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EURON

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Network of Excellence
Information Society Technologies

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Minutes of Third board meeting

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Minutes of EURON Board Meeting
November 11-12, 2005
Ljubljana, Slovenia

1 Participants

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Roland Siegwart, EPFL, CH	Bruno Siciliano, UNINA, IT
Frans Groen, UVA, NL	Erwin Prassler, GPS, DE
Martin Hägele, FhG IPA, DE	Herman Bruyninckx, KUL, BE
Libor Preucil, CTU, CZ	Miguel Salichs, UC3M, ES
Juri Vain, TTU, EST	John Hallam, SDU, DK
Kostas Kyriakopoulos, NTUA, GR	Amiram Moshaiov, TAU, IL
Jorge Dias, ISR, PT	Jadran Lenarcic, JSI, SL
Juha Röning, UOULU, SF	Guido Bugmann, UPLYM, UK

2 Meeting Agenda

2.1 Friday, 11 November-05

1. Start of meeting – Welcome/Local information
2. Update on EURON
3. Update on Research Planning
4. Update on Education and Training
5. Integration with Industry and EUROP

2.2 Saturday, 12 November-05

1. Introduction day 2
2. Discussion on Research Proposals ...
3. Dissemination Strategy for EURON
4. Update on EUROS-06
5. New activities for Yr 2
6. Follow-up activities

3 Minutes - Day 1

3.1 Introduction

Everybody was welcomed to the meeting. The agenda for the two days of the meeting was presented by the Co-ordinator and adopted by the board.

3.2 Update on EURON (by Henrik Christensen - Coordinator)

Short overview of the outcome from the first annual review meeting in June 2005

- New Workplan for months 13-30 has been sent to the EC. It is preliminary approved, but no official confirmation has been received. Answers from the Commission concerning the cost reports for the first year of the projects (both EURON and other IPs) are being delayed. Next payment is expected in January 2006.
- Results of the first year of EURON II have been overall approved by the EC. But the level of acceptance was different for different activities. Some of them had been criticized and actions for improvement must be taken:
 - The Research Roadmap must be completed ASAP. It has to be presented for the Commission before the launch of the FP7 in March 2006. The robotics industry has already prepared its own roadmap and it is of importance for the academic community to present their roadmap. A 1.5 day WS was organised in September 2005 to discuss the Roadmap and some information is already available on the web. More information about this event will follow in Rüdiger Dillmann's presentation later on during this meeting
 - Summer schools were well received by the Commission
 - The WebBook needs a better structure and continuation
 - The EURON Website was rejected by the reviewers and a significant revision is needed. The design/layout must be reworked. All sites of different EURON activities must be integrated into one. It has to be easy to get all the information about EURON events and activities through one place.
 - The Commission likes the idea of having the Research projects as an activity within EURON very much and wants to see continuation even in the next periods. The question of how to continue with this activity needs a major discussion though, as the management of these projects has not been an easy task and some improvements, changes and clarifications are needed. One of the suggestions that has already been introduced in the revised Description of Work is re-inventing SIGs. This will hopefully activate the community a little bit more.
 - EURON Brand issue was raised by the reviewers. This point is now taken into account in the revised Description of Work. The reviewers pointed out that there was too little involvement of industry in EURON. Their suggestion was, e.g. invite people from industry to attend EURON Summer schools.

As it is unclear to the Coordinator what exactly should be done to brand EURON, all suggestions on how to make EURON even more visible to the public and industry are welcome.

The question of how to transfer EURON from a network to a robotic society needs a serious discussion in the nearest future.
 - Some criticism had been received concerning the Gender action issue within EURON. The Commission wants to see more concrete activities and actions taking care of this issue. The planned activities are now described in the revised Description of Work. For example, a child-care service will be organised during the next annual meeting.

Some of the suggestions made by the Board members were:

- * to include the Gender action issue into the Roadmap
 - * to organise good quality presentations of robotics for national high schools
 - * to invite high school teachers to attend EURON SS
 - * to organise a SIG "High schools and robotics"
 - * to have a WS raising this issue during the next annual meeting
- The idea of organising a European Robotics Conference/Symposium (EUROS) was presented to the EC during the review meeting. The response was positive. Even if the timing is very tight and not optimal, it is still possible to make this conference a high quality European event. More information will be given later during the meeting.
 - The EC wants to see EURON in closer cooperation with EUROPE. Henrik doesn't like the fact that EURON is almost obligated to be involved in EUROPE, whereas the opposite is not true. The requirement is highly unbalanced!
 - The EC had some strong comments about the WebBook. The idea is good, but it needs continuation. If this activity is so hard to complete, then maybe it is better to abandon it and use the funds for something else. This issue must be carefully discussed and the decision has to be made ASAP.
 - International cooperation programme is included in the new Workplan. EC agrees on the importance of this action and supports it. A first meeting is planned for February 2006. The discussion of robotics internationally will provide important input to the Roadmap.

EURON Status today

- there are approximately 150 members in EURON today and 1 - 3 new applies for membership each month. During October-November the following organisations have applied:
 1. University of Oxford - Mobile Robotics Group (Prof. P. Newman)
 2. Microsoft Research Ltd - Intelligent Environments Group (Dr A. Braendle)
 3. Fundacion CARTIF - Industrial Robotics Area (Dr. J-C Fraile)

The descriptions of the groups will be circulated to the Board electronically and the formal approval is expected to be made in a week from now.

- organisation of EUROS has launched and going well
- for the EURON brand there is an urgent need to get in touch with a good journalist. There is enough potential for writing about EURON and there is money available to fund this journalist (12 k Euro / year).

Comments from the Board:

- It is important to invite one or even two journalists to the next Annual Meeting and EUROS.
- Maybe it is possible to organise a press conference.
- The Commission will value 1 page of information in a scientific magazine more than a presentation at a conference. Promoting of robotics to the public is seen as an important issue by EC. H. Christensen suggested submitting an article to "Scientific American".

- According to E. Prassler Korea is organising a Korean Robotics Week and maybe it is good to have a similar academic event in Europe
- F. Groen suggested organising local national events to brand EURON
- To get in touch with TV-journalists might be a good idea. A TV-team invited by EURON can probably produce a good programme about robotics in Europe.
All other ideas on this issue are welcome to be sent to the Coordinator.
- The discussion and the decision about what model is best to use for management of the Research Projects within EURON must be taken by the Board during this meeting.
- 4 Summer schools organised during summer 2005 were a great success again. Two Winter schools has been approved and being organised now.
- Suggestions on how to activate the rest of the community are welcome to be sent to the Coordinator.
- there is a need to define both duties and opportunities of being a member of EURON.

3.3 Update on Research Planning (by Rüdiger Dillmann)

R. Dillmann gave a short update on the status for the Research Roadmap.

The draft version of the Roadmap was presented during the last Board meeting a year ago. Different fields had been identified and accepted:

- Advanced production systems
- Adaptive robot servants and intelligent homes
- Network robotics
- Outdoor robotics
- Health care and life quality

This structure was presented during the review meeting in June and accepted by the EC.

Comment from the Board: to add transportation systems as a separate field.

The structure is similar to the one presented on US WTEC WS "Review of Intl. Research in Robotics". Their goal was to see the status of R&D in robotics in the world and compare the efforts in terms of quality, scope and funding. Six areas had been defined. The draft report is available. The final one is not available for distribution yet.

EURON Roadmapping WS took place in Karlsruhe on September 26-27, 2005. Full overview on the objectives and results of that WS is available on <http://www.iaim.ira.uka.de/euron/ws/>

R.Dillmann gave a short presentation of the main conclusions from WS. The main objectives of the WS were to improve the existing draft of the Roadmap, to collect new ideas and contributions to all the application areas listed above. 27 people participated in the WS and worked in 4 smaller groups - one per field. The last field dealing with health care and life quality was not well represented and the working group was postponed/cancelled. Contributions for this area are most welcome. Board members were asked to disseminate the information.

Six equal questions were stated for each working group based on what seemed to be most important for each application area:

- Economical & societal driving forces
- Objectives
- Bottlenecks to progress
- Technological driving forces
- Scientific challenges
- Future research activities

The WS participants defined the objectives, challenges and the approximate timeline for each of the above mentioned fields except the last one. The results were presented to the Board.

Comments after discussion by the Board:

- Advanced Production Systems
 - in the approximate timeline slide - change the wording in the last box "specialised production assistant"
- Outdoor Robotics
 - in the slide on Scientific Challenges - maybe "self-awareness" definition should be changed to "self-safety"
 - the definitions of challenges are a bit fuzzy and hard to approach; it can be rather unclear, e.g. for a PhD student to understand what to do
 - in the slide for the timeline an extra challenge is added - European "Grand Challenge"; the question is what can it be? This is probably a question that should be stated to manufactures not only in the transportation field.
- Adaptive Robot Servants & Intelligent Homes
 - this working group was very well represented and had a good discussion with a lot of input
 - R. Siegwart suggested to add industrial services to the list of challenges; the tasks that industry sets are always very clear and companies are glad to invest in robots that help them; H. Bruyninckx suggested to make a "Grand challenge" of this point
- Network Robotics

Objectives, challenges and timeline were presented. There are no clear answers on which way Europe should choose.

R. Dillmann asked all to have a look at the above mentioned WS homepage and welcomed all to send comments, suggestions and other input to him. He presented the future activities for the completion of the Roadmap:

- continuous update of the draft version
- incorporation of the WS results into it

- identification of leading labs in Europe and clusters of excellence
- presentation of the new version of the Roadmap at the EURON AM in Palermo in March 2006

Overall comments from the Board:

- there is some overlap in the presented topics (A. Moshaiov)
- be more specific on what robotics will contribute with (H. Christensen)
- take into consideration the EU nuclear programme (J. Lenarcic)
- be more specific with the challenge topics (G. Bugmann)
- some timelines seems to be too optimistic (M.Salichs)

3.4 Update on Education and Training (by Alicia Casals)

A.Casals reminded the Board of the WPs/DRs that this Key area consists of and presented the E&T Board members.

WP. 5 Robotics Webook and Teaching material data base

Persons working on the Webook are H.Bruyninckx, J.Hallam, J.Dias, M.I.Ribeiro. Their main goal has been to increase the number of contributions to the Webook. The Wiki Platform is used for technical support. The procedure for contribution is not complicated and rather convenient. All the details can be seen on <http://www.roble.info/>

The major problem is that the idea of having this Webook has not been very successful and the major question now is if there is any use to continue with trying to get it work. It has been an ambitious project supported by a lot of volunteer work and the management of it has not been an easy task. Solutions suggested by the kea area coordinator were:

- to have a person in charge for following up the individual contributions
- to organise a WS so that some key people would complete the basic material

Comments from the Board:
according to H. Bruyninckx

- there is 250 pages of different kind of material gathered by now
- the wiki page doesn't work; the wiki-book project is empty
- maybe it is better to make a textbook instead
- the idea of having 4-5 appointed section-editors didn't help either
- it has been two years of trying to make it work without success, so maybe it is better to stop this project

H. Christensen suggested:

- to have more people as section-editors
- to make the contribution process even easier

- to pay those who contribute per written chapter
- The main question is still if there is any need to continue with this project and if it is possible to deliver the results in six months from now?

Some members see this as a waist of money and time and suggest stopping the project, as this should have worked by itself but it didn't. A.Moshaiov suggested making a report of what had been available by now.

A. Casals continued with the presentation of the status for the Teaching Material Data Base and presented the 5 people responsible for different areas such as:

- Wiki Platform and Videos
- Robotic Platforms
- Simulators
- SS/Videos
- Lectures/Robotic courses
- Robotic books

The Database is easy to contribute to. A person was hired to push the process and the amount of inputs grew significantly. The Database is accessible through EURON website, so have a look and send your comments and suggestions. A mixed list of courses is now available on the web. SS Teaching Material needs to be integrated into this database.

One of the actions previously planned was to open a new section on Lectures/ Courses. Some material is almost ready and all are welcome to contribute. A webpage for gathering of course material already accessible through EURON page and can be found on <http://euron.upc.es/rcdb/> It is very easy to contribute. The main goals of this initiative are:

- to increase the mobility of students and professors
- to be a source of inspiration of new subjects' contents
- to facilitate interchange of educational material between the teachers
- to help the administration in recognition of foreign courses' ECTS

A suggestion from the Board is to make sure that there is some connection between this action and the Roadmap.

The timetable for this activity is along the lines:

May-June	05	Data base tested and problems fixed
Summer	05	Implementation of searches; search fields selected
September	05	contact with some members within EURON asking to fill up the DB with courses; spread responsibilities to national representatives
Oct-Dec	05	Evaluation of courses, registration process, recall for courses if necessary
December	05	Test of courses management and searches on real courses and users; resolution of the possible problems on searches – redefinition of the search fields if necessary
January	06	Presentation of half-filled RCDB to all EURON members; call announcement for general participation
March	06	Report of first results at EURON AM: registration process, inventory of courses, tentative "course clusters" from contents appearing in the DB. (Discuss how the curricula recommendations can be extracted from data in this DB and how to make curricula recommendations?)
March-Apr.	06	First tentative curricula recommendations

Other future actions planned:

- complete the Robotics Books section
- to continue the effort to promote contributions and visits to all sections
- people hired will continue to push up the process by sending reminders and following up the contributions

Comments from the Board:

- R.Siegwart asked how this work would be continued after the end of EURON project
- H. Christensen. pointed out that right now we were obligated to follow up what had been written in EURON's Program of Work and to deliver the promised results under the WP; at the same time it is possible that the European Robotic Society will start its existence after EURON and overall it is valuable for the robotic community to have the teaching material gathered in one place.
- It was suggested to stop the Robotics Book project as it appears too difficult to organize with reasonable results

3.5 Update on Summer/winter schools given (by Roland Siegwart)

Four SS have been organised during 2005 (see EURON web site for more details):

- Modeling and Control of Complex Dynamical Systems, July, Bologna, IT
- Perception and Sensor Fusion in Mobile Robotics, Sept, Ancona, IT
- Surgical Robotics, Sept, Montpellier, FR
- Robotics and Neuroscience, Sept, Benicassim, ES

Two Winter schools have been approved:

- Camp on Rescue Robotics, Oct, Rome, IT

- Telesurgery, Benidorm, ES

New funding policy was taken because of the overlap between the two Winter Schools and the already existing SS. Basic condition is that you have at least 15 registrations from at least 10 different EURON member institutions. More info can be found on the website.

R.Sieglwart presented some ideas that came out after different discussions including the gender issue one.

- it has been suggested to collect all course material from SS in one place - on a web server having simple structure that is easy to access. R.Sieglwart will be the person serving this. An evaluation by quality will be done.
- It is suggested to organise a SS for high- / primary-school teachers. This will be an attempt to attract more female students for studies in science and technology; to collaborate with First LEGO League; to collect interesting material. H. Christensen can help to get in touch with Lego.
- it is also suggested that EURON members should visit the local high-schools to give lectures on robotics. EURON can support the initiative financially.

3.6 G.Giralt PhD Award

Of all the submissions received by the end of October – 11 had been accepted. The review process started in November and the decision on the nominees will come in February. The presentations and the award ceremony will be held at EURON AM in March 2006.

The new initiative that came out of this successful action is the Repository of Thesis on Robotics. 15 thesis are already available on THESEURON <http://www.euron.org/education/theseuron/> The new webpage working successfully since 10 of November–05. Responsible person is Ricardo Tollez.

Summary

There have been a lot of activities. Some of them are very successful, where in others there are problems to motivate members to contribute. There have been some difficulties in following up the process. There is a need to better promotion of activities through EURON Website.

3.7 Integration with Industry and EUROP (by Martin Hägele)

3.7.1 Liaison with industrial organisations

- already existing collaboration with IFR and EUnited
- EURON-EUROP collaboration (more info later during this meeting)
- Some statistical data will be available on the EURON Web soon

3.7.2 Industry WS

The following WSs inspired by EUROP topics are planned for Y2:

- Robot Automation Industry Meets Robotics Research (M18)
- Service Robot Industries Meet Robotics Research (M24)

3.7.3 Industrial White Papers

Update of white papers on:

- Industrial Robot Automation
- Service Robotics

3.7.4 Tech.Transfer Award

- new call in November-05 - same procedure as usual
- industry is very pleased with this initiative and the sponsorship is secured
- EUNITED had its AM two weeks ago - a press release available

M.Hägele presented a new activity for EURON members to participate in - Automatica 2006 - trade fair on service robotics for professional use. Organised in Munich on 16-19 May 2006 (unfortunately at the same time as the next ICRA). The event will be announced to all EURON members later. A lot of journalists will be invited - a perfect place for them to get a good story to write about and make a lot of pictures. The fair is sponsored by Munich fair organisation and the prices for exhibiting are very attractive. A joint booth on Service Robotics will be set up. For full set of information contact M.H0gele mmh@ipa.fhg.de or Ch.Schaeffer cfs@ipa.fhg.de

Comments and discussion by the Board:

- will EURON participate in this and how? Will there be any sponsoring for members from EURON?
- This can be a perfect place to brand EURON, distribute brochures and other information
- EURON is a network, so it is the European network that must be presented

Conclusion:

- to ask members to contribute with high quality robot videos
- no real robots to exhibit, as this will be too much effort
- send a professional who can make a Multimedia presentation at the fair (at a cost of 10-15 K Euro) - videos, a touch screen panel, EURON home page with access to the labs through the active map.

The action will be coordinated by R. Siegwart. It was suggested to ask Nikos Vlasis (B. Siciliano) and Kai Arras (R.Siegwart). Report sent to Coordinator in a week from now.

3.7.5 EUROP presentation (by M.Hägele and H.Christensen)

Under FP7 there will be Technology Platforms with well defined topics supported by industry. The objectives are to strengthen the European industry, to formulate the goals for research partnership that has to be supported on a national level, to define research roadmaps. EUROP - European Robotic Platform - is one of the technology platforms chosen by EC under FP7. The very first presentation of EUROP was made at the previous Board meeting. A document defining the basis for the ETP was

composed in October 2004. After that a Brainstorm meeting was held in Brussels in November 2004. Then several WSs were organised during 2005 discussing the objectives, challenges, governance of EUROP and future actions. The platform was officially launched by the Commissioner Vivian Reding on October 7 2005. More details about this platform can be found on www.roboticsplatform.com. The first WS will be held in Paris on 22-23 November and somebody from EURON should participate (M.H0gele, A. Casals). There will be 5 WG defining the roadmaps. EUROP is coordinated by SAGEM/SAFRAN and the organisation is still in progress. It consists of organisations working within industry, service robotics, security and space. Approximately 50 companies have already joined EUROP. The link to the academic community will be held through EURON. EURON has 20% of the seats on the steering committee. As agreed earlier, the representatives from EURON will be R.Dillmann, A. Casals, M. H0gele, R. Chatila, J. Lenarcic, and H. Christensen. So, EURON plays a role and should participate in their activities and contribute to their Strategic Research Agenda. A EURON/EUROP WS is planned on 17-18 of January 2006. On 7-8 of March the methodology for the Roadmap will be presented. This will not be the same as EURON's Roadmap. It is very important that EURON has its own Roadmap ready by then in order to influence the European process. An active involvement will be the key to a long-term robotics programme in Europe.

Another ETP that might be of interest to EURON members is MANUFUTURE. Find more information on www.manufuture.org

Update on 6th call within FP6

It is still unclear if robotics will be included into the 6th call within FP6. The decision will be taken end of November. The call will be announced in December 2005 and the deadline for sending the proposals will be February 2006. Budget expected 30-35 M Euro. The expected start date for the projects is January 1, 2007.

4 Minutes - Day 2

4.1 Introduction day 2 (by Henrik Christensen)

H.Christensen presented the meeting agenda for the day that was adopted by the Board.

4.2 Discussion on Research Proposals

H. Christensen presented the projects being already funded by EURON after the two calls:

- 2 PRPs - PHRIDOM and LE- FES
- 3 RAs - ROBOETHICS, ROSE and Network Rob. Systems
- 1 TRS – VISOR

The success-rate has been rather low. People seem have misunderstood what TRS projects are supposed to be. It was even suggested by the coordinator at the review meeting to abandon the initiative, but the EC wants to see it working. So, the question is what can be done to make this to a success story and of value to the community? What is the best manageable mechanism - should we change the procedure and scope of the calls? The EC recommended more involvement of industry and young researchers.

Comments and decisions from the Board:

- The calls should be rewritten:
 - 5 PRPs can be funded – receiving 75 K Euro each, the consortium should consist of partners from at least 2 member countries
 - RA has to be based on the fields defined by the Roadmap; Rudiger Dillmann is responsible to compose the new text for this part of the call
 - Only SIGs can apply for TRS projects; Herman Bruyninckx is responsible to write text describing the evaluation criteria for a SIG. The SIG consortium should consist of at least 5 members and include groups from at least 2 member countries
- The budget is 400-600 K Euro per year. The funding model is the same and cannot be changed. No national local research projects can be funded.
- It is of value to encourage young researchers to apply for the projects or be involved in them, as this can be a good training before applying for major national and EU projects.

Next call for project proposals:

- announcement by December 2005
- deadline for proposals 1 of March 2006
- evaluation process takes 6 weeks
- the evaluators for this call are: Amiram Moshaiov, Jorge Dias, Herman Bruyninckx, Guido Bugmann. The main consultant on the Roadmap issues is Rudiger Dillmann.
- Board members sitting in the selection/review committee (including their labs) cannot be involved in any proposals within the call.

4.3 Dissemination Strategy for EURON (by Bruno Siciliano)

4.3.1 WP 9 Book series

The main goal is to continue the success of STAR series and publish best PhD theses including the finalists of EURON PhD Award, monographs and proceedings including the ones from SS into a single collection on robotics.

- In total 21 volumes have already been published (10 monographs and 11 edited collections), 14 more are formally accepted for publication. 20 proposals have been rejected and 5 are recommended for revision. 1 proposal is now under review.
- Contacts with new potential authors and editors are being established. SS organizers will be contacted in order to publish the proceedings from these SS. The aim is to make at least 10 new volumes during Y2.
- The Editorial Advisory Board had two meetings.
- EURON brand is now visible both on the website and book colophon

A new project is launched under this WP - Springer Handbook of Robotics. The editors are B.Siciliano and O.Khatib. The official presentation to the community was given at ISRR-05 in San Francisco. The book is expected to be completed by mid 2007. It will be a one volume book consisting of 65 chapters (1800 pages).

4.3.2 WP 11 Information about EURON and Beyond Robotics

The main goal of this WP is to raise public awareness about EURON and the "Beyond Robotics" initiative and dissemination of EURON activities and achievements.

A regular column appearing in IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine has become a good tradition since EURON I. It is a good source for dissemination about EURON activities and the magazine is read by a large international audience of researchers and practitioners. The column about EURON is edited by K. Kyriakopoulos and B. Siciliano. Six columns have already appeared since September 2004. The latest are September 2005 informing about the funded PRP, TRS and RA projects and December 2005 with information about EUROP. Planned issues for upcoming columns are information on IP projects, recently funded PRP-RA-TRS, EUROS. Kostas and Bruno welcome ideas and contributions from all on what is important to write about in the future columns.

Contact with press and media is another activity within this WP. The main actions here are:

- prepare information package

The Information Flyer outlining main activities within EURON and Beyond Robotics was presented to the Board. It has been distributed at various conferences and meetings.

- issue periodic press releases reporting different EURON activities – A press release for EURON/EUnited Robotics Technology Transfer Award 2005 was delivered by M.Högele through DPA channels to highlight the successful collaboration between research and industry. A joint press release on PhD Award and Thesis Award is on the agenda.

- make an information leaflet (presented even by John Hallam)

A draft version of the leaflet prepared by Bridget Hallam was presented to the Board. It consists of 6 pages. A science journalist had been contacted in order to help. The first one - M. Kenward - who committed himself for doing this some months ago, has recently dropped off. A new journalist has been found - Duncan Graham-Rowe - and he is working on the leaflet now. The text should be revised during next week. The final version should be ready by Christmas time.

Future actions:

- Dissemination to public
 - continue promoting EURON brand
 - invite science journalists to the next AM and EUROS
 - issue periodic press releases on all EURON activities Even contact the IP projects and ask to write press releases.
 - promote the robotics science and technology and contribute to e.g. Trade Fairs (Automatica), RoboCup, Eurobot (a simplified version of RoboCup contest for students, has been held in Europe in 10 years)
Board members had different opinions on which contest is better to support for EURON.
 - outreach general public through articles in popular newspapers and magazines as well as website
- Dissemination to students

- post high-school projects in robotics on EURON website Some European high-schools have ongoing projects in robotics. It is good to approach at least some of them and put the information on the EURON website.
- organize a SS for high-school teachers
- adopt RoboCup Jr – already active in Germany and Finland and it would be good if EURON gets involved in this action
- networked robots is a good way to attract young people to robotics

4.3.3 WP10 EURON website (by John Hallam)

J.Hallam reminded the Board members of the comments received from the EC during the review meeting in June. The main points were:

- change the design of the site The work is in progress since June. The criteria to follow were:
 - to design by use case
 - functionality of the site and accessibility of the information on it
 - artistic merit is desirable but secondary
 - searchable by Google etc.

CMS open source software system was chosen and being tested. It is very well documented, very configurable, easy to fix and easy to get out from. Some new content was added, such as active maps.

- integrate the content - make all information accessible through one place Some integration has already been done - Conference calendar and Theseuron are now integrated. Next steps are to integrate the material from SS and other E&T material.

It was suggested to write a text informing the new/old members on how they can contribute to different activities.

- brand EURON

The average number of hits between March and May was 100 per hour. The site is well visited not only by EURON members (come from 6500 different addresses).

H.Christensen raised the question about the policy for "the robot of the week". According to J.Hallam no robot appears twice and only 1 robot per group is allowed.

4.3.4 Update on EUROS-06 (presented by Bruno Siciliano)

This new activity is now launched. The first European Robotics Symposium will be organized in Palermo, Italy on 15-18 March 2006 in connection to EURON annual meeting. It will be partly a scientific and partly a technical meeting. EUROS is planned as a single-track quality event organized every other year and open to international submissions. Two meetings will be held under EURON support and then the conference is supposed to be independent and self-supported

The local organizer for the first meeting is Antonio Chella with support from Bruno Siciliano. B.Siciliano presented some information concerning the travel to Palermo, accommodation possibilities, venue for the meeting and the draft schedule. High level governors such as Major of the City are invited to the meeting and the social events are sponsored by the local and national authorities and industry.

Presentation of EUROS and EURON AM issues continued by Henrik Christensen
EURON AM will take place in Palermo on 18 of March. F.Groen asked if there will be any WS organized. H. Christensen suggested making a call. It is not decided yet if the members will have their posters with them again. It is, again, a good opportunity for the IPs to present thier work. As it was mentioned before, EUROS will be held every other year, so the next one is planned for 2008. This is the year when the "Beyond Robotics" projects including EURON finishes. Quality has to be the primary target for EUROS. The best quality conference within computer vision today is ECCV and EUROS should aim to become the best one in robotics. The deadline for papers was very tight. 50 papers have been received - Henrik presented two diagrams showing the distribution by country and by keywords. Most papers were sent from Germany and Spain and the main keywords are Mapping/Navigation and HRI. This is less than it was expected and the preliminary quality indications are not excellent. Only high quality papers will be accepted - the expected number is about 15 papers. The reviewing committee consists of several researchers from EU countries, 2 from USA and 2 from Asia. There will be 3 reviewers per paper and the PaperPlaza system is used for the review process. The paper selection will be made by mid December. The question if there was a need to have invited speakers during the conference/AM had been raised by the Coordinator. Board members discussed different opinions and the final answer was "yes" - 1-2 speakers with, possibly, one from industry. These will talk during EUROS and there will be no invited speaker at the EURON AM. It would be good to have persons who usually don't submit papers to such conferences. R. Siegwart suggested inviting the Swiss astronaut as a user of robotics. According to Roland, this person is a very good speaker. (Roland will contact him). The other suggested options are persons from:

- SME (M. Hägele)
- Robotics for elderly
- ITER
- Robotized cars

All suggestions on possible speakers are welcome to be sent to Henrik Christensen. Everyone agreed that it would be good to encourage the speakers to stay until 18 of March to participate in EURON AM.

EUROS 2008?

Board members discussed the possible venue for the 2nd EUROS. One suggestion to have the meeting in Prague will be investigated by Libor Preucil in cooperation with Rüdiger Dillmann. Gran Canaria is another option. The date for the meeting needs to be coordinated with IAS organizers.

Relationship EUROS - RSS conference

The question was raised by the Coordinator. What is the desired RSS / EUROS and other European conferences in robotics? What will be EURON/EUROS relationship to this conference?

The first RSS conference took place in USA in June 2005. The second one will be August 2006 in Philadelphia. The third one - 2007 - is planned to be held in Europe - same year that ICRA is in Rome. Some members thought that there was no conflict and both conferences were OK to have in Europe. Other members thought that it was a bad idea and suggested to send a message to the RSS organizers and discuss the option of having the 2007 meeting in Asia instead and 2009 in Europe. Or even have RSS as an USA conference only.

Other issues

- G.Bugmann stated a question concerning the status of EURON Advisory Board. H. Christensen answered that the Advisory board met only once at the EURON AM in Warsaw and discussed the status of robotics in Europe comparing it to what was going on in USA and Japan. Not much has been done after that meeting. No integration with national projects has been achieved.
- H. Bruyninckx raised a discussion concerning the publishing of the conference proceedings:
 - is it necessary to transfer the copyright to the publisher such as SPRINGER
 - isn't better to publish on the web (or both as a book and on the web)

B.Siciliano will investigate if it is possible for SPRINGER:

- to publish without having the copyright
- to publish on the web

Several members disagreed with the idea of having the proceedings only on the web. The material must be achievable to have academic value.

The issue of having the conference proceedings published after the conference was discussed and the final conclusion was that it was a bad idea.

The decision was to have the conference proceedings published as a book and have it available before the conference start date.

4.4 New activities for Year 2 / 6. Follow-up activities (by Henrik Christensen)

- Beyond-the Horizon WS
The Coordination Action project BTH funded by the EC is organizing a WS on 12-13 of December. This WS is a preparation action for FP7. Henrik will send more information by e-mail. It is important that someone from EURON participates, as one of the discussion issues will be cognition and robotics within FP7.
The volunteers from EURON are: R.Siegiwart (1 of the days depending on the program), H. Bruyninckx (12/12), J.Dias. (12/12). The travel expenses will be covered by EURON.
- Roadmap
The draft version of the Roadmap should be sent to the Coordinator ASAP. H.Christensen will come back with comments and the final version should be ready before March 2006.
- EUROS
It was suggested that a European Commissioner should be invited to give a presentation during EURON AM.
- SIG
 - Issue the call.
 - The members should be encouraged to organise SIGs even without funding from EURON
 - Make a list of SIG topics
- Increasing the involvement of EURON members in the activities

- encourage the members to visit the local high-schools giving talks on robotics (this can be funded as dissemination activity)
- organise SS for high-school teachers
- compose and send a questionnaire to new and old members through euron-dist list B.Hallam can start collecting the questions to be included into this questionnaire
- G. Bugmann and H. Christensen suggested to investigate the national funding mechanisms - to organise a WS during EURON AM discussing and presenting the national strategies for research funding in different countries
- Presentation of new members
- R.Siegwart suggested starting the discussion on how to transfer EURON to a Robotic Society immediately. All board members agreed with this and would like to participate. This issue should be included into the questionnaire named above. R.Siegwart. and R.Dillmann will coordinate the action.

End of meeting.