

Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal: Victory and European vice championship go to Škoda crews*

- › Sharing a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from Team MRF Tyres, Mārtiņš Sesks and co-driver Renārs Francis from Latvia win the final round of the 2026 FIA European Rally Championship.
- › Mikołaj Marczyk from Poland (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from ORLEN Team) secures second position overall in the Drivers' Championship.
- › Škoda crew Teemu Suninen/Antti Haapala from Finland became the new FIA European Rally Champions* already after the previous round.

Guimarães (POR), 26 October 2026 – With the 2026 FIA European Rally Champions already crowned, the Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal was all about the fight for the runner-up position. Škoda crew Mikołaj Marczyk and co-driver Szymon Gospodarczyk went head-to-head with Lancia's Andrea Mabellini/Virginia Lenzi. But it was another Škoda crew that claimed victory in Portugal: Mārtiņš Sesks and co-driver Renārs Francis from Latvia.

After a two-year absence, Portugal was back in the calendar of the FIA European Rally Championship. The Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal served as the closing event of the 2026 season. Guimarães hosted the start and finish ceremonies, while the service park was located in Fafe. The route featured 17 gravel stages, covering 181.10 kilometres.

Having secured the title already after the previous round, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 driver Teemu Suninen attended the season finale only as a spectator. He saw an impressive performance of Mārtiņš Sesks and co-driver Renārs Francis already during the Qualifying Stage. "I had only around 30 kilometres of testing to adapt to the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2," explained Mārtiņš Sesks, who usually competes in the FIA World Rally Championship.

From the outset, the rally turned into a battle for victory between Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis and Roope Korhonen/Anssi Viinikka right from the start. The duel between the MRF Tyres teammates from Latvia and Finland was so intense, that both crews won 15 of the 17 stages. Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis were the fastest six times. At the end of the first leg, the Škoda crew led their Toyota opponents by 10.5 seconds.

Already during Saturday, several crews hit trouble. That included "Iron Dames" Sarah Rumeau and co-driver Julie Amblard. The newly crowned French Gravel Champions rolled their 2C Competition-run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 into retirement. Andrea Mabellini, who came to Portugal second overall with a lead of six points over Mikołaj Marczyk, suffered a similar fate (SS7).

However, with the Italian out of the running, the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 driver from Poland only needed a decent finish to secure second place in the championship. "From the moment Andrea and Virginia stopped, it was all about strategy and tactics for us," admitted Mikołaj Marczyk. Eighth position earned him enough points to overtake Andrea Mabellini in the final standings. Because Mikołaj Marczyk competed in the Royal Rally of Scandinavia together with Daniel Dymurski, his usual navigator Szymon Gospodarczyk finished third in the Co-Drivers' Championship.

Meanwhile, the duel between Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis and Roope Korhonen/Anssi Viinikka continued on Sunday. After stage 13, the Škoda crew lost the lead due to an issue with a damper. Fortunately, a service break was next. However, even after repairs, the Latvians lost a couple of seconds more. The fight took another twist when the Finns car lost rear wheel drive (SS15). With only two stages remaining, Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis were back on top. They kept the lead until the finish, making history as sixth different Škoda crew to win a round of the 2026 FIA European Rally Championship.

"We both experienced some technical issues. In the end, we were a bit luckier. But Roope and Anssi made us work really hard for that victory," said Mārtiņš Sesks at the finish line. "Yesterday, we gave it our all from the outset. Today was more about seeing, what we could do. Ultimately, we played it safe, and it paid off."

Five Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews finished the season finale inside the top ten. Jan Solans/Rodrigo Sanjuán from Spain (Team PH.Ph.) came home fourth ahead of Simone Tempestini/Francesca Maria Maior from Romania (Team MRF Tyres). Local heroes Armindo Araújo/Luís Ramalho from The Racing Factory secured the seventh place followed by Mikołaj Marczyk/Szymon Gospodarczyk.

The final result of the 2026 FIA European Rally Championship* features seven Škoda drivers inside the top ten. Alongside champion Teemu Suninen and vice champion Mikołaj Marczyk, Simone Tempestini from Romania, Mārtiņš Sesks, Jakub Matulka from Poland and Giandomenico Basso from Italy competed with a rally car from Mladá Boleslav.

Number of the rally: 6

Victory at the Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal for Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis (Team MRF Tyres) was the sixth win across the seven FIA European Rally Championship rounds for a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew. Other victories went to José Antonio Suárez/Alberto Iglesias Pin (Recalvi Team), Mikko Heikkilä/Kristian Temonen (TGS Worldwide), Roberto Daprà/Luca Guglielmetti (Delta Rally Team), eventual FIA European Rally Champions* Teemu Suninen/Antti Haapala (The Racing Factory), Adam Březík/Zdeněk Bělák jnr. (Samohýl Škoda Team) and finally Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis (Team MRF Tyres).

** Subject to confirmation of the results by the FIA*

**Result Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal (POR), 23-25 October 2026,
7th round of the FIA European Rally Championship**

- 1 Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis (LVA/LVA), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, 2:05:42.1 hours**
- 2 Pablo Sarrazin/Yannick Roche (FRA/FRA), Lancia Ypsilon Rally2 HF Integrale, +1:02.9 minutes
- 3 Roope Korhonen/Anssi Viinikka (FIN/FIN), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, +1:25.0 minutes
- 4 Jan Solans/Rodrigo Sanjuán (ESP/ESP), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +1:48.0 minutes**
- 5 Simone Tempestini/Francesca Maria Maior (ROU/ROU), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +2:28.4 minutes**
- 6 Arthur Pelamourgues/Bastien Pouget (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20 N Rally2, +3:19.0 minutes
- 7 Armindo Araújo/Luís Ramalho (POR/POR), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +3:25.8 minutes**
- 8 Mikołaj Marczyk/Szymon Gospodarczyk (POL/POL), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +4:00.3 minutes**

Final Standings 2026 FIA European Rally Championship/Drivers*

- 1 Teemu Suninen (FIN), Škoda, 137 points**
- 2 Mikołaj Marczyk (POL), Škoda, 103 points**
- 3 Andrea Mabellini (ITA), Lancia, 98 points
- 4 Simone Tempestini (ROU), Škoda, 72 points**
- 5 Mārtiņš Sesks (LVA), Škoda, 63 points**
- 6 Jakub Matulka (POL), Škoda, 58 points**

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Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

Latvians Mārtiņš Sesks/Renārs Francis (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from Team MRF Tyres) won the final round of the 2026 FIA European Rally Championship.

Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

Mārtiņš Sesks from Latvia (right) celebrated his fifth victory in the FIA European Rally Championship. He shared the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from Team MRF Tyres with co-driver Renārs Francis.

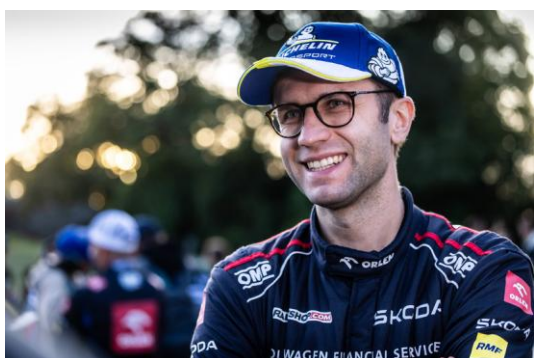
Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

Together with co-driver Szymon Gospodarczyk, Mikołaj Marczyk (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from ORLEN Team) collected enough points to secure the vice title.

Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

The 2025 FIA European Rally Champion Mikołaj Marczyk from Poland (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from ORLEN Team) had another strong season and finished the series in second position overall.

Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

With fourth position Spanish pairing Jan Solans/Rodrigo Sanjuán (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from Team PH.Ph.) equalled their best FIA European Rally Championship result so far.

Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

Romania-based Simone Tempestini and co-driver Francesca Maria Maior drove another Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from Team MRF Tyres to fifth place.

Source: Škoda Motorsport



Škoda crews at Rally 6 Cities North of Portugal

Armindo Araújo/Luís Ramalho (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from The Racing Factory) took the honour of finishing highest-placed Portuguese competitors.

Source: Škoda Motorsport

Škoda Motorsport

- › Škoda celebrates 125 years of Motorsport since the first efforts in 1901, garnering success in rallies as well as in circuit racing.
- › Highlights include winning the 1981 European Touring Car Championship (ETCC) with the Škoda 130 RS.
- › Since 2009, the Škoda Fabia celebrated numerous successes for the Czech manufacturer on rally stages worldwide.
- › Until 2014, the Škoda Fabia S2000 (2.0 naturally aspirated engine, four-wheel drive) secured 50 international titles and national rally championships. The Škoda Fabia S2000 also helped to win the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) three times each.
- › The successor model Škoda Fabia R5 (1.6 turbo engine, four-wheel drive) entered the scene in 2015. Later renamed to Škoda Fabia Rally2 and followed by the further developed Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo, the model collected nearly 2,000 victories in 68 countries until the end of the 2022 season.
- › During this period, Škoda Motorsport factory drivers Jan Kopecký (CZE), Esapekka Lappi (FIN), Pontus Tidemand (SWE) and Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) won the FIA World Rally Championship's support category WRC2/WRC2 Pro. Škoda Motorsport also took the WRC2/WRC2 Pro Manufacturers' title five times in a row from 2015 to 2019.
- › Beginning with the 2020 season, Škoda Motorsport changed its strategy to supporting private teams. The success story continued: Driving a Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo run by Toksport WRT, Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) and Emil Lindholm (FIN) became WRC2 Champions in 2021 and 2022. Mikkelsen became WRC2 Champion again in 2023 with team Toksport WRT, when the all-new

Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 entered the scene. The Škoda Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT also won the WRC2 Teams' title three times in 2020, 2022 and 2023. In 2025 Toksport WRT took another WRC2 Teams' title and Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov of Toksport WRT became WRC2 Challenger drivers' and co-drivers' champions respectively.

- › Škoda Motorsport customer teams have also won titles in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC), the FIA North American and Central American Rally Championship (NACAM), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

Škoda Auto

- › is successfully steering through the new decade with the Next Level Škoda Strategy;
- › aims to become one of the top three best-selling brands in Europe by the end of the decade by offering its customers the best of both worlds through a range of attractive BEV, hybrid & ICE products;
- › effectively exploits the potential in important growth markets such as India, Vietnam and the ASEAN region;
- › currently offers customers 12 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
- › delivered more than 1,040,000 vehicles to customers worldwide in 2025;
- › has been part of the Volkswagen Group, one of the world's most successful car manufacturers, for more than 30 years;
- › is part of Brand Group CORE, an organisational merger of the Volkswagen Group's volume brands, with the aim of achieving joint growth and significantly increasing the overall efficiency of all five volume brands;
- › independently develops and produces components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions for other Volkswagen Group brands;
- › operates three production plants in the Czech Republic; has production capacities in Slovakia, Kazakhstan and India, mostly through group partnerships, as well as in Vietnam and Ukraine in cooperation with a local partner;
- › employs around 40,000 people worldwide and is active in almost 100 markets.