK-TECNALIA.

European robotics industry - towards implementation of the EUROP Strategic Research Agenda

Starting point for discussions was the completion of the EUROP Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for robotics in Europe in July 2009. With the creation of the SRA, the European robotics industry demonstrated a common vision for all robotics application domains. Product visions and their timely development, application scenarios and core technologies have been already identified. "EUROP is now asked to inform academia what the most urgent technological challenges are that hinder the industry to develop further," states Rainer Bischoff, KUKA Roboter GmbH and EUROP Coordinator. Therefore the EUROP members – among them 60 European robot manufacturers – started to work on concretising the product visions of the SRA with the expectation that the academic community will meet the challenges and work on solutions of industrial relevance. "Only with the help of academia we can realise the product visions stated in the SRA!", says Rainer Bischoff.

European academic research – towards empowering the robotics industry


The European robotics research community is ready to empower their industrial colleagues. "My personal motivation for doing academic research is to create a rich basis for the European robotics industry to select from", says Herman Bruyninckx, coordinator of EURON and professor at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Many academic researchers seem to share his goal, given their high rate of participation in the meeting. However, there are impediments preventing academic researchers to engage in applied research. It is mandatory for many to invest their time and energy in doing research which will result in publications hence earning them academic merits. In other cases, academia does not know what exactly the needs of industry are. "The joint meeting was important to give incentives for both communities to engage in closer cooperation", says Rainer Bischoff.

EUROP and EURON - highlighting examples of successful technology transfer

Inspiring for all were the presentations given during the Tech Transfer Session. The six finalists of the EUROP/EURON Technology Transfer Award introduced outstanding examples of applied research - all of them success stories of academic research ending in product innovations with commercial impact. "Successful cooperation and technology transfer already exists", says Peter Eriksson from ABB AB Robotics, leader of the EUROP working group industrial robotics and member of the jury, "we only need more of those success stories!" During the three days of the joint EURON/EUROP annual meeting there were plenty of opportunities to start new ones.

European robotics – towards tackling societal challenges

The EURON and EUROP coordinators agree that robotics has much to say when it comes to societal challenges. "Sustainable manufacturing, ageing society, security – the European robotics industries have many products already on the market contributing to tackle these challenges!", mentions Rainer Bischoff. "And many more are yet to come, especially in the burgeoning service and security markets, once the price-value ratio of technologies decreases.", concludes Herman Bruyninckx.

	<p>EUROP – European Robotics Technology Platform</p> <p>EUROP is an industry-driven framework for the main stakeholders in robotics to strengthen Europe’s competitiveness in robotics R&D and global markets.</p> <p>EUROP is one of several European Technology Platforms (ETPs) supported by the European Commission.</p> <p>http://www.robotics-platform.eu</p>
	<p>EURON – European Robotics Research Network</p> <p>EURON is a community of more than 220 academic and industrial groups in Europe with a common interest in advanced research in the field of robotics.</p> <p>The network was founded in 2000 and was supported by the European Commission for 8 years.</p> <p>http://www.euron.org</p>
	<p>euRobotics Coordination Action</p> <p>euRobotics is a project funded by the European Commission - Information & Communication Technologies – Cognitive Systems and Robotics.</p> <p>Portfolio under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission supporting robotics related research.</p> <p>A list of other projects funded under this particular subfield can be found on the website.</p> <p>http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/cognition/</p>