**Press release**

**WRC Croatia Rally – the world's best drivers' mastery for the second time in Croatia!**

*Details about Croatia's largest sports event to date and one of the most watched sporting events in the world have been revealed. The event will be taking place in five Croatian counties from 21 to 24 April 2022. The WRC Croatia Rally team has been busy while expecting with great thrill the best world’s drivers and a record number of spectators.*

**Zagreb, 25 February 2022 –**  On the occasion of the beginning of the WRC Croatia Rally 2022 sign-in a press conference was held at the National and University Library in Zagreb. Speeches were delivered by Daniel Šaškin, the host of the event and President of the Organizing Committee of the WRC Croatia Rally; Tomislav Družak, State Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport and emissary of the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković; Milan Čolić, Assistant Head in the City of Zagreb Office for Education, Sport and Youth; Tomislav Josip Mlinarić, Dean of the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences and Davorin Štetner, President of the Croatian Car and Karting Federation

The WRC Rally Sweden is currently underway and ends on Sunday, after which all eyes will be on Croatia. Given that this year is not like the last one when the pandemic significantly limited travel, competitions and gatherings, the organizers trust there will be around one hundred registered crews. The peculiarity of this year’s competition is the presence of the audience. In addition to free viewing along the special stages’ routes, as is customary, this year the organizers invite spectators to come to specially designed Fan zones, where a rich catering offer and entertainment will be awaiting them.

Daniel Šaškin, President of the Organizing Committee of the WRC Croatia Rally says: “We are extremely happy and proud to bring this show back to Croatia with the support of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the City of Zagreb, the counties, the sponsors and all other partners. This is one of the greatest victories and recognitions for the Croatian motorsport ever. Getting the WRC is a huge success *per se* but to keep it and sign a three-year contract is proof positive that we mean business and that the WRC last year edition was organized at a very high level. Special thanks go not only to all those people who took part in the organization of the WRC last year, but also to those who are with us this year, more than 2000 of them, out of which 500 are volunteers. In terms of organization, it is a very demanding sports event that will be taking place in front of the audience for the first time. We are expecting a staggering number of 350,000 spectators, so we invite visitors to take care of the environment and reduce traffic congestion by carpooling in order to reach the venue. This year we are preparing numerous surprises and a rich content for fans of octane thrills, both along the tracks and at Fan zones. Tickets for the Platak Fan Zone are already on presale. Fan zones provide a full experience because besides delivering the most attractive passages of the rally stars, they also furnish the visitors with a rich catering offer and all-day entertainment. The largest Fan zone will be located at the Zagreb Fair (*Zagrebački Velesajam*) and it will be the first one to open, as early as Tuesday, 19 April. Visitors will be able to see there the top competitors’ service areas, buy Croatia Rally’s, top teams’ and WRC’s souvenirs, try their skills on the simulators and indulge the catering offer and performances of famous rock artists.”

The collaboration between the WRC and the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences continues for the second year in a row. For the first time audience will be present at this organizationally demanding sports competition, so it presents a much greater challenge for everyone involved in its organization. Tomislav Josip Mlinarić, Dean of the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences, says: “As in term of logistics and organization this is an extremely demanding sports event, we are very pleased to be partners with WRC Croatia Rally and acknowledge this is an opportunity and a challenge for our experts to be involved in its organization for the second consecutive year. The Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences will provide professional assistance in terms of traffic management and logistical support during the WRC Croatia Rally, while by setting up a safety driving simulator in the Service Park at the Zagreb Fair (*Zagrebački Velesajam*) we will raise awareness of the importance of responsible behaviour in traffic.”

„WRC Croatia Rally is extremely important to Croatia from the economic point of view. It is one of the largest sports competitions in the history of our country, and we expect to near a full occupancy of accommodation establishments and attract high-end visitors. With such events, we are taking the right steps forward and Croatia is receiving an international promotion measured in millions of Euros! At the same time we are popularizing the motorsport and expect positive effects while attracting new people to our sport. We got off to a good start last year, but we still have to demonstrate we are able to confirm the excellent assessment we received. I am proudly pointing out that this race is also a Croatian product because it has been almost entirely organized by Croatian sports functionaries and enthusiasts”, says Davorin Štetner, President of the Croatian Car and Karting Federation.

The City of Zagreb has been contributing to motorsport for years and it is providing support to the organization of the WRC Croatia Rally again this year. “The arrival of the WRC Croatia Rally to Zagreb for the second consecutive year is a confirmation of the successfully organized race last year. We invite all citizens of Zagreb and its guests to visit the races and experience the world’s best rally drivers on the city streets. The City of Zagreb has provided attractive locations at the city’s fountains for the start of the race and in the Service Park at the Zagreb Fair to be enjoyed by all motorsport fans”, says Milan Čolić, Assistant Head in the City of Zagreb Office for Education.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Tourism and Sport have recognized the value of this competition in sporting, economic and promotional terms. On this occasion, Tomislav Družak, State Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport and emissary of the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković stated: “The Ministry of Tourism and Sport recognized the importance of this event that goes beyond sports and has been providing support from the very beginning. The exceptional organization of the last year edition has also been recognized by the FIA enabling us and the motorsport fans to watch the best rally drivers competing in Croatia again while images of our beautiful country will be going around the world again.”

**About WRC Croatia Rally**

The WRC Croatia Rally will be taking place from 21 to 24 April at 20 attractive special stages through five Croatian counties – Zagreb County, Karlovac County, Krapina-Zagorje County, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and Varaždin County; while the ceremonial start, the finish line and the service park, where a rich program is being scheduled, will be located in Zagreb. This year, a record number of spectators is expected at one of the biggest sporting events in the country ever. Indeed, according to the predictions of the Organizer the event will be followed by more than 350,000 people in special fan areas and along the tracks, arriving from Europe and many countries worldwide.

The visitors will also be able to lay eyes on the ground-breaking new generation of hybrid Rally1 vehicles, which premiered in Monte Carlo at the beginning of the season. Thanks to the excellent organization of the sports and collateral contents of the race, including also the environmental protection, Croatia has been mentioned many times as refreshing and a real surprise in the WRC calendar. Thus, following the excellent assessment for the overall impression, the organizer was given the opportunity to sign a three-year contract to organize this octane show. The importance and the success of this event has been recognized by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the City of Zagreb, that decided to provide co-funds for the organization of the competition in 2022 and in the subsequent years.

**About WRC**

WRC (World Rally Championship) is the most popular motorsport competition in the world besides F1, which is regularly broadcast by over 250 TV stations and watched by about 836 million people worldwide.

After many years of vying with much richer countries, Croatia had the opportunity to organize an event of the World Championship for the first time in 2021, which has been labeled WRC Croatia Rally and took place in Zagreb and the surrounding area in April of the same year.

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