*Press Release*

 **WRC CROATIA RALLY AWARDED THREE STARS BY THE FIA ENVIRONMENTAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME**

**Zagreb, April 6th** – The International Automobile Federation (FIA) awarded WRC Croatia Rally with **three stars through its Environmental Accreditation Programme**. With the Programme's three stars being the highest possible mark, it is yet another accolade for the organisation of the Croatian event being in line with the highest standards of the event being environmentally sustainable with a minimal effect on the environment.

It is a great honour to receive this recognition from the FIA, as the Organisers of the WRC Croatia Rally have begun a cooperation with the Hrvoje Požar Environmental Institute (EIHP) in Zagreb, with the aim of accurately defining the carbon footprint of the event as well as goals and action to be taken for it to be reduced.

"*We are exceptionally proud of the fact that the FIA recognised our efforts and have awarded us with this great merit. We are fully aware of our responsibilities and our actions stem from exactly that - from year to year we put in a tremendous effort to reduce the effect on the environment with due regard to the world's highest standards. This accolade is a confirmation that our efforts have paid off as much as it is a motivation to continue our work to justify the honour and confidence we've been given,"* said **Daniel** **Šaškin, President of the WRC Croatia Rally Organising Committee.**

EIHP have based their research on the data collected from the 2022 event, and it has been done in line with the GHG-Protocol and ISO 14064-1:2018 standards.

*"The results of the research are in line with projected metrics. With 4906 tons of equivalent carbon dioxide and a total of 82,5% of the entire estimated share, the largest share of emissions belongs to the general public, which have mainly used personal vehicles to arrive at the event. With due consideration of the fact that the average age of the personal vehicle in Croatia is older, we are not surprised by the fact that that is what raised our carbon footprint. With this research we have contributed to the growing trend of calculating an event's carbon footprint, which we'd like to be more common in Croatia. The approach taken by the organisers greatly helps raise awareness on climate change, and carbon footprint is a valuable metric on how to optimally reduce emissions and eventually become climate-neutral,"* said **Šimun Lončarević, researcher at the Hrvoje Požar Environmental Institute.**

WRC Croatia Rally's long term goal is to **become carbon neutral by 2050,** and the research done by EIHP brings forth legitimate steps that need to be taken, in order to achieve that goal. Aside from working together with local communities in order to assure proper waste disposal and identify potential risks to the environment, WRC Croatia Rally will undertake a number of steps to promote driving in a safe and environmentally friendly manner in general traffic, as well as protection of the climate and environment.

*"Not only will we continue cooperating with EIHP, this year we will also maintain our efforts to reduce the event's carbon footprint through locally done activities. The research's results state that the largest share of the carbon footprint comes from the spectators' arrivals, thus we will continually encourage our fans to arrive to the special stages through carpooling in order to reduce the general number of vehicles arriving to the event. We are also very much aware that to become carbon neutral, an improved public transport infrastructure is necessary, such as a modern railway,"* said **Daniel** **Šaškin, President of the WRC Croatia Rally Organising Committee.**

One of 13 events on the 2023 WRC calendar that begun in Monte Carlo in January, WRC Croatia Rally will be held from April 20th to 23rd in five Croatian counties. The dominance on this year's calendar belongs to gravel events, whereas Croatia Rally is one of only three tarmac-only legs.

WRC Croatia Rally has also recently, in cooperation with the Economic University of Zagreb, presented a research on the economic impact of the event, highlighting that the event also has a positive influence on Croatia's economy as a large contributing factor to the tourism sector. Last year's event brought in 105 million Euros, as over 310 thousand spectators came to Croatia.

A four-day ticket package for the WRC Croatia Rally is available for 30 Euros, where as single day tickets are available for 10 Euros. All tickets are valid for not only the special stages, but also to visit the service park as well. In order to reduce large queues at the entries to the special stages, the organisers recommend purchasing the tickets in advance through the ulaznice.hr ticketing portal.

**About the Hrvoje Požar Environmental Institute**

The Hrvoje Požar Environmental Institute (EIHP) is a public institution belonging to the Republic of Croatia, working on scientific research in the field of energy, offering expert advice to governmental bodies and on both the national and international market. Education is one of the key activities of the Institute, which constantly works on educating experts in the energy sector. The Institute accomplishes its goals through cooperation with various scientists and other institutes nation, but also worldwide, and takes a leading role in the development of energetics in its broader spectrum.

Photo: Mario Pavlović & Uroš Modlic