Volvo Cars puts people first in the development of autonomous cars

Volvo Cars, the premium car maker, has revealed its distinctive approach to developing autonomous cars with the introduction of a family of four at the Detroit Motor Show.

The Hain family, from Gothenburg in Sweden, are the first people chosen to take part in a real-life autonomous drive research program using real cars, in real traffic.

“We do things differently at Volvo Cars – we always have,” said Håkan Samuelsson, President & CEO, Volvo Car Group. “Our main focus has always been on people and making their lives easier. Technology should improve the consumer experience making mobility safer, sustainable and more convenient.”

Volvo Cars believes that in the rush to deliver fully autonomous cars, many car makers are forgetting the most important ingredient: the people that will use them. Volvo’s unique approach is to define the technology based on the role of the driver – not the other way around.

“The aim of the Drive Me research project is to focus on how to enhance people's lives and have a positive impact on society. We take a holistic rather than a purely technical approach to our research and development processes. No one else to our knowledge is developing autonomous drive from a human-centric standpoint,” said Henrik Green, Senior Vice President, Research and Development at Volvo Car Group.

The Drive Me project is a collaborative research program consisting of several players from public, private and academic fields. It is probably the most advanced, ambitious and extensive real-life autonomous drive project in existence. The project will see up to 100 autonomous cars on the roads around Gothenburg, Sweden, home to Volvo Cars, driven by real people, in real traffic during 2017. The project is set to expand to other cities around the world in the near future.

“We want to learn more around how people feel when they engage and disengage autonomous drive, what the handover should be like, and what sort of things they would do in the car when it’s driving them to their destination,” added Henrik Green.
The Swedish car maker, a leading partner in the Drive Me research project, aims to have its first fully autonomous car on the market by 2021.

Volvo Cars provided a vision of what autonomous cars could deliver with Concept 26, revealed in 2015. More recently the company has partnered with ride-sharing company Uber to develop base technology for autonomous cars and has launched a joint venture with leading automotive safety supplier Autoliv, called Zenuity aimed at developing benchmark autonomous drive software and safety solutions for OEMs.

Volvo Cars also announced preliminary full year sales figures at the Detroit Motor Show, reflecting the continued growth that the premium car maker is achieving, and restated its commitment to further growing the brand in the United States, where a new Volvo car plant will begin production in 2018, creating over 4,000 new American jobs in Charleston, South Carolina.

Note to Editors:

More information on the Drive Me project and Volvo’s approach to autonomous drive.

Volvo Car Group in 2015/16
For the 2015 financial year, Volvo Car Group recorded an operating profit of 6,620 MSEK (2,128 MSEK in 2014). Revenue over the period amounted to 164,043 MSEK (137,590 MSEK). For the full year 2016, global sales reached a record 534,332 cars, an increase of 6.2 per cent versus 2015. The record sales and operating profit cleared the way for Volvo Car Group to continue investing in its global transformation plan. Full financial results for 2016 will be announced in February.

About Volvo Car Group
Volvo has been in operation since 1927. Today, Volvo Cars is one of the most well-known and respected car brands in the world with sales of 534,332 cars in 2016 in about 100 countries. Volvo Cars has been under the ownership of the Zhejiang Geely Holding (Geely Holding) of China since 2010. It formed part of the Swedish Volvo Group until 1999, when the company was bought by Ford Motor Company of the US. In 2010, Volvo Cars was acquired by Geely Holding.

As of December 2016, Volvo Cars had around 30,000 employees worldwide. Volvo Cars head office, product development, marketing and administration functions are mainly located in Gothenburg, Sweden. Volvo Cars head office for China is located in Shanghai. The company’s main car production plants are located in Gothenburg (Sweden), Ghent (Belgium), Chengdu and Daqing (China), while engines are manufactured in Skövde (Sweden) and Zhangjiakou (China) and body components in Olofström (Sweden).

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