SEAT strengthens its strategy to enter China during Chinese government visit in Spain

- Volkswagen Group CEO Dr. Herbert Diess and SEAT President Luca de Meo met with the government representatives
- The partners of the JAC Volkswagen joint venture signed an agreement to make progress on SEAT’s development in China
- A new R&D centre in Hefei is scheduled to open in 2021

Martorell, 27/05/2019. SEAT advances its strategy to begin operating in China. A delegation from the Chinese government today visited the SEAT headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona) to meet with the JAC Volkswagen joint venture partners (SEAT, Volkswagen Group China and JAC). The Chinese delegation, led by Anhui province Governor Li Jinbin and Ling Yun, the Mayor of Hefei, the provincial capital where the JAC headquarters are located, was hosted by Volkswagen Group CEO Dr. Herbert Diess, SEAT President Luca de Meo, Volkswagen Group China CEO Dr. Stephan Wöllenstein and JAC Chairman An Jin.

The JAC Volkswagen partners and the joint venture, which was founded in 2017 and focuses on the development, production and marketing of pure battery vehicles, signed an agreement that enables further progress in the introduction of SEAT in China in two or three years. The agreement specifies the collaboration among the partners and the strategy towards the future of the joint venture. Furthermore, JAC Volkswagen will become a globally integrated member of the Volkswagen Group and play an active role in its manufacturing network.

The new R&D centre is the cornerstone to achieving the objective of developing mobility solutions and it will integrate, among others, capabilities to co-develop smaller e-cars and components and conduct research into technologies for automotive applications. Currently under construction, it is scheduled to open in 2021 and it will be based in Hefei.

SEAT President Luca de Meo emphasised that “the signing of this agreement is a new step forward in the strategic plan for the globalisation of SEAT. With the introduction of our business in China, we are boosting the future of the company and of electric mobility at the same time. Today, China is the benchmark country for electric vehicles. We aim to be a part of this ecosystem in order to exchange knowledge and make progress in achieving global mobility that is more sustainable.”

The Chinese government delegation toured the SEAT Design Centre, one-of-a-kind facilities in the south of Europe that are a part of the Technical Centre, SEAT’s technological core which employs more than 1,000 engineers, making the company the foremost industrial investor in R&D in Spain. The representatives from Anhui, a province in Eastern China with a population of 62 million, also visited the Martorell factory, where SEAT’s three best-selling Leon, Ibiza and Arona models are assembled. Martorell is one of the most modern and efficient factories in Europe, and it produces over 2,300 vehicles every day, one every 30 seconds (production in 2018: 474,300 cars), which are distributed in 80 countries. Their next stop was CARS, a healthcare and
rehabilitation centre for SEAT employees, where specialists in areas such as traumatology, cardiology and gynaecology offer a wide range of personalized services.

As Barcelona is an innovation hub and a global smart city reference, following the visit to SEAT, the delegation from the Anhui government toured the SEAT Metropolis:Lab, the carmaker’s innovation laboratory integrated in the Volkswagen Group’s digital labs network, as well as Pier01 (Barcelona Tech City), the heart of the city’s start-up ecosystem in Barcelona.

**China, a key country in SEAT’s future strategy**

Last July, SEAT, Volkswagen Group China and JAC signed an agreement in Berlin, in the presence of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, whereby SEAT became a partner in the joint JAC Volkswagen venture created for the manufacture and distribution of electric vehicles, and was designated the Volkswagen Group’s lead brand in this project. Since the founding of the joint venture in 2017, SEAT has been contributing its know-how in the areas of design and R&D.

SEAT’s participation in the joint venture was endorsed with the signing of a new agreement in November in Madrid which specifies the development of a platform for the introduction of electric vehicles and the creation of a new R&D centre in the city of Hefei. The agreement was signed by Volkswagen Group CEO Dr. Herbert Diess, JAC Chairman An Jin and SEAT President Luca de Meo, in the presence of the People’s Republic of China President Xi Jinping and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. A member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exporting 80% of its vehicles, and is present in 80 countries on all five continents. In 2018, SEAT sold 517,600 cars, the highest figure in the 68-year history of the brand, posting a profit after tax of 294 million euros and a record turnover of close to 10 billion euros.

The SEAT Group employs more than 15,000 professionals and has three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Arona and Leon. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca in the Czech Republic, the Tarocco in Germany, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii in Slovakia.

The multinational has a Technical Centre, which operates as a knowledge hub that brings together 1,000 engineers who are focussed on developing innovation for Spain’s largest industrial investor in R&D. SEAT already features the latest connectivity technology in its vehicle range and is currently engaged in the company’s global digitalisation process to promote the mobility of the future.

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