**Hankook opens its own European test centre**

**for winter tyres in Finland**

**After a construction period of more than a year, Hankook has now opened ‘Technotrac’, its own European test facility for winter tyres in Finland. With a development centre in Germany, high-end production and state-of-the-art indoor testing in Hungary, as well as its very own winter test facility in Finland, Hankook stands for an integrated approach in the field of tyre development and production in Europe.**

***Neu-Isenburg, Germany / Ivalo, Finland, 27th February 2017*** – Premium tyre maker Hankook has officially opened its very own European winter tyre test facility, named ‘Technotrac’ in Ivalo, Finland, approximately 300 km north of the Arctic Circle. Finnish company Test World Oy was commissioned to build the facility at the end of 2015. The opening of the test facility means that Hankook’s winter tyres for the European market are not only developed and produced in Europe, but they can also now be tested under real European winter conditions.

“Europe is one of Hankook’s largest and most important markets globally, which is why we have spent a long time working towards regional product development”, explains Ho-Youl Pae, head of Hankook Tire Europe. “We are proud that not only our summer tyres, but also those with winter treads, both of which are produced in Europe, can now be tested here under ideal conditions to ensure that they are perfectly suited to the prevailing road and climatic conditions, as well as responding to market demands. Having our very own winter test facility, means that we can consolidate our position as one of Europe’s leading tyre makers.”

The new test facility comprises three so-called flat tracks, which are used for testing braking, traction and lateral stability on snow or ice, as well as two snow handling tracks for subjective tyre evaluation, that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of premium vehicle manufacturers located in Germany. The site also boasts an excellent infrastructure, with offices and conference rooms and even state-of-the-art workshops, as well as a large cold-storage warehouse. The stable and prolonged winter conditions in Ivalo was one of the factors that influenced the decision to build the most northerly winter test facility in the world in this location.

Hankook has been investing extensively in research and development (R&D) for many years. “Approximately five percent of all Hankook employees already work in R&D worldwide. That is more than 1,000 employees in total,” says Dr. Hyung Nam Kim, head of global development at Hankook. Just last October, the tyre maker opened its futuristic global research and development centre, the ‘Hankook Technodome’ in Daejeon, South Korea, which the company intends to use for developing innovative technologies to position itself as one of the world’s top brands. The ‘Technodome’ is the central hub of Hankook’s global R&D infrastructure and connects not only the regional technical centres, ATC (American Technical Center), CTC (China Technical Center), JTO (Japan Technical Office) and the European Technical Center (ETC) in Hannover, Germany, but now also the new winter test facility in Finland. “Test facilities like the new ‘Technotrac Ivalo’ are an important and logical first step towards ensuring that we are able to fully test the forward-looking innovative tyre technologies that are being developed in the ‘Hankook Technodome’”, adds Dr. Kim.

Since the opening of the ETC in Hannover in 1997, Hankook has expanded the scope of its research projects in Europe and today it is one of the main suppliers for many premium automotive manufacturers, including all top brands, such as Audi, BMW, MAN, Mercedes Benz cars and trucks, MINI, Porsche, Scania and VW. “Our ultra-high-performance tyres, Hankook Ventus S1 evo² SUV with ‘sound absorber®’ technology, were recently selected by Audi for the Q7 and SQ7. The continuous growth of our original equipment business activities demands the parallel expansion of testing capacities, for instance the new ‘Technotrac Ivalo’. Now that the necessary requirements have been met, we assume that we will be able to significantly improve the effectiveness of our research and development plans”, says Dipl.-Ing. Klaus Krause, head of European Technical Centre, which will be coordinating the test activities taking place at the new ‘Technotrac Ivalo’.

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**About Hankook Tire**

Hankook Tire is one of the global top 5 companies in the mass production of tyres and manufactures innovative, award winning radial tyres of proven superior quality for passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, RVs, trucks, and buses as well as motorsports (circuit racing/rallies).

Aspiring to bring consumers the utmost excellence in product quality, technological excellence and driving satisfaction, Hankook Tire continuously invests in research and development maintaining five R&D centres and seven production facilities around the world. Bespoke tyre solutions for the European markets as well as European Original Equipment according to the requirements of leading premium car manufacturers, are developed in the company’s regional Technical Centre in Hanover/Germany. Production for the European region is taking place in the state-of-the-art manufacturing site in Rácalmás/Hungary which was inaugurated in June 2007 and is continuously being expanded. Currently more than 3,000 employees produce up to 19 million tyres a year for passenger cars, SUVs and light trucks.

Hankook Tire’s European headquarters are located in Neu-Isenburg near Frankfurt am Main in Germany. The manufacturer operates further branches in Germany, UK, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia, Turkey, Sweden and Poland. Hankook products are sold directly through regional distributors in other local markets. Hankook Tire employs more than 22,000 people worldwide and are selling their products in over 180 countries. Internationally leading car manufacturers rely on tyres made by Hankook for their original equipment. Approximately 30 percent of the company's global sales are generated within the European and CIS-Region.

For further information please visit www.hankooktire-mediacenter.com or www.hankooktire.com

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