

Press release



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A strong recovery in industrial robots investment

After a slump in 2002, there was a strong recovery of shipments of industrial robots in 2003. Worldwide nearly 10% more robots were ordered in 2003 than in 2002. The world market for industrial robots is projected to increase from 68,600 units in 2002 to just over 91,000 in 2006, or by a yearly average of 7.4%.

The surge in robot investment is expected to continue in 2004. The automotive industry and its suppliers – the most important customer of industrial robots – are the driving force behind the booming robot market. The demand for robots in the plastics and rubber industry, chemical industry and machinery industry (including the electrical) is also expected to rise as a result of increasing investments in the automotive industry. Other industrial sectors with a growing market potential are the food and packaging industry and the furniture industry. All sectors of industry have to automate in order to save costs and stay competitive.

At the end of 2002, about 770,000 industrial robots were in operation worldwide, of which 350,000 in Japan, 233,00 in the European Union and about 104,000 in North America. In Europe, Germany was in the lead with just under 105,000 units, followed by Italy with 47,000, France with 24,000, Spain with 18,000 and the United Kingdom with 14,000 robots.

Detailed results of the 2003 robot market for a large number of countries as well as forecasts for the period 2004-2007 will be available in the publication *World Robotics 2004*, which is to be issued in autumn.

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