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Outreach Strategy Guide

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Executive summary

This Deliverable will provide a comprehensive overview of different outreach activities, as outlined and defined in WP2, mainly by updating all findings and outputs previously reported in D2.2 (Outreach Strategy Guide).

The 29 June 2017 Outreach Advisory Board meeting comprised a mix of participants, some of whom had taken part in the previous OAB event in September 2016. They represented many organisations with a direct or an indirect interest in - or relationship to – the European robotics sector. The academic and industrial sectors were strongly represented.

Whereas the purpose of the first meeting (Frankfurt, September 2016) had broadly been to mobilise the Board for the first time, the focus of this latest OAB meeting had sharpened: to go further in detailing the Outreach strategy, with consideration given to target audiences, this time mainly the industrial side, key actions and measurement.

As before, (i) the meeting was moderated by Steve Doswell, whose findings are the base of this Deliverable, and (ii) outputs were considered and discussed within a three-themes framework. This time the themes were:

- **Education**
- **Ethics, Law and Society (ELS)**
- **Competitions**

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1. Introduction

The development of an outreach strategy able to extend its reach beyond the current robotics community is vital for the successful delivery of a positive message about robotics, in terms of engagement, public awareness, public perceptions, media interest and far-reaching specialized and non-specialized knowledge.

All outreach activities implemented within WP2 (Outreach and Public Awareness) are described and listed in this deliverable, which is linked to other project deliverables (especially the competitions-ERL related ones) in order to show the consistency of the strategy's approach and its potential impact on stakeholders and new markets.

In particular, this deliverable will focus on Outreach Advisory Board meeting, Outreach to European Organisations and Policy Makers, Outreach to End Users, and activities implemented to improve Public Awareness.

2. The Outreach Advisory Board

The robotics community is now creating communication structures and mechanisms to enable robotics stakeholders within Europe to build a viable global market. This is a primary directive of the Outreach Advisory Board (OAB) which has been formed to provide strategic guidance and leadership for this purpose. Drawing from among both end-users and stakeholder organisations, the OAB comprises prominent figures from diverse backgrounds connected to the robotics sector and over time its purpose is to provide a mix of robotics and non-robotics expertise and a growing advocacy role.

2.1. OAB Meeting Background

The June 2017 meeting comprised a mix of participants, some of whom had taken part in the previous Outreach Advisory Board event in September 2016. They represented many organisations with a direct or an indirect interest in - or relationship to – the European robotics sector. The academic and industrial sectors were strongly represented.

Whereas the purpose of the first meeting (Frankfurt, September 2016) had broadly been to mobilise the Board for the first time, the focus of this latest OAB meeting had sharpened: to go further in defining an Outreach strategy, with consideration given to target audiences, this time mainly industry, key actions and measurement.

As before, outputs were considered and discussed within a three-theme framework. This time the themes were:

- Education
- Ethical, Legal and Socio-Economic issues (ELSE)
- Competitions

It is worth noting that the previous OAB workshop had kept education as a discussion theme 'in reserve', to be considered only if time permitted, given that Skills, STEM and robotics

education had already been explored during coordination workshops for European Robotics Week. However, given the current state of evolution of the robotics sector ('we are at the dawn of the robotics era', as one OAB member observed), it was felt to be appropriate and timely that this latest OAB meeting should devote time to education and to make it one of the themes for discussion.

By prior arrangement, there were several short presentations in which delegates gave their personal insights into key topics, using practical examples from their personal experience in order to illustrate main points. These provided the content for the first half of the workshop.

The second half of the workshop was devoted to group work for ideas-generation and development around the three umbrella themes, with a focus on industrial needs

As before, a moderator helped the group to work through the agenda on time and to focus on the Workshop's desired objectives, stimulating the discussion and ensuring that all voices were heard.

In a final plenary roundtable phase, delegates were asked to evaluate the outputs and identify priorities for action. The workshop concluded with a brief round of closing perspectives.

A summary of responses for each phase is given below (see Outcomes). This captures key points from the sub-group discussions and also selected points from the short guest presentations made by several of the delegates.

2.2. Outcomes by theme

2.2.1. Competitions

In line with the structure agreed for ideas generation, the Competitions group developed the following proposals:

Objectives

The objectives of investing time and other resources into robotics competitions would be to:

- Develop more robotics skills and expertise ('talents')
- Provide a platform and stimulus for greater innovation
- Create unconventional opportunities for training and R&D

Audiences

Primary audiences would be:

- Industry
- Academia
- End users
- Entrepreneurs
- The general public

Actions

- Build relationships and links between robotics competitions and industry
- Set up workshops and develop training for industry to enable industry partners to understand and realise the benefits of a closer association with robotics competitions
- Communicate to demonstrate that competitions are not just games
- Identify and present case studies of success stories of talent recruitment and start-ups arising from individuals' prior involvement in robotics competitions
- Build companies' confidence to support competitions by demonstrating that large corporations already invest in competitions
- Attract the interest of companies and provide them with an incentive to become involved with competitions by asking them for tasks to be solved
- Launch a junior (high school) robotics league in Europe
- Address 'competition between competitions' by focusing on coordination /harmonisation between a few competitions
- Explore the sponsorship opportunities arising from branded competitions, but be aware of the tension between title-sponsor branding and the desire to collaborate with other competitions
- Learn from previous/current attempts at collaboration between competitions
- Move at pace but also be patient, remembering that 'It took soccer a long time to harmonise globally'
- Identify and highlight changes in focus in competitions to demonstrate that successful competitions (e.g. RoboCup) continue to evolve and explore the margins of innovation, besides stimulating scientific progress.

Evaluation

Serious in-depth evaluation should be carried out to understand the impacts of competitions. This evaluation should take several forms, for example by measuring the numbers of:

- *business start-ups created by competition participants*
- *talent recruited*
- *alumni returning*
- *new partnerships created*

The commercial impact of sponsored competitions could also be calculated through increases in sales of sponsors' products.

The scale of growth of competitions themselves could be gauged through the conventional measures:

- *Increases in participation over time*
- *Number of visitors*
- *Media coverage*

2.2.2. Education

Out of the three umbrella themes, the Education discussion was perhaps couched in the most general terms. There is a clear sense, backed by a re-reading of the previous OAB

report, that the conclusions about education are already well-rehearsed and as such they did not bear much further elaboration at this latest OAB meeting.

The OAB debated the role of industry in education (as in other aspects of robotics). There was a sentiment (voiced by several but perhaps not universally shared) that the political sector and society at large had not yet been prominent in signalling their understanding of the importance of education in the development of the European robotics sector ('Why should industry lead? Because society and politics have failed so far').

It was widely accepted that 'Europe' (the institutions of the EU) should take a lead in creating the conditions and an environment that would encourage key robotics skills to remain in Europe and help to develop the European robotics sector. There was a broad consensus that a European-level agency should play a role in motivating and coordinating activities and by extension that euRobotics was therefore well-placed to play a part in this.

Specifically, there were calls for robotics to be built into schools' curricula, for summer schools in robotics to be created and, at an even more basic level, for children to be taught to code as a fundamental skill, like reading and writing.

2.2.3. Ethical, Legal and Socio-Economic issues (ELSE)

The group discussion around the themes of ELSE highlighted the following points:

Objectives

The objectives of a focus on the ELSE themes identified by the OAB were:

- A standardisation of approach at an EU level
- Overcoming considerable cultural barriers
- Encouraging and enabling business readiness to respond to ELSE challenges
- Creating awareness and excitement, thereby smoothing the path of progress for the European robotics sector.

Audiences

As before, audiences identified were broad, also in view of a skill shortage and aging work force in industry

- Teachers and school system in the future
- Society at large
- Manufacturers and other industries with the need to recruit talents and up-skill existing work force
- Regulatory bodies and specialists
- Users

Actions

The OAB was fruitful and productive in proposing a diverse range of actions. Inevitably, there was some overlap with the other themed discussions. The focus of proposed actions also varied from the broad to the narrow, from the aspirational to the practical. A useful insight was also offered, that although the OAB existed for a specific purpose, it should always

remember that robotics was a mean to an end (indeed, to a variety of ends) and not the end goal. In other words that society's overarching interests should remain paramount in the OAB's deliberations. With all of this in mind, the following actions were identified:

- Harmonise robotics education
- Define a timeline for implementation
- Create demonstration programmes
- Develop political programmes and seek political endorsement
- Be mindful of the challenges of standardisation and the need for harmonisation
- Ensure that legal aspects and liabilities are covered (with reference to the European Parliament's report, to which its author Mady Delvaux herself referred at the previous OAB meeting)
- The robotics and insurance industries to develop a common position, drawing on sufficient data to be able to assess risks
- Broaden the debate around 'Robo-ethics' and include end-user opinion in this, consistent with the standard European approach to ethics, in favour of transparency and the involvement of civil society (nb IKEA's 'bottom-up' approach was commended as a model to learn from)
- Look for good PR/crisis management case studies regarding 'dangerous robots' (examples: drones, Swisspost automatic car)
- Develop thinking around robots' form of legal entity (with reference to 'electronic personalities' and the Roman law on slaves).

2.3. Key Insights

The workshop concluded with a round of discussion about concrete, practical and specific actions that could be implemented within a measurable time-frame. A summary is given here:

- Clarify the communication and dissemination approach being taken regarding competitions – including identify strategies, actions, timeline, responsibilities - and prepare to tell the sector and key media a clear story about it
- Identify and connect with key target journalists and other potential influencers, build a network of journalists across Europe
- Present workshops at competitions to showcase the robotics industry (and introduce industry to the competitions)
- Create a series of workshops on specific sectors (examples: education, healthcare)
- Create a comprehensive overview of competitions, with a directory, and write them into a single over-arching framework, as a preliminary step towards harmonisation
- Consider an 'Olympics committee' for European robotics competitions (federative/confederative approach)
- Create a topic group for communication and outreach and provide concrete, practical guidance to help the sector achieve clarity of messaging and gain attention ('cut-through')
- Empower/enable industry to start lobbying governments and lawmakers. As part of this, create an industry member committee with an external voice
- Update the SPARC roadmap

- Ethical questions are much wider than just the rules governing market operation and they require deep, detailed thought involving a broad coalition of stakeholders including civil society. Industry has an important voice in this but the responsibility cannot be abdicated by other societal sectors - it must be shared. Public discussion with policy makers must be an early step in this process.
- There is a need to tackle inequality in robotics as in all other socio-economic sectors. How can countries and communities on the periphery participate in robotics?
- A compelling narrative is still required, to engage, reassure and inform an uncomprehending and suspicious public, whose perception of robots is largely framed by a media too willing to present robotics in terms drawn from dystopic science fiction. Public understanding and acceptance of robots is of huge importance. For the European robotics sector, the fulfilment of its ambitions will depend to a large degree on its ability to connect positively and meaningfully with its target audiences.

3. Outreach to European Organisations and Policy Makers

In order to establish connections with all European institutions involved and/or interested in robotics related policies, euRobotics (as WP leader) and other project partners took part in different events where they have been able to extend their reach beyond the robotics community, and to align and synchronize messages as outlined by the Outreach Advisory Board (see chapter 2). The following list represents both an update of chapter 4.2.1 of Deliverable 2.2, and an exhaustive overview of all meetings/events where policy makers and RockEU2 project partners have been involved during the second half of RockEU2.

The activities of outreach are grouped by several axes: Link to the regions of Europe, especially to the Committee of the Regions (CoR); links to the European Parliament; links to other associations active in relevant sectors; links related to overarching policy, such as education and training.

3.1. Outreach to Regions

3.1.1. Smart Robots for Smart Regions (Brussels, 10 May 2017), Workshop at the Committee of the Regions

About 200 robotics experts and local, regional, and national authorities met to consider how to develop regional innovation strategies based on robotics, how to exploit the particular potential that robotics has for Europe's regions, whether in manufacturing, inspection, agriculture, mining or health. Robotics has the potential for raising productivity in every region's specific industrial and civil competencies. Hence, the European Commission's Smart Specialisation strategy of regions programme helps regions to foster research and innovation, attract investment, spark entrepreneurship, create jobs, involve local SMEs and authorities, and attract new users to test technology in public spaces. Among speakers and participants, Markku Markkula (then President of the CoR), Dr Juha Heikkilä (EC- DG CONNECT), Dr. Bernd Liepert (President of euRobotics), MEP Mady Delvaux (Rapporteur of the European Parliament report on robotics law).

The meeting paved the way for the Digital Innovation Hubs strategy, bringing together different policymakers from various EU institutions and local/regional representatives with the aim to create and define synergies between different funding instruments and align policy strategies.

3.1.2. European Robotics Week 2017 (ERW2017) Central Event in Brussels, Belgium (20-23 November 2017)

Held at the Committee of the Regions, the ERW2017 Central Event was a unique opportunity for European and regionally funded projects to showcase their results in front of the Committee members during a 4 days exhibition. Following the successful conference on Smart Robots (see previous point), the ERW Central Event reached out to regional policy makers with the aim to promote Digital Innovation Hubs and disseminate a better knowledge/understanding of the positive impact robotics could have across Europe.

Several targeted activities related took place:

- Exhibition of EU projects, initiatives, and research groups aligned with the meetings of individual committees:
 - **Healthcare** - 20 November: *CYBERLEGS* - exoskeletons; *Louvain Bionics* – endoscopy; *Eureyecase* – eye surgery; *MURAB* - biopsy; *SOFTPRO* - upper limb rehabilitation; *Wonder/ Robocure* - monitoring diabetes patients; *BabyRobot* - special education for children with autism; *ENDOO* - developing an active colonoscopic platform.
 - **Education** - 21 November: European Robotics League; *ER4STEM* – how to turn curious children into young adults passionate about science and technology through a hands-on platform using robotics; *LUVMI* - a small, lightweight rover being designed to explore polar regions of the Moon and drive into a Permanently Shadowed Region (PSR); *Dwengo* - using robotics to teach children about programming and other digital skills; *IDLab at UGent* - building and programming quadruped robots to understand the underlying principles of movement and cognition.
 - **Environment** - 22 November: *Bots2ReC* - development of a robotic system for the efficient automated removal of asbestos contamination, without putting human workers at risk; *CoCoRo* - creating a swarm of interacting, cognitive, autonomous robots; *DexROV* - technologies for executing sub-sea dexterous interventions with underwater robots (ROVs); *BADGER* – an autonomous underground robotic system able to drill, maneuverer, localise, map and navigate in the underground space; *SAGA* - prove the applicability of swarm robotics to precision farming.
 - **International cooperation** - 23 November: *ICARUS* – an integrated set of unmanned search and rescue tools; *SafeShore* - cover existing gaps in coastal border surveillance; *TIRAMISU* - the foundation for a global toolbox that will cover the main mine action activities; *SHERPA* - developing a mixed ground and aerial robotic platform to support search and rescue activities in a real-world hostile environment like the alpine scenario; *HyQ-REAL* - four-legged robot, capable of a wide repertoire of indoor/outdoor motions ranging from running and jumping to carefully walking over rough terrain; *Co4Robots* -

build a systemic, integrated methodology with which to accomplish complex tasks given to a group of robots in various environments such as a hotel, an office, a hospital, or a warehouse.



- *How regions can benefit from robotics and how the EU can support innovation processes - Workshop @ERW2017 Central Event in Brussels, Belgium (23 November 2017)*

This workshop aimed at informing both regional policymakers and the public about current initiatives of the European Commission and other European organizations, the status of current deliberations for future policies, and presenting recipes for supporting the establishment of successful regional clusters and especially Digital Innovation Hubs.

- *European Robotics League promotion @ERW2017 Central Event in Brussels, Belgium (21 November 2017)*

The ERL, given the positive impact it has had so far, was presented to regional policymakers and members of the CoR. It represented a unique opportunity to promote the results of the League and increase the interest among regions across Europe to host local tournaments in the upcoming seasons to showcase applications relevant to the region.

3.2. Other events and activities

Especially in face of the upcoming discussion about the structure and funding instruments of FP9, there was a need to coordinate with the other cPPPs and further organisations, including the EIT Health and EIT Digital. Contacts were made and will be intensified during the FP9 discussion in the first half of 2018.

One of the events in this context was a cPPP workshop at the ICT Proposer Days in Budapest, 9 November 2017, initiated by the IDEAL-IST network of National Contact Points. This was the first opportunity to discuss in an open environment the results of the mid-term evaluation with all cPPPs and a representative of the expert group.

To further stimulate discussion around relevant topics, euRobotics organized a dinner in the European Parliament, which took place on 22 November 2017, where several high-level representatives participated in, among them Commissioner Oettinger, the inventor of the DEI strategy, Khalil Rouhana, Deputy Director General, DG CNECT, Wolfgang Müller-Pietralla, VW future research, and representatives from large robot manufacturers, policy makers, end users' representatives, and research.

Besides that, key players of euRobotics and the RockEU2 project partners participated in several policy related events, e.g. discussions at the EP, driven by different parliamentary groups and MEPs:

- 16-18 Sept 2017: Invitation to MEP Mady Delvaux to the ERL-ER competition and as a speaker to the opening ceremony
- 19 October 2017: MEP Pavel Svoboda, Chair of the JURI Committee - Living with Artificial Intelligence: The legal and regulatory implications of emerging technologies
- 8 November 2017: MEP David Borelli - Transferring Robotics to the World of SMEs
- 8 November 2017 – S&D Conference on Robotics
- 28 November 2017 – Dinner Debate on Robots and Society: How to create a safe, fair and productive society using robotics? Hosted by MEPs Michal Boni and Lieve Wierinck

4. Outreach to End Users

During the reporting period, several end users in different areas were approached. In particular, a series of workshops focused on Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) were organized by euRobotics and iTechnic with the aim to involve also end-users in the debate around both cross-cutting and vertical Priority Areas identified by the EC:

- 10 October 2017: Initial discussion round on the European Artificial Intelligence (AI) on demand Platform
- 18 October 2017 Information and networking workshop on DIH networks for the Agri-Food sector
- 14 November 2017 Information and networking workshop on DIH networks for the Maintenance and Inspection sector

Each workshop gathered around 35 experts (average).

The outcomes/results of these workshops were presented on 6 December 2017 at the *SPARC Robotics Brokerage Day* in Brussels, with the aim to build a virtuous circle where all

connections/networks are exploited, especially the ones among policy makers and end-users. Additional DIH workshops will be organized in January 2018, with a particular care for other two Priority Areas, Healthcare and Agile Manufacturing.

5. Improving Public Awareness

One of the most critical aspect concerning the introduction of different robotic domains/ technologies on the job market and in the public perception is how the degree of automation will affect jobs. The activities undertaken within Task 2.4 try to address this issue by putting forward positive messages/narratives capable to reach a wider audience, beyond the European robotics community.

The following is a summary of major project activities related to Task 2.4, and it shows how those activities have been implemented in the right contexts, with different audiences, by ensuring a proper balance between all Work Packages:

- *ELSE Workshops @ERF17* (European Robotics Forum 2017) in Edinburgh, Scotland (March 2017)
Different ELSE workshops were organized at the European Robotics Forum 2017, focusing on Ethical, Legal, and Socio-Economic aspects of robotics. All workshops were welcomed by the public of the Forum; some of them where run by the euRobotics ELSE Topic Group.
- *ERL Emergency Robots* in Piombino, Italy (September 2017) - *Side Events/ Public Talks*
As part of ERL Emergency 2017 in Piombino, Italy, and as reported in Deliverable 4.3, a series of robotics talks took place at Piombino Castle. Focused on the future of robotics, and on current service robotics applications, both talks generated interest among attendees, especially within the local community.
Additionally, a public Opening Ceremony, attended by more than 100 visitors, showcased different EU funded projects in the fields of rescue and search robotics. Children of different ages came to Piombino to participate in robotics workshops provided for free by School of Robotics. This was part of the effort in involving the local community.
A total of ~1500 people attended the parallel public programme, from all ages.
- *ERL Local Tournaments*
A series of Local Tournaments, both in Industry and Service Robots, have been held across Europe, and have managed to generate a wide interest.
- *ERW2017 Local Events across Europe*
In line with the increased number of local events organized across Europe since 2011, the European Robotics Week 2017 delivered another success in terms of (i) events registered within the framework of Week, and (ii) stakeholders involved. Schools, research centers, universities and industries opened the doors to the youngest with almost 1.000 events about robotics and education. As for previous years, a full report on the events organized will be made available to the public in 2018.

- *Awards @ERF2017* (European Robotics Forum 2017) in Edinburgh, Scotland (March 2017)

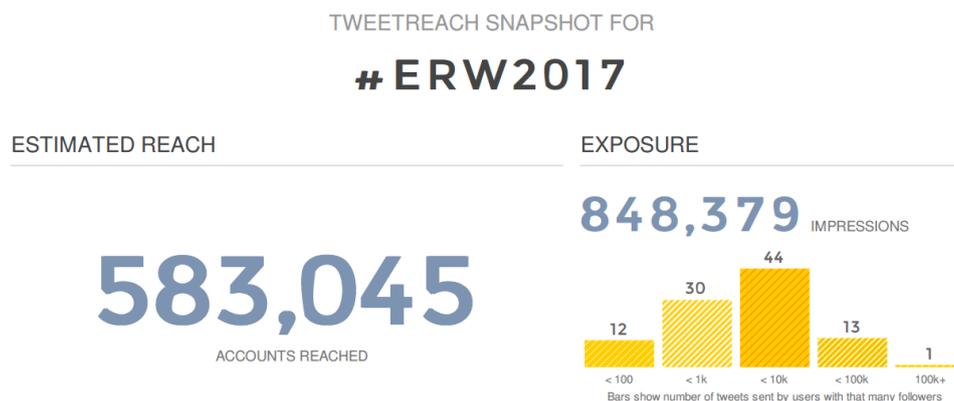
Technology Transfer, Entrepreneurship, and ERL Awards are handed over to the winners every year at the ERF, during a Gala Dinner with more than 500 guests. These awards are not only part of an established and well recognized event among the robotics community, but they represent a huge opportunity to showcase and promote robotics research and industrial take-up to the general public as well.

All activities listed above and many others have been properly channeled through multiple dissemination tools, especially newsletters and press releases/info update on euRobotics/ SPARC portal.

Social Media activities

euRobotics has been using a variety of social media channels to reach the public: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. On Facebook, 3 pages have been actively updated: [euRobotics](#) (likes: 6,171, followers: 6,182), [SPARCRobotics](#) (likes: 2,169 and followers: 2,181), [ERLRobot league](#), focused on the competition communities (likes: 630, followers: 657). The Twitter accounts that have been used are [eu Robotics](#) (4,159 followers and 3,342 Tweets) and [SPARCRobotics](#) (1201 followers) and [ERLRobotLeague](#) – dedicated to the competitions community (271 followers).

The European Robotics Week 2017, under the hashtag #ERW2017, had a major impact on the social networks. According to a report by TWEETREACH, 583,000 accounts reached¹ all over Europe and with an exposure of around 850,000 impressions², during the European robotics week peak days (20-24 November). The campaign has been benefitting from contributions on Twitter of high level policy makers, such as Vice-President of the European Commission Andrus Ansip, the Accounts of the European Committee of the Regions and of the Digital Single Market and the Brussels-based media (EUSciComm). The reached users came mainly from: Spain, the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Finland.



A consistent use of the branding guidelines, as already described in *Deliverable 8.1* (Development of Info-graphics and Communication Materials), is also supporting the

¹ *Reach* is the total number of unique Twitter users that received tweets about the #ERW2017 hashtag (source: <https://unionmetrics.com/blog/2010/04/understanding-twitter-reach-vs-exposure-with-tweetreach/>)

² *Exposure* is the total number of times tweets about the #ERW2017 hashtag were received by users. Each receipt of a tweet is an impression (source: <https://unionmetrics.com/blog/2010/04/understanding-twitter-reach-vs-exposure-with-tweetreach/>)

creation of a SPARC identity which is now easily recognizable inside and outside the European Robotics community, helping to improve the public perceptions of all messages/communications.

6. Conclusions

As a follow up to D2.2, the project Outreach Strategy was further developed and refined throughout the second part of the project. In particular:

- Industry representatives in the Outreach Advisory Board emphasized the strong needs to engage with all stakeholders;
- Increased dissemination activity brought industries to support ERL teams, reinforcing the link between industry and the European Robotics League, also in terms of sponsorships to the ERL, establishing a clear path towards the sustainability of the different Leagues. An overview of all industry connections and sponsorships can be found [here](#) ;
- The effectiveness of different communication channels led to increased media engagement both within and outside the project, creating a solid legacy for future activities and media involvement, even beyond the scope of RockEU2 project;
- Social media activities have been extended to cover all project tasks, including the European Robotics League;
- The increasing engagement and interest among the youngest and/or students towards the European Robotics Week are a sign of the effectiveness of this Outreach Strategy;
- All outreach activities helped to boost and expand the dialogue with different policy makers, such as MEPs, EC representatives from various DGs, EITs and JRC representatives. Links with all other cPPPs were also strengthened;
- Overall, synergies between all project Work Packages were intensively exploited, ensuring a coherent approach and increasing public interest.