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## **Volkswagen – the innovation think tank: world leader in research and development with investment totaling €11.5 billion**

- **Prof. Dr. Martin Winterkorn: “Volkswagen is positioning itself at the forefront of automotive change with ‘Future Tracks’”**
- **Focus on electromobility and the digitalization of vehicles, factories and retail**
- **46,000 researchers and developers and over 10,000 IT experts at Volkswagen are working on the mobility of the future**
- **Largest low-CO<sub>2</sub> fleet: 57 model variants already meet the 95 gram target**
- **CEO calls for “a climate in Europe where innovations are truly welcome”**
- **Good start to 2015 – the Group delivered over 1.5 million vehicles in January and February for the first time in its history**

**Geneva/Wolfsburg, March 2, 2015 – Volkswagen invested €11.5 billion in research and development last year, more than ever before and more than any other company worldwide. Speaking today on the eve of the Geneva International Motor Show, Prof. Dr. Martin Winterkorn, CEO of Volkswagen Aktiengesellschaft, underscored: “Volkswagen is an innovation think tank. We develop technologies that point the way well into the future.”**

**According to Winterkorn, the world’s most innovative company now employs 46,000 researchers and developers as well as over 10,000 IT experts, all of whom are working on the mobility of the future such as alternative drive concepts or the digitalization of vehicles and factories. He went on to say that the car manufacturer is positioning itself at the forefront of automotive change with its forward-looking “Future Tracks” program. To remain a strong contender in competition with Asia and the USA, Winterkorn called on industry in Europe to “show even more courage and even greater innovative strength. But there is also a need for greater openness and stronger backing from politics and society.”**

Winterkorn stressed that “at Volkswagen, technology is never an end in itself. All these technologies serve people, our customers. Because they make driving safer and more comfortable, because they conserve resources and protect the environment, and because they bring together the mobile and the digital worlds.” That is why he would like to see “in Europe in particular, a climate where new technologies are not eyed with suspicion right from the outset”, but rather a climate “where innovations are truly welcome.” As a center of automotive engineering and manufacturing, Europe must, for example, drive forward core technologies such as piloted driving with determination and speed.

Winterkorn added: “It may come as a surprise for you, but I highly welcome the interest of Apple, Google and others in the automobile. Because that means, the car will gain more acceptance from ‘Digital Natives’.”

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Volkswagen is paying very close attention to the issues of the future for the automotive industry such as electromobility, the digitalization of vehicles, factories and retail, or social change, which is altering, and to a certain extent redefining, the role of the automobile. "Our forward-looking 'Future Tracks' program is the umbrella for all of these activities", Winterkorn said. He pointed out that thanks to sensor technology and connectivity, the Group already has the largest networked fleet in the world on the road, adding that the automaker also has the world's largest low-CO<sub>2</sub> fleet, with the present lineup including 57 model variants that already meet the 95 gram target. The company already offers the widest range of electromobility solutions in the automotive industry as well, with nine electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids.

## **Volkswagen is committed to its environmental goals**

Winterkorn also reiterated that "Volkswagen is committed to its environmental goals", commenting that the present low level of oil prices would not change that: "Oil will not be as cheap as it is at the moment for ever. The CO<sub>2</sub> limits apply irrespective of fuel prices. And, more importantly, this is about our responsibility for protecting the climate. That is why our approach to drive diversity is the right one." He stated that ever more efficient petrol and diesel engines are indispensable. "Let me be very clear about one point: those who talk down diesel are jeopardizing CO<sub>2</sub> targets."

The current status of the Group's ecological realignment initiative launched in 2012 is very positive, and Volkswagen is well ahead of schedule with its most important environmental targets. For example, emissions by the EU new vehicle fleet were brought down to approximately 125 grams CO<sub>2</sub>/km last year. That is 13 percent less than 2010 and 31 percent less than 1995. This means the Group is already well below the legal limit for 2015. Production processes have already been made 19 percent more environmentally compatible within the space of four years, well on the way to the target of 25 percent. According to Winterkorn: "The second half will be tougher than the first. Every additional gram and percent we save will be a hard-fought battle."

The company also made a good start to the year in terms of operating performance. The Volkswagen Group delivered over 1.5 million vehicles in January and February to customers for the first time in its history. Last year, the Group topped the ten million delivery mark for the first time.

**Volkswagen Group Communications**  
Head of  
Corporate & Business Communications  
Michael Brendel  
Phone: +49 (0) 5361 / 9-39 35 6  
E-mail: [michael.brendel@volkswagen.de](mailto:michael.brendel@volkswagen.de)

**Volkswagen Group Communications**  
Spokesperson  
Corporate & Business Communications  
Eric Felber  
Phone: +49 (0) 5361 / 9-87 57 5  
E-mail: [eric.felber@volkswagen.de](mailto:eric.felber@volkswagen.de)