

Austria's Industry: Improved Business Conditions, Domestic Sites Under Pressure

According to the “Made in Austria IndustriePANEL 2026,” three-quarters of respondents expect industrial value creation to shift abroad. At the same time, automation and the use of AI are on the rise.

Vienna, October 22, 2026 – Austria’s manufacturing sector is once again viewing its international business situation in a more positive light, but it considers the competitiveness of its domestic production sites to be more critical than ever before. This is evident from the eighth edition of the TU Wien study “Made in Austria IndustriePANEL (MiA): The Future of Manufacturing in Austria,” which the study’s author and FHWien Head of Research Walter Mayrhofer presented at the “MiA-IndustrieFORUM 2026” on October 19 at TUtheSky. The survey, conducted by TU Vienna in cooperation with Fraunhofer Austria, University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, EIT Manufacturing East, and Metaltechnology Austria (FMTI), included 106 executives from 101 manufacturing companies.

Business Conditions Improve – Competitiveness Hits New Low

Overall, 55.7% of respondents rate their company’s business situation on the global market as positive or very positive. That is 5.2 percentage points more than in 2025. By contrast, only 30.7% of respondents view the international competitiveness of their Austrian locations positively. This marks a new low. In addition, 76.3% of respondents expect Austria to undergo deindustrialization within the next ten years. *“Despite difficult conditions, companies are showing resilience. However, high costs, geopolitical uncertainties, and international competitive pressure are weighing on the country as a business location. To secure industrial value creation in Austria, we must more effectively integrate research, innovation, and industrial production,”* says study author Sebastian Schlund, head of the Industrial Engineering research division at the IMW of the TU Vienna and managing director of Fraunhofer Austria, summarizing the findings.

Jobs in Austria Under Pressure – Circular Economy Remains Stable

Over the next five years, 63.8% of companies expect global employment figures to rise. In contrast, 60.5% anticipate a decline in domestic production and production-related sectors. At the same time, 88.3% of the companies surveyed consider themselves innovative. *“Austrian companies possess a high degree of innovation and adaptability. To ensure that these qualities continue to generate high-quality jobs in the future, we need stronger European cooperation that specifically promotes key technologies and firmly integrates Austria into cross-border value chains,”* emphasizes Hannes Hunschofsky, Managing Director of EIT Manufacturing East GmbH. Corporate initiatives in the field of the circular economy were another topic covered in the survey. As the results show, the share of revenue derived from circular economy measures remains largely stable. However, one-quarter of respondents report a slightly positive impact on job creation.

New Products at Record Levels – On-Site Production Loses Ground

The share of new products and services in revenue has reached a new high of 28.4%. In addition, companies are increasingly turning to automation to offset rising unit labor costs and the shortage of skilled workers. At the same time, the share of employees in production and production-related areas in Austria has fallen to just 45.7% – a possible indication of production relocation. 85% believe

PRESS RELEASE



the competitiveness of their domestic locations has deteriorated over the past five years. *“Companies are investing in innovation, automation, and AI – the study clearly shows this. To ensure that these investments and the associated jobs remain in Austria, we need competitive costs, less bureaucracy, and a swift implementation of the industrial strategy that is tailored to SMEs,”* says Sabine Hesse, Managing Director of Metaltechnology Austria (FMTI).

Robot Density and AI Adoption Are on the Rise – Human Labor Remains Important

At the surveyed companies' Austrian locations, there are an average of 517 industrial robots per 10,000 employees – more than twice as many as in 2020. For the first time, a minority of 59.1% uses AI tools or machine learning in production or production-related areas. That is 10.2 percentage points more than in the previous year. Nevertheless, 96.8% of respondents consider human labor to be of great or very great importance. *“Automation and AI are key drivers for boosting productivity and competitiveness. However, they only realize their full potential when companies simultaneously invest in training their employees and in safe technologies,”* explains Walter Mayrhofer of University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication.

About “Made in Austria: The Future of Manufacturing in Austria”

The “Made in Austria IndustriePANEL” is an annual study conducted by the Institute for Management Sciences (IMW) at the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien) in cooperation with the Institute for Digital Transformation and Strategy (IDS) at FHWien der WKW, Fraunhofer Austria, EIT Manufacturing East, and the Trade Association of the Metalworking Industry (FMTI). The aim of the study is to provide a regular and methodologically sound overview of the current situation and future expectations of the domestic industry. The topics of automation, digitalization, assistance systems, and sustainability play a central role in this context.

The [current study is available for download](#) (in German) on the TU Wien server.

Images:

Presentation of the study results from the “Made in Austria IndustriePANEL” 2026 at the “Made in Austria IndustrieFORUM” on Monday, October 19, 2026, at TUtheSKY at the TU Vienna.

[Download image](#)

Copyright: Fraunhofer Austria Research Center/APA-Fotoservice/Arman Rastegar

The “Made in Austria” project partners with the keynote speaker at IndustrieFORUM 2026 (from left to right): Dipl.-iur. Sabine Hesse, MBA (FMTI), Prof. Dr.-Ing. Rüdiger Daub (Technical University of Munich), Univ.Prof. Dr.-Ing. Fazel Ansari Chaharsoughi, MSc (TU Vienna), Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dipl.-Ing. Sebastian Schlund (TU Vienna / Fraunhofer Austria), Theresa Neuhauser, MA BA (EIT Manufacturing East), FH-Prof. DI Dr. Walter Mayrhofer (University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication)

[Download image](#)

Copyright: Fraunhofer Austria Research Center/APA-Fotoservice/Arman Rastegar

Further Images: <https://www.apa-fotoservice.at/galerie/40188>

Copyright: Fraunhofer Austria Research Center/APA-Fotoservice/Arman Rastegar

PRESS RELEASE



FHWien der WKW – University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication

FHWien der WKW is Austria's leading university of applied sciences for management and communication. Its Bachelor's and Master's degree programs offer over 2,900 students a practical academic education. Two-thirds of the lecturers come directly from the business world. The close cooperation with local companies in teaching and research prepares students optimally for their careers. Since its foundation in 1994, FHWien der WKW has already produced more than 16,800 graduates.

Contact:

Bernhard Witzeling

Head of Corporate Communication, Marketing and Alumni & Career Services, Press Officer

Tel.: +43 (1) 476 77-5733

presse@fh-wien.ac.at

www.fh-wien.ac.at