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Materials Handling and Information Flow  
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## **Press Release**

### **FORUM: Limits of automation Economic considerations and quality issues**

**Thursday, 4 March from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, Forum I – Hall 1  
Organisation: dispo trade magazine, Austria**

#### **NOTE: simultaneous translation into English**

Automation is an important subject in logistics. Cost reduction with more transparency and quality or quicker execution are some of the plus points. But automation also has its limits: too much is just as disadvantageous as too little.

“In many cases a fully automated logistics chain would be possible today. But a deserted factory would not function, we categorically also need human intelligence alongside machines. That is the most fundamental finding to come from the production area over the last twenty years, and it can be applied absolutely to logistics,” says Wilfried Sihm of Fraunhofer Austria, Production Management and Logistics Division.

But what is the optimum level of automation? Anyone expecting a hard and fast answer to this question will be disappointed. The general requirements from business to business are too varied. “First a company must define its key processes. What are the success factors that ultimately lead to a satisfied customer?” What is important is an integrated approach when analysing the overall logistics process, which starts with the supplier, also impacts intralogistics, but which does not end with the customer. What must I do so that my customer can benefit his customer?

It is essential to understand your customer’s business and to think outside the box, believes Gerald Lassau, Director Software Solutions at Knapp AG. “Automation is not always the answer. Knapp also provides scalable solutions from person-to-goods (warehouse management systems using RF or voice technology) through to fully automated warehouses.” The key is therefore to construct integrated, intelligent logistics systems – and only then to decide what the correct automation for it is. And this will be different from sector to sector.

In the trade forum, experts from industry and research will throw light on the potential of automation and, using practical examples, inspire businesses to introduce automation to their own processes.

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*Note: The company and the institute organising the forum are responsible for the editorial content of this press release.*