

## **Snow and cold can not jeopardize 7. INA Rally Kumrovec**

Weekend prior to 7. INA Rally Kumrovec a promotion of the Event was held at Westgate Shopping City. Visitors could get information on the Event through the whole day, and they also could see showcased rally cars of current Croatian champions. Skoda Fabia R5 of Krisztian Hideg and Istvan Kereka, members of AC Delta Sport Zagreb, who also won the Mitropa Cup last season, as well as Fiat 126, of the historic rally champions Marko Oto Juricev Martincev and Sanda Tolic.

The preparations for the competition have entered the final phase. A total of 150 people will be operating the rally and Clerk of the Course Željko Štefanić says that neither the snow nor the cold can spoil the first race of the season: "We have snowplows in standby mode, but rain, snow or sun can not surprise us. We expect a large number of spectators and we expect a spectacle in Kumrovec. On Friday we start with scrutineering and administrative checks, followed by two prologues in Terme Tuhelj at 16:45 and 19:00. After that, there will be prize giving and a small rally party. On Saturday the ceremonial start will begin at 9:00 at Old Village Museum, followed by special stages and at 18:00 the finish ceremony at Old Village Museum. "

Special stages of Kumrovec have been known for years as the most demanding in Croatia, and consequently they attract a large number of spectators, as well as the crews. The president of the organizing club, AC Delta Sport Dino Deljkic, says that the first weekend in March is ideal for foreign crews to test their cars before the start of the championships in their countries: "Three years ago we decided ourselves for this term because a large number of foreign crews are coming to test their vehicles. The track is extremely demanding, it has a lot of curves, crests, uphill, and downhill with lowest average speed in Croatia, about 85 km/h, a track that just does not allow mistakes. "

Austrian Niki Mayr-Melnhof in Ford Fiesta R5 will defend his victory at INA Rally Kumrovec. This year with a new co-driver, Thomas Zeiser: " It's been a real pleasure driving in Kumrovec last year and with the sweet win in the end it was an amazing experience for us. As I'm still pretty new to rallying it was my first ever rally win, which I will for sure remember for a long time."

Mayr-Melnhof and Zeiser will have major opponents in the current Croatian Champions Krisztian Hideg and Istvan Kerek, who will compete for the first time at Rally Kumrovec in R5 car. They have been celebrating at Kumrovec stages in year 2016. "This is a very short race, the shortest in the Croatian Championship. We love the long rallies because we can build tactics for them. Of course, our goal is to defend the Croatian title this season and we will see if we will succeed in that", concluded Istvan Kerek.

The Eno-gastronomic offer from is becoming richer year by year. During the Rally Kumrovec, a significant increase in the number of overnight stays has been recorded, and this year the caterers will also offer a music program for visitors, said director of the Tourist Board of arrea Kumrovec, Desinic, Zagorska Sela Milan Kladnicki: "It is our pleasure to host this event that is no longer just a sporting one, it is also a tourist event. It brings the benefit to our whole region. That's why we've also joined organizers to create the best conditions for both - spectators and competitors."