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# APRC: ŠKODA wins again at the desert rally in the core market of China

- › **Conditions overcome: Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall complete a hat-trick of wins in the APRC with victory at the "China Rally Zhangye" and, in doing so, extend their overall lead in the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)**
- › **Impressive display from Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian: third place**
- › **Michal Hrabánek: "A strong performance in tough conditions"**

**Zhangye/China, 7 August 2016 – Extreme conditions overcome and the hat-trick completed: ŠKODA won again in its core market of China and remains on course for the title at the halfway point in this season's FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall (IND/AUS) were unbeatable again in the APRC classification at the "China Rally Zhangye", meaning they remain undefeated after three races in the prestigious continental championship. The second ŠKODA MRF duo of Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian (D/D) joined them on the podium, finishing third in the APRC competition after an impressive fightback.**

"This rally was a huge challenge for man and machine. However, the MRF team and our ŠKODA FABIA R5 produced a really strong performance in difficult conditions in a rally that is new to us. This win for Gaurav Gill and Glenn Macneall is worth its weight in gold! We are leading the APRC at the halfway point of the season," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek, who went on to praise the second driver in the team, Fabian Kreim: "Fabian's stage wins showed what great potential he has. That was only his third rally on gravel!"

After the two rallies in New Zealand and Australia, a race with a completely new character awaited the drivers at a new venue in China. The route took them through the steppe on the edge of the Gobi Desert, where the road surface was stony in some places and sandy in others. The extreme conditions really put the drivers through their paces all weekend. Temperatures of up to 44 degrees and extreme dryness only added to what was already a very demanding route. However, the ŠKODA MRF team successfully overcame this challenge.

"That was a really tough rally, and I am proud that we won the APRC classification. Three wins from three races – as far as the championship is concerned, things really couldn't look any better," said a happy Gill. Fabian Kreim also produced a strong display in the Gansu province, not far from the border with Mongolia. He failed to reach the finish on Saturday, following a technical issue on the fifth special stage. Kreim rejoined the rally on Sunday and was the fastest man in the field, winning stages with outstanding times. In doing so, he fought his way back into third to make it onto the APRC podium for the third time, after two runner-up finishes in New Zealand and Australia.



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"That was a really eventful rally – in every regard. Rallies in such extreme conditions really help me in my development. And I am proud of the podium finish! I am looking ahead now. I have the Rally Germany in just a few days, which is the absolute highlight of the season for me. I am already hugely looking forward to it," said Kreim.

The ŠKODA Motorsport lines up in WRC 2 at the German round of the FIA World Rally Championship (18 to 21 August), as well as the Rally China (8 to 11 September). The latter will provide the next opportunity to showcase the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in what is a core market for the Czech car maker.

### The number for the Rally Zhangye: 1500

Up and away: the "China Rally Zhangye" took place at about 1500 metres above sea level. This makes it the highest event on the calendar. As such, it places a far greater strain on man and machine, as the oxygen percentage in the air is lower than at other rallies.

### FIA Asia-Pacific Championship (APRC)

Event	Date
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

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### ŠKODA at the APRC rally in China

The duo of Fabian Kreim and Frank Christian (D/D) finished third at the "China Rally Zhangye" after a great fightback.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at the APRC rally in China

Gaurav Gill/Glenn Macneall (IND/AUS) completed a hat-trick of wins in the APRC to extend their overall lead.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## 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.



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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.