

EURON Board Meeting
5 December 2006
ETHZ, Zürich, Switzerland

Participants:

Herman Bruyninckx, KUL, BE
Henrik Christensen, KTH, SE
Angel del Pobil, UJI, ES
Alicia Casals, UPC, ES
Roland Siegwart, ETHZ, CH
Bruno Siciliano, UNINA, IT
Frans Groen, UVA, NL
Martin Hägele, FhG-IPA, DE
Erwin Prassler, GPS, DE
Markus Vincze, ACIN, AT
Ognyan Manolov, ICSR-BAS, BG
Libor Preucil, CTU, CZ

Miguel Salichs, UC3M, ES
Juha Röning, UOULU, FI
John Hallam, SDU, DK
Raja Chatila, CNRS, FR
Kostas Kyriakopoulos, NTUA, GR
Amiram Moshaiov, TAU, IL
Cezary Zielinski, WUT, PL
Jorge Dias, ISR, PT
Jadran Lenarcic, JSI, SI
Guido Bugmann, UPLYM, UK
Michael Pardowitz, UKA, DE
Jeanna Ayoubi, KTH, SE (adm)

Meeting Agenda

10.00 Start of Meeting – Welcome/Local information

Round 1 (10:15 – 11:30)

- WP overview – brief report and action plans for Period 3 (5 min per WP)
- Priority list for further discussion in Round 2

Decisions to be taken (11:30 - 12:30)

- Research grants processing & decision making
- Extension of EURON
- Events that can be sponsored by EURON
- New members: what info to provide
- Annual meeting 2007
 - Presentation by Kostas K.
 - Events to be included

- Annual meeting / EUROS 2008
 - presentation by Libor Preucil
 - presentation by Michael Pardowitz on behalf of Rüdiger Dillmann

Lunch (12.30 – 13.00)

Round 2 (13:00 – 16:00)

- 13.00 Discussion on political stance – new EU situation (Robotics – Cognitive Science)
- 13.20 Discussion on priority list defined in Round 1:

Introduction

Roland Siegwart – local organizer of the meeting – welcomed everybody to ETH Zürich and gave some brief practical information for the day.

A present was handed to Henrik Christensen by the Board members as a “thank you” for his great efforts as the former scientific Coordinator of EURON.

Herman Bruyninckx – the new elected scientific Coordinator of EURON – welcomed everybody to the meeting. He presented the agenda which was adopted by the Board.

The main goal of this meeting was to finalise the new Description of Work (DoW) for the next 18 months of the project and to send it to the Commission as soon as possible. Each WP of the DoW was presented by the responsible key area coordinator in order to define the topics where decisions still needed to be taken after a discussion with the rest of the Board.

WP 1 Reseach Roadmap (UKA) – *presented by Michael Pardowitz on behalf of Rüdiger Dillmann*

The main objectives of this WP were briefly presented.

The draft version of the Roadmap had been previously distributed to the EURON members. Comments from approximately 20 people were received and the text was revised after that. The plan is to update the Roadmap at least every six months.

Comment from the Board: this would be too often to be realistic.

The main comment given by the EC at the latest review meeting was *to define the end users* of the Roadmap.

Comment from the Board and the Coordinator: this question is still not clearly answered in the existing description of the WP. The goal and the impact of the Roadmap need to be clearly identified.

The plan for the next 18 months is as follows:

- in order to involve more people in the revision-work of the Roadmap, it is planned to compose and send a Questionnaire to EURON members in January 2007. It is important to identify the experts in each key area of the Roadmap and address these people personally. The questions to be asked are:
 - Which goals should be attained and why? What can be considered as breakthroughs?
 - Which obstacles block the road? Which European research activities need to be supported?
 - Which key technologies are expected to push the development in every key area?
- continue with the joint EURON-EUROP Workshops so that the industrial partners can meet the academic partners for discussion and tuning of the two roadmaps. The next meeting is planned to be held during the coming ICRA
- try to involve representatives of international and national funding agencies in the discussion of the Roadmap’s findings – organize a Workshop. The exact dates are not decided yet – approximately September-October 2007.
- To finalise and publish the Roadmap document directly after the WS named above
- To put the Roadmap document on EURON web

WP 2 Research Benchmarks (UJI) – presented by Angel del Pobil

The current status of the WP was presented and plans for the next period were described. 17 different groups are involved in the work with 15 on-going activities. These activities need to be disseminated through reports and the web site to encourage more members to participate in them.

Two meetings on Benchmarks were planned for the 3rd period of the project:

- The 1st WS at IROS'06 in Beijing in October 2006
- The 2nd WS will be held during the EURON Annual Meeting in March 2007

A brief presentation of the 1st WS was given. Not many people attended that meeting, but a person from Microsoft was present.

Lecture notes from both meetings are DRs of this WP and will be distributed to the Board members.

Comments from the Board:

- *the initiative is too broad, needs to be more focused*
- *Benchmarks should depend on the Roadmap. A closer connection between the two WPs is needed*
- *a WS on SLAM should be held within EURON*
- *support a SIG or a research project in benchmarking with EURON research projects funds*
- *give extra credits to project applications with connection to the benchmarks*
- *a top-down hunting method is not effective*

Decisions:

- ***to put a link in the Roadmap to Benchmarking WP***
- ***to support a mini-project on Benchmarking***
- ***to support/organise a SIG on Benchmarking***

WP 3 Inter-project cooperation (LAAS) – responsible Raja Chatila

The main objective of this WP is to provide mechanisms and resources to ensure cooperation between the on-going IPs and integration with nationally funded efforts.

A Strategic Advisory Committee has been set up, but it had only one meeting until now. The activity is not working as it was planned, so the Coordinator raised a question to the Board if this WP should continue its work or be canceled.

As 2007 is the last year for the existing IP projects, the goal is to organize at least one joint meeting out of three promised in the Workplan. The goal for this meeting could be to feed the Roadmap with common views on the future work within robotics.

Comments / suggestions:

- *The following could be organised at the coming EURON annual meeting:*
 - *joint WS for the three IP projects*
 - *a session with all IP coordinators*
 - *a short presentation of the results to the rest of the EURON community*

- *After the above mentioned joint meetings the following could/should be done:*
 - *produce a brochure informing about the status of European robotics – this can be a good way of highlighting the results of FP6. Information about other projects than just IPs could be included in the brochure. (Alternatively, a book could be edited with one chapter per project, but this suggestion is less realistic than the brochure, though)*
 - *put a short summary about each project on the EURON web site (1 page per project)*

WP 4 Research Projects (KUL) - presented by Herman Bruyninckx

The activity is delayed and not working as it has been planned. Thus, a major update is needed and the Coordinator raised the following points for discussion and taking decisions on:

- project types
- review process
- post project evaluation
- next call / open call
- review team and conflict of interest within the Board
- request for extension of EURON

Decisions:

*The main decision that the Board agreed on after a thorough discussion was **to reduce the complexity of the call and its processing**, make it more clear and feasible, thus:*

- *announce an **new call for proposals no later than 1 February 2007***
- *the call is an **open call** with no deadline for sending the proposals*
- *the proposals are **send through EURON web site***
- *the incoming proposals will be **evaluated once a month***
- ***two step procedure for evaluation** of proposals (Roland Siegwart and Markus Vincze will write a concrete proposal for how this could be done)*
- ***EU forms for evaluation should be used, but modified***
- *the same **proposal** can be **re-submitted only once** after being rejected*
- ***the results of the projects should be submitted for publication***
- *of the different types of projects suggested in the previous calls **keep only the PRPs and move the TRS and RA into SIG initiative***
- *the PRPs **main goal** should still be **testing new “crazy” ideas**, but they should be **connected to Beyond Robotics initiative and the EURON Roadmap***
- ***delete the limitation** set up in the previous call where **only young researchers** were invited to apply for PRPs (but young researchers should get extra support during the review process)*
- *give extra support to **cooperation with new member states***

Other suggestions and comments:

- *organize Bachelor/Masters contests to design new robots*
- *launch explorative research*
- *the effort is good for community building*
- *encourage industries to participate*

WP 5 Teaching material (UPC) – presented by Alicia Casals

The current status and the plan for the next period were presented. The Coordinator stated a question about how to make the collected material more useful and visible for the community.

The web page where the teaching material had been collected was updated/reorganised in order to simplify its use when contributing with new material or when searching for it. This web page will appear on EURON web page very soon. Examples on how this new page looks like were presented to the Board.

The effort is worth to continue with and when enough data is gathered on the web page it will automatically become more attractive for the potential users.

WP 6 Robotics Curricula (UPC) – presented by Alicia Casals

The current status and the plan for the next period were presented. A lot of courses related to Robotics are included in the universities' own websites around Europe and their contents can be very useful to others. It was suggested to put links to other pages to improve the search possibilities.

The Coordinator stated a question about how to create and promote a more useful curricula and if it could be used as a basis for the European Master programme. Alicia Casals welcomes suggestions from the Board on how this action can be realized. One of the suggestions is to invite speakers to the coming EURON meeting who can present the already existing Master programmes in European universities (potentially, someone from Sweden or Germany) – this could be a good start for going on with next steps.

The action plan for the future is:

- to follow up individual contributions to the Curricula Data Base
- to compose a group of approximately 8 people representing different European countries and let them meet for Workshops (2-3 times a year) where the discussion on the design of Model courses could be started

WP 7 Summer Schools (ETHZ) – presented by Roland Siegart

The activity is running successfully, as usual. For the future there is a suggestion to organize a Summer School for High-school teachers. A comment from the Coordinator is that there is a need (as in many other cases) to start thinking about how this successful initiative can continue beyond EURON II.

The following Summer and Winter Schools were/or will be organized during 2006-2007:

- 2nd SS on Perception and Sensor Fusion in Mobile Robotics (September'06 in Fermo, Italy – by P. Zingaretti from UNIVPM)
- 3rd SS on Simultaneous Localisation and Mapping (August'06 – by P. Newman at Oxford University)
- IURS'06 - 6th International UJI Robotics School on Humanoid Robots (September'06 in Benicàssim, Spain – by A. del Pobil, UJI)
- Rescue Robotics Camp'06 (November'06 in Rome, Italy – by D. Nardi, UNIROMA1)
- 2nd International UMH Robotics Winter School on Parallel robots: theory and applications - IURWS'07 (March'07 in Benidorm, Spain – by J. Navarro, UMH)

WP 8 PhD Award (UPC) – presented by Alicia Casals

People responsible for this activity are Alicia Casals, Manel Frigola and the jury that has been renewed for the next period: H.Bruynickx, R. Dillman, C.Lashi, J.Lenarcic, M.I. Ribeiro, N. Simeon.

Another activity under this WP is the THESEURON – repository of Thesis on Robotics. People still need to be contacted individually in order to get their contribution.

New ideas/suggestions for activities within Education & Training KA:

- *create a Web page with FAQ*
- *gather videos of Robotic classes*
- *create a Net of Laboratories on line*

Any other suggestions are always welcome

WP 9 Book series (UNINA) – responsible Bruno Siciliano

The activity is going on according to the plan.

WP 10 WWW Site – presented by John Hallam

Some statistics on the web usage was presented. The EURON web seems to be an attractive site and widely used by different people. 50% of users come from Europe, the rest from other countries.

The plan for the future is:

- continue with integration of the material from different EURON activities and separate web sites
- provide technical support, so that people can contribute to different pages more actively
- create technical support for the next calls for research projects (under construction – should be ready by 1 of February 2007 when the call will be announced)

Suggestions:

- *the EURON website should be better advertised to out of Europe*
- *EURON can collect news from members' own web pages*
- *Collecting and reporting news can be part of National Representatives' work*

WP 11 Dissemination (UNINA/NTUA/UVA) – responsible Bruno Siciliano & Frans Groen

All planned activities are on track. Two new activities were suggested to the Board for discussion:

- ***EURON Magazine***
- ***EU library of Robotic Research***

The previous discussion on launching a *EURON Magazine* was postponed till the new EURON Coordinator was known. Launching such a magazine would be a good way of making EURON more visible in Europe, as a wider audience can be reached.

A proposal from Atlantis Press describes what the magazine can be used for:

- a way for EU and funding agencies to show what is going on in European Robotics
- presenting small to large companies in the robotics field
- act as an initiation for articles by journalists
- the magazine will be available in both print and website form
- there should be a professional central editor with local editors
- intended to exist after EURON II ends – be connected to European Robotics Council

Comments:

- *As similar magazines already exist (I-EEE or the one ERCIM has), the question is how to compete with these and if there is a need to do that?*
- *How to distribute the magazine?*

It is suggested to apply for an EU funded project to set up **EU Library of Robotics Research**. It would be a good way for EC to spread leading European research inside and outside Europe. Such library would give an opportunity to have one searchable (virtual) repository of digitally available EURON research articles.

WP 12 Liaison with organizations (IPA) - presented by Martin Hägele

Martin gave an overview on objectives and deliverables within this WP. Links to IFR statistics and World Robotics 2006 can be found on EURON web site.

One of the main activities within this WP is close cooperation with EUROP. Raja Chatila is also involved in this action. EUROP produced a Strategic Research Agenda - SRA. The Coordinated Action CARE (FP6, call 6) launched in November 2006 – partners involved are IPA, SSSA, LAAS. Martin coordinates the activities between EURON and CARE. There is some similarity between EURONs and CAREs WPs and Martin presented some tables where different activities were compared. For example, CARE's WP 1.6 is comparable to WP12 within EURON and is about establishing contacts with other organizations/networks.

Raja Chatila presented the planned joint EURON-CARE (EUROP) activities:

- Roadmapping – combination of the two perspectives for roadmapping (EUROP sectorial activities and EURON research potential)
- Organize a joint WS at ICRA in Rome, April 2007

Other possible joint actions:

- Summer/Winter schools
- Industrial activities and Tech Transfer Award
- Contribution of industry to EURON education database
- Joint dissemination channels

WP 13 Sectorial White Papers (IPA) – presented by Martin Hägele

The main objective of this WP is revision of the existing sectorial EUROP SRAs in industrial and service robotics (“White papers”). This is again an activity in close cooperation with CARE. Experts from EURON can point out current activities, trends and challenges in modularity, integration architectures and middleware, engineering and benchmarking methods for cost effective robot development. Results will be part of consolidated sectorial SRAs and cross sectional schemes of a common SRA.

WP 14 Mechanisms to improve TechTransfer & Spin-off Creation (GPS)

This WP is taken over by Erwin Prassler. It should be revised and get a different title (to be less ambitious). DRs and Milestones re-defined.

As there is some similarity between the objectives of this WP and CARE’s WP1.7, the work should again be done in close cooperation with EUROP. Jointly commercialization routes of robotics research will be developed. It is planned to include experts from entrepreneurial studies and consultants.

Proposal:

together with EUROP help SMEs to get involved in future EU-projects. Funding scheme in FP7 is changed and it makes it easier for companies to participate.

Comments/questions:

- *there is a need to develop a culture for Startups, as it is not common in Europe*
- *there is also a need to create a good mechanism for reaching people at SMEs . They should be listed on some webpage (EURON, EUROP, elsewhere??) According to Martin H. the list is not so long, as most companies are known. A recommendation from the Board is to get help from National representatives in finding and contacting the national organizations.*

WP 15 Tech Transfer Award (IPA) – responsible Martin Hägele

- The Fourth EURON/EUnited Robotic Tech Transfer Award has been announced
- The jury is changed

Comment: *what is meant by the” transfer”? – this should be explained in a more clear way.*

WP 16 Yellow Pages – canceled.

WP 17 Management (KTH / KUL)

Herman Bruyninckx, who has taken over the technical coordination of the Network, gets all the necessary information about different issues from Henrik Christnesen and Jeanna Ayoubi.

The new Workplan will be finalized by Herman during this week and sent to EC.

WP 18 Annual meeting

Decisions:

- **Next EURON annual meeting** will be held in **Chania, Crete**
- **Local organisers:** Nikos Vlassis and Nikos Tsourveloudis from TU Crete in cooperation with Kostas Kyriakopoulos (they have just started with exploration of possibilities)
- **Date: last week of March** (exact dates to be decided later) with 2 days for the official part of the meeting plus a 3rd day for potential WSs and other activities (if needed – depends on suggestions from the consortium)
- The **annual meeting 2008** (final for ERUON II) will be **combined with EUROS** and held in Prague

Comments:

- put the dates for the annual meeting closer to other events
- what is the purpose for the meeting – what do members benefit from it?

Suggestions for concrete activities during the meeting should be sent to Herman ASAP.

WP 19 EUROS

Two potential places for holding the meeting were presented to the Board, describing the venue and costs:

- **Prague** –by Libor Preucil
Four different options for a concrete venue were presented – hotels, conference centers or university. Suggested dates: 12-15 March or 26-30 March 2008.
- **Baden-Baden** – by Michael Pardowitz on behalf of Rüdiger Dillmann
An alternative option is to have EUROS in connection to IAS in July 2008.

Comments/suggestions:

- *IRSS is planning its meeting in Europe the same year as EUROS. It is suggested to discuss this issue with the organizers*
- *IP projects – both finished and new – could be invited to present their work/results*
- *It would be good to attract more participants from outside Europe*
- *One track conference with good quality presentations*
- *WSs can be held in parallel*
- *Lower conference fee for students – not many students were present at EUROS I in Palermo*
- *Design a content that could attract young researchers to come*

Decision:

- **next EUROS will be held in Prague at Hotel Diplomat Praha on 26-30 March 2008**
- **EURON coordinator will send a message to IRSS organisers with a recommendation from EURON to move their meeting in Europe to 2009 in order to avoid conflicts of schedule**
- **To build a Programme Committee**

- *Recommended representation - 50% from Europe, 25% from USA, 25% from Asia*
- *WS chair - Jorge Dias (ISR)*
- *Start the preparations in summer 2007*
- *Continuation plan for EURON and EUROS should be discussed and prepared*

WP 20 International cooperation (LAAS/KUL) – responsible Raja Chatila and Herman Bruyninckx

The main objective of this WP is to coordinate EURON efforts with other similar efforts worldwide. For education it is of interest to have joint summer schools, for research it is important to exchange information and create common roadmaps, for industry there is a need to have a view beyond the regions.

EURON is already organizing joint meetings. The last WS was held at ICRA 2006 where several international participants were present. EURON was represented by Raja Chatila, Rudiger Dillman, Bruno Siciliano, Alicia Casals. Another joint WS on roadmapping was held at IROS 2006 – representatives from Korea, USA and EURON were present (Australia is absent for now, but planned for participation in the coming meetings). Next meeting is planned during ICRA 2007 and all are welcome to participate.

Decision:

Minutes from such meetings/WS must be sent to the Board and put on EURON web

WP 21 Gender Action (KTH) – responsible Danica Kragic

The goal for the coming period is:

- to generate a database of female researchers
- to appoint a special working group consisting of one senior and one junior female representative from each EURON member country
- organize a gender issue panel discussion at the coming annual meeting

WP 22 SIGs (KUL) – presented by Herman Bruyninckx

- Call for SIG proposals will be included into the coming call for proposals
- All are welcome to send suggestions for potential SIGs
- Board members should participate more actively in this action
- The submitted proposal should include dates and agenda for the planned meetings

WP 23 European Robotic Society (KUL)

Herman Bruyninckx will lead the work in finding possible options for the future.

Suggestions:

- To apply for a new network with 10-15 partners

- To apply for EURON III, even though this instrument is not on the list presented by EC, but this project can be seen as Consorted action
- To build a working group in order to plan the above suggestions and make sure that “bridging” people are in this group
- To organize an open WS at the coming EURON annual meeting to discuss the organization and the content of the future project

This issue had already been brought out to the community during the annual meeting in Palermo. Many people showed interest to be a part of the discussion and the working group. The list with the names was previously sent to Roland and now should be forwarded to Herman.

Other issues for discussion

- **EURON new members (policy for participation)**
 - define the rule for participation in the Network
 - a clear answer is expected from the National representatives when a new list with applying organizations is sent for approval to the Board
 - if the country doesn't have a National representative, then the decision is made by the entire Board
- **Events that can be sponsored by EURON?**
 - a separate decision should be taken by the Board for each concrete topic or activity
 - the event cannot be sponsored in cases where somebody else than EURON keep the profit from it
 - at least two EU member countries should be involved in the event
- **Re-organisation within EC (Robotics – Cognitive Science)**

The Board has discussed the new situation when Robotics and Cognitive Science units within the EC becomes one and projects such as EURON move from FET in Brussels to Luxembourg.

It was suggested that Herman Bruyninckx should book a meeting with Colette Maloney and the potential new project officer to discuss the future of EURON including the possibility for applying for EURON III.

End of meeting