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## Czech and Slovenian heads of government visit the ŠKODA DigiLab

- › ŠKODA CEO Bernhard Maier informs Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar about ŠKODA AUTO's digitalisation strategy
- › ŠKODA on its way to becoming a mobility service provider
- › ŠKODA will increasingly test innovative digital concepts from Slovenia
- › ŠKODA seeks to intensify partnerships with technical universities in the Czech Republic and Slovenia on the topic of digitalisation

**Mladá Boleslav / Prague, 23 January 2017 – Today, the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, Bohuslav Sobotka and Miro Cerar, have visited the ŠKODA DigiLab in Prague. In conversation with ŠKODA CEO Bernhard Maier, the heads of government discussed the future of the automotive industry in the digital age with a primary focus on innovative mobility services. Amongst other things, the possibility of collaborations between Czech and Slovenian companies was addressed. In this context, Bernhard Maier also explained ŠKODA's digitalisation strategy and encouraged the intensification of partnerships with technical universities in the Czech Republic and Slovenia.**

"The development of digital technologies, particularly in respect of mobility services, is of central importance for the future direction of our company," said ŠKODA CEO Bernhard Maier. "In this context, the DigiLab is an integral part of our 2025 strategy, with which we are preparing ŠKODA for the digital age. We are delighted that politicians are showing an interest in the challenges posed by digitalisation in the automotive industry and that they actively support development," added Maier.

"The digital agenda is a priority for the Czech government – and not just within the Czech Republic. It is important to view the digital market agenda as a key part of the European Union's economic policy. It is the government's role to support the development of modern technologies and to do everything possible to ensure that these improve the life of our citizens," said the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka, during his visit to ŠKODA's DigiLab.

With the foundation of the DigiLab, ŠKODA has strengthened its expertise in both innovation and digital development. Creative teams will research and develop new business models here. In particular, this will include greater integration of digital technologies into ŠKODA's existing core business and the development of innovative connectivity and mobility services. With modern services for individual mobility, ŠKODA intends to develop new business segments.

During the visit by the heads of government, ŠKODA launched the website [www.skodadigilab.com](http://www.skodadigilab.com). Here start-ups can submit projects that lend themselves to





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cooperation with ŠKODA. Topics include solutions for smart cities, a shared economy and concepts for the use of big data.

The visit saw both heads of government highlight the exceptional importance of digitalisation for the economic development of their countries and explain which political frameworks they considered to be useful for the promotion of digital innovations. They also addressed the prospects of fully interconnected production in the Czech Republic and Slovenia in accordance with the Industry 4.0 concept.

During the Prime Ministers' visit, Bernhard Maier announced that the ŠKODA DigiLab will step up testing of innovative digital concepts also from Slovenia in the future. This includes projects from centres of excellence and ICT (information and communication technology) start-ups, from research and development departments as well as governmental projects. Furthermore, the long-established Czech brand would like to enter partnerships with technical universities in the Czech Republic and Slovenia for specific digital projects in the future in order to gain digitalisation talent for the company.

Both countries are amongst the most important European automotive locations with plants of multiple well-known car manufacturers and numerous suppliers. Many other companies are also concerning themselves with the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalisation. That's why Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and his Slovenian counterpart Miro Cerar also spoke with representatives of mobility-oriented 'digital' start-ups from Slovenia at ŠKODA's DigiLab in Prague. Amongst other things, in the future the DigiLab is to connect digital projects in the Czech Republic and Slovenia and build bridges between companies from both countries.

ŠKODA only recently defined digitalisation as a central course of action within its 2025 strategy. As a cross-departmental function, it will involve all of the company's departments – from the training and development of staff and the development of vehicles using modern virtual reality and 3D technology through to Industry 4.0 solutions. For one thing, this means that digitalisation will influence the classic ŠKODA business of car manufacturing even more heavily. For another, the revenue from the digital business, such as mobility services for example, is expected to reach a similar level to the income generated from the core business of vehicle manufacturing by as early as 2025.

## Further information:

Jozef Baláž  
Head of Corporate Communications  
T +420 326 811 773  
[jozef.balaz@skoda-auto.cz](mailto:jozef.balaz@skoda-auto.cz)

Tomáš Kubík  
Corporate Communications  
T +420 326 811 749  
[tomas.kubik@skoda-auto.cz](mailto:tomas.kubik@skoda-auto.cz)





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## Media images:

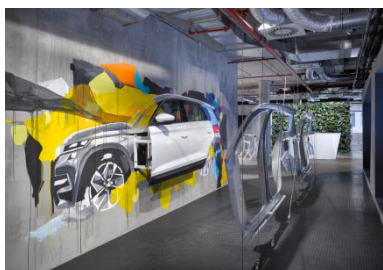


### Czech and Slovenian heads of government visit the ŠKODA DigiLab

Today, the Prime Ministers of Slovenia and the Czech Republic, Miro Cerar and Bohuslav Sobotka, and ŠKODA CEO Bernhard Maier (left to right) visited the ŠKODA DigiLab in Prague.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. The company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- > currently offers the following model series: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI as well as the KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- > delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide in 2016.
- > has been part of Volkswagen Group since 1991, one of the most successful car manufacturers in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles as well as components such as engines and gear transmissions.
- > operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- > employs over 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

