

December 18, 2011

Dr. Wolfgang Boch
Head of Unit
European Commission
DG INFSO-PI (BU25-05/24)
1049 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Dr. Boch,

Re: Letter of support for the FuturICT project

I herewith wish to express the full support of Tel-Aviv University (TAU) to the FuturICT Flagship Initiative, which is coordinated by Prof. Dirk Hebling of ETH Zurich, Switzerland.

Located in Israel's cultural, financial and high-tech heartland, TAU is the country's major center of teaching and research. The University is the most comprehensive institution of higher learning in Israel, with nine faculties, 24 schools, over 100 research institutes and 29,000 students, 14000 of whom are post graduates. TAU is a government funded institution, which focuses on research in Exact Sciences, Life Science and Engineering along with the Social and Liberal Sciences. As the President of TAU, I place a great emphasis on encouraging an extensive range of programs in both the traditional and emerging fields offered across the range of multi-disciplinary activities.

Tel-Aviv University considers that the main research areas of the FuturICT FET Flagship proposal are critical to the global challenges of humanity in the 21st century. We fully recognize the potential of the visionary FuturICT project, and its vital importance in attaining a new level of understanding that will enable us to discover paths towards a sustainable future. Through the exploitation of information and communication technologies, major breakthroughs can be achieved that can be applied towards developing and strengthening the community at large.

TAU has a longstanding tradition of helping to shape Israel's scientific agenda. In particular, TAU currently engages in several multi-disciplinary research programs in the context of FuturICT. These include the recently initiated I-CORE excellence center in the field of computer sciences, headed by Prof. Yishay Mansour; Israel's largest super-computing center; Environmental Simulation Laboratory (ESLab), headed by Prof. Juval Portugali; interdisciplinary center for technological analysis and forecasting; and Ramot – the University Authority for Applied Research and Industrial Development, the commercial arm of the university.

TAU provides the ideal background for becoming an active partner in the FuturICT project, both as an institution and through its individual highly talented researchers and students. Amongst the University's senior faculty members are 20 talented individuals who are interested in taking part in this specific project. These include, among others, world renowned scientists, such as Prof. Eshel Ben-Jacob (Physics), Prof. Yishay Mansour (Computer Sciences), Prof. Irad Ben-Gal (Engineering), Prof. Tzachi Gilboa (Economics), Prof. Juval Portugali (Human Geography), Prof. Itzhak Ben-Israel (School of Government and Public Policy), Dr. Gal Oestreicher-Singer (Business School). Furthermore, TAU is prepared to dedicate Master and Ph.D. level students in existing and future graduate level programs to the main themes of FuturICT and thus amplify the University's efforts to assist in this endeavor.

In order to reflect the depth of our commitment to all these factors mentioned above, TAU is willing to commit Euro 300,000 per year to the project in matching funds.

In conclusion, against the background of the rapid advances in ICT and the increasing influence of ICT networks on human behavior, I am of the opinion that the FuturICT is a project of crucial global significance, in which TAU could have a central role in terms of scientific contribution. I look forward to the launching of this project by the EU and to the anticipated accomplishments and scientific breakthroughs that will greatly serve the needs of mankind.

Sincerely,



Professor Joseph Klafter
President

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