



## A total of 65 crews at the start of 44. Croatia rally

A grand total of 65 crews have passed through the verification and scrutineering tents inside the service park in Porec, and are heading towards the grand opening ceremony of the 44th edition of the Croatia Rally. The weather forecast has been very kind on Istria for the duration of the rally, which raises the level of the general entertainment value of the event.

The Croatia Rally has been a serious candidate for the World Rally Championship for some time now, already with a set WRC offer on the table for July of 2018, which had to be turned down due to the large inconveniences it would cause as it would be peak tourist season. That meant postponing the project until 2019.

**“The guarantees that we have are more than just a confirmation that we got during various conversations, what we have is a written letter of intent from the WRC Promotor and the FIA, as well as a contract on the table,”** said Daniel Saskin, president of the organising committee. **“The new WRC season traditionally starts with the Monte Carlo Rallye in January, which is when we will likely find out the exact dates for the 2018 and 2019 Croatia Rally – the 2018 edition holding the official WRC Candidate status, with the 2019 being the hopeful WRC event. This year's special stages are genuinely challenging, the tarmac in Istria has the reputation of being the most slippery in the world, which should make the rally as entertaining as ever. I'd like to invite everyone to come and enjoy Croatia's largest octane spectacle.”**

Last year's Croatia Rally featured an intense fight for first place between Vlastimil Majercak and Juraj Sebalj, who pulled the shorter straw and faced defeat due to technical difficulties.

**“I've had technical issues as did Še balj,”** said Majercak. **“I went off the track twice, and the choosing the right tires always presents great challenges here as the tarmac is slippery and smooth, and the high temperatures don't make things easier on us. Istria is a great location to hold a rally, the people are kind and genuine, the organisation is on a very high level – I thoroughly enjoy being here.”**

In the battle for the Croatian Championship, young hopeful Viliam Prodan is currently in third place with no chance to take home the title.

**“We've had a lot of misfortune this year, so the Croatian Championship is out of our reach,”** said Prodan, who will start second in Porec. **“We came to this rally with a lot of ambition, anything less than a placement in the top three, if not first place will be a disappointment for us. The special stages are**



truly difficult, they'll require us to be at our best. As familiar we, or Sebalj, are with them, every curve has its own unique challenge. It will be very interesting, to say the least."

Nadia Stifanic-Dobrilovic, the deputy mayor of Porec, showed great gratitude to the partaking crews.

"This event carries a great deal of importance for us, it's always well attended and that the fans are passionate about it" said Mrs. Stifanic-Dobrilovic during the press conference before the rally. "We're always happy when everything goes as planned on our roads and I hope it will be the same this year, because safety is our number one priority. This rally is a pleasant and interesting Istrian storyline, and I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the crews who have chosen to come to Istria and Porec. May the best crew win, I wish everyone a lot of luck!"

Friday, September 30th, will mark the first day of the crews heading out on the roads in their cars – first during the shakedown, and later on in the day at 17:29, during the first two special stages Fuskulin. The finish will be a day later, at 20:00 at the finish ramp inside the service park.