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### To Whom It May Concern

It gives me great pleasure to support the application of Alessandro Rovetto and Francesco Scandelli to the SAIS Master Thesis Award. Their thesis is in the area of **autonomous robotics and intelligent human-robot interaction**.

**Rovetto and Scandelli** have performed the work that led to their MSc thesis during a 6 month visit at the AASS Mobile Robotics Laboratory of Örebro University, under my supervision, and they have finalized the writing in Italy. Even before I met them, I was impressed by their great enthusiasm and by their motivation. They resolved to come and live in Sweden at their own expenses, just because they were eager to learn about artificial intelligence and robotics, and they wanted to do so by carrying out a research program in first person.

**The subject of their work** was challenging and innovative: to develop a system for remote-autonomy of a robotic dog — an AIBO robot produced by Sony. In the course of their development, Rovetto and Scandelli carefully dig out and examined all the existing literature that was somehow relevant, and chose what approaches to use. The solutions that they have developed, and are reported in the thesis, are original and very promising. They carried out their work with competence, enthusiasm and autonomy: my meetings with them were always characterized by that sort of intellectual excitement which you may more easily experience when discussing with an inspiring colleague than when supervising a student.

**The thesis document** is an excellent example of scientific reporting. The structure is clear, the motivations and the literature survey are presented convincingly, the original techniques developed are explained to a sufficient level of detail. Rovetto and Scandelli have validated their approach through a number of experiments, which are carefully reported.

**The outstanding value** of this thesis lays, in my opinion, in the unusual breadth of the problems addressed and of the solutions proposed (although all of them are clearly placed as part of one single problem). These solutions are novel contribution to the state of the art, and they have been autonomously developed by the students. The extensive experimental evaluation is also an important value of the thesis, which is not usual to find in computer science theses.

**In conclusion**, I believe that Rovetto and Scandelli's thesis is an innovative and sound piece of scientific work, which has an unusually high value both for its contents and its methodology.

Sincerely,

Prof. Alessandro Saffiotti  
Head of the AASS Mobile Robotics Lab