Taurob and Equinor to introduce autonomous robots on Norway's offshore platforms

Monday 12 April, 2021

Equinor is introducing autonomous ATEX-certified robots on their oil and gas installations. Partner in the project is inspection robotics specialist Taurob of Austria. Its robot will be used to conduct routine inspection and maintenance tasks on offshore installations.

Thorough certification

Taurob started developing robotics applied for human safety, particularly in emergency response situations, 11 years ago. Safety is also the main driver for the energy domain to step into robotics. The state-of-the-art 'Taurob Inspector' is the result of an intensive 2-year collaboration between Taurob, French energy giant Total and UK's OGTC. Total was the first energy major to implement robotic inspection on their plant in the North Sea's Shetland Islands. Matthias Biegl, Managing Director and co-founder of Taurob, emphasizes his company's focus on safety: *"Our goal is to build trust with operators and raise acceptance on site. Going through thorough certification procedures with the customers and their HSEQ and Electrical departments is as important as the development process itself."*

Equinor decided in 2019 to join Total, OGTC and Taurob in the ARGOS Joint Industry Project to develop a completely new robot, capable of performing autonomous manipulation operations. *"We expect the result to be a robust and reliable robot, with maintenance intervals of up to only once per year; ideal for Normally Unmanned Facilities (NUF) where human intervention is rare. As a so called 'Work Class' robot, it will physically interact with the installation,"* says Biegl. First tests will be performed this year.

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Scan Me:

Company Contact:

Taurob GmbH

T. +4316982519
E. communication@taurob.com
W. https://taurob.com

Additional Contact(s):
Matthias Biegl, managing director and co-founder

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