

Media Information

28 July 2022

BMW Group offers a first glimpse of the new development site in Sokolov.

- With the early deployment of two track sections, the BMW Group is developing test scenarios for new assistance systems for autonomous driving.
- Exclusive test runs with prototypes on a six-kilometre motorway-style circuit.
- Expected to be fully operational by the summer of 2023.

Munich. The early deployment of two test areas marks an important milestone in the construction of the BMW Group's first development site in Central Europe. The Group is presenting the first two track sections for testing autonomous vehicles and assistance systems to guests from politics and the media at the new BMW Group Future Mobility Centre in Sokolov. At the new test site, the BMW Group will continue to advance ground-breaking topics, such as electrification, digitalisation and automated driving. The proving ground in the Karlovy Vary region is about two-and-a-half hours' drive from the BMW Group's main development site, the Research and Development Centre (FIZ), in Munich.

With the launch of the two test tracks and an exclusive insight into its testing operations, the BMW Group will showcase the first results of its 300-million-euro investment in Sokolov. The testing facility is expected to be fully operational by mid-2023 and will have more than 100 employees working on site. The New Technology Area, an approx. 90,000 m² homologation-capable area with three separate run-up tracks, provides optimal conditions for testing assistance systems and behaviour in cross traffic as well as emergency braking and evasive situations. The tests are prepared and controlled from the adjoining control room with temporary workstations.

"With the early deployment of two track sections to prepare for official vehicle testing in Sokolov, we are now testing new assistance systems from the point of view of driver safety and advancing the further development of test scenarios. From mid-2023, the new test site in the Czech Republic will operate in addition to the BMW Group's existing testing facilities in Aschheim near Munich, Miramas in France and Arjeplog in Sweden," explains Andreas Heb, BMW Group project manager responsible for the testing ground in Sokolov.

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In the immediate vicinity of the New Technology Area is the six-kilometre Autonomous Driving Highway, a motorway-style circuit with on- and off-ramp scenarios for testing autonomous vehicles on motorways. The test motorway has been equipped with two functional lanes and an emergency stop lane as well as gantries and a straight stretch measuring over 1,000 meters. "The BMW Group's first development location in Central Europe creates new opportunities. Sokolov offers ideal conditions and suitable grounds for expanding our test locations. The trusting cooperation with property owner Sokolovská uhelná and all political representatives confirms that our choice of new location is the right one," says Robert Thurner, BMW Group Head of Real Estate Management Region Europe, Middle East, Proving Ground.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2021, the BMW Group sold over 2.5 million passenger vehicles and more than 194,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.990 billion. As of 31 December 2020, the BMW Group had a workforce of 120,726 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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