

Austrian industry has subdued expectations and takes steps for sustainable value creation

The fifth IndustriePANEL survey conducted by TU Wien in cooperation with FHWien der WKW shows the high value of human labour despite the high degree of automation.

Vienna, October 18, 2023 – Even though the global business situation of companies is perceived as cautiously positive, the current study results confirm a weakening competitiveness of the manufacturing sector in Austria - a trend from the previous year that accelerated in the 5th IndustriePANEL "Made in Austria: Future of Production in Austria". Once again, more than 100 managers from manufacturing companies took part in the survey, which has been conducted annually since 2019. For the first time, existing and planned initiatives in the direction of the circular economy were also surveyed. The results show that 75 percent of the companies surveyed are already taking measures for sustainable value creation.

Established digitalisation in a sign of sustainable value creation

*"Material recycling, resource reduction, sustainable forms of energy as well as repair and reuse were named as important approaches to the circular economy," said **Sebastian Schlund**, Director of the Institute of Management Sciences (IMW) at TU Vienna, at the presentation of the study. "In addition to the economic relevance due to lower production costs, the respondents expect their circular initiatives to have a lower environmental impact and a more sustainable image. Furthermore, these sustainability measures already generate an average of 14 percent of the total turnover at the companies represented in the panel."*

The level of automation in the survey has reached a new high. *"Despite an average of 407 robots per 10,000 industrial workplaces, the trend towards cobots, assistance systems and machine learning are slowing down to a certain degree," adds **Walter Mayrhofer**, Head of Research at FHWien der WKW. "The results indicate that the big hype is over and that the former trend topics have now arrived in company practice."*

Shortage of workforce instead of shortage of skilled workers

For **Johannes Hunschofsky**, Managing Director of EIT Manufacturing East, *"the human factor continues to enjoy a high status in Austrian production work despite increasing automation. Compared to the already high level of the previous year, the appreciation of human labour in the surveyed companies has risen to 99 percent."* While the optimistic mood prevails in international personnel development, the expectations for the Austrian locations are more subdued, but still positive. *"What is new is that personnel is now being sought at all qualification levels. In this respect, the shortage of skilled workers has become a shortage of labour."* According to the study authors, the challenges associated with this range from education and training systems, childcare facilities and migration policy to the organisation of employment.

Furthermore, continuing problems in the supply chains were pointed out, which led to longer delivery times for 65 percent of the companies surveyed. Austrian companies counter these delays with a clear focus on complex and multi-variant production, which underlines the flexibility of Austrian production sites.

PRESS RELEASE



About the IndustriePANEL „Made in Austria: Future of Production in Austria“

In spring 2023, for the fifth time, more than 100 leaders of Austrian industrial companies were surveyed about their own company, the market, competitiveness and the use of robotics and assistance systems. The aim of the survey is to provide a regular and methodically sound presentation of the status quo as well as the future expectations of domestic industry. The topics of automation, digitalization and assistance systems play a central role. Over 60 percent of the employees of the companies participating in the panel work directly in production or in production-related areas. The average number of employees in the companies surveyed in 2022 was 10,370 worldwide and 1,066 in Austria. The share of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the industry panel has increased from 21 to 29 percent this year.

The current study as well as previous editions are available for download on the [website of "Made in Austria"](#) (in German).

"Made in Austria 2023: Future of Production in Austria" is a study by the Institute of Management Sciences (IMW) at the Vienna University of Technology in cooperation with the Institute for Digital Transformation and Strategy (IDS) at FHWien der WKW, Fraunhofer Austria, EIT Manufacturing East and the Austrian Association of the Metalworking Industry.

Press release photos:

Sebastian Schlund, study author and head of the Institute of Management Sciences (IMW) at the Vienna University of Technology presented the results of the 5th MiA IndustriePANEL at the "Made in Austria (MiA) IndustrieFORUM 2023".

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Walter Mayrhofer, author of the study and Head of Research at FHWien der WKW, moderated the "Made in Austria IndustrieFORUM 2023".

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Study authors Sebastian Schlund (l.) and Walter Mayrhofer (r.) with Katharina Hölzle (Universität Stuttgart), who spoke on "Production Work in Transition" and innovation through the symbiosis of man and machine in a keynote address at the study presentation.

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About the Institute for Digital Transformation and Strategy (IDS) at FHWien der WKW.

Founded in 2021, the Institute for Digital Transformation and Strategy (IDS) at FHWien der WKW is engaged in applied research, development and innovation in two fields of work:

- Use of digital technology with a focus on Internet-of-Things solutions in the context of logistics.
- Strategic management in the context of digital transformation with a focus on management options for established small and medium-sized enterprises.

PRESS RELEASE



FHWien der Wirtschaftskammer Wien (WKW)

FHWien der WKW is Austria's leading university of applied sciences for management & communication. Its Bachelor's and Master's degree programs offer more than 2,800 students a practice-oriented academic education. Around 900 people are completing a continuing education program at FHWien. Two thirds of the lecturers come directly from the business world. The close cooperation with local companies in teaching and research optimally prepares students for their careers. Since its foundation in 1994, FHWien der WKW has already produced around 14,400 graduates.

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