



## ECHORD – New European Project to Support Robotics Research

### *EU has set aside 19 million Euros to support robotics research*

“ECHORD” (European Clearing House for Open Robotics Development) is a new project recently launched under FP7, and is aimed at strengthening the cooperation between scientific research and the robotics industry. ECHORD is coordinated by Professor Alois Knoll, Technical University of Munich. The project’s international orientation and its positioning in the existing robotics landscape are brought forward by the participation of an alliance of Italian universities led by the University of Naples Federico II (Prof. Bruno Siciliano) and the University of Coimbra in Portugal (Prof. Norberto Pires).

The project volume of 24 Million Euros includes 19 million Euros received from the EU to fund further advancement of robotics research in Europe. ECHORD will strengthen the already existing leading position of robotics in Europe and enhance the cooperative effort between academia and industry. Therefore, it will support about 50 individual small-scale projects (experiments) focusing on industrial challenges leading towards a clear solution. The ECHORD project will last three and a half years, during which there will be three separate rounds of open calls for proposals.

All European manufacturers and researchers are invited to submit their proposals during this time. It is the intention of the project to keep the duration short and the entry hurdles for potential applicants as low as possible in order to attain quantifiable results as quickly as possible. The first call for experiments will be launched in September 2009.

Research focused on human-robot interaction and safety, robot grippers and complex manipulations, mobile manipulators and synchronized operations of networked robots will be considered for the project. Therefore, each individual experiment can be carried out within one of three scenarios, which build upon one another:

- interaction between human and robot
- hyper-flexible manufacturing cells
- cognitive factories

EUROP (the European Robotics Technology Platform) established in 2004, which has been actively enhancing the dialogue between industry and academia, looks forward to a close cooperation with ECHORD. For further details <http://www.echord.info>.

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