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## 2014 RESEARCH TAKES FLIGHT DAY

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Laureates of the Airbus Group Foundation prizes: Olivier CAPPE, Rachid DERICHE, Frédéric HECHT

Between electronics, embedded software, and artificial intelligence, robotics is now seizing upon every domain, including of course industry. At the dawn of the era of intelligent robots, and just as Airbus has introduced the first interactive humanoid robot in its factory in Puerto Real in Spain, this is the subject the Airbus Group Foundation has chosen for the 10th edition of its 'Research Takes Flight Day'.

Aiming to promote exchanges and reflection among actors of public research and private research, the 'Research Takes Flight Day' was held on Monday 31st March 2014 in Paris in the presence of researchers and experts in this field.

During the opening conference, **Jean-Paul Laumond**, Director of Research at LAAS-CNRS, took stock of "50 years of research in robotics" and spoke of the "new opportunities" in this field: "Manufacturing represents a big potential market for robotics, especially in large-scale industries such as aircraft manufacturing."

During the round-table on "Factory of the future: what degree of autonomy can we expect from robots in the development of their actions?", various experts gave an update on the latest developments of industrial robotics and the challenges that remain. "The new challenge is to have an autonomous flying vehicle - I'm not speaking about tele-operated drones, but about autonomous drones" stated **Bruno Siciliano**, Coordinator of the FP7 NMP-ICT-FoF EuRoC Project - University of Naples Federico II. **Christoph Borst**, Head of Department Autonomy and Teleoperation, Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics, German Aerospace Center (DLR), said that the complete autonomy of robots was not for the immediate future: "In the coming years, we will see robots in the factory that interact directly with humans, but robots real autonomy is not for now, I rather expect to see robots able to imitate what they saw or learned through demonstrations." **Adolfo Suarez Roos**, Airbus Group Expert - Robotics, Coordinator of ANR project ICARO preferred to speak of adaptability rather than autonomy: "In the factory of the future, we want more flexibility, robots that have the ability to reconfigure their task if they encounter an unexpected situation". **Mariusz Baldyga**, Project Officer - Robotics Unit - European Commission, DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (Programme H2020) added: "We have launched projects on the flexibility and autonomy of robots under the Horizon 2020 program, but with regard to completely autonomous robots, it will be after 2020".

This discussion was followed by a conference on "Robotics in Space" by **Gianfranco Visentin**, Head of Automation and Robotics Section at ESA, which stressed the specificity of robots used in space: "Space robots must meet the very demanding constraints of Space (high radiation, low power, different gravity), which makes them very different from ground robots and requires the development of appropriate technology".

Conference participants were then able to discover the projects supported by the Foundation through an exhibition and to applaud the winners of the [Foundation Awards](#) and [Best Thesis Awards](#).

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