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Neelie Kroes © European Commission

3 June, 2014

EU launches world's largest civilian robotics programme

Under the umbrella of euRobotics, the European Commission and 180 companies and research organisations have launched the world's largest civilian research and innovation programme in robotics.

SPARC, the initiative covering manufacturing, agriculture, health, transport, civil security, and households, is the EU's industrial policy effort to strengthen Europe's position in the global robotics market (€60bn a year by 2020). This initiative is expected to create over 240,000 jobs in Europe, and increase Europe's share of the global market to 42% (a boost of €4bn per year). The European Commission will invest €700m and euRobotics €2.1bn.

European Commission Vice-President, responsible for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, says: "Europe needs to be a producer and not merely a consumer of robots. Robots do much more than replace humans – they often do things humans can't or won't do and that improves everything from our quality of life to our safety. Integrating robots into European industry helps us create and keep jobs in Europe."

President of euRobotics Bernd Liepert said: "SPARC will ensure the competitiveness of European robotics industries. Robot-based automation solutions are essential to overcome today's most pressing societal challenges – from demographic change to mobility to sustainable production."

Robotics enables companies to continue manufacturing in Europe, where they might otherwise move operations to lower cost countries. But the Commission said the potential of robotics goes far beyond the factory, from helping nurses in hospitals to inspecting dangerous power plants and tedious farm work.



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