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### German Federal Minister of Economics Michael Glos and Bavarian Prime Minister Günther Beckstein visit DLR in Oberpfaffenhofen

17 July 2008



#### Centre of excellence for automation and robotics in the making

On 17 July 2008, the German Federal Minister of Economics and Technology, Mr Michael Glos, the Bavarian Prime Minister, Dr Günther Beckstein, and the Bavarian State Minister for Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology, Mrs Emilia Müller, visited the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR) in Oberpfaffenhofen. In a joint statement, they came out in favour of further expanding the DLR Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics (DLR-Institut für Robotik und Mechatronik) based on the accomplishments in Oberpfaffenhofen so far.

In the Federal Budget for 2009, the German Federal Cabinet has decided to boost the field of automation and robotics technology. The Free State of Bavaria has decided to support the robotics site in Oberpfaffenhofen through the new BayernFIT - Forschung, Innovation, Technologie (Research, Innovation, Technology) innovation programme. "We have taken a joint initiative to develop the existing Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics at DLR in Oberpfaffenhofen into a centre of excellence for automation and robotics", stated Bavarian Prime Minister Beckstein. "In the case of a showcase project like this, it is also the responsibility of the state government to ensure that it remains world-class", he added.

"Today, we were able to see with our own eyes how much potential the DLR institute has. Because its research is important for the international competitiveness of the German economy, we would also like to provide the necessary federal support for the development of the centre of excellence here at DLR in Oberpfaffenhofen", stated German Federal Minister of Economics Michael Glos.

According to the first plans developed by DLR for the further development of the DLR Institute for Robotics and Mechatronics, its current research capacity should be doubled to 300 staff members over the next six years. This should lead to the establishment in Oberpfaffenhofen of the most important and largest research centre in the world for applied automation and robotics.



Plans to increase funding for automation and robotics

Through cooperation agreements with industrial enterprises, colleges of higher education and non-university research institutions, the centre of excellence will be integrated into a national robotics network. International cooperation will ensure that the centre of excellence stays abreast of the latest global developments and that it can enter into strategic alliances.

"Automation and robotics technologies provide a clear competitive advantage for the whole German industrial sector. The planned development of the DLR centre of excellence for automation and robotics would create a lasting nucleus for robotics in Germany - for use on Earth as well as in space", stated Professor Dr Johann-Dietrich Wörner, **Chairman of the DLR Executive Board**.

#### **New focus on robotics for the national space programme**

German Federal Minister of Economics Michael Glos envisages a strategic further development of the German space robotics field through a substantial increase in the funds allocated to it in the national space programme. This new focus should foster the development and testing of technology for deployment of robotics and automation in Earth orbit as well as in complex exploration projects. For instance, the principal goal of the DEOS mission (Deutsche Orbitale Servicing Mission; German Orbital Service Mission), currently discussed in the context of the national space programme, is to demonstrate measures for the preservation or controlled decommissioning of near-Earth satellites using robot satellites. In this way, the know-how available in Germany about the detection, recognition, and approach of a target satellite, docking in Earth orbit, and controlled de-orbiting, can be brought together.

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