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IT4Innovations supercomputing centre crosses regional borders; Brno University and enterprises joining in

OSTRAVA – Moravian-Silesian Region creates a nation-wide unique partnership – thanks to the IT4Innovations project, comprising of a supercomputing centre and centre of excellence. Besides institutions seated in Ostrava, Northern Moravia, and Silesia, universities and enterprises form the whole Czech Republic are gradually entering the cooperation. At this moment, not only all universities of the Moravian-Silesian Region, Institute of Geonics AS CR, City of Ostrava, and the Region itself are interlinked in the project, but the partnership now also includes Brno University of Technology. Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, Fire Rescue Service of the Moravian-Silesian Region, and other individual enterprises, such as VITKOVICE, ELMARCO, or SAAB Group confirmed their interest in cooperation with the project.

"The Regional Assembly recently decided to provide financial support of 9,8 millon CZK for the IT4Innovations project. The link of the project to the national level and towards the application sphere proves that this decision was correct," said today Jaroslav Palas, President of the Moravian-Silesian Region.

The IT4Innovations Centre, which will contain, apart from an unprecedented concentration of research capacities, also a supercomputer – similar to only tens of other systems in the world – already raised funds of about 20 million CZK. However, the overall costs of the project will exceed 2 billion CZK. "It will be necessary to secure these funds from the EU, namely the Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovations," added Ivo Vondrak, the project leader and Dean of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the VSB-Technical University of Ostrava. Besides the Moravian-Silesian Region, the City of Ostrava also contributed to the preparation of this centre of excellent research. By the decision of the City Assembly, 9,5 million CZK were reserved from the city's budget.

Research teams from the IT4Innovations project cooperate with the Moravian-Silesian Region since 2006 when the development of the so-called system Floreon began. "It simulates natural disasters and crisis situations, which will become one of major tasks of the future supercomputer within the IT4Innovations project," explained professor Vondrak. Currently, the project Floreon is presented at www.floreonplus.eu, where one can test all its applications available at the moment, including floods simulations, traffic situations monitoring and

predictions, or air pollution or disaster impacts simulations. Team of 35 researchers work on the Floreon system, cooperating with the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute, Povodí Odry and Povodí Labe, Axitech, NAM Systems, and Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic. The supercomputer will provide for Floreon the possibility of further applications and development.

However, the IT4Innovations project will have much broader orientation. Companies like Vítkovice Machinery Group, Saab Group, Ivax, University Hospital Ostrava, and many more are already among potential users of the project's outputs. For example, Olympus aims to exploit the centre's infrastructure for solving tasks in the field of telepathology – i.e. scanning of tissue samples and their analyses. Practical applications of the IT4Innovations outputs can be represented by the systems controlling fuel cells, machines in industry, cars, airplanes, or mobile phones. The centre and supercomputer will provide capacities for industry to develop new materials for applications e.g. in automotive, engineering, power engineering, or building industries. The project will also focus on development of nanotechnologies – research based on characteristics of nano-particles invisible to human eye, which have applications in all areas.

IT4Innovations will bring to the Ostrava region a new quality of investment, around 200 new jobs for first-rate experts, and tangible outputs for better life in the city and the region. Experts from abroad will also come during the construction of the IT4Innovations centre.

Supercomputer *is a general term for a high-performance computer, providing a computing capacity larger by orders of magnitude in comparison to standard computers. Currently, supercomputers are used in solving the most demanding research and technological issues by way of simulations, and their importance is constantly growing. USA are the supercomputing superpower, using supercomputing e.g. for space missions planning.*

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Contact Us:

Project Leader - professor Ivo Vondrak
Dean, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science,
VSB-Technical University of Ostrava
Phone: +420 602 718 027
Email: ivo.vondrak@vsb.cz

Project Manager - Martin Duda
VSB-Technical University of Ostrava
Phone: +420 731 505 646
Email: martin.duda@vsb.cz

Media Agent:
Eva Kijonková,
EK Media
Phone: +420 721 857 097
Email: eva.kijonkova@ek-media.com