

Press Release

Expert Organization Celebrates Centennial

100 Years of DEKRA: Safety in a Changing World



Today, June 30, 2025, DEKRA celebrates its 100th anniversary – with a clear focus on the future. What began in 1925 with voluntary vehicle inspections is now a global expert organization for safety, sustainability, and digital trust. On its centennial, DEKRA reaffirms its commitment to tackling the major challenges of our time – in line with its anniversary motto: “Securing the Future.”

DEKRA was founded on June 30, 1925, in Berlin as the “Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein” (German Motor Vehicle Inspection Association) – at a time when the automobile was beginning to reshape the world. Its mission: voluntary technical inspections to bring safety to a new era of mobility. A century later, this initiative has evolved into a global expert organization with 48,000 employees in around 60 countries – all pursuing one clear goal: enabling safety and trust in a changing world.

What began in 1925 with vehicle inspections has grown into a comprehensive portfolio across mobility, industry, environment, and digital technologies. DEKRA tests both physical and digital products, processes, and systems. “Safety is not static – it evolves with the world we live in,” says CEO Stan Zurkiewicz. “Our task is to help shape key areas of transformation – mobility, digitalization, artificial intelligence, and sustainability – with expertise, responsibility, and foresight.”

Shaping Germany – Expanding Globally

DEKRA's history is marked by constant progress. When periodic vehicle inspections became mandatory in Germany in 1951, DEKRA played a key role in their implementation. The 1960s and 1970s brought a focus on education and research, including the founding of DEKRA Akademie (1974), the Research and Development department (1968), and Accident Research (1978) – the latter with the aim of learning from data.

After German reunification, DEKRA took over responsibilities from the former East German vehicle authority and built a comprehensive inspection network in the new

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federal states. Shortly thereafter, the company entered international markets, including France, Spain, China, and the United States. Since then, DEKRA has pursued a globally focused strategy – while maintaining strong roots in its home market of Germany.

New Fields – Same Mission: Safety in Transition

Starting in the mid-2000s, DEKRA systematically expanded its competencies in industrial inspection, infrastructure, and environmental technologies – with the founding of DEKRA Industrial GmbH as a major milestone.

In 2017, the acquisition of the Lausitzring racetrack in Brandenburg, Germany, marked an important step toward future mobility. Together with the neighboring DEKRA Technology Center, it now forms Europe's largest independent test center for automated and connected driving – a symbol of mobility transformation and the safe, responsible implementation of new technologies. Today, DEKRA's scope ranges from AI validation and cybersecurity to hydrogen safety and sustainability certifications. The common thread remains: building trust where transformation happens.

Testing Expertise for Tomorrow's World

“Digitalization, connected systems, and artificial intelligence are increasingly shaping our everyday lives – at home, on the road, and in the workplace. To fully harness their potential and drive innovation, we must understand their risks and manage them effectively. Only then can we truly trust them,” says Petra Finke, Chief Digitalization Officer at DEKRA. “Safety is the foundation for that trust. That's why we've developed an integrated testing approach that combines functional safety, cybersecurity, and AI validation.”

DEKRA bundles these services under the term Digital Trust Services. This means the organization doesn't just assess whether software or systems function properly and pose no danger to users – it also examines whether they are resilient against cyberattacks, transparent in their decision-making logic, and ethically sound in their use of AI. “At DEKRA, we view digitalization not only from a technical angle but also strategically – as a driver for more efficient processes, intelligently connected data, and new, trustworthy services, both internally and externally,” Finke adds.

Global Growth with Focus – People at the Center

DEKRA is also expanding its geographical footprint in future-relevant markets. “We are making targeted investments in regions where transformation is tangible – in Asia, North America, and Europe,” says Peter Laursen, Chief Operating Officer for DEKRA's global regions. “These are the places where new technologies, new industries, and new safety requirements are emerging. And we want to help shape that future – not just respond to it.” At the same time, DEKRA's operational backbone – such as vehicle

inspection, industrial inspection, product testing, and audits – remains central. “These are our core services, where we also see great growth potential,” Laursen continues.

However, sustainable growth in new markets requires more than technology – it needs people who understand and drive change. “The future is not decided by technology alone – but by people who use it responsibly,” emphasizes Chief Financial Officer and Head of Human Resources Wolfgang Linsenmaier. “That’s why we are consistently investing in employee development, strengthening leadership, and fostering digital skills at all levels.” DEKRA is also modernizing internal structures – with clearer career paths, more efficient systems, and a globally connected HR approach. The goal: a learning, values-based organization with strong customer focus.

UNICEF Partnership: Securing Water Means Securing the Future

As part of its centennial, DEKRA is also breaking new ground in social responsibility – through a partnership with UNICEF for the Water Security for All initiative. Together, the two organizations are implementing programs to provide access to clean drinking water in regions highly affected by climate change – including solar-powered water pumps, technical training centers, and modern groundwater treatment. “Water is essential for life – and increasingly scarce,” says CEO Zurkiewicz. “Our partnership with UNICEF demonstrates what ‘Securing the Future’ means to us: the future begins with responsibility – for products and systems, but above all, for people.”

The centennial is being celebrated in Berlin, DEKRA’s founding location, with partners from business, politics, and society.

Caption:

On June 30, DEKRA celebrates its 100th anniversary. What began in 1925 with vehicle inspections has grown into a comprehensive portfolio across mobility, industry, environment, and digital technologies.

About DEKRA

For 100 years, DEKRA has been a trusted name in safety. Founded in 1925 with the original goal of improving road safety through vehicle inspections, DEKRA has grown to become the world's largest independent, non-listed expert organization in the field of testing, inspection, and certification. Today, as a global partner, the company supports its customers with comprehensive services and solutions to drive safety and sustainability forward—fully aligned with DEKRA's anniversary motto, "Securing the Future." In 2024, DEKRA generated revenue of 4.3 billion euros. Around 48,000 employees are providing qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries across five continents. DEKRA holds a Platinum rating from EcoVadis, placing it among the top 1% of the world's most sustainable companies.