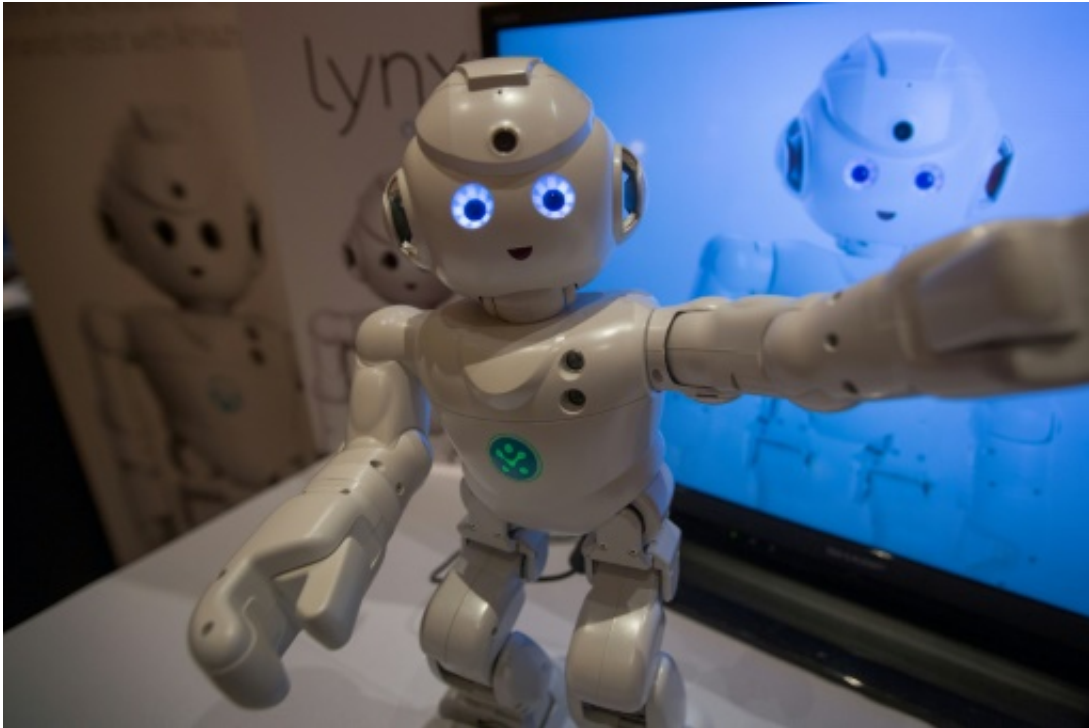


Robots need 'kill switches', warn Euro MPs

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A Lynx robot toy made by UBTECH Robotics, seen at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas this month

The unstoppable rise of robots in our everyday lives requires urgent EU rules such as "kill switches", European Parliament members warned Thursday as they passed a resolution urging Brussels into action on automaton ethics.

Mady Delvaux, a Socialist MEP from Luxembourg, led the campaign and warned that Europe is passively standing by as robots take an

increasingly powerful role that will grow even stronger with the emergence of [driverless cars](#).

To encourage EU action, Delvaux tabled a resolution at the European Parliament that also includes the need for an EU agency specialised in dealing with artificial intelligence.

Once passed, Delvaux's resolution could force the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, to begin work on laws that deal with these issues head-on.

"A growing number of areas of our daily lives are increasingly affected by robotics," Delvaux said after a committee vote on her measure.

"In order... to ensure that robots are and will remain in the service of humans, we urgently need to create a robust European legal framework," she said.

Delvaux's resolution was easily passed by the European Parliament's legal affairs committee on Wednesday and now faces a plenary vote, probably in February.

Her report is a broad overview on how robots are creeping into the lives of humans and what the EU can do to stay in control.

Its recommendations are wide-ranging, including the kill switch allowing humans to shut down a [robot](#) at the smallest sign of danger.

'Apocalyptic scenario'

Without such rules, "humanity could face the apocalyptic scenario where robots turn on their human masters," Delvaux warned in an interview with EU affairs website EurActiv.

Delavaux also warned that robots cannot be your friend, no matter how emotionally involving they may become.

"We always have to remind people that robots are not human and will never be. Although they might appear to show empathy, they cannot feel it," she added.

The report recommends an EU agency for robotics to oversee all European regulation involving robots, like the bloc already has for food safety or aviation.

Most urgently, the report demands that the EU draw up a legal framework for driverless cars.

Auto builders want to see robotic cars on the roads by 2020, but difficult questions remain on who would be legally liable in the case of a car crash.

"If all decisions of a machine are no longer directly attributable to the actions of a person, it must be clarified who is liable if something goes wrong," said Greens MEP Julia Reda, who backed the report.

To fill this void, the MEPs called for an obligatory insurance scheme and a fund to ensure victims are fully compensated in cases of accidents.

The report also called for the EU to find ways to help the millions of workers who will inevitably lose their jobs as industries become increasingly automated.

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