



Press Release

Open Platform Challenge: These are the finalists for the 2023 KUKA Innovation Award

Augsburg, 21.09.2022 – Get started right away, even without expert knowledge: With the Innovation Award 2023, KUKA has called on creative minds from the robotics community to submit their ideas relating to the simple operation and maximum flexibility of robots. The teams that have made it through to the final of the “Open Platform Challenge” have now been determined. The winners will receive a prize of €20,000.

How can engineering, setup and programming be simplified? This is the topic addressed by the KUKA Innovation Award 2023. For the first time, the €20,000 robotics competition is based on the new KUKA robot operating system and the associated ecosystem iiQKA.

iiQKA offers open interfaces, intuitive operation and makes it much easier than before for users to implement their own hardware and software expansions on a KUKA robot. This makes automation more intuitive and accessible, and enables the automation of new tasks, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises.

These are the finalists of the “Open Platform Challenge”:

Team SPIRIT

The team from the Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) is working on the automation of maintenance and inspection tasks in the oil and gas industry. A single large refinery often requires more than 50,000 maintenance and inspection routines. To this end, a novel flying robot is being developed that is suspended from a cable and features advanced telepresence technology, combining state-of-the-art AI-based

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perception and control theory. This solution enables safe and intuitive operation of air manipulators for industrial applications.

Team Fashion & Robotics

The fashion and textile industry is under great pressure to reduce its environmental footprint by producing more durable, high-quality products and developing circular material flows. The “Creative Robotics” and “Fashion and Technology” departments at the University of Art and Design Linz are working on creating a way for small and medium-sized textile companies and designers to increase their production by setting up micro-factories with collaborative robot systems, while simultaneously enabling more efficient sorting and finishing processes on an industrial scale.

Team JARVIS

The goal of the finalists of the Merlin Laboratory of the Italian Politecnico di Milano is to develop a complete plug-and-play method for programming collaborative robotic applications (e.g. assembly and packaging) that is fully integrated into the iiQKA ecosystem. This will facilitate their introduction in small and medium-sized enterprises. Together with the integration of artificial intelligence into the new iiQKA ecosystem, the concept enables unskilled operators to instruct the robot in a new task and to generalize in unknown situations, including new tasks and product variants.

What happens next?

To help them turn their ideas into reality, KUKA is providing the finalists with the sensitive LBR iiisy cobot free of charge for the duration of the competition, including free training and coaching during the contest. The final will take place at an industry trade fair in 2023, where the finalists will present their concepts to a wide-ranging expert audience and have an opportunity to make contacts and exchange ideas. There, a jury of experts will select the winner of the €20,000 award.

All information about the Open Platform Challenge can be found [here](#).



KUKA

KUKA is a global automation corporation with sales of around 3.3 billion euro and roughly 14,000 employees. The company is headquartered in Augsburg, Germany. As one of the world's leading suppliers of intelligent automation solutions, KUKA offers customers everything they need from a single source: from robots and cells to fully automated systems and their networking in markets such as automotive, electronics, metal & plastic, consumer goods, e-commerce/retail and healthcare. (As at: 31 December 2021)