

Robotronic and Mitsubishi Electric aim to strengthen pharmaceutical supply chain and cut medicine lead times with new ‘smallest’ automated palletising cell

Ratingen, Germany – 7 April 2026



Image Caption: The new low-footprint automated palletising cell developed by Robotronic in partnership with Mitsubishi Electric is designed to help the pharmaceutical industry overcome record-high shortages across Europe..

[Source: Robotronic / Mitsubishi Electric]

A long-standing automation partnership between a Swiss machine builder and one of the world’s leading manufacturers of industrial robots is aiming to help transform the pharmaceutical supply chain in Europe with the launch of what is believed to be the ‘smallest’ automated palletising cell for vials and pre-filled syringes.

Swiss-based Robotronic has partnered with Mitsubishi Electric’s Factory Automation EMEA division for more than two decades. Now, the two

organisations are collaborating together on a new low-footprint cell to help the pharmaceutical industry overcome record-high shortages across Europe in recent years for medicines ranging from children's cough syrups through to antibiotics and even cancer treatments.

The growing demand, which has impacted patient treatment and quality of life, has led the European Medicines Agency to increasingly focus on one of the main causes of shortages - manufacturing and quality issues - with the aim of ultimately strengthening the fragile pharmaceutical supply chain.

Mike Weber, founder of Robotronic, says faster production is required to shorten lead times and cope with the ever-increasing demand.

"We are a Swiss company concentrating on machine building with robotic applications for the pharmaceutical industry, including everything from de-nesting and re-nesting, through to de-traying, re-traying, and palletising. We have specific expertise in vial and pre-filled syringe handling, offering solutions that deliver maximum efficiency with a small footprint, and enabling pharmaceutical manufacturers to rise to the challenges in their supply chain."

One of the key challenges for Robotronics is compliance. "Pharmaceutical consistency is about more than quality," says Mike. "It is also about regulatory compliance and safety."

He continues: "To get the required productivity, we need two robots working very closely together at high-speed, but we also need the assurance that the delicate products being handled will not be damaged in the process."

The Robotronic choice is Mitsubishi Electric, specifically the FR series, a highly flexible robot with compact arm sizes that is equipped with

SoftTouch technology.

The result is a small footprint automation solution with increased productivity for handling pallets as small as 120cm x 80cm. Most importantly, the FR series has built-in compliance control that offers soft touch capability that delivers zero product damage with no glass-to-glass contact, no broken glass and is easy-to-clean.

“The challenge was to have two robots operating side by side in a confined environment without compromising speed or precision,” says Mike. “With Mitsubishi Electric’s help, we have two robots driving at full speed within millimetres of each other with no possibility of collision. This enables our cells to process up to 600 products a minute, without really challenging the robots.”

He concludes: “The relationship between Robotronic and Mitsubishi Electric is a true technological partnership – a combination of deep pharmaceutical process expertise allied to best-in-class robotic technology. Together, we believe we can develop machines that can shorten lead times and create a more robust pharmaceutical supply chain.”

Stefan Knauf, Division Manager at Mitsubishi Electric Factory Automation – German Branch, adds: “The biggest challenge was enabling Robotronic to safely and continuously operate two robots side-by-side in a confined environment, without compromising speed or precision. Our FR series robots with additional servo axis perfectly matched their requirements to deliver high throughput from a small footprint.

“The unique, built-in compliance control also allows the robots to gently handle glass vials without the risk of damage. Ultimately, in pharmaceutical production, consistency isn't just about quality, it is about

regulatory compliance and safety. Our relationship with Robotronic is a true technological partnership. Mike and his team bring deep pharmaceutical process expertise and we bring robotics innovation.”

To watch a video case study of the partnership in action, please click [here](#).

For more information on the Mitsubishi Electric range of industrial robots, please visit: <https://emea.mitsubishielectric.com/fa/products/rbt/robot>.

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For more information, please visit www.MitsubishiElectric.com

*U.S. dollar amounts are translated from yen at the rate of ¥150=U.S.\$1, the approximate rate on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market on March 31, 2025.

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