



Media Information  
30 September

### Clear the decks for the new MINI WRC.

**Paris.** Visitors to the 2010 Mondial de l'Automobile in Paris (FR) can look forward to a special treat: The new MINI WRC, which will contest the FIA World Rally Championship from 2011, will receive its world premiere at this international motor show. In addition, Kris Meeke (GB) has been confirmed as one of the drivers who will contest the championship with this brand new rally car.

The MINI WRC, powered by a 1.6-litre, four-cylinder Di turbo-charged engine, recently received a baptism of fire, acquitting itself well during initial testing at Prodrive's rally track. The company commenced development of the car in 2009, and a concept of the MINI WRC will be displayed in Paris.

"The Paris Motor Show is the perfect stage, on which to launch our MINI WRC," says Ian Robertson, member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, responsible for Sales and Marketing. "The response to our announcement that MINI will return to the world of rallying next year was very positive. The FIA World Rally Championship is the pinnacle of rallying, making it the ideal platform for demonstrating the competitive spirit of our brand. The development of the car is running on schedule, and the preparations for the world championship are in full swing. The MINI Countryman production model provided the ideal basis for our new world championship challenger."

The 2011 World Rally Championship will see the new MINI WRC contesting in six of 13 scheduled rounds, with MINI competing in the full 2012 season. In addition, Prodrive plans to make available customer versions to independent teams for use in the championship.

Rallying is hardly uncharted territory for MINI. In the past this popular motor sporting genre decisively shaped the image of the brand. The MINI Cooper S became a true legend through its numerous victories on Rally Monte Carlo. The European Rally Championship, too, saw MINI notch up serial successes.

"MINI can look back on a successful tradition in rallying," says Dr Wolfgang Armbrecht, Senior Vice President Brand Management MINI. "The interest in motorsport among the present generation of MINI customers is massive. The WRC provides an excellent communications platform for the MINI Countryman, upon which the MINI WRC is based."

Prodrive, an experienced motorsport operation, was chosen as the partner in the quest to continue MINI's success story. The company, founded by David Richards, is viewed as one of the most respected and successful in rallying.

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Media Information

Date 30 September

Subject Clear the decks for the new MINI WRC.

Page 2

"This project is a truly passionate opportunity," believes Richards. "MINI is a cult brand which left a lasting impression during its previous motorsport campaigns. We are both extremely happy and proud to be on board as a partner when MINI returns to rallying. We aim to use 2011 as a preparatory year, amassing experience in order to ensure we are fully competitive from the start of the following season. But let's not underestimate the task ahead of us nor the stiff competition we will face on the way, however our target is firmly set on winning the World Championship title again with MINI."

Prodrive was founded in 1984, and has established itself as one of motorsport's leading independent teams. Currently employing over 500 staff, the company is based in Banbury (GB). Among other successes, Prodrive has to date won six World Rally Championships, five British Touring Car titles, and scored three class victories in France's classic Le Mans 24 Hours.

Kris Meeke has been confirmed as the first driver to compete for Prodrive in the MINI WRC. The rally ace from Dungannon (GB) first came to prominence when he won the British Junior Rally Championship in 2002. Numerous victories and titles were to follow. With support from his long-term mentor and former rally world champion, the late Colin McRae (GB), Meeke has been able to successfully establish himself on the rally scene. The Northern Irishman celebrated his most recent success last year, when he won the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC).

The MINI Countryman is the youngest MINI model and also the first to be equipped with an all-wheel-drive system. Therefore this model provided the logical basis for a competitive rally derivative. The flagship MINI Cooper S Countryman is powered by a 1,6-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine, supplemented not only by a twin-scroll turbocharger and direct fuel injection, but also fully variable valve management – so offering by far the best relationship between engine power and fuel consumption in its class. The engine produces an impressive 135 kW / 184 bhp, and accelerates the MINI Cooper S Countryman from 0 to 100 km/h in 7.6 seconds.

As part of the MINIMALISM concept, a range of fuel- and emission-reducing features are fitted as standard and/or in appropriate combinations, including Brake Energy Regeneration, the Auto Start/Stop function, Shift Point Display and the need-based operation of ancillary components.

All MINI Cooper S Countryman and MINI Cooper D Countryman are optionally available with permanent MINI ALL4 all-wheel drive, with an electro-hydraulic differential positioned directly on the final drive varying the distribution from front to rear in an infinite process. Under normal driving conditions up to 50 per cent of the engine's power goes to the rear wheels; under extreme conditions up to



### Media Information

Date 30 September  
Subject Clear the decks for the new MINI WRC.  
Page 3

100 per cent, offering a new, high-traction rendition of the agile handling so typical of MINI.

The heart of the MINI WRC is the BMW Motorsport-developed 1.6 litre, four-cylinder Di turbo-charged engine which can be deployed not only in the WRC, but also in other championships running to the FIA's Super2000 regulations. The power transmission takes place via an Xtrac 6-speed, sequential gearbox. For its outings on the rally stages, the MINI Countryman chassis has been fitted with a roll cage developed by Prodrive, which exceeds the strict safety requirements of the International Automobile Federation (FIA).

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