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News Release

Brilliant appearance: automotive coating by BASF honored with design award

- **XSpark® is the first special-effect paint to impress within the “Red Dot Award: Product Design”**
- **Tiny glass particles in the finish create intensive radiance**

For many car owners, the color of their car is still the most important individualization factor. They are calling for more depth and dimensions. When it comes to automotive finishes, special effects can achieve subtle contrasts that lend the color a sophisticated vitality. With XSpark®, BASF's Coatings division has developed a color effect that has now been honored in one of the world's most prestigious design competitions: the Red Dot Award: Product Design.

For the first time in the 60-year history of the competition, an OEM automotive paint has been awarded the coveted “Red Dot”. The 38 jurors, all of whom are independent design experts, chose the winners from among the 4,928 submissions from all areas of industrial design. The evaluation criteria included the product's degree of innovation, its durability and its symbolic and emotional content.

XSpark® convinced the jury. It is an exclusive color effect for the automotive industry that sparkles in a very eye-catching manner and thus creates a much more intensive effect than other special-effect pigments. The material is applied in a single step in a mere 10 to 20 µm thick layer, together with the pigmented paint. This corresponds

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to 10 to 20 percent of the thickness of a human hair. The result is a homogenous surface that permits a special depth to come about in the finish thanks to a pure, solid-color reflection. Stephan Schwarte, Head of Basecoat Pigments/Dispersions & Color Design Lab at BASF's Coatings division described it as follows: "The glass particles integrated in the paint layer are particularly effective only in light. The sparkle created this way enables the automotive finish to look exceptionally luxurious and elegant without being intrusive. We have therefore achieved an unprecedented exclusive effect."

The targeted interaction between color and special effects is making automotive colors more complex and multifaceted, which expands the range of applications. Tailored to the particular model, such finishes can accentuate the shape of a car in terms of style. Mark Gutjahr, Head of Design at BASF's Coatings division in Europe, put it like this: "Our paints and effects act as an important design element. We are particularly pleased about being awarded the Red Dot in product design. The award underlines our design competence and sends an important signal to our customers in the automotive industry."

XSpark® also plays a significant role in the new color collection that will be officially presented in late July and which provides a preview of the automotive color trends. Six colors will be featuring this innovative effect and will represent the wide range of possibilities offered by automotive coatings.

About BASF's Coatings division

BASF's Coatings division develops, produces and markets innovative automotive coatings, automotive refinishes and industrial coatings as well as decorative paints. We operate sites in Europe, North America and South America as well as Asia Pacific. Within this network, we collaborate closely with our customers all over the world. In 2014, the Coatings division achieved global sales of about €3 billion. More information about the division is available at www.basf-coatings.com.

About BASF

At BASF, we create chemistry – and have been doing so for 150 years. Our portfolio ranges from chemicals, plastics, performance products and crop protection products to oil and gas. As the world's leading chemical company, we combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Through science and innovation, we enable our customers in nearly every industry to meet the current and future needs of society. Our products and solutions contribute to conserving resources, ensuring nutrition and improving quality of life. We have summed up this contribution in our corporate purpose: We create chemistry for a sustainable future. BASF had sales of over €74 billion in 2014 and around 113,000 employees as of the end of the year. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and Zurich (AN). Further information on BASF is available on the Internet at www.basf.com.