



## ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 1 of 5

### **APRC: ŠKODA optimistic ahead of the "desert rally" in the core market of China**

- › Third round of this year's FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) from Friday to Sunday at the "China Rally Zhangye"
- › ŠKODA duo Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian eager to go on the attack at the first APRC race in a desert region after two second places
- › Hat-trick of wins in sight: Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall want to extend their leading position in the overall standings in the ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › Michal Hrabánek: "The Chinese market is paramount for the ŠKODA brand"

**Mladá Boleslav, 2 August 2016 – ŠKODA are keen to keep to winning ways in the core market of China in the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). Which is why ŠKODA duo Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian (D/D), front-runners in the German Rally Championship (DRM), are not competing in the national championship at the Wartburg Rally and will contest the "China Rally Zhangye" in the Middle Kingdom from Friday to Sunday instead. Also in action for the ŠKODA MRF team at the "desert rally" in the Chinese province of Gansu: This season's unbeaten duo, Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall (IND/AUS), who are after a hat-trick of wins in the APRC.**

"The Chinese market is paramount for the ŠKODA brand. So it is no surprise that we want to show our best side there and aim for the win," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek, and added: "The ŠKODA drivers are doing a fantastic job this season and I am sure that they will be up there right at the front again in China. It will be far from easy since the event is completely new territory for us as the location has changed compared with the APRC rallies in previous years in China." This is the first time that the prestigious continental championship has a rally in a desert region in store for the ŠKODA team.

In previous years, the APRC Rally China was held in Longyou, in the province of Zhejiang around 400 kilometres away from the metropolis of Shanghai, but this season the organizers switched the location to the north of the People's Republic, to Zhangye in the province of Gansu. There will be a total of nine special stages, over which the drivers and co-drivers must complete 235.45 kilometres on the gravel tracks.

A new challenge for the experienced ŠKODA MRF team. But the ŠKODA Fabia R5's season tally to date is positive and speaks for itself: Two races, two one-two results – you can't do better than that.

Together with co-driver Glenn Macneall, Gaurav Gill won both times, so the Indian's interim conclusion is correspondingly positive: "The season couldn't have gotten off to a better start for me. The two wins mean I have given myself a slight buffer in the



## ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 2 of 5

championship, but I can't rest on that since the competition is strong, particularly in my own ranks."

He means Fabian Kreim, who in second place in the overall standings of the APRC with 61 points behind Gill (77) is still in with a good chance of the title. The German who is contesting the APRC for the first time this season was convincing in the first two rallies, finishing second both times. And on gravel – a surface on which the 23-year-old had never contested a rally before. "I have already learned a great deal so far this season and am pleased with my development. As a newcomer, to be second in the championship after two rallies is fantastic," said Kreim. In addition to the APRC, he also contests the DRM – also with the ŠKODA Fabia R5 and also extremely successfully. With his win at the Thuringia rally in mid-July, Kreim extended his lead in the overall classification of the German championship further.

For the ŠKODA junior driver, the event in the Far East is also a trial run for the WRC in Germany (18 to 21 August), where Kreim will compete with the world's elite in rallying. The ŠKODA Motorsport team will contest the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) there. Then the team will also travel to China: The WRC event in ŠKODA's core market of China takes place from 8 to 11 September.

### FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Whangarei – New Zealand	29.04.–01.05.2016
Rally Queensland – Australia	18.06.–19.06.2016
<b>Rally Zhangye – China</b>	<b>06.08.–07.08.2016</b>
Rally Hokkaido – Japan	24.09.–25.09.2016
Rally Malaysia – Malaysia	29.10.–30.10.2016
Rally India – India	10.12.–11.12.2016

### Did you know that ...

... the ŠKODA Fabia R5 is unbeaten in this season of the APRC? Two rallies, two wins – that's the new rally car's perfect haul.

... ŠKODA has been victorious in the last three editions in the APRC classification at the continental championship race in China? Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won in 2013, Jan Kopecký (CZ) triumphed in 2014 and Pontus Tidemand (S) clinched victory last year. However, the APRC rally is being held in a new location this year.

... the ŠKODA Fabia R5 made its debut in the APRC in China last season? The former duo of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson had the honour of presenting the new rally car in the



## ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 3 of 5

Middle Kingdom for the first time – the baptism of fire could not have been more successful: 13 of 13 special stages went to the Swedish duo and the new winning car from the Czech Republic.

... the current leader of the APRC, Gaurav Gill, has already won the championship once? He secured overall victory with the ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 in 2013. He was the first Indian to win the APRC.

... Fabian Kreim is not only successful in the APRC, but also in the DRM with the ŠKODA FABIA R5? Alongside his co-driver Frank Christian, he competes for the team ŠKODA AUTO Deutschland, and is currently in first place in the overall standings.

... China has been part of the APRC since 1997? From 2006 to 2015, Longyou in the province of Zhejiang hosted the event. This year, the organizers relocated the venue to the north of the People's Republic, specifically to Zhangye in the province of Gansu.

... Gansu, where the "China Rally Zhangye" will be held, is one of the largest provinces in China? The province is around 390,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size, making it almost five times larger than the Czech Republic (almost 79,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Around 70 percent of the area of Gansu consists of mountains or plateaus. The west of the province is where the Qilian Mountains, which reach up to 5500 metres in height, are located, while the world-famous Gobi and Alashan deserts are in the east.

... China is the most important sales market for ŠKODA? The Czech automobile manufacturer defied the difficult market conditions and increased the brand's deliveries by 11,8 percent to 22,400 vehicles in June.

... China will host the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) again this year for the first time since 1999? From 8 - 11 September, the elite class of rallying will stop off around Huairou near Beijing.





# ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 4 of 5

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### ŠKODA at the APRC rally in China

The German duo Fabian Kreim and Frank Christian (D/D) are keen to continue to cause a stir in the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) in the ŠKODA Fabia R5.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at the APRC rally in China

After their two wins in New Zealand and Australia, Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall (IND/AUS) are at the top of the APRC overall standings with ŠKODA MRF.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO





# ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 5 of 5

## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview:

ŠKODA has been on the motorsport scene since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include numerous title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Monte Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2015, ŠKODA celebrated four victories in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with their new ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally car. The high-tech 4x4 was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. In the ŠKODA FABIA R5's very first season, factory duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) secured the fourth APRC title in a row for ŠKODA. In addition, the brand claimed five national titles with their new winning model.

ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 proudly continues the brand's long tradition in motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA Super 2000, was the most successful model in ŠKODA's 115-year motorsport history. With the 4x4 from Mladá Boleslav, factory duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the historic feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the drivers' title in the ERC and the APRC in consecutive years. Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 drivers won a total of 50 national and international titles around the world.

In 2016, the factory teams Pontus Tidem and/Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (F/F) are competing with the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- › currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI and SUPERB.
- › in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful automotive groups in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs over 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

