



BARCELONA DECLARATION ON ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION 2026

For a resilient, competitive, sustainable, and human-centered industry

June 2026

PREAMBLE

We, the undersigned associations, reaffirm and extend the Barcelona Declaration on Robotics and Automation, first signed in May 2025. One year on, the urgency of its message has only intensified. Demographic pressures, persistent labor shortages, mounting sustainability obligations, and an increasingly competitive global technology landscape continue to reshape the world economy. Robot density is rising on every continent. Artificial intelligence is gaining a body: “physical AI” is moving from laboratories into factories, hospitals, and farms.

This declaration builds on the five strategic drivers agreed in 2025 and translates them into ten concrete priorities for policymakers. They are designed to work in any country, regardless of its size, industrial structure, or level of automation maturity.

A SHARED VISION

Robotics and Automation are strategic drivers for:

- Enhancing industrial competitiveness and resilience.
- Addressing demographic challenges and skilled labor shortages.
- Promoting safer, more ergonomic, and productive workplaces.
- Accelerating the transition to a resource-efficient economy aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Supporting human well-being and personal autonomy.

TEN PRIORITIES FOR POLICYMAKERS

1. Adopt a National Robotics Strategy

Every country or region should have, or establish, a properly founded and funded robotics strategy with a dedicated government body responsible for its implementation.

Fragmented responsibility across ministries is a common cause of policy failure. A clear institutional home gives a point of contact to keep the strategy alive across changes.

2. Improve general investment conditions through tax policy

Never penalize automation technologies. Incentives should be wide in scope, covering not only equipment but also integration, software, and training.

Tax policies can accelerate the competitiveness of any country or region.

3. Governments should use Robots, not only regulate them

Public agencies should adopt automation in their own operations in public services, such as hospitals or infrastructure, expanding automation to sectors where it is underused.

Government procurement is a powerful, underused lever. It creates initial demand, builds operational knowledge, and signals that automation is a normal tool.

4. Bring Robotics into schools

Integrate robotics, automation, and AI into education from early years onward.

The talent pipeline starts at age 6, not 18. Use robotics as an enabler to increase the appeal of math, science and tech for young people generating vocational talent.

5. Communicate the real impact of Robotics and Automation on jobs

Governments should back the evidence: automation creates more valuable jobs. These are roles that pay more, are safer, and are more engaging.

Public perception shapes public policy. When citizens understand that automation creates better jobs, governments gain political space to act.

6. Invest in assistive and care Robotics

Healthcare funding should treat assistive robotics as a public health investment.

Lab automation, exoskeletons, surgical and rehabilitation systems, and care robots are deployed today. Aging populations make this urgent.

7. Make Robotics accessible to everyone

Lower barriers for small and medium-sized companies and underserved communities.

Simplified funding, shared facilities, and hands-on support let smaller firms adopt. No-code tools and regional innovation clusters are proven accelerators.

8. Regulate smartly and keep up with technology, avoiding unnecessary costs

Regulation should promote and support innovation, be lean and proportionate, supported by sandboxes. Cybersecurity and data rules for connected robots must be clear and practical.

Collaborative and AI-powered robots need updated rules that enable innovation.

9. Back international standards, not regional ones

Invest in international standards development. Avoid regional variants that fragment markets.

Global standards work. Regional alternatives raise compliance costs and slow adoption.

10. Close the gap between innovation and scale

Create the conditions, including access to growth capital, that let robotics companies scale from prototype to global product.

Promising companies fail for lack of capital, not weak technology.

A JOINT COMMITMENT

We commit to:

- Engaging actively with governments at all levels to advance these priorities, adapted to local context.
- Providing technical expertise and industry data to legislators and regulators.
- Championing a human-centric approach to automation in our standards and advocacy.
- Publishing regular progress reports on the uptake of these priorities.

THE PROCESS

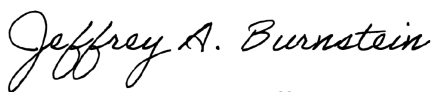
This declaration is a living framework. Signatories will meet annually to review progress, update priorities, and invite new organizations to join.

The declaration is open for signature by major national robotics and automation associations, representative regional clusters, and allied organizations worldwide upon review by the founding signatories.

A FRAMEWORK IN PROGRESS

These priorities constitute a practical roadmap for national legislative action. We invite all stakeholders, including governments, industry, labor organizations, research institutions, and civil society, to join us in advancing this agenda based on consensus.

Signed in June 2026



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