14th April 2014

**FIA WTCC 2014 Begins**

Jose Maria ‘Pechito’ Lopez won a “lights to flag” race hotly pursued by newcomer to WTCC Sebastien Loeb. Current FIA WTCC Champion Yvan Muller had to settle for third in a clear Citroen dominated first race of the season. This was the season opener in Marrakech’s street circuit with Tom Chilton following at some distance from the impressive Citroen trio, with a fourth ‘best of the rest’ place.

Crowds of spectators had flocked to watch the FIA WTCC show in the North-African Imperial city from early on Friday enjoying a certainly majestic weather and the opportunity to get close to their stars and to witness at first hand all the excitement of the training sessions and setting up of cars. On Saturday thousands attended the qualifying runs which had resulted in ‘Pechito’ Lopez achieving the first pole position of the new season and this form continued throughout the whole weekend.

Race two also had similar protagonists although this time the Frenchman Loeb managed his maiden victory narrowly ahead of the argentine Lopez, who now tops the overall table with a 1 point lead - thanks to his pole position on Saturday’s qualifiers.

In third, a meritorious effort from Valente who managed to pip Chilton at the end for his first podium finish. The beginning of race two had been hampered by an unfortunate accident which caused Yvan Muller and Tom Coronel to retire early.

After their first wins of the season both Lopez and Loeb were complimentary and graceful thanking their team’s splendid efforts which enabled them to compete at such high level.

For his part David Oliva, responsible for Yokohama Europe communications expressed satisfaction at the way the first race weekend of the Championship had gone with a very exciting and spectacular treat for all motorsport fans. “With the new drivers and the new regulations and the cars being even more spectacular this season and our new 18” ADVAN tyres it promises to be a very exciting championship ahead”.

The FIA WTCC Championship will continue next weekend in France at the Paul Ricard circuit.