

Press release 08-03-2018

New partnership will break down barriers to robot safety

In a pan-European strategic effort to break down barriers around collaborative robot safety, five Research and Technology Organizations across Europe have teamed up in a new initiative funded by the EU called COVR.

Unless safety regulation becomes easy to access, understand and apply, it can become a barrier to the increased deployment of collaborative robots that industries across many domains demand. One of the main goals of the project is thus to provide a single-point-of-access framework for validating collaborative robot safety, organized around EU directives and standards, accessible to everyone.

“Collaborative robots are not out in the future. Market-ready technologies are arriving already”, says Project Coordinator Kurt Nielsen of DTI's Centre for Robot Technology in Denmark, and continues:

“One main reason we don't see more true cobots in use is the complexity of safety certification. With so many different directives, rules and regulations there is a lot of doubt as to what tests are needed to guarantee a “safe” collaborative robot. We need to harmonise validation methods – and even the whole approach to safety – in a more streamlined manner acceptable by all key stakeholders”.

José Saenz from Fraunhofer IFF in Germany concurs and adds, that not enough people know about and understand the safety standards regarding robotics. “There are no well-established best practices regarding validation of safety for collaborative robotics, and in general it is too difficult for companies to bring new collaborative robots into their facilities”, he says.

Federico Vicentini from the CNR Institute of Industrial Technologies and Automation in Italy points out that even for those who are in the edge of collaborative technology, validation in the field is still a major issue: “ISO committees for robot safety have indicated that the development of validation methods is a top priority to provide the community with better normative guidance and requirements for robotics applications”, he says and continues: “COVR will develop a series of rich, sound and widely adoptable test protocols for the validation of safety in collaborative robot applications across a range of application domains”.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the development of the validation protocols. Anyone with a cobot related technology can apply for a so-called COVR Award in three rounds of open calls. With a COVR Award you are supported financially with up to €60.000 to develop and test your cobot components or systems. The first open call one will open in the fall 2018.

COVR is driven by five RTOs – the Danish Technological Institute, the Italian National Research Council, German Fraunhofer IFF, the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission and Roessingh Research and Development from the Netherlands. The RTOs will provide expert knowledge and assistance as well as access to test facilities in their safety laboratories.

To learn more about COVR, go visit our [website](#).

Further information from Kurt Nielsen, the Danish Technological Institute, cell phone: +45 7220 2211. mail: kuni@teknologisk.dk



'COVR has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 779966'