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## Industrial breakthrough with robots

**2011: The most successful year for industrial robots since 1961**  
**2012: Continuing growth expected**

Munich, 23 May 2012 – “2011 was the most successful year for industrial robots in 50 years. Since the first installation in 1961 more than 2.3 million were sold all over the world! “ stated Dr. Shinsuke Sakakibara, IFR President, on Wednesday, 23 May 2012 at the AUTOMATICA in Munich. “And the robotics industry is looking forward to a bright future.”

### Using robots always guarantees fast return on investments

“In 2011, about 165,000 industrial robots were sold worldwide, by far the highest level ever recorded, 37% more than 2010” announced Arturo Baroncelli, IFR Vice President in Munich. “The impetuous increase of demand in 2010 and 2011 following the worldwide financial and economic crisis exceeded all our expectations. We expect that in 2012, robot sales will further increase with a more reduced growth rate and again reach a new peak level. ” he added. “The use of robots always guarantees fast return on investments and dramatic improvements in terms of quality. And this is true both in the car and the general industry, both in emerging countries and in nations having a long industrial tradition.”

### The most important countries in 2011: China, United States and Germany

The most important countries responsible for the remarkable growth were China, the United States and Germany with growth rates of robot sales between 39% and 51%. All three countries reached new peak levels. However, they still could not reach the levels of the two biggest markets which only increased below average. Japan was back on top with almost 28,000 industrial robots, 27% more than 2010. Robot sales to the Republic of Korea increased more slightly by 9% to 25,500 units.

China was the most rapidly growing market over the last years except in 2009. In 2011 almost 22,600 industrial robots were supplied to this market. At least by 2014, China will surpass other countries to top the robot market worldwide. Most of the ASEAN countries with Thailand topping the list, as well as the Central and European countries are increasing their

robot markets. The strong increase of robot supplies in India might be the initial breakthrough of robotics and automation in that country. Also the robot sales to Brazil skyrocketed to more than 1,400 units in 2011, 125% more than in 2010.

### **Automotive and metal were the main drivers of the growth in 2011**

Again, like in 2010, the automotive industry strongly increased robot investments. Continuing Modernization and increase of capacities in emerging markets were the main reasons. The trend towards automation, especially in the metal and machinery industry, boosted robot sales also to other industries. The electrical/electronics industry - which almost tripled robot installations in 2010 - increased robot orders again with a lower growth rate. There is still a high potential for robot installations in almost all industries.

### **The trend towards automation will boost robot installations further on**

Since the end of the financial and economic crisis in 2008/2009 the trend towards automation accelerated enormously all over the world, especially in Asia with China on top. The automotive industry and the electrical and electronics industry boosted robot installations already in the past two years. But all other industries are following this trend. There is an increasing demand for products of high quality all over the world. Industrialisation is rapidly increasing in growing consumer markets in Asia and South America. The North American industry, especially the automotive industry, strengthens its competitiveness domestically and abroad.

Increased productivity will be required to offset labour shortage and the higher costs associated with demographic shift in many countries. Sustainability, eco-friendly production and energy-saving measures are gaining an increasing importance all over the world. New production processes have to be installed. Automation provides solutions for all these challenges and industrial robots are key components of automation.

The robotics industry is prepared to meet this changing and growing demand. Many robot suppliers were increasing their capacities. Since the installation of the first robot in 1961 technology has improved extensively. Who could imagine in 1961 that an industrial robot

- Can work as a production assistant of a worker without using a fence
- Can be easily programmed by lead through teaching
- Can handle about 1,300 kg
- Can weigh only 14 kg
- Can save energy

Just to name a few.

### **The industrial breakthrough with robots has just begun!**

#### **Brochure on the “The History of Industrial Robots” published**

Die IFR brochure: “History of Industrial Robots, Milestones of Technology and Commercialization” and more details on the history of industrial robots are available at [www.ifr.org/history](http://www.ifr.org/history).

**Do you have any questions? Gudrun Litzenberger, IFR Statistical Department, Telephone +49 69 66 03-1502 is ready to respond to your questions or concerns.**

The **International Federation of Robotics** was established in 1987 in connection with the 17th International Symposium on Robotics, as a professional non-profit organisation, by robotics organisations from over 15 countries. Since 1970 an International Symposium on Robotics is organised every year on a different continent, in a different country and another city. The Symposium is systematically organised in conjunction with an International Robot Exhibition.

The purpose of the International Federation of Robotics is to promote research, development, use and international co-operation in the entire field of robotics to act as a focal point for organisations and governmental representatives in activities related to robotics.

The IFR is hosted by VDMA Robotics and Automation.

The **IFR Statistical Department**, which is hosted by the VDMA Robotics + Automation Association, publishes two studies of World Robotics every year. **World Robotics Industrial Robots:**

This unique publication presents comprehensive global statistics on industrial robots in uniform tables allowing consistent country comparisons. It contains detailed statistical data for some 40 countries, broken down by application areas, industrial branches, types of robots and by other technical and economic variables. Data on production, exports and imports are presented for a selection of countries. Trends in robot densities, i.e. number of robots per 10,000 persons employed in relevant sectors, are also featured.

**World Robotics Service Robots:**

This unique publication presents comprehensive global statistics on service robots, market analysis, case studies and international research strategies of service robots. The study is evaluated in cooperation with our partner, the Fraunhofer IPA, Stuttgart, Germany.

World Robotics 2012 Industrial Robots and Service Robots will be published on 30 August 2012

**Links:**

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