

Proceedings of the

8th ESA Workshop on



Advanced Space Technologies for Robotics and Automation

ASTRA 2004

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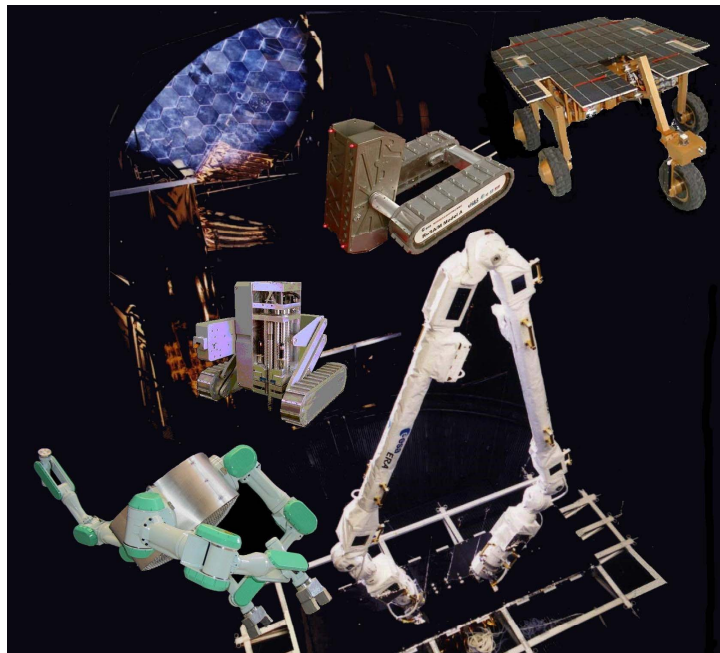
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**8th ESA Workshop on
Advanced Space Technologies for Robotics and Automation
'ASTRA 2004'**



ESTEC, Noordwijk, The Netherlands

November 2 - 4, 2004

8th ESA Workshop on Advanced Space Technologies for Robotics and Automation

ASTRA 2004 Workshop

**November 2 - 4, 2004
ESA/ESTEC, Noordwijk, The Netherlands**

**Organised by the European Space Agency (ESA)
Directorate of Technical and Quality Management
Mechatronics & Optics Division,
Automation & Robotics Section (TEC-MMA)**



INTRODUCTION

The Automation and Robotics Section of the European Space Agency (ESA) Directorate of Technical and Operational Support organized the eighth Workshop on “Advanced Space Technologies for Robotics and Automation (ASTRA)”. ASTRA 2004 was held from November 2nd – 4th, 2004, at the European Space Research and Technology Centre (ESTEC) in Noordwijk, The Netherlands.

ASTRA 2004 built on the tradition of the previous seven ASTRA Workshops. It was a forum for information exchange and discussion of the European space Automation and Robotics (A&R) community. Participants obtained an up-to-date picture of

- currently envisaged space missions and application scenarios where A&R could play a major role,
- the A&R technology needs, which can be derived from these application scenarios,
- the current status of European research and development programmes in the field of space A&R, and
- new technology trends for space A&R.

The Aurora long-term mission framework for robotic and human exploration of the bodies of the Solar System - particularly those holding promise for traces of life - which ESA is setting up at this moment, is expected to increase the need for space Automation and Robotics.

Furthermore, recent trends indicating interest in manned missions to the moon, demand for robotic technologies in order to prepare future manned visits to our neighbouring celestial bodies.

ASTRA provides an overview of technologies, which are available or are being developed in Europe and in the ESA member states in particular, or which should be included in future ESA-managed R&D activities.

SCOPE

The scope of the ASTRA Workshop is A&R technology and its application in space.

The following areas should be covered:

- **automation and robot system technologies**
- (design and development methodologies, operational concepts, simulation and calibration techniques, multi-robot cooperation architectures, “evolutionary” robotics, micro-system technologies, etc.)
- **robotic support equipment technologies**
- (testbeds, simulators, training equipment, etc.)
- **robot ground segment technologies**
- (for programming and verification, commanding and monitoring, teleoperation at various levels of abstraction)
- **robotic mobility technologies**
- (arm relocatability, rover locomotion on / above / under the surface, etc.)
- **manipulation subsystem technologies**
- (kinematics, structures, actuators, proprioceptive sensors, harnesses)
- **end-effector and sensor instrumentation technologies**
- (grippers, hands, tools, drilling and sampling devices, payload interfaces, exteroceptive sensors including robotic vision, etc.)
- **robot control technologies**
- (space compatible hardware platforms, rover navigation and piloting techniques, control algorithms, intelligent sensor based control, human-computer interfaces, etc.)
- **robot-friendly payload technology and design methodologies**
- **(non-robotic) technologies for space laboratory automation**
- (payload control systems, data communications and imaging technologies, user interface and “telepresence” technologies)
- **test and operations.**

Papers on the following topics were especially encouraged:

- Programmatic (e.g. cost reduction, novel project management approaches, risk analysis, increasing competitiveness, failure detection)
- Robotic autonomy (e.g. operations autonomy, science autonomy, robotic task planning, scheduling)
- Miniaturization in robotics and robotic payloads (e.g. Contributions from High-tech to robotics, MEMS, Nano-technologies)
- User aspects (e.g. novel ideas for applications of space A&R, identified shortcomings of robotics for space applications, “success stories” from user’s point of view).

In particular, technology developers were invited to use their contacts with interested users, to forward this announcement to them and to make joint contributions.

ORGANISATION AND PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Workshop Chairman:

H.P. Lutz ESA D/TOS, Head of Mechatronics & Optics Division (TOS-MM)

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ASTRA 2004 Workshop

WELCOME ADDRESS

H. Lutz

Head of Mechatronics and Optics Division, ESA/ESTEC
ASTRA 2004 Chairman

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome you to ESA's Space Research and Technology Centre, ESTEC, and to the 2004 edition of the ESA Workshop on Advanced Space Technologies for Robotics and Automation.

The ASTRA Workshops are traditionally held every two years here at ESTEC. Since the last ASTRA Workshop in 2002, we have been experiencing quite difficult times with regard to the potential use of Automation and Robotics in space. For one, ESA and its member states are facing severe financial problems related to the major programmes, namely the ISS, the Ariane-Launcher and the Galileo-Navigation programme, and this has caused delays and setbacks for a number of other activities. But on the other hand, promising new perspectives are opening up, particularly within the Exploration programme that ESA is currently putting in place. Indeed, if I look around, I see a quite promising landscape for the use of Automation and Robotics in space.

On the International Space Station, after the first Canadian robotic elements have long proven their effectiveness, new robotic systems are about to join in. The European Robot Arm is finally ready for its tasks on the International Space Station, and a date for its launch has been set. The EUROBOT development has been initiated with a first Phase-A contract and many R&D activities are now running to support it.

While the first practical uses of space robotics will be on the Space Station, ESA is also intensifying its activities in the area of planetary exploration by robotic means. The first ESA Exploration mission to another planetary surface, EXOMARS, has a rover as main actor of the mission. Furthermore, the Exploration Programme promises to make space robotics the main means by which several planetary exploration missions will be accomplished.

Large international co-operation is likely to be initiated soon for human exploration beyond Earth orbit. Also in these scenarios, Automation and Robotics will play a key role in preparing, enabling, supporting, amplifying, and protecting human operations.

Even in near-Earth orbit, after many setbacks in promoting robotic servicing of spacecraft, we finally have an ESA funded programme, the ConeXpress-Orbital Recovery Service (ORS) programme, which aims at extending the life of GEO satellites by means of captive carrying.

We believe that these endeavours into new missions and frontiers will fascinate the science community and public alike, and we are convinced that Automation and Robotics technologies will be among the essential elements to make such missions possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is you who can reach these ambitious goals with your contributions as planners, researchers, technology developers, managers and users. I am very grateful that you have followed our invitation to come to ESTEC to share your views with us on this important topic. I wish you all the best in your endeavours and I look forward to yet another stimulating and rewarding conference.

I hereby declare OPEN the ASTRA Workshop 2004.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Session A: Programmatic

- An Overview of Mission Applications for Space A&R
*Visentin, Gianfranco** A-01
**ESA/ESTEC*
- ESA's Technology Reference Studies
Falkner, Peter ; Lyngvi, A.* ; van den Berg, M.L.* ; Renton, D.* ; Atzei, A.** A-02
**ESA-ESTEC, SCI-A*
- Canadian Activities in Intelligent Robotic Systems - An Overview
Piedboeuf, Jean-Claude ; Dupuis, Erick** A-03
**Canadian Space Agency*
- Unmanned on-orbit servicing (OOS), ROKVISS and the TECSAS mission
Sommer, Bernd ; Turk, M** A-04
**DLR*

Session B: Orbital Robotics I – Applications

- Eurobot: EVA-assistant robot for ISS, Moon and Mars
Schoonejans, Philippe ; Stott, R.** ; Didot, F.** ; Allegra, A*** ; Pensavalle, E*** ; Heemskerk, C***** B-01
European Space Agency, **ESA, *Alenia Spazio Torino, ****Dutch Space*
- On-Orbit Servicing of Satellites Using Automation & Robotics: Satellite Capture Tool
Naumann, W. ; Hofmann, P.* ; Landzettel, K.*** B-02
**Kayser-Threde GmbH, **DLR GmbH*
- An Overview of Technology Development for On-Orbit Servicing Activities in Canada
Piedboeuf, Jean-Claude ; Martin, Eric* ; Doyon, Michel** B-03
**Canadian Space Agency*
- On-Orbit Servicing (OOS) & Its Potential Impact on Design, Operations and Efficiency of Future Space Infrastructure
*Kreisel, Joerg** B-04
**JOERG KREISEL International Consultant*

Session C: Manipulation Subsystems I - Robotic Arm-systems

DEXARM – a Dextrous Robot Arm for Space Applications C-01
Rusconi, Andrea ; Magnani, P.* ; Grasso, T.** ; Rossi, G.** ; Gonzales Lodoso, J.F.*** ;
Magnani, G.*****
Galileo Avionica S.p.A., **Tecnomare S.p.A., *Sener S.A., ****Politecnico di Milano*

Dextrous Robot Arm C-02
Hirt, Martin ; Gruener, Gabriel***
**CONTRAVES SPACE AG, **CSEM*

Eurobot End-Effector C-03
Michaud, Stephane ; Dominguez, M.* ; Nguyen, Uy-Liem**
**CONTRAVES SPACE AG*

LMF: The lightweight manipulator vehicle of Kerntechnische Hilfsdienst GmbH C-04
Süss, Uwe ; Abadie, Vincent** ; Joudrier, Luc****
KHG, **Cybernetix, *ESA/ESTEC*

ROGER - Robotic Geostationary Orbit Restorer C-05
*Bischof, Bernd*** ; Starke, Juergen** ; Guenther, Hansjuergen*** ; Foth, Wolf-Peter* ; Kerstein,
Lothar****
EADS Space Transportation, **EADS-ST, *EADS ST*

Session D: Planetary Robotics I - Missions to Mars (Exomars)

Overview of exomars mission preparation D-01
*J. Vago**
** ESA/ESTEC*

FORMID: A Formal Specification and Verification Environment for DREAMS D-02
Guy, Bormann ; Joudrier, Luc** ; Kapellos, Konstantinos* ;*
**TRASYS, **ESA / ESTEC*

Concept study for the subsurface sampling system for the Pasteur payload of the ExoMars Mission D-03
*Anttila, Matti**
**Helsinki University of Technology*

Sample Acquisition and Management Systems for Missions to Mars . D-04
Magnani, Piergiovanni ; Re, E.* ; Gelmi, R.* ; Olivieri, A.***
**Galileo Avionica S.p.A., **ASI*

Chassis Concepts for the ExoMars Rover D-05
Kucherenko, V. ; Bogatchev, A.* ; van Winnendael, M.***
**RCL, **ESA/ESTEC*

Session E: Autonomy

- Demonstrating Robotic Autonomy in NASA's Intelligent Systems Project
Morris, R. ; Estlin, T.** ; Pedersen, Liam*** ; Williams, Brian*****
NASA Ames Research Center, **NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, *QSS Group Inc., **** MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology* E-01
- Autonomous Robotics Toolbox
L'Archeveque, Regent ; Allard, Pierre* ; Dupuis, Erick**
**Canadian Space Agency* E-02
- Towards Autonomous Long Range Navigation
Dupuis, Erick ; Allard, Pierre* ; Bakambu, Joseph* ; Lamarche, Tom* ; Wen-Hong Zhu*
**Canadian Space Agency* E-03
- Integration of On-board EOS Schedule Revision with Space Communication Emulation System.
Khatib, Lina,** ; Morris, Robert***
**Kestrel Technology, **NASA Ames* E-04

Session F: Planetary Robotics II – Exploration

- Venus Orbiter and Entry Probe: An ESA Technology Reference Study
Phipps, Andy et al. ; Underwood, John et al.** , Van den Berg, Marcel*** ; Falkner, Peter****
Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd, **Vorticity Ltd, *ESA/ESTEC* F-01
- Atmospheric Microprobes for Venus: A preliminary probe design and localisation method
Wells, Nigel ; Ballard, A.* ; Cosby, M.* ; Eldridge, A.* ; Singh, R.* ; Picardi, E.** ; Taylor, F.*** ; Bowles, N.*** ; Wilson, C.*** ; Lacy, S.* ; Doherty, J.**
QinetiQ, **Laben, *University of Oxford* F-02
- Sky-Sailor – Design of an Autonomous Solar Powered Martian Airplane
Noth, A. ; Bouabdallah, S.* ; Michaud, S.* ; Siegart, R.* ; Engel, W.**
**Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL)* F-03
- Wireless Power Transmission Experiment Using an Airship as Relay System and Moveable Rover as Ground Target for Later Planetary Exploration Missions.
Steinsiek, F. ; Weber, K.H.* ; Foth, W.P.* ; Foth, H.J.** ; Schaefer, C.***
**EADS Space Transportation, **Technical University Kaiserslautern* F-04

Session G: Control I - Groundstations and Controllers

- A-DREAMS: An Advanced Ground Control Station for Teleoperation & Telemanipulation
*Didot, Frederic** ; *Kapellos, Konstantinos*** ; *Schiele, Andre**
*ESA / ESTEC, **TRASYS S.A. G-01
- A robotic task scheduler – Task Planner for Automation and robotics in Space (TAPAS)
*Focant, G.** ; *Fontaine, B.** ; *Steinicke, Leif** ; *Joudrier, L.***
*Space Applications Services, **ESA/ESTEC G-02
- CONTEXT – Space A&R Controller Capability Extension
*Bologna, Patrizia** ; *Mondellini, C.** ; *Crudo, E.** ; *Didot, F.*** ; *Foresti, L.**
*Galileo Avionica S.p.A., **ESTEC G-03
- New Generation Robotic Controller Software For Space Manipulators
*Cikic, N.** ; *De Marchi, E.** ; *Filippini, M.** ; *Fusco, F*** ; *Grasso, Tiberio** ; *Olivieri, A.**** ;
*Rusconi, A.***
*Tecnomare S.p.A., **Galileo Avionica, ***Italian Space Agency (ASI) G-04

Session H: Mobile Robotics I – Simulation

- Advanced Modelling and Simulation Methods of Planetary Rover Mobility on Soft Terrain
*Gibbesch, Andreas** ; *Schäfer, B.**
*DLR H-01
- Performance Evaluation of locomotion modes of an hybrid wheeled-legged robot for self-adaption to ground conditions
*Ben Amar, Faiz** ; *Grand, Ch.** ; *Besseron, G.** ; *Plumet, F** ;
*Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 6, H-02
- Modelling and Comparison of Wheeled Rovers
*Lamon, Pierre** ; *Thueer, Thomas** ; *Jordi, Rolf** ; *Siegwart, Roland**
*EPFL H-03
- Rover Mobility Performance Evaluation Tool (RMPET): A Systematic Tool For Rover Chassis Evaluation Via Application of Bekker Theory
*Patel, Nildeep** ; *Ellery, Alex** ; *Allouis, Elie** ; *Richter, Lutz*** ;
*University of Surrey, **DLR H-04

Session I: Exhibit Session

- An Approach to Reliability-Adaptive Multi-Robot Coordination I-01
Rakowsky, Uwe K. ; Schneeweiss, Winfrid G.***
**Vossloh Kiepe, University of Wuppertal, **Fern Universität Hagen*
- Entrainment as a Paradigm for Modelling a Planetary Robot's Circadian Rhythm I-02
Rocks, Claire ; Barnes, Dave**
**University of Wales, Aberystwyth*
- Electroactive Polymer Actuator design for space applications I-03
Fernández Infante, Diego ; Moreno, L.E.** ; Baselga, J.***
**Universidad Carlos III de Madrid/ EADS Astrium, **Universidad Carlos III de Madrid*
- Exhibit :Planetary Rover Simulator I-04
Rastel, Laurent ; Maurette, M.M.**
**C.N.E.S*
- ASVIS, an Operational Vehicle Servicing the ISS I-05
del Cura, Juan Manuel ; López, A.* ; Colmenarejo, P.** ; Strippoli, L.** ; Modrego, D.** ;*
**SENER Ingeniería y Sistemas, S.A., **Grupo de Mecánica de Vuelo, S.A*
- Imaging and localisation package for a Martian balloon based aerobot I-06
Barnes, Dave ; Shaw, A* ; Summers, P* ; Ward, R** ; Woods, M** ; Evans, M** ; Paar, G*** ; Sims, M*****
University of Wales Aberystwyth, **SciSys (Space & Defence) Ltd., *Joanneum Research, ****University of Leicester*
- Analysis of Flapping Wing Robots for Exploration. An evolutionary approach. I-07
Salles, Renato ; Schiele, Andre**
**ESA/ESTEC*
- MAGRITTE: a graphic supervisor for telerobotics interventions I-08
Leroux, Christophe ; Guerrand, Martine* ; Leroy, Christophe* ; Measson, Yvan* ; Boukarri, Bachir***
**CEA-LIST, **CYBERNETIX*
- The results of ESA/ESTEC and VNII Transmash & RCL joint R&D activities aimed at the development of the planetary rovers I-09
Matrossov, S. ; Gromov, V.* ; Malenkov, M.* ; Vladykin, S.**
**Rover Centre Ltd, RCL*
- Development of a bioinspired insect leg I-10
Oszwald, F. ; Wedler, A.* ; Schiele, A.**
**ESA/ESTEC*
- The mole with sampling mechanism (MSM) – Technology Development and Payload of Beagle 2 Mars Lander I-11
Richter, L. ; Coste, P.** ; Gromov, V.*** ; Grzesik, A.**
DLR Institute of Space Simulation, **ESA/ESTEC, *VNII Transmash*

Session L: Manipulation Subsystems II - Modelling and Simulation

- Modular, Generic Inverse Kinematics Algorithm Applied to Kinematically Redundant Space Manipulators L-01
*Krenn, Rainer** ; *Hirzinger, G.**
**German Aerospace Center (DLR)*
- In-situ calibration methods for damaged planetary manipulator robots L-02
*Taylor, Edward** ; *Barnes, Dave**
**University of Wales, Aberystwyth*
- Object-oriented modeling of a space robotic manipulator L-03
*Ferretti, G.** ; *Magnani, G.A.** ; *Rocco, P.** ; *Viganò, Luca** ; *Gritti, M.** ; *Rusconi, A.***
**Politecnico di Milano, **Galileo Avionica*

Session M: Vision

- Imaging and Localization for a Planetary Aerobot M-01
*Vergauwen, Maarten** ; *Matthews, Glyn** ; *Van Gool, L.** ; *Fontaine, B.***
**K.U.Leuven, **Space Applications Services*
- High resolution 3D terrain mapping with low altitude imagery M-02
*Lacroix, Simon**
**LAAS/CNRS*
- Far-field terrain evaluation using geometric and toposemantic vision M-03
*Avedisyan, A.** ; *Wettergreen, D.*** ; *Fong, Terrence** ; *Baur, C.**
**Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), **Carnegie Mellon University*
- Imaging and localisation package for a Martian balloon based aerobot M-04
*Barnes, Dave** ; *Shaw, A** ; *Summers, P** ; *Ward, R*** ; *Woods, M*** ; *Evans, M*** ; *Paar, G**** ; *Sims, M*****
University of Wales Aberystwyth, **SciSys (Space & Defence) Ltd., *Joanneum Research, ****University of Leicester*

Session N: Control II - Telemanipulation & Telepresence

- ROKVISS: Orbital Testbed For Tele-presence Experiments, Novel Robotic Components and Dynamics Models Verification N-01
*Schäfer, Bernd** ; *Landzettel, K.** ; *Rebele, B.** ; *Albu-Schaeffer, A.** ; *Hirzinger, G.**
**German Aerospace Center (DLR)*
- Comparison of Control Methods in Time-delay Teleoperation N-02
*Fiorini, Paolo** ; *Botturi, Debora** ; *Castellani, Andrea** ;
*Moschini, Davide**
**University of Verona*
- Analysis and Synthesis of an Impedance Matching Scheme for Emulation of Space Robots N-03
*Aghili, Farhad** ; *Dupuis, Erick** ; *Namvar, Mehrzad**
**Canadian Space Agency*

Session O: Mobile Robots II – Mobility

- RCET: Rover Chassis Evaluation Tools
*Michaud, Stephane** ; *Richter, Lutz*** ; *Patel, N.** ; *Thueer, T.**** ; *Huelsing, T****** ; *Joudrier, Luc****** ; *Sieglwart, Roland**** ; *Ellery, Alex****** ;
CONTRAVES SPACE AG, **DLR, *EPFL, ****SURREY, *****ESA*****EADS Bremen* O-01
- Ambulating Robots for Exploration in Rough Terrain on Future Extraterrestrial Missions
*Spenneberg, Dirk** ; *Kirchner, F.** , *De Gea, Jose**
**University of Bremen* O-02
- Robustness Concepts for Hopping Robots
*Fiorini, Paolo** ; *Marchesi, Massimiliano**
**University of Verona* O-03
- New Robot Concept for Mars Soil Exploration: mechanics and functionality
*Rovetta, A.** ; *Paul, E.**
**Politecnico di Milano* O-04

Session P: Demonstration Session

- High Resolution High Frame Rate Video Management Unit.
*Severi, M.** ; *De Nino, M.** ; *Quadarella, R.** ; *Capuano, G.** ; *Monti, F.**
**Techno System Dev. S.r.l.* P-01
- Live Demonstration SCORPION: An Ambulating Robot for Exploration in Rough Terrain
*Spenneberg, Dirk** ; *Kirchner, F.**
**University of Bremen* P-02
- A simple embedded stereoscopic vision system for an autonomous rover
*Genta, Giancarlo** ; *Chiaberge, Marcello** ; *Amati, Nicola** , *Padovani, Mauro** ; *Sansoè, C** ;
*Rolando, P**
**Politecnico di Torino* P-03

Session Q: Control III – Simulation

- Simulation of Contact in Multibody Dynamics using Simulink
*Gonthier, Yves** ; *Lange, Christian** ; *McPhee, John*** ;
*Piedboeuf, Jean-Claude**
**Canadian Space Agency, **University of Waterloo* Q-01
- Recent results in visual servoing for robotics applications
*Chaumette, Francois** , *Marchand, Eric**
**IRISA / INRIA Rennes* Q-02

Session R: Mobile Robotics III - Alternative Mobility Concepts

- Biologically inspired solutions for robotic surface mobility
*Ylikorpi, Tomi** ; *Halme, A** ; *Jakubik, P** ; *Suomela, Jussi** ; *Vainio, Mika** ;
**Helsinki University of Technology* R-01
- Ground Mole Demonstrator for Mars subsoil exploration – Design and Testing
*Parzianello, G** ; *Angrilli, F** ; *Bettanini, C** ; *Campaci, R*** ; *Debei, S** ; *Finotello, Roberto*** ;
*Rossi, G*** ; *Visentin, G**** ; *Zaccariotto, M**
CISAS Università di Padova, **Tecnomare S.p.A., *ESA/ESTEC* R-02
- An Artificial Neuro-Endocrine Kinematics Model for Legged Robot Obstacle Negotiation
*Henley, Julian** ; *Barnes, D.P.**
**University of Wales – Aberystwyth* R-03
- Bionics & Space System Design Project - Progress Report for ESA Advanced Concepts Team
*Scott, Gregory** ; *Ellery, A** ;
**University of Surrey* R-04

Session S: Orbital Robotics III - Systems and Payloads

- ERA Operations Verification: Results and Lessons Learned
*Heemskerk, Cornelis** ; *Petersen, H** ; *Aris, L** ; *Stott, R*** ; *Didot, F***
**Dutch Space, **ESA/ESTEC* S-01
- Scanning Time-of-flight Laser Sensor for Rendezvous Manoeuvres
*Michel, K.** ; *Ullrich, A.***
**Jena-Optronik GmbH, **Riegl Research GmbH* S-02
- Stereo Vision Measurement System - Satellite Maintenance Mission Application
*Ferrario, R.** ; *Finotello, Roberto** ; *Losito, S.*** ; *Marcon, A.** ; *Mondellini, C.**** ; *Rossi, G.** ;
*Scaggiante, A.** ; *Viareggio, A.** ; *Zampato, M.**
Tecnomare S.p.A., **Italian Space Agency, *Galileo Avionica* S-03
- CRM, a novel approach for mini manipulators for space
*Foth, Wolf-Peter** ; *Maediger, Bernd*** ; *Maediger, Cornelia*** ; *Guenther, Hansjuergen***
**EADS Space Transportation, **EADS ST* S-04