

Press release

Hankook SmartFlex AL51 and DL51: designed for regional and long-distance transport

- **Wide range of uses and long service life**
- **Up to 25% less rolling resistance for maximum fuel efficiency and lower CO₂ emissions over medium distances**
- **Up to 20% higher mileage over long distances**

Neu-Isenburg, Germany, 09 May 2023 – The logistics and transport industry is being faced with major challenges. It's not just increasing fuel costs, growing competitive pressure and the lack of trained drivers that are causing headaches for companies, but the fact that they simultaneously need to make transport operations more sustainable. Addressing these concerns premium tyre maker Hankook has added two new tyres to its truck tyre range which are suitable for both long-distance and regional transport. The Hankook SmartFlex AL51 for the steering axle and an all-position tyre and the new Hankook SmartFlex DL51 for the drive axle are specifically designed to meet these hybrid distance requirements. A comprehensive technology package means that the new SmartFlex tyres have a significantly lower rolling resistance than the SmartFlex AH31/DH31 over medium distances.

"Hankook recognised early on what the future challenges in the logistics industry would be, which is why we have continually renewed our truck and bus tyre portfolio," explained Sanghoon Lee, President of Hankook Tire Europe. "Mileage, safety and sustainability are equally important and all contribute to the fact that a greater number of fleet operators in Europe and around the world rely on our products."

Guy Heywood, Vice President Marketing Strategy Truck & Bus at Hankook Tire Europe, added: "We see more fleet partners using the same vehicles for long haul and regional applications. These hybrid usage conditions call for different tyre requirements – the need for better fuel efficiency than a standard regional tyre and also better mileage performance than a standard long haul tyre. The new Hankook hybrid product is designed to meet these new usage demands, delivering optimum fuel efficiency, mileage and also - thanks to the 3D tread pattern – maximum grip and safety from the first to last mm of tread wear."

Both Hankook SmartFlex tyres are available in sizes 315/70 R22.5 156/150L (AL51) and 315/70 R22.5 154/150L (DL51), with more sizes to come over the course of the year.

Driving stability up to the final kilometre: SmartFlex tyres for steering and drive axles

Regarding the new Hankook **SmartFlex AL51**, the steering axle and all-position tyre, Hankook's design engineers have managed to reduce rolling resistance by up to 20% compared with the SmartFlex AH31 through adopting various targeted measures.

The SmartFlex AL51 comes in a striking design featuring three parallel tread grooves. The stepped tread groove wall increases stability of the now wider tread blocks. These are designed to be stiffer, which improves grip, increases mileage, and reduces rolling resistance. In addition, the reinforced interlocking of the blocks has a positive impact which on the tyre's service life and traction. The sipes and hidden tread grooves created through the 3D metal printing procedure allow for even wear. This means the tyre retains its safety, traction and rolling resistance properties throughout its life cycle. The hidden tread grooves are revealed in two stages depending on the level of wear, ensuring continued wet grip and traction. Once around 40 per cent of the tyre has worn down, the newly revealed 3D sipes benefit from the rigidity of the remaining tread blocks which increases grip and also contributes to the low rolling resistance. As the tyre reaches 70 per cent wear, additional linear grooves appear to give the tyre more traction and grip in the wet. By using horn-shaped, self-generating sipes that prevent cracking, the load on the tyre shoulders is reduced. They also enable water to be evacuated in a more targeted manner, resulting in 15% improved wet performance.

Similarly, the **SmartFlex DL51** brings together multiple innovations for the drive axle. Compared to the previous Hankook SmartFlex DH31, rolling resistance is reduced by up to 25%. The more closed tread deep within the tyre, which features three parallel zig-zag tread grooves, is characteristic and improves traction while lowering rolling resistance. Likewise, the wider tread blocks minimises rolling resistance while increasing stiffness. As per the model for the steering axle, the tread adapts organically as the tyre wears down. New tread patterns appear in stages to ensure low rolling resistance, superb traction and good wet braking performance throughout the mileage covered.

An important feature of these new products in the Hankook SmartFlex range is the advanced compounding technology; a carbon-silica dual filler system which improves the homogeneity of the rubber compound mix, increasing fuel efficiency. Another notable feature is the significantly lower level of heat generated by the tyre, which is due to Hankook's innovative mixing system (IMS) and the rigidity of the tread blocks due to the interlocking 3D sipes. The Stiffness Control Contour Technology (SCCT) ensures uniform tread deformation, which counteracts uneven wear through targeted load distribution.

SmartFlex tyres display the 3PMSF symbol to indicate unlimited use all year round. Both of the new variants are suitable for regrooving, while the high-quality carcass ensures they can all be retreaded too.

About Hankook Tire

Hankook Tire manufactures globally innovative, award-winning radial tyres of proven superior quality for passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, RVs, trucks, and buses as well as motorsports (circuit racing/street circuits/rallies).

Aspiring to bring consumers the utmost excellence in product quality, technological excellence and driving satisfaction, Hankook Tire continuously invests in research and development maintaining five R&D centres and eight production facilities around the world. Bespoke tyre solutions for the European markets as well as European Original Equipment according to the requirements of leading premium car manufacturers, are developed in the company's regional Technical Centre in Hanover/Germany. Production for the European region is taking place in the state-of-the-art manufacturing site in Rácalmás/Hungary which was inaugurated in June 2007 and is continuously being expanded. Currently around 3,000 employees produce up to 19 million tyres a year for passenger cars, SUVs and light trucks.

Hankook Tire's European headquarters are located in Neu-Isenburg near Frankfurt am Main in Germany. The manufacturer operates further branches in several European countries and sells its products through regional distributors in other local markets. Hankook Tire employs approximately 20,000 people worldwide and sells products in over 160 countries. The company has been selected as the technical partner and exclusive tyre supplier of the Generation 3 for the FIA ABB Formula E World Championship, starting 2023. Internationally leading car manufacturers rely on tyres made by Hankook for their original equipment. Approximately 38 percent of the company's global sales are generated within the European and CIS-Region. Hankook Tire has been represented in the renowned Dow Jones Sustainability Index World (DJSI World) since 2016.

For more information please visit www.hankooktire-mediacyenter.com or www.hankooktire.com

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