

Minutes of EURON Board Meeting
November 29-30, 2004
KTH, Stockholm, Sweden

Participants

Henrik Christensen (coord.), KTH, SE
Angel del Pobil, UJI, ES
Roland Siegart, EPFL, CH
Frans Groen, UVA, NL (only day 1)
Martin Hägele, FhG IPA, DE (only day 2)
Libor Preucil, CTU, CZ
Jüri Vain, TTU, EST
Raja Chatila, CNRS-LAAS, FR
Cezary Zielinski, PW, PL
Jadran Lenarcic, JSI, SL
Guido Bugmann, UPLYM, UK

Jeanna Ayoubi (adm.) KTH, SE
Alicia Casals, UPC, ES
Bruno Siciliano, UNINA, IT
Erwin Prassler, GPS, DE
Herman Bruyninckx, KUL, BE
Miguel Salichs, UC3M, ES
John Hallam, SDU, DK
Martin McGinnity, U Ulster, IE/UK
Jorge Dias, ISR, PT
Juha Röning, UOULU, SF
Pekka Karp (project officer), CEC (only day 1)

Meeting Agenda

Monday, 29 November

1. Welcome / Local information
2. News from Brussels
 - robotics in FP7
 - next call for proposals
3. Review of the received project proposals & the process
4. Final decision on proposals
5. EURON Annual Meeting in Warsaw on 16-18 Feb 2005
6. Review of Y1 Summer Schools
7. Short tour of CAS laboratories

Tuesday, 30 November

1. Extra news from CEC
2. Review of Key-area activities
 - Research Planning
 - Education and Training
 - Industry Activities
 - Dissemination / WWW
 - EURON's new website
3. Future meetings
 - PC meeting
 - Board meeting
 - Y1 Review meeting
4. New members issue
5. Planned activities for Y2 and ad-hoc involvement
6. Raising awareness of EURON / International cooperation

Minutes - 29 November

1. Introduction

Everybody was welcomed to the meeting. The agenda presented by the coordinator was adopted. Copies of the proposals and the reviews were distributed to all the participants.

2. News from Brussels

Presented by Pekka Karp and Henrik Christensen.

Karp spoke on plans in FP7 and presented a short paper (2,5 pages) written by the Commission. Robotics seems to be in favour when the new technical platforms are being discussed. At the same time it is still unclear if robotics is going to have its own platform in FP7.

A short review of the Brainstorm meeting held in Brussels on 8-9 November was given. This is one of the efforts to enter robotics into FP7.

A document called "Building the European Robotics Platform –EUROP" made and submitted to the EU by a group of robotics industrialist and researchers was presented and a paper version of it was distributed to the participants. Comments are most welcome and support is needed from all member countries. Also, an electronic version of both the above-mentioned document and the background document made by the Commission called "Communication from the Commission - Investing in research: an action plan for Europe" was sent to all members of the Board shortly after the meeting. Information on details regarding other platforms in FP7 will be made available.

The Commission will publish the new Call for proposals a week after EURON board meeting. Deadline for proposals will be 22 of March 2005. And Call 5 will be announced in May 2005 with the deadline on 21 of September. This will probably be the final call under FP6, but there is still a possibility for an additional call.

3. Review of proposals

Introduction

- The first call for proposals was advertised on 9 of July 2004 with deadline on 15 of October
- In total 20 proposals were received, but 3 were returned unopened because of late arrival
- The proposals received cover all instruments as follows:
 - 7 Prospective Research Projects
 - 4 Research Ateliers
 - 6 Topical Research Studies

Where

- PRPs are ad-hoc projects for IP input or evaluation of "wild" idea with a view to a full project
- RA is a study of a topic in a single venue for a specific area (similar to a WS or a Brainstorm meeting)
- TRSs are similar to SIGs in EURON1 and can be used for community set up

Official procedure for processing the proposals – description & comments

- Proposals were registered by the coordinator and a notification of receipt sent to the applicants by fax

- 3 independent reviews per proposal were requested by the coordinator

Comment:

- *the coordinator reports that it was difficult to find qualified reviewers. Some of those who agreed to make a review never sent the report to the coordinator or answered with significant delay. Suggestions to improve the process are most welcome.*
- *As a result, 3 of the proposals had only one review each (PRP1, PRP3 & PRP5) and for that 3 persons from the board volunteered to make an additional review before the end of the meeting*

- Evaluation process

Conflict of interest: all board members who had a conflict of interest with any of the proposals left the room during the discussion of those projects as follows:

PRP	RA	TRS
	1. H Christensen & A del Pobil	1. E Prassler
2. B Siciliano & R Chatila	2. H Bruyninckx & J Hallam	2. F Groen
6. B Siciliano	3. R Chatila	3. A Casals & R Siegwart
7. R Siegwart	4. R Siegwart	4. R Siegwart & G Bugmann
		6. J Lenarcic

Proposals were discussed one by one; approximately 5-8 minutes were devoted to each proposal

Consolidation of reviews

Comment

No consolidation reports were written in advance due to time pressure

Volunteers to write the evaluation summaries on each proposal were chosen after the discussion as follows:

<u>PRP</u>	<u>TRS</u>	<u>RA</u>
1. John Hallam	1. Jorge Dias	1. Frans Groen
2. Erwin Prassler	2. Juha Rönning	2. Frans Groen
3. Angel del Pobil	3. Raja Chatila	3. Guido Bugmann
4. Jorge Dias	4. Erwin Prassler	4. Henrik Christensen
5. Juha Rönning	5. Henrik Christensen	
6. Herman Bruyninckx	6. Cezary Zelinski	
7. Alicia Casals		

The forms that should be completed (ESR and CMM) were sent to all of them shortly after the meeting to be returned to the coordinator a week later.

- The official decision made by the Board will be sent to the applicants approximately one week after the meeting and after that the evaluation summaries have been returned.

4. Final decision on the proposals

- **Budget**

Total annual budget for the projects is 465 K Euro - approximately 230 K Euro per call (with 2 calls/year)

- ***Following proposals were accepted by the board for further funding:***

PRP-2

Title: Physical Human-Robot Interaction in Anthropic Domains: Safety & Dependability
Acronym: PHRIDOM
Consortium: 1) Antonio Bicchi, UNIPisa, The Inderdepartmental Research Center "E. Piaggio", IT
2) Raja Chatila, LAAS-CNRS, FR
3) Bruno Siciliano, UNINA-DIS PRISMA Lab, IT
4) Gerd Hirzinger, DLR, DE
5) Alessandro De Luca, UNIROMA1-DIS LabRob, IT
Budget: 100 K Euro
Comment: a more detailed plan of work must be provided

RA-2

Title: Robotics Ontology for the Semantic Web
Acronym: ROSE
Consortium: 1) John Hallam, SDU-MIP, DK
2) Herman Bruyninckx, KULeuven, BE
Budget: 35 K Euro

RA-3

Title: Roboethics Atelier
Acronym: Roboethics Atelier
Consortium: 1) Gianmarco Veruggio, Scuola di Robotica, IT
2) Raja Chatila, LAAS-CNRS, FR
3) Paolo Dario, SSSA, IT
Budget: the accepted budget has been reduced to 50 K Euro
Comment: the consortium must provide a detailed list of experts who will be involved

TRS-6 was rejected with an encouragement to improve and resubmit the proposal

- ***Comments and lessons***

- No Topical Research Studies was chosen for funding under this call. It seems that this instrument has been misunderstood. The difference between PRP and TRS must be more clear described in the future calls
- Recruitment of reviewers and the review process take a lot of time and the timetable is challenging.
- F Groen and H Christensen suggested to find a WEB support system that can help to ease up the reviewing process
- It was suggested to setup a rotating committee that will take care of the reviewing process of the proposals in future calls
- Marks given by the reviewers are not enough. They have to provide written comments that should be clear.

- ***Second call for proposals***

- Advertised - 15 of January 2005
- Deadline – 15 of April 2005
- Text of the call will be re-written by the coordinator before Christmas

- New version of the review guidelines must be prepared - the text presented by the EC for entry of new members into NOE contracts must be used as a base, but it has to be changed a little bit to fit the needs of the call for proposals within EURON

The following members accepted to serve on the committee to take care of the second call for proposals:

John Hallam
Raja Chatila
Miguel Salichs
Herman Bruyninckx

The group together with the coordinator is responsible for the evaluation process and will meet on 17 of May 2005 in Brussels or in Frankfurt (Christensen and Bruyninckx will check the possibilities for the meeting venue).

5. Next EURON Annual Meeting

Venue – Warsaw, Poland. The exact venue is not yet defined – there are two options to choose between, and the coordinator will make the decision before Christmas.

Date - 16-18 February 2005

Comments:

- *Two main issues should be always taken into consideration when planning the EURON annual meetings:*
 - *easy accessible venue*
 - *limited budget (costs should be kept low)*
- *The meeting will be announced to all members before Christmas.*
- *The meeting is co-located with IP's Review meetings (COGNIRON, NEUROBOTICS & iSWARM).*
- *All EURON members including the Board members will receive the same kind of travel reimbursement for participation at the meeting*

The draft structure of the meeting suggested by the coordinator is as follows:

- Day 1 General plenary meeting
- *EURON status report*
 - *KA summaries (highlights)*
 - *Invited speaker presentations*
- Joint dinner
PhD Award ceremony (12 nominations have been received)
Tech Transfer Award ceremony
- Day 2 Workshops (5-6 sessions):
- One WS per IP
 - 2-3 invited WSs

The IP review meetings start at lunchtime (closed sessions)
The other workshops can continue throughout the afternoon

Day 3 Review meetings of the 3 IPs continue (closed sessions)

Comments:

- Workshops

All suggestions on topics and organizers of the Workshops are most welcome to be sent to the coordinator as soon as possible (before Christmas, if possible).

- Other suggestions for the meeting

- *It was suggested to make it possible for people to bring posters to the meeting, as it is a good way for all EURON members to present themselves to each other.. Space will be offered for this during the whole meeting. It was even suggested that robots could be brought to the meeting together with the posters.*
- ***Suggestions on good speakers that could be invited to the meeting are most welcome***
- *Costs issue will be discussed with Pekka*

- **Review meetings issues (presented by Pekka Karp)**

- *New guidelines for reporting within FP6 was advertised by the Commission on 1 October 2004*
- *In draft the following reports must be sent to the Commission at the end of each reporting period:*
 - Technical report*
 - Financial report*
 - Next 18 months plan-report*
- *The Commission accepts the 12 months cost reports without adjustments at the end of the project.*
- *The review meeting takes place 45 days (as latest) after the end of each reporting year.*
- ***EURON review meeting*** *should be held in June – beginning of July. Pekka wishes to have the reports sent to him before end of June. The meeting is 1,5 days long.*
- *Suggestions on possible reviewers are most welcome to be sent to Pekka*

6. Year 1 Summer Schools (review by Roland Siegwart)

- Summer Schools 2004 – short presentation was given on each of the four SS organized during this summer and autumn. And the SS are:
 1. 5th Summer School on Images & Robotics (two weeks)
June 14 – 24, 2004, INRIA Sophia Antipolis, France, Christian Laugier, Juan-Manuel Ahuactzin,
<http://www-sop.inria.fr/icare/WEB/SSIR04>
54 participants, EURON sponsorship: €10'000
 2. RAS/IFRR Summer school on Human-Robot Interaction

19 - 23 July 2004, Volterra, Italy, Henrik Christensen, Ron Arkin,
<http://www.cas.kth.se/ras-ifrr-ss04/index.html>
35 participants, EURON sponsorship: €10'000

3. EURON Summer School on Simultaneous Localization and Mapping
August 3 - 7, 2004, Toulouse, France, Raja Chatila, Juan D. Tardós,
<http://www.laas.fr/SLAM>
75 participants, EURON sponsorship: €10'000
4. 4th International UJI Robotic's School on Mobile Manipulators
September, 13-17, 2004, Benicàssim, SPAIN, Pedro J. Sanz, Raúl Marín, Markus Vincze,
<http://ciclop.act.uji.es/Euron04>
23 participants, EURON sponsorship: €10'000

Different kind of statistics was presented, based mostly on the Questionnaires that students were asked to complete:

- distribution of participants per country: totally 112 European and 75 non-European students participated in the above named SS. SLAM SS seems to have best distribution of participants in Europe.
 - level of education of the participants: most the participants are PhD students. A majority is studying Computer Science. Siegwart expressed some concern over the lack of students from Mechanical Engineering area.
 - Quality of the technical program, lectures, exercises and rhythm: variability of the exercises needs some improvement and even the rhythm between the lectures and exercises.
 - Quality of other things, such as accommodation, meals, social events and costs. Some students expressed a wish that all participants have to be at the same hotel, which can make the interaction between students and lecturers more informal. Costs, such as participation fee, didn't cause any problems.
 - Most of the students said that they definitely want to participate in the future SS organised by EURON, some were uncertain, but nobody said NO. A list of possible future SS schools was made based on the propositions from the students.
- Call for Winter Schools was announced too late and only one proposal was received. It hasn't been approved by EURON, but happened anyway! And it is:

Camp on "Rescue Robotics"
October 29th-November 2nd 2004, Istituto Superiore Antincendi, ROMA
Daniele Nardi, Andreas Birk, Adam Jacoff, Satoshi Tadokoro
<http://www.dis.uniroma1.it/~multirob/camp04>
 - Summer and Winter Schools 2005
 - Deadline for proposals SS'05 is 1 February'05 (Winter S – 15 July)
 - Same procedure as used earlier
 - The decision can be made before/during the Annual Meeting in Warsaw
 - Budget: 45 K Euro/year (max 10 K Euro/SS); students travel at own expenses;
 - co-sponsoring from e.g. IPs was considered as a good option for future SS, as each of the IPs will organize at least one SS per year

- Other issues

- how to attract more participants from Europe?

All members of EURON has to inform their own students

- credits for SS (request comes from many students)?

Exams are not possible to arrange. Maybe create an official EURON Certificate that students can take with them to their own universities and probably get some credits based on that.

- lecture notes – availability on the Web?

A Webbook must be created. Suggestions on how to do this in a best way are welcome to be sent to Roland Siegwart

End of Day One.

Minutes – 30 November

1. Welcome. Extra news from EC (by Henrik Christensen)

Henrik Christensen presented the meeting agenda for the day.

Some additional news from EC concerning the Robotics in FP7 was presented. The EC has preliminary decided to have robotics as a major topic in FP7. An official documents will be distributed by the Commission soon.

High quality pictures presenting European robotics are useful for promotion of the research - to be sent to Christensen as soon as possible.

2. Review of Key-Area activities

Major question from the coordinator is how to accelerate the activities in EURON. The question is if some push-action needed?

KA coordinators presented the existing activities and the plans for the future.

- Research Planning (Angel del Pobil made the presentation of this KA as Rüdiger Dillmann, couldnot attend this meeting)
 - Angel del Pobil made a short reminder-presentation of the main goals of this KA. One of those is to make a Roadmap for robotics. A 160-pages roadmap document created in EURON1 will be integrated into EURON2. Pobil himself is more involved in benchmarking action.
 - A Brainstorm meeting was held in Brussels on 8-9 November'04 organized by EC and EURON. Approximately 20 people from academia and industry were present. The meeting brought up a feeling of agreement on several conclusions between the different participants. A detailed report from this meeting is expected soon.
 - KA members will have their meeting in January'04.

- A short presentation of Wiki-Webpage was made. It was set-up on 29 September as a platform for co-authoring of EURON Roadmap. It is also a way of presenting this KA for the rest of EURON members (it was a lack of information on this issue in EURON1) and also a good support in communication between the KA members. KA coordinators wish to see more people involved in this activity – help needed. The board members discussed the possibilities of involving *more* EURON members.
- The question about finding the person who can devote his time to do a good roadmap in robotics was discussed actively by the board members – issues such as time, budget and costs, level of education of the person were raised.

The conclusion is that a good strategy must be found and a detailed work plan must be made very quickly. Prassler volunteered to help a little with this issue.

- Research Benchmarking action was presented. Christensen underlines that it is a good way of measuring the progress in science. Comparing research actions is a difficult task. Competitions can be a good way of attracting more people to come up with new solutions.
- A first attempt on benchmarking for Motion Planning was made in EURON1. A 1 day WS was organized during the Annual Meeting in Amsterdam in March 2004. Goals and actions were presented to the consortium. A web-portal for motion planning had been setup and it has to be kept alive. Feedback is most welcome.
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- Future actions : 1) a report on existing benchmarks will be made during the Annual meeting in Warsaw. 2) identification of core problems defined by Roadmap and IPs (had been discussed by the board). Christensen points out that the work mechanism is an issue for further discussion – not all are happy with the existing one.
- Christensen underlines that the results must be presented at the end of month 12

- Education and Training (presented by Alicía Casals)

- latest KA meeting was held on 21-22 October in Barcelona. List of participants presented.
- A list of future actions with well defined deadlines were presented
 - 1) Current status and future actions for **the Robotics Webbook** were presented. One of the issues is to make the contribution process easier. PDF is seen as a sub-optimal option by some of the board members. Bruyninckx together with others are trying to find new solutions and welcomes all suggestions. Adraft version of the Webbook will be ready for presentation during the Annual meeting.
 - 2) The group is in parallel working on making a database of **Teaching material** in robotics. A wiki Platform used for technical support. More active contribution from all members is required. Suggested actions – send reminders, improve visibility on the website.
 - 3) **Robotic curricula** – action plan presented. Responsible person – Joan Aranda. Call to EURON members to enter courses will be made in December'04. Help from National representatives needed. 1st recommended robotics curricula will be presented at the annual

meeting. A Wiki-site will be setup to gather comments and feedback from the students. All recommendations are most welcome.

- 4) **PhD Award.** Submissions received in October'04 and 12 were accepted. Final decision on Nominees will be made in January'05. The Award ceremony will be held during the annual meeting in Warsaw.
 - 5) **WEB** – list of contents presented. Suggestions and comments sent to John.
 - 6) **Future actions** – promote an award for best E&T contribution. Henrik suggested collecting of Thesis presented around Europe – right mechanisms has to be created for making this possible.
- Robotic Webbook - showed and presented by Bruyninckx. All kind of feedback is welcome.
 - Industrial Activities (presented by Martin Hägele)
 - People involved and main goals of the KA were presented.
 - The current status of the deliverables in WPs (12-16) was shown and it is as follows:
 - WP12 “Liaison with industrial organizations” – status OK:
 - contributions to World Robotics Yearbook
 - cooperation with EUnited
 - proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding with European Robotic Association for closer cooperation with EURON
 - WP13 “Industry Workshops” – two WS to be organized
 - WP14 “Ind. White Papers on Ind. Robot Automation and Service Robotics – to be updated
 - WP15 “Tech Transfer Award” – in progress.
 - The invitation had been sent. Deadline for proposals is 31 Dec'04. The first ceremony was held in March'04 during EURON Annual Meeting in AMS. The second ceremony will take place in Warsaw during the next EURON Annual Meeting. The event is co-sponsored by EUnited.

Comments:

- *the jury might have too many German representatives*
- *Prassler suggested showing the technical transfer physically. Maybe an exhibition can be organized. IP Cogniron came with a proposal to organize a robotic-automation fair. This can be a good opportunity to show the achievements of robotics in Europe. The event can take place a year from now. Prassler/Hägele will investigate if EUnited is interested in co-sponsoring such an event. Christensen suggested making a detailed workplan where the aspects and possibilities must be defined and a closer look to how the costs can be split can be taken. Prassler volunteers to do this. It is important that the venue for such an event is an easily accessible one.*

Slides with diagrams and photos showing the achievements in robotics during year 2004 were presented. United Nation website has some statistics to download. The statistics shown was based on the questionnaire that had been sent to industrial

companies and the questions were “how many robots have been installed during the year?” and “how many robots are planned to be installed during the next year?”

WP16 “Yellow Pages” – an agreement with ERF on a joint portal / draft and implementation plan for joint portal (GPS)

As seen above, some of the deliverables are in progress and can be presented at the end of Y1. But there are also some issues that need to be discussed.

Christensen raised the question concerning the database “Robotics in Europe”. Is there still any need such a database? Is it still possible to make it? EURON has collected descriptions (1 page) from the labs involved. The list of members on EURON website needs to be updated.

- Dissemination (Presented by Bruno Siciliano)

Main goals and the current status of the activities were presented.

- **STAR** (Springer Tracts in Advanced Robotics) Book Series is a successful continuation from EURON 1. The information can be found on www.springer.de Editors of the series are Bruno Siciliano, FransGroen, Oussama Khatib. During last two years 14 volumes have been published, 10 more are in production and 6 are being reviewed. A lot of proposals are received all the time, but some are denied. Feedback on the books is most welcome. There is also a separate series with proceedings. Is this needed? Done on CD? Opinions are welcome.

Planned activities presented shortly.

- **Publications**
The current status of visibility in IEEE Robotics and Automation Society Magazines is good. It is planned to continue having a regular column in there (done by K.Kyriakopoulos & B.Siciliano).
- **WEB SITE**
Short background presentation done by Siciliano to be continued by Hallam. Of the three proposals received, only one was chosen for further evaluation – e2advance. After discussion within the board this proposal was denied on several points, such as long delivery time, high cost, lack of qualified personnel to act as content provider and the issue of how to maintain this after EURON2. New proposal was received from MIP, DK and accepted both by the EC and EURON board. The proposal has advantages on several points, such as open source, lower costs, fast delivery, content provision by qualified personnel. The work started one month ago.
- **Industry**
Not much done until now. Nothing to report. But the planned actions are:
 - Presence at major industrial fairs (in cooperation with Ind. Links KA)
 - Pay special attention to the interests of SMEs
- **Media and Press**

A prepared Information Flyer presenting the main activities with EURON was distributed to the Board. Feedback is most welcome.
One of the planned activities is to organise a press conference during the Annual Meeting in Warsaw.

It was suggested to hire a professional journalist who can follow EURON events. Christensen has already received a proposal and has a budget foreseen for that.

- Hallam presented the draft version of the new EURON web site that will replace the old one at the end of December. Two documents presenting the page and the work were distributed to the Board. All the material that should appear on the web site should be sent to Hallam. The main plan for the future is to create a self-sustaining web site. Opinions on the layout are also welcome.

3. Future meetings

- **PC meeting** (John H, Herman B, Raja C, Miguel S)
Date: 17 May 2005
Venue: Brussels or Frankfurt
- **1Y Review Meeting** (KA coordinators must be present)
Date: 20-21 June 2005
Venue: Ljubljana, Slovenia

Feedback on potential reviewers needed! The reviewers could be experts in networks. Same reviewers will evaluate EURON every year.

- **Board Meeting**
It was agreed that the next Board meeting will be 1/2 day and will be held in Ljubljana on 20 June – just before the Review meeting. A telephone conference might be organised earlier if there is a need.

4. New Members

Two applications were presented to the Board:

Miguel Hernandez Univ. and Bilkent Univ. Both were accepted by the Board.
Hallam volunteers to act as a “national representative” for Turkey until the issue is solved in some other way.

Membership of such big organisations as INRIA, CNRS, Fraunhofer were discussed. All FhG Institutes enter EURON through one signed contract. The same is for INRIA. CNRS labs enter EURON primarily through different French universities as part of joint research units.

5. Planned activities for Y2 & Ad-hoc involvement

- Brainstorm on topics to be pursued. Reflection needed – what has to be done / improved?
- Added press coverage. Involvement of science journalists – proposals are most welcome. These journalists should be invited to the Annual Meeting. They can be

national. 15 K Euro /year can be paid, even travel reimbursement to the Annual meeting.

- New call for proposals
- Joint EURON-IPs SS
IPs are required to organise SS every year. Right mechanisms for joint funding must be found. This can be discussed with IP project leaders by e-mail. A good quality SS can be organised with this kind of funding. 30 students with 5 lectures are enough for a SS. Roland S can coordinate the further discussion (needs the contact data to IP leaders). The SS can be both in Robotics and Cognition. COSY is planning one – Cosy light. It is important not duplicating the SS. The important question raised is how to involve more EURON members to organise SS.

6. Raising awareness of EURON / International cooperation.

- How to involve more EURON members in different activities? Help from National representatives needed.
- It is important for EURON to have good coverage in popular magazines
- A proposal to sign a MOU with Korean robotics was discussed. Some members of the board expressed doubts about this. It is important that joint activities are of benefit to both parties.

End of meeting.