Dear reader, dear robotics community!

The more than 50 years success story of industrial robots continues in 2014 and beyond. This unique global statistics on industrial robots highlights the facts and figures of 2012 and gives an overview about the expected growth of the markets until the year 2016. We forecast a 6% increase in worldwide robot sales on average per year between 2014 and 2016. I see three main sources of further growth for the robotics industry:

First: The analyses of the last decades show clearly that there are still huge potentials for further growth of the robotics industry in many industry segments. For example the robot density of already highly automated industries impressively demonstrates the immense growth potential in many industries with a lower level of automation, e.g. aerospace.

Second: Additional growth based on breath taking advanced and innovative technological developments. These technologies are opening doors to completely new applications for robots. Impressive for me are the developments regarding man-robot cooperation and opportunities that are provided in new fields for automation, especially in areas where no robots are currently used.

Third: Growth of robot sales in the emerging countries. With on-going industrialization of the emerging countries, the use of robots is also increasing. China has become the second largest market for robots after Japan in 2012. With its annual demand that has quadrupled since 2008, China is still the world’s fastest growing market. For more insights please see the special feature “Roadmap for Robotics in China” in chapter 6.

Finally, additional tailwind for robotics is coming from the general trends in the manufacturing industries: to increase flexibility, quality, and output rate; to improve the quality of work for employees regarding safety and health; and to reduce material waste and energy consumption in the production process.

Besides these great growth opportunities for the industrial robotics community, I would like to bring up one final last point: The robotics industry is aware of its social responsibility to create better working conditions for the employees in the manufacturing industry. I am proud to highlight a study which has also proven that robots create jobs. For details please see the research study titled “Positive Impact of Industrial Robots on employment” conducted by Metra Martech, London. The study clearly shows countries where manufacturers have embraced the use of robots have resulted in greater manufacturing output and lower unemployment.

That’s why I am absolutely sure the robotics success story will go on for decades to come!

Sincerely,

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Dr. Andreas Bauer, Chairman IFR Industrial Robot Suppliers Group