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EU launches €2.8bn robot innovation programme

Initiative is set to create 240,000 new jobs by 2020

By **PE**

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The European Commission and 180 companies and research organisations, under the umbrella of euRobotics, have launched a €2.8 billion innovation programme in robotics.

The initiative, called SPARC, will cover manufacturing, transport, agriculture, health, civil security, and households. It is expected to create more than 240,000 new jobs in Europe and increase the region's share of the global market to 42%.

By 2020, SPARC is expected to create: 75,000 new qualified jobs at European manufacturers of industrial and service robots; 30,000 additional new high-tech jobs in European companies supplying components and software for robots; and more than 140,000 new jobs in European service industries using a broad variety of service robots.

Bernd Liepert, president of euRobotics, said: "SPARC will ensure the competitiveness of European robotics industries. Robot-based automation solutions are essential to overcome today's most pressing societal challenges – from demographic change to sustainable production."

Neelie Kroes, vice-president of the EC, added: "Europe needs to be a producer and not merely a consumer of robots. Integrating robots into European industry helps us create and keep jobs in Europe."

Calls for proposals related to SPARC are run under Leadership in Enabling Industrial Technologies pillar of the new EU research and innovation programme Horizon 2020.

The next funding call will be published in October 2014, with an April 2015 deadline.

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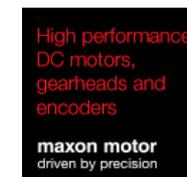
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