Környe, 26 October 2017.

**BRIDGESTONE COMPLETES 85 BILLION FORINT DEVELOPMENT TO ITS TATABÁNYA FACTORY**

Digital manufacturing technology, R&D and production of innovative DriveGuard tyres deployed to Hungary

**Bridgestone has completed its development program and inaugurated its Tatabánya plant extended by an 85 billion Forint investment. As a result of the development, inaugurated today by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian subsidiary of the world’s largest tyre and rubber product corporation has doubled the floor size of the factory, increased production capacity from an annual 1.8 million to 3.6 million tyres, and tripled the number of employees. The company has introduced digital manufacturing technology unique even by European standards to its Tatabánya plant, where it also conducts R&D and manufactures close to half of the available sizes of the DriveGuard tyre, one of its most advanced products.**

**Continuous growth**

In 2008 Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd. began production of ultra-high performance car and SUV tyres in over 230 sizes for vehicles mainly in the premium category. The company decided to make a capital investment totalling 85 billion Forints (276 million Euro) back in 2013, in order to develop its Tatabánya factory after signing the Strategic Agreement with the Hungarian government.

As part of the development it built a new, 97,200 m² facility behind the existing 47,200 m² factory, as a result of which its floor size has doubled to 144,400 m², and has also installed the internationally most advanced manufacturing technology at the new facility.

**State-of-the-art manufacturing technology**

Out of the Bridgestone’s factories in the world, firstly it is the Tatabánya plant that operates new type of mixers, which produce more consistent quality compound for tyres manufacturing. In Europe, following Japan, the Hungarian factory is the first to use the new, artificial intelligence-based EXAMATION digital technology in manufacturing, which checks and analyses the tyres at 480 different points in order to ensure timely and flawless production and the high quality of the products. The fully automated storage, for the tyres to-be vulcanised, with capacity up for 70,000 tyres, as well as a final inspection and palletizing system, which enables the company to performing the delivery processes more efficiently and more accurately, are also unique technologies.

*‘Our company has decided to implement this significant capacity and technology development in Tatabánya because, thanks to the investor-friendly economic policy, the automotive industry has grown dynamically in Hungary, which our company intends to supply. Our aim is that more and more vehicles manufactured in Hungary run on Hungarian tyres, and this development supports us in providing superior quality products and services to our European and Hungarian customers’ -* said Adolfo Llorens, Senior Vice President of Manufacturing at Bridgestone.

**Capacity to double again by 2020**

The development at the Tatabánya plant has increased its annual capacity from 1.8 million to 3.6 million tyres. The extended plant is expected to reach its peak capacity by 2020, when it will manufacture an annual volume of 7.2 million Bridgestone and Firestone tyres, the most popular brands among drivers.

*“The newly completed development enables the plant to support R&D activities, in cooperation with the Rome Technological Center, in the area of new raw material development for tyres” -* said Melinda Topolcsik, Chief Executive Officer of Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd. “*This is exactly why Bridgestone has selected Hungary as a location for manufacturing DriveGuard, one of its most advanced tyres that has won multiple innovation and product awards and is engineered to allow you to continue driving 80 kilometres at up to 80 km/h even after a puncture” -* added Melinda Topolcsik.

**Expanding employment, expanding export**

In parallel with the increase in production, the number of employees at Bridgestone Tatabánya has also risen. Before the expansion, the company only had 361 employees. Currently, it has close to 1100 workers, which makes Bridgestone to be one of the major employers in Komárom-Esztergom County.

80% of the employees work as operators and technicians. The company was one of the first to develop and introduce a progressive wage and career model under which, subject to productivity and personal performance, current employees can increase their income by as much as 40 per cent in 3 years.

The company exports its products made in Tatabánya to European (Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain, France and Turkey) and overseas (Mexico, the USA and Japan) markets.

**For further information:**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

***About Bridgestone***

*Bridgestone Corporation, the world’s largest tyre and rubber product company was founded by Shojiro Ishibashi in 1931. The company inherited the name of its founder: ‘ishi’ and ‘bashi’ mean ‘stone’ and ‘bridge’ respectively in Japanese. The mission of Bridgestone has remained the same since its foundation: “Serving Society with Superior Quality”.*

*Based on the 2016 sales figures, Bridgestone Corporation is the world’s largest manufacturer of tyres and other rubber products. The company and its subsidiaries operate 180 plants in 25 countries and employ over 144,000 employees worldwide. Its products are sold in over 150 countries.*

*Bridgestone has a broad product portfolio. Tyres account for 84% of its products; the remaining 16% are automotive components, industrial rubber products, chemical products and sports equipment.*

***About Bridgestone Europe***

*Bridgestone Europe, with headquarters in Belgium, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tokyo-based Bridgestone Corporation, the world’s largest tyre and rubber company. Bridgestone Europe operates in more than 60 countries and has over 18.200 employees. Across the region it has 14 tyre and tyre related plants, a major R&D centre and a proving ground. Bridgestone Europe’s premium tyres are sold globally.*

***About Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd.***

*Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd. has been operating since 2006, and today is one of Hungary’s largest tyre plants. Since its foundation, the number of its employees has more than doubled. Production began in 2008 with 361 employees. Today close to 1.1000 people are engaged in the production of Bridgestone’s world-famous brands. In 2016, the company’s annual sales revenue was 34 billion HUFs.*

*Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd. manufactures ultra-high performance car and SUV tyres in over 230 sizes for vehicles mainly in the premium category. The range of products manufactured at the plant includes the DriveGuard, Turanza and Potenza brands from the Bridgestone product range and the Roadhawk, Winterhawk and Destination brands from the Firestone product range.*

*Bridgestone Tatabánya Manufacturing Ltd. has approximately 750 suppliers, mostly Hungarian SMEs, from which the company has procured goods and services in the value of 4.6 billion Forints last year. In 2016, the company’s annual sales revenue was 36 billion Forints.*

*For more information about Bridgestone in Europe please visit* [*www.bridgestone.eu*](http://www.bridgestone.eu)*,* [*www.bridgestonenewsroom.eu*](http://www.bridgestonenewsroom.eu) *or find us on* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/Bridgestone.EU)*,* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/BridgestoneTyre)*,* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/bridgestoneeurope/) *and* [*YouTube*](https://www.youtube.com/user/bridgestone)*.*