



New agreement with the entrepreneurial ecosystem

## SEAT and Champion Motors create XPLORA, a partnership on technological innovation in Israel

- / The initiative aims to detect new technologies and services related to the connected car and smart mobility
- / With this project, SEAT and Champion Motors commit to find new solutions and business models in the automotive sector
- / SEAT President Luca de Meo took advantage of his visit to Tel Aviv to meet with the **country's high level representatives**
- / Israel is a global hotspot for digital entrepreneurship

Tel Aviv, 02/11/2017. - SEAT and Champion Motors Ltd., **the brand's importer in Israel**, have reached an agreement to create XPLORA, a transversal team of specialists focussed on technological innovation projects aimed at the connected car and smart mobility services. The goal of the initiative is to encourage relations with local mobility-related startups and players and identify innovative projects that could lead to future solutions and business models for the brand.

Luca de Meo, who travelled to Tel Aviv to sign the partnership with Champion Motors and gained insights into the initial stages of XPLORA, said that **"having the opportunity to launch this type of project in Israel, one of our main markets, makes it a strategic location for SEAT"**. In addition, de Meo pointed out that **"Israel is a benchmark country in innovation, and is considered the 'nation of startups', so there is no better place to launch an initiative of this kind"**.

Professor Itzhak Swary, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Champion Motors, expressed that **"we are happy to strengthen and deepen the ties between Champion Motors and SEAT. I am sure that our joint activity in the smart mobility market in Israel will yield business opportunities for the Spanish automaker and for the local industry"**.

In order to develop the project, XPLORA, which is headquartered in Tel Aviv and will carry out its activity around the country, will have an initial team made up of four professionals. Where SEAT is concerned, the company is going to arrange a one year transfer for three members of its transversal Easy Mobility Team, specialising in UX Design, Electric Development and **Business Development, which is spearheading the company's digital transformation, to cover the needs of the initiative and identify and develop the most relevant solutions for SEAT and the sector.** Furthermore, Champion Motors Ltd. will assign a Project Manager responsible for coordinating and carrying out the project since its initial stage. This team of professionals, who will begin by scouting startups and projects that might be of interest, will select the most outstanding innovations and carry out concept tests in close collaboration with SEAT



specialist teams in Martorell. These first steps will be used to analyse the feasibility of pilot testing on a larger scale in Israel and at European level.

With this agreement, SEAT will establish direct contact with the most innovative projects and with startups that are taking off in Israel, as well as harness technological resources and business platforms. Furthermore, Champion Motors, which is seeking to become an active **part of its local technological ecosystem growth, will be the link between the country's** startups and the Spanish multinational.

### **Strategic visit to one of the company's key markets**

Throughout his trip to Israel, SEAT President Luca de Meo, along with the entourage of SEAT Executive Vice-President for Sales and Marketing, Wayne Griffiths, and SEAT Executive Vice-President for Research and Development, Dr. Matthias Rabe, had the chance to spend time with leading local figures, such as Economy Minister Eli Cohen, Chief Scientist of Israel Innovation Authority Ami Appelbaum and general director **of the Prime Minister's Office** Eli Groner. In addition, de Meo met with the main Israeli startups involved in the initiative. The President of SEAT also opened the second day of the Fuel Choices and Smart Mobility Initiative summit held in Tel Aviv.

#### Prime example of entrepreneurship

Israel currently has more than 7,000 emerging businesses, making it the second country with the highest concentration of startups after Silicon Valley. 50% of these are committed to areas such as IT or internet software. Moreover, the country has more than 100 accelerators and most of the business incubators are managed by the Israel Innovation Authority.

As regards the number of startups targeting the automotive sector and smart mobility in Israel, there has been a dramatic increase in the last few years. In 2013, the country had 87 companies, whereas today there is a total of 520 new businesses.

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 81% of its vehicles, and is present in over 80 countries through a network of 1,700 dealerships. In 2016, SEAT obtained an operating profit of 143 million euros, the highest in the history of the brand, and achieved worldwide sales of nearly 410,000 vehicles.

SEAT Group employs more than 14,500 professionals at its three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Leon and Arona. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca and the Toledo in the Czech Republic, 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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