Dr. Alisa Rupenyan Appointed as Inaugural Endowed Professor of Industrial Artificial Intelligence at ZHAW

In a groundbreaking collaboration between the Rieter Group and the Johann Jacob Rieter Foundation, a momentous announcement was made in October 2022 regarding the establishment of the first-ever Endowed Professorship in Industrial Artificial Intelligence at the ZHAW School of Engineering. Taking the helm of this prestigious position on September 1, 2023, will be Dr. Alisa Rupenyan, a renowned expert in the field. Her primary focus will be to advance the realms of teaching and research in neurosymbolic approaches, specifically tailored for the industrial applications of artificial intelligence.

Having spearheaded a research group for Advanced Control and Automation at inspire AG since 2018, Dr. Alisa Rupenyan has been at the forefront of knowledge and technology transfer in production engineering, serving as the strategic partner of ETH Zurich. In this capacity, she has overseen groundbreaking research projects in process optimization, industrial control, and machine learning, all of which are closely intertwined with the realm of manufacturing. Dr. Rupenyan's expertise extends further as she holds the position of Chief Scientist at the Automatic Control Laboratory of ETH Zurich, while also being a respected expert at the Swiss innovation agency, Innosuisse. Prior to these accomplishments, she played a pivotal role as the Head of Application Development at QualySense AG, a Swiss startup specializing in robotics and agricultural technology, where she designed innovative industrial sorting solutions. Her academic journey began with a Master's degree in Laser Physics from the University of Sofia in Bulgaria, followed by a PhD from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and a two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship at ETH Zurich.

The newly established Endowed Professorship, situated within the Center for Artificial Intelligence at the ZHAW School of Engineering, is dedicated to the development and application of principle-based, neurosymbolic-inspired learning, specifically in relation to production and service processes. This groundbreaking approach combines the power of machine learning with knowledge-based systems, paving the way for cutting-edge advancements in various sectors.

As part of the program, both basic and advanced modules will be offered for the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Data Science, as well as for the Master of Science in Engineering programs. To support the research and educational initiatives, a dedicated research group will be established, ensuring a robust and comprehensive exploration of the field.

In line with the initial announcement made in October 2022, the funding for this prestigious Professorship will be provided equally by the Rieter Group and the Johann Jacob Rieter Foundation over a six-year period, with an annual contribution of CHF 300,000. Rieter's commitment to this endeavor is a testament to their unwavering dedication to technological leadership. The Johann Jacob Rieter Foundation's contribution to sponsoring the Professorship aligns seamlessly with the Winterthur Cluster Initiative, showcasing their commitment to advancing research and innovation in the region.

Dr. Alisa Rupenyan's appointment as the inaugural Endowed Professor of Industrial Artificial Intelligence at ZHAW represents a significant milestone in the field of AI and underscores the university's dedication to fostering cutting-edge research, education, and technological advancements. It is a testament to the collaborative efforts of industry leaders and academic institutions in pushing the boundaries of AI for the benefit of society as a whole.