

PRESS RELEASE no. 16

Kopecký, Kajetanowicz and Bouffier among the top favourites

Altogether 132 crews from 20 European countries have signed up for the 46th Barum Czech Rally Zlín, which takes place at the end of summer, as the eight event of the ten-series FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the fifth event of Auto-club Czech Rally Championship 2016. In total 87 crews are also competing in the European championship. Barum Rally will be once more one of the most star-studded European rally events and the highlight of Czech rally season.

Among the favourites is the defending champion, Škoda Motorsport factory driver, Jan Kopecký (Škoda Fabia R5), who may win his fifth title. He achieved his victories in even years (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015) in Zlín and the three-time Czech champion is the most decorated driver in Barum Rally's history. Zlín will also welcome the reigning European champion and the current leader of ERC Kajetan Kajetanowicz from Poland, Russian driver Alexey Lukyanuk (both Ford Fiesta R5) and French Bryan Bouffier (Citroën DS3 R5). However, other drivers are also aiming higher, like this year's surprise from Latvia Ralfs Sirmacis or Dutch Hermen Kobus, German Fabian Kreim, Belgium Cedric Cherain (all Škoda Fabia R5), Hungarian Dávid Botka (Citroën DS3 R5) and Polish Lukasz Habaj (Ford Fiesta R5). We must not forget the Czech drivers intending to show their best on local roads like Jaromír Tarabus, Pavel Valoušek, Jan Černý, Tomáš Kostka, Vojtěch Štajf (Škoda Fabia R5) and Roman Odložilík (Ford Fiesta R5). Other domestic elite drivers hope to finish in top ten, Antonín Tlustý (Škoda Fabia R5), Martin Vlček (Ford Fiesta R5) and Miroslav Jakeš (Škoda Fabia S2000). Altogether there will be 20 cars R5 category in Zlín. The multiple times Czech champion Václav Pech (Porsche 997 GT3) will also be competing, but only in the Czech championship.

Production car category ERC 2 will be represented by its second overall driver Italian Giacomo Scattolon and Hungarian Tibor Érdi (Mitsubishi Lancer EVO). Martin Březík (Mitsubishi Lancer EVO IX), Václav Kopáček and Jaroslav Szeja (both Subaru Impreza STi) are hoping to make it bit harder for the European crews.

On the start line with a rear-wheel drive car there will be the three-time European champion Luca Rossetti from Italy who will be driving Toyota GT86 CS-R3 for Toyota Motorsport team. He competes in the tough ERC3 category. The list of amazing drivers goes on with FIA priority driver Turkish Murat Bostanci (Ford Fiesta R2T) and the fast Russian with Latvian licence Nikolay Gryazin (Peugeot 208 R2). Barum Rally is the penultimate event of ERC Junior and for its title there is a tough fight between Opel factory drivers British Chris Ingram and German Marijan Griebel (both Opel Adam R2). The Czech and Slovakian art of rally driving will be also represented by Martin Koči (Citroën DS3 R3T), Václav Dunovský, Filip Mareš and Ján Kundlák (all Peugeot 208 R2).

Motor sport is enjoyed by women as well and the following ones will show their abilities behind the wheel - Bulgarian Ekaterina Stratieva (Citroën C2 R2 Max), Czech singer Olga Lounová (Mitsubishi Lancer EVO IX), Pavlína Tydlačková (Škoda Fabia) and Hana Baďurová (Honda Civic VTi). World hockey champion of 2000 and a former hockey player Martin Špaňhel will also participate in this year's Barum Rally.

Zlín, 15th August 2016

Roman ORDELT
Press Relations Officer
Barum Czech Rally Zlín

