

VLADIMIR PUTIN WISHES LADA TO WIN

Russian Federation's Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin visited Togliatti and the LADA Avtovaz factory on Tuesday.

In the city of the Samara region, Mr Putin chaired a remote session of the Russian Government that was dedicated to the situation of the national automotive industry.

During his visit the Prime Minister met the workers, visited the automobile plants and took a close look to the exhibition of LADA Sport cars.

Mr Putin showed a lot of interest for the racing and rally cars, sat behind the wheel of some of them and wished success to all drivers who take part in the competitions under the LADA Sport banner.



Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin during his visit at LADA Sport

EUROPEAN CHAMPION LOOKS AT WTCC

Michel Nykjær, the winner of two consecutive FIA European Touring Car cups, plans to make a few appearances in the WTCC.

The 29-year old Dane won a first European title in 2007 at Adria, Italy, at the wheel of a SEAT León and encored last year at the Austrian Salzburgring driving a Chevrolet Lacetti. *"After we won the race the team and I started negotiations for the 2009 Danish Touring Car championship,"* said Nykjær who was crowned Danish Touring Car champion in 2007.

DTC is the priority, but Nykjær and the team are looking ahead: *"We won the European cup together and we are certain that we could do well in the WTCC. Chevrolet Motorsport Denmark have a very tight cooperation with Chevrolet's WTCC team, and I am hoping that we could join a few WTCC events, which are not in clash with the Danish races."*

BENNANI'S FIRST TEST AT MAGNY-COURS

Mehdi Bennani had his first test in the Exagon Engineering SEAT Wefnesday on the French track of Magny-Cours. The young Moroccan driver, who will make his first appearance in the FIA World Touring Car Championship at Marrakech, spent the day at the wheel of the petrol-powered SEAT León car sporting the red-white-green livery of OMNT, Morocco's Tourism Office.

During the test Bennani was watched carefully by the team principal Luc Marchetti, the team manager Cathy Muller and by her brother Yvan, the reigning WTCC champion.

"Yvan was very generous in giving Mehdi advice. I have to say that we were all impressed by the way this young driver was able to quickly adapt himself to the car and also by the interesting feedback he gave. Obviously it will take some times to be competitive in such a tough championship, but I'm sure Mehdi has the potential to do well," Marchetti commented.



Mehdi Bennani tests the Exagon Engineering SEAT at Magny-Cours

SEAT AND MULLER WIN WEBSITE AWARD

2008 WTCC champions SEAT and Yvan Muller won the trophies awarded by the visitors of the website www.touringcartimes.com.

DRIVER OF THE YEAR: Muller 34.6%, Fabrizio Giovanardi 33.4, Richard Göransson 16.1.

TEAM OF THE YEAR: SEAT 40.3%, VX Racing 27.6, Audi Sport Team Abt 17.6.

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR: SEAT 38.4%, BMW 29.4, Vauxhall 17.0, Audi 15.2.

MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR MARRAKECH

Rounds 5 and 6 of the 2009 FIA World Touring Car Championship will take place at Marrakech, Morocco, 2nd and 3rd May.

The deadline to apply for media credentials is Tuesday, 21st April.

Please remind that media passes issued by National Sporting Authorities and/or any other series will NOT be valid.

The Accreditation form may be downloaded at the websites www.fia.com and www.fiawtcc.com.

- **International Press** must send applications to Fabio Ravaioli
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- **Moroccan Press** must send applications to Anne De Lanoue
tel: 024 458408, fax: 024 458636; email: a.delanoue@marrakechgrandprix.com
- **TV and Radio** must send applications to Antonios Argyropoulos
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COUNTDOWN: - 29 DAYS



to the 2009 FIA WTCC Race of Morocco – 2nd / 3rd May in Marrakech