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Page 1 of 3

ŠKODA AUTO opens AIM.Lab in collaboration with the Technical University of Ostrava VŠB-TUO

- › **Artificial Intelligence laboratory – a unique project in the Czech automotive industry**
- › **ŠKODA AUTO and VŠB-TUO continue their successful cooperation**
- › **Linking theory and practice strengthens Czech Republic as automotive hub and its competitiveness**

Mladá Boleslav, 7 September 2021 – ŠKODA AUTO is launching the ‘AIM.Lab’ in partnership with the Technical University of Ostrava VŠB-TUO. The acronym AIM.Lab stands for Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing Laboratory. The initiative is the first of its kind in the automotive industry. The lab, which is located on the campus of VŠB-TUO, will be the focus of the collaborative work between the university and the Czech car manufacturer. The three main areas of interest are data analysis, machine learning and AI applications, and optimisation challenges in industrial practice.

Dr. Michael Oeljeklaus, ŠKODA AUTO Board Member for Production and Logistics, emphasises, “The collaboration between ŠKODA AUTO and the Technical University of Ostrava is a win-win situation; we combine theory and practice and create tangible added value in the field of artificial intelligence – both for us as a carmaker and for the students, who benefit immensely from the direct practical experience. I am convinced that the new AIM.Lab will further strengthen and future-proof the Czech Republic as an automotive location.

Professor Václav Snášel, Rector of VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava explains, “Artificial intelligence is playing an increasingly important role – not only for the end user, but also and especially in industrial manufacturing. That is why we will make extensive use of the AIM.Lab infrastructure for teaching and development in the area of industrial data analytics. There will be courses offered on bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes, and from 2022, we also plan on teaching a new doctoral programme, focusing on data analytics. For our students, the insights into practice form the indispensable basis for being able to conduct targeted research.”

The AIM.Lab initiative is unique in the automotive industry, but it is not the first collaborative venture between ŠKODA AUTO and VŠB-TUO. The project was developed following several years of successful cooperation between ŠKODA AUTO’s Digitalisation and Industry 4.0 department and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science VŠB-TUO as part of the ŠKODA AUTO Talent Programme for PhD students. Thanks to their knowledge of the production environment, students are now well prepared to solve problems in the context of industrial practice, as evidenced by the first successful joint projects. The car manufacturer and the university are preparing further collaborative work at the AIM.Lab that will greatly enhance practice-oriented teaching and development. The plan also includes networking with other industrial partners and cooperation with institutions such as the IT initiative Czechitas, which promotes women’s education in IT.

ŠKODA AUTO has also collaborated with the faculty in the past. For example, the company and the university have been collaborating on new technologies in the area of assistance systems since autumn 2019. Within the framework of the National Centre of Competence - Cybernetics and Artificial Intelligence project (Technology Agency of the Czech Republic), they are developing a



ŠKODA
SIMPLY CLEVER

PRESS RELEASE

Page 2 of 3

new assistance system "Follow the Vehicle". The aim is to drive in convoys according to the principle of 'two vehicles, one driver'. The vehicle in front – driven by a human – sets the route, speed, lane and other parameters. Data on steering wheel movements, acceleration and deceleration are transmitted wirelessly to the autonomously controlled vehicle behind, which follows at a distance of up to ten metres.

By supporting universities, ŠKODA AUTO is embracing its social responsibility in its home country. The company supports 20 universities across the Czech Republic and abroad, for example by providing vehicles and components for study and research purposes. The company also offers opportunities in the form of work placements for students, an international trainee programme with work placements abroad and a development and talent programme for doctoral students (more information at [ŠKODA Career/Postgraduate Students](#)).

The company has set itself the goal of developing the Czech Republic into an electric vehicle hub as part of its NEXT LEVEL – ŠKODA STRATEGY 2030. Production of MEB battery systems for the ENYAQ iV will also start in Mladá Boleslav at the beginning of next year. In addition, the Czech car manufacturer is working with partners to build a stable supplier structure for electromobility.

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From left to right: Jana Polášek Filová, Ph.D., coordinator of innovation management at ŠKODA AUTO, Dr. Michael Oeljeklaus, ŠKODA AUTO Board Member for Production and Logistics, Prof. Dr. Václav Snášel, Rector of VŠB-TUO and Prof. Ing. Jan Platoš, Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, open the AIM.Lab on the university campus.

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ŠKODA
SIMPLY CLEVER

PRESS RELEASE

Page 3 of 3



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Dr Michael Oeljeklaus, ŠKODA AUTO Board Member for Production and Logistics, and Prof. Dr Václav Snášel, Rector of VŠB-TUO, review the progress of the 'Follow the Vehicle' project. It is based on the principle of 'two vehicles, one driver'. The vehicle at the head of a convoy is controlled by a driver who sets the route, speed and lane, among other things.

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Prof. Dr. Václav Snášel, Rector of VŠB-TUO (on the right), presents the university's commemorative coin to ŠKODA AUTO Board Member for Production and Logistics Dr Michael Oeljeklaus.

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ŠKODA AUTO

- › is successfully steering through the new decade with the NEXT LEVEL – ŠKODA STRATEGY 2030.
- › aims to be one of the five best-selling brands in Europe by 2030 with an attractive line-up in the entry-level segments and additional e-models.
- › is emerging as the leading European brand in India, Russia and North Africa.
- › currently offers its customers ten passenger-car series: the FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ, ENYAQ iV and KUSHAQ.
- › delivered over one million vehicles to customers around the world in 2020.
- › has been a member of the Volkswagen Group for 30 years. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world.
- › independently manufactures and develops not only vehicles but also components such as engines and transmissions in association with the Group.
- › operates at three sites in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia and India primarily through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine with a local partner.
- › employs more than 43,000 people globally and is active in over 100 markets.