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EURON

European Robotics Network

Network of Excellence
Information Society Technologies Priority

DR 17.16
Minutes of seventh Board Meeting

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Start date of the project: 1 May 2004

Duration: 48 months

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: KTH

Revision: Final version

Dissemination level: PU

**EURON Board meeting
Brussels Airport
9 October 2007**

List of participants:

Herman Bruyninckx (CO), KUL, BE	Juha Röning, UOULU, FI
Jeanna Ayoubi (Adm.), KTH, SE	Erwin Prassler, GPS, DE
Rüdiger Dillmann, UKA, DE	John Hallam, SDU, DK
Alicia Casals, UPC, ES	Libor Preucil, CTU, CZ (10/10/2007)
Martin Hägele, IPA, DE	Miguel Salichs, UC3M, ES

Some of the Board members that are not present at this meeting sent their written suggestions via e-mail to the Coordinator about the issues in the agenda.

Introduction

Herman Bruyninckx welcomed everybody to the meeting and presented **the meeting agenda** as follows:

- Description of Work – revision for Period 4. In need of most attention are:
 - WP1 – Research Roadmap
 - WP2 – Research Benchmarks
 - WP4 – Joint Research (PRP)
 - WP5 - Teaching Material (Videos)
 - WP14 – Fostering Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship
 - WP24 – European Robotics Research Platform
- Programme of EUROS 2008
- Programme of the Annual Meeting
- Design of the “New EURON”

Description of Work (DoW) – Period 4

According to the letter received from the Commission the updated Description of Work for Period 4 (Annex I) should be delivered on 19 of October as latest. Thus, this meeting’s main goals are:

- to look through and approve each WP description taking into consideration the comments in the official review report for Period 3
- to discuss possible changes to the budget
- to discuss concrete action plans for the future

The following should be done during this and next week:

- final update of DoW document (by Herman and Jeanna)
- to send the document to the Board for final approval (by e-mail)
- to send the DoW document to Anne Bajart at EC on 19 October'07 (by e-mail)

The planned actions have to be executed directly after the above work is finalised.

WP1 – Research Roadmap

Martin Hägele gives a status report about EUROP and CARE:

- Currently (Sep 07) KUKA is candidate designated to lead EUROP and to be coordinator of the CARE project
- CARE had a general assembly, and decided how to go forward with the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA = Roadmap)
- the EC expects the final draft to be delivered of the SRA in March 2008.

The EURON Board decides that Rüdiger Dillmann, Angel del Pobil and Martin Hägele take the lead to harmonize the EURON Roadmap with the CARE SRA, and to invite the right people from the EURON community as contributors.

Rüdiger will contact Angel to streamline the integration of WPs 1 and 2.

The EC message that there has to be only one roadmap with industry is clearly understood. EURON has a lot of material available, but has not been invited to integrate that into the SRA material that CARE has. (This is mostly due to the delays in CARE caused by the organisational transition period.) However joint meetings as well as consensus workshops and a Mini-Delphi-expert study are foreseen. EURON also wants to integrate benchmarks into the roadmap, so cooperation between WP 1 (Rüdiger) and WP 2 (Angel) will be intensified.

Martin Hägele is the perfect liaison person between EUROP and CARE, and he volunteers to synchronize the SRA meetings planned by CARE with the meetings planned by Rüdiger:

- 4-5 Dec 2007: an internal EURON meeting, trying to harmonize the EURON material with the CARE documents, as well as to integrate Benchmarking.
- 22-23 Jan 2008: preparation of final EURON publication (at the Annual Meeting in March 2008).

The Board decides to do the following for the EURON publication:

- to include short information about each EURON partner in the booklet
- to give each member 2 copies
- to let the editor/printer also do the mailing, to the members and all institutes EURON wants to reach.
- to print 1000 copies, at 200 pages per booklet, in color, and with a professional editor. The estimated cost is 50.000 EUR (part of KTH-CO budget, paid by invoice from the editor company).

WP4 – Joint Research (PRPs)

The Commission has decided not to fund this activity. Even though the Board is not happy with this decision, there is not much time left to appeal. Thus it is decided to use the remaining funds for setting up new activities that has previously been discussed and met positive reactions from the Board members (and some of them were even suggested by the reviewers). Examples of such activities are: European Robotics Research Platform (only the study of how such platforms could be organised and what the possibilities and requirements are, but not the concrete realisation), production of video, better financial support for participation of PhD students in EUROS and EURON annual meeting etc.

WP5 - Teaching Material (Video)

This activity was recommended by the review team during the review meeting in June 2007. The launching meeting was held in Barcelona on 26 September 2007.

Alicia Casals made a detailed presentation of the WP. The description and the goals were approved by the Board. The team working from UPC within this WP is:

Josep Amat (WP leader)

Alicia Casals

Manel Frigola

Oriol Escoté

It was decided to hire a professional for filming the high-level robotics experiments.

The goal of the activity is generation of audiovisual material that can reach the great public showing the possibilities and the reality of robotics in applications far beyond classical industrial environment. Also, to present robotics as a relevant component for the improvement of life quality, considering both labour and daily life.

The video will consist of 6-8 chapters, self-explained and designed in a way that they can be displayed both separately or all of them together. Each chapter should be attractive and didactic for wider public including the young and it should transmit in a clear way the current possibilities of robotics differentiating them from the future expectancy. It is important that the material presents the European research in robotics in an encouraging way so to attract future students into the field. The copyright is owned by EURON.

Timetable:

- 10 October'07 – Call for definition of the video structure announced to EURON Community. (The text of the call is presented to the Board and approved)
- 14 November'07 – Meeting for definition of the video structure. Call for scenarios to be sent directly after the meeting.
- December'07 – Drafting the scenarios
- January'08 – Final scenarios defined
- The video is presented at the EURON meeting in March'08
- April'08 – the video is sent for translation to other languages than English (not yet decided if this will be done)

The total estimated budget for the activity is approximately 225000 eur.

WP14 – Fostering Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship

As the activity is being behind the schedule, it is decided to integrate this work into WP24 (ERRP) and the SMEs will be encouraged to participate in this new activity.

WP24 – European Robotics Research Platform

The Coordinator states the question to the Board if EURON will/need to proceed with this activity at all and if yes then in which way. The fact is that there is not much time left of the project to be able to set up a research platform available for the members to use as it was discussed and planned before. Martin H. and Herman B. participated in these discussions and presented the objectives and the results. Herman informed that he already received positive response from 8 industrial partners. Some input sent by Bruno S. and Markus V. on the above issue is presented to the Board.

After a discussion the Board members decide that it is only possible to make some analysis/preparation work exploring the possibilities for setting up common robotics platforms in Europe. Erwin Prassler agrees to lead this WP. Martin H. and Herman B. agree to provide assistance if needed.

The first step will be to prepare and send a questionnaire to all EURON members within three weeks from the Board meeting. A draft version is already available.

A management meeting will be held in December. Martin H. points out that it is important to meet the industrial partners in order to investigate if they are ready to make the components available. It is worth to investigate possibilities for collective orders to keep the price as low as possible.

In the lifetime of EURON II the following can be delivered:

- ***Requirements analysis*** (investigation of Community's needs, interests of the suppliers, financial and time constraints; different requirements for different robot categories)
- ***Specification of the ERRPs***
- ***Experimental evaluation of selected ERRP concepts***

Programme of EUROS 2008

Suggested plenary speakers are:

- ABB: Torgny Brogardh, Sönke Kock?
- Craig Libeck, Ricardo Velez, R&D Manager Visual Components, Helsinki?
- Someone to talk about the "Desire" project? This would be a talk about "the science of integration".
- Rob Buckingham from OC-Robotics (about starting up a robotics company)
- Logotetis (Tubingen; artificial retina)

Suggested tutorials:

- Cognitive Science for Roboticians
David Vernon, Tom Ziemke? Tubingen (ask Bulthoff + Schöllkopf? Jan Peters?)
- Learning Theory for Roboticians (Bayesian, SVM, ...)

Programme of EURON Annual Meeting

Suggested plenary speakers:

- ABB: Torgny Brogardh, Sönke Kock?
- the same list as for EUROS08

Suggested slots:

- Tech Transfer
- PhD Award presentations
- Poster Session
- PhDs-meet-Industry event
- New EURON presentation/discussion
- Summary of the IPs (Cogniron, Neurobotics, I-Swarm) ?
Prefered: the newly approved projects! (Get the list via A.Bajart.)
- Towards an open source Integrated Development Environment for robotics (Herman Bruyninckx)

Suggested member funding scheme:

- to allow 2 members per legal entity, instead of 1 in the past.
- to require at least one to be a PhD student (checked at registration of EUROS08).
- to allow for 350EUR reimbursement: hotel, travel, _and_ EUROS'08 registration.
- to impose a strict deadline on the submission of the reimbursement forms, because of the end of EURON.

The estimated budget for travel reimbursement is:

100 entities x 2 members x 350EUR = 70.000EUR

Design of “New EURON”

The draft proposal for the future of EURON was sent to the Board on 21 of September’07 for comments.

Everyone agrees on the important role of the website as a main instrument for keeping the network alive. It also brings an extra value on being a member of EURON. Summer school is another activity that should be kept.

A questionnaire should be prepared and sent to the Community asking if they are interested in keeping the membership in EURON and how much they are ready to contribute to the common work.

Different management structures are discussed:

- a robotics society (where should it be registered then?)
- EURON III with a status of a project
- within IEEE with co-organised meetings
- in cooperation with EUnited
- an academic network with focus on PhD students
- new way of cooperation with industry (this action starts already at the coming Annual Meeting)

Further on there is a need to discuss different options for membership: individual, as one legal entity, as a robotic lab/department etc.

If choosing to be an independent society/organisation and not applying for EC funds to run the network as a whole, there is still a suggestion to apply for funds from EC to run some concrete separate activities within the network.

End of meeting