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CNET Sci-Tech Europe lavishes \$3.8 billion on robotics research program

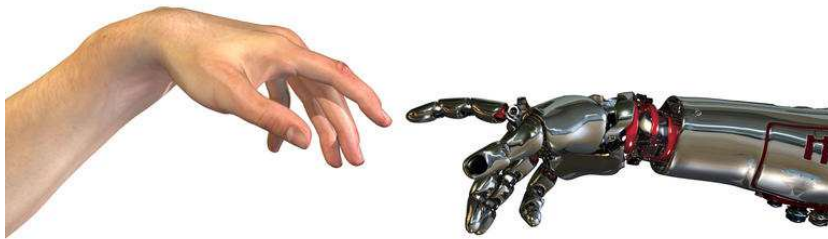
Europe lavishes \$3.8 billion on robotics research program

To automate manufacturing instead of watch it move elsewhere, European Commission unveils new robotics funds.

by [Stephen Shankland](#)  [@stshank](#) June 3, 2014 10:19 AM PDT

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European Commission

European government and industry will spend €2.8 billion (about \$3.8 billion) on a robotics research program for the region, an attempt to make Europe a strong player in the market and to keep manufacturing work from moving to other parts of the world.

EC Vice President Neelie Kroes **announced the move** Tuesday, saying it will create more than 240,000 jobs in the region and boost its collective economy by €80 billion (about \$109 billion). The funds will be spent over seven years, from 2014 through 2020.

That's the kind of promise that's germane in today's Europe, which has struggled to snap back from the financial troubles of recent years. High unemployment is still a problem in many countries, and the EC has to prove its value: in May elections, **"euroskeptics" opposed to the multicountry political effort gained ground**.

The initiative, called **Sparc**, is expected to increase Europe's share of the robotics business from 35 percent today to 42 percent in 2020, when the global industry will reach \$60 billion, the EC said.

For Sparc, a quarter of the funds comes from the EC itself; the remaining €2.1 billion comes from **euRobotics**, a nonprofit organization that counts dozens of companies and universities as members.

Robots are increasingly important to manufacturing, handling repetitive tasks with precision. Sparc is broader, though; it also will fund research and development for robotics in agriculture, health, transportation, environmental management, civil security, and home care, the EC said.

Tags: [Sci-Tech](#) [Robots](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stephen Shankland

Stephen Shankland has been a reporter at CNET since 1998 and covers browsers, Web development, digital photography and new technology. In the past he has been CNET's beat reporter for Google, Yahoo, Linux, open-source software, servers and supercomputers. He has a soft spot in his heart for standards groups and I/O interfaces. [See full bio](#)