

CMRE Challenges Robots to Compete in Sea, Land and Air Venues

Written by CMRE PAO
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The Centre is part of the consortium of the new [EU project euRathlon](#) which expands on the well-established SAUC-Europe underwater competition with land and airborne contests.

A new European Union initiative will create an exciting new Grand Challenge for intelligent search and rescue robots. The euRathlon project is a three-year effort, funded by the European Commission. It is led by the University of the West of England (UWE) with seven partners, including CMRE. Three competitions will see robots and their teams of designers go head to head in a series of demanding outdoor scenarios that mimic the real challenges of a disaster situation. The adoption of common standards for communication and shared concepts will facilitate integration and collaboration.

euRathlon begins in 2013 with a demanding land-based competition, followed in 2014 by an underwater competition. For that underwater challenge the project will provide core hardware components enabling the teams with backgrounds in other domains to compete. This clearly shifts the focus of the competition onto cognition, intelligence, and autonomy of the robots. In 2015 the Grand Challenge will feature all three elements: land, sea and air. The robots from the different domains will need to work together to respond to a mock disaster scenario inspired by the Fukushima accident.

The robots will be designed by teams of technologists from universities, research groups and

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industry, who will work to a set of rules and strict technical criteria. The aim is to accelerate progress in cognitive cybernetics to meet the challenge of developing smart robots which can operate safely and effectively in unpredictable and hazardous physical environments.

For CMRE euRathlon represents an extension of the successful experience started in 2010 with the Student Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Challenge - Europe (SAUC-E). One of CMRE's Scientists, Vladimir Djapic, says: "We are excited to have an opportunity to organize such a high-profile event involving, extending and showcasing European cognitive robotics technologies in all three domains. Further, participation in euRathlon will highlight areas into which the CMRE may diversify. It will be a perfect opportunity for a survey of technology developed by academia and industry for applications other than those considered traditionally."

The euRathlon competitions will be supported by annual workshops. In parallel, there will be an open process of developing benchmarks to allow comparison of different robots in the euRathlon competitions, and for adoption in the wider community.

Download the [press release](#) .