Vision for the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Robotik

Georgia Chalvatzaki (TU Darmstadt) | Candidate for Vice President (2. Vorsitzende)

German robotics has exceptional scientific depth, a strong industrial ecosystem, and a long tradition of combining engineering, control, perception, and artificial intelligence. Yet our community is distributed across disciplines, institutions, and scientific traditions, without a membership-based scientific society that connects people across this breadth. At the same time, the field is changing quickly, and important agendas for robotics and embodied AI are increasingly shaped at the European and international level, across science, industry, and policy**.** RIG has created an important network across leading robotics institutions in Germany. DGR has the opportunity to complement this structure in a distinctive way: **RIG connects institutions; DGR can connect people**. By bringing together researchers across institutions and career stages, academia, industry, startups, and students, DGR can help German robotics act as one community and speak with a strong, coherent voice in Germany and internationally.

I would like to contribute to this mission as Vice President. I built my academic career in Germany across robotics and machine learning, while being deeply involved in the international robotics community. Through leadership roles in IEEE RAS (Chair of RAS-Women in Engineering and Co-Chair of the technical committee on mobile manipulation) and major international robotics conferences (Program Chair RO-MAN 2026 and CoRL 2026), I have seen how much a professional society can give back to its community. I would bring this experience, together with the perspective of a younger and international generation of researchers, to the DGR Board. My priorities would be:

a. Connect the breadth and the next generation of robotics. DGR should be a home for the whole robotics community, from control and mechatronics to perception, learning, and interaction, across academia and industry. I would support focused scientific forums and an early-career network where young researchers can build connections, gain visibility, and take active roles. I would also help develop a network supporting women in robotics, connected to existing international initiatives. Through my leadership roles in IEEE RAS, I have helped establish the Women in Robotics and Automation Award, the RAS-WiE PhD Award, and IDEA travel grants, and supported scientific communities through technical committees, workshops, and best paper awards. I have seen how targeted structures for mentoring, visibility, recognition, and leadership can become lasting parts of a professional community. As DGR grows, similar structures should give back to members across career stages, education, and service, while creating opportunities to become more active in DGR.

b. Connect academia and industry. Germany combines world-leading robotics research with a unique industrial ecosystem. One initiative I would particularly like to drive is a recurring academia-industry challenge forum around open scientific and deployment problems, involving established companies, startups, and SMEs. DGR can provide a neutral space where deployment experience shapes research questions and scientific developments reach robotic systems in practice. The shared challenges identified through this dialogue can also help DGR communicate the needs of the robotics community to policymakers and contribute to research and innovation agendas. We should also build lasting relationships with industry as members, partners, and sponsors, making successful DGR activities sustainable while preserving scientific independence.

c. Strengthen the international presence and voice of German robotics. I would use my international networks to strengthen links with European and international robotics communities and bring the scientific perspective of German robotics into national and European discussions on robotics and embodied AI. Through my involvement in European Commission discussions on the future of robotics and embodied AI, I have seen the value of bringing scientific perspectives directly into these conversations. DGR should develop joint formats around major conferences, showcase research from Germany, and contribute a coherent scientific voice to emerging robotics agendas. Having come to Germany from abroad, I also want DGR to help international researchers become an integral part of the German robotics community and take on visible scientific and leadership roles.

A concrete three-year plan

Year 1: connect and start. Grow and diversify membership across universities, non-university institutes, industry, startups, and students. Prioritize launching the academia-industry challenge forum, while laying the foundations for the early-career and women-in-robotics networks, stronger international links, recognition and support programs, and long-term industrial partnerships.

Year 2: make successful formats recurring. Develop the formats that work, create joint activities with RIG and German and international organizations, strengthen DGR's contribution to European robotics discussions, and give younger members opportunities to organize and lead.

Year 3: consolidate. Make successful initiatives sustainable beyond one Board term, pass growing responsibility to members who have taken on organizing roles, and strengthen DGR's financial basis through membership, strategic partnerships, sponsorship, and diversified funding.

I see the Vice President as an active and complementary role: supporting the President and Board while taking ownership where my experience and networks can make a particular contribution. I would especially like to drive stronger links to industry and the international and European robotics community, while helping move initiatives from discussion to implementation. My goal is a Board that works as a team, with complementary strengths and clear responsibilities. **My vision is for DGR to become the home of the German robotics community: connecting our scientific breadth, bringing academia and industry together, and giving German robotics a strong and internationally visible voice.**