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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **No Time for Waste: PUMA pilots testing for biodegradable RE:SUEDE version of its most iconic sneaker**

**Herzogenaurach, Germany, November 4, 2021** - Sports company PUMA has developed an experimental version of its most iconic sneaker, the SUEDE, to test for a product to make it biodegradable. By doing so, PUMA aims to meet the growing demand for sustainable products for a better future. The RE:SUEDE, which uses the latest technology available today, will be made from more sustainable materials such as Zeology tanned suede, biodegradable TPE and hemp fibres.

The RE:SUEDE experiment is a pilot in circularity, and today's ultimate expression of the next generation SUEDE – with the ambition to set new standards of sustainability for the iconic shoe. Designed to help address the challenge of waste management in the footwear industry, the RE:SUEDE experiment will allow PUMA to take more responsibility when it comes to tackling the 'after life' of its products. The pilot will launch in January 2022, offering 500 selected participants in Germany the chance to join PUMA on its experimental journey towards circularity.

In partnership with PUMA, participants will wear their RE:SUEDEs for six months to test out the durability of a product using biodegradable materials in real life, before sending them back to PUMA via a take back infrastructure, designed to move the products to the next step in the

experiment. The sneakers will then be subject to an industrial biodegradation process in a controlled environment at Valor Composting B.V., owned by Ortesa Groep B.V., a family-run business of waste specialists in the Netherlands. The goal of this step is to determine if Grade A compost can be produced for agricultural use. The findings will help PUMA assess the biodegradable process and unpick essential research and development for the future of sustainable shoe consumption.

The RE:SUEDE experiment is the first circular programme to launch under PUMA's "Circular Lab" – a new innovation hub, which is led by PUMA's sustainability and design experts who work to develop the future of the company's circularity programmes.

This pilot is a recharged, refreshed experiment in circularity, following PUMA's exploration in the space in 2012, which saw the brand's first attempt to create a biodegradable sneaker as part of its InCycle collection. Yet after four seasons, the sneaker was discontinued due to low demand and the need for further research and development.

Since 2012, PUMA's innovation department has worked to address the technological limitations of the InCycle collection in order to apply such learnings into the RE:SUEDE experiment. Improvements include the use of new, innovative materials such as Zeology suede, which is made using a more sustainable tanning process and ensures better comfort for the wearer, when compared to other biodegradable materials evaluated at PUMA. The outsole of the RE:SUEDE has also been improved to ensure optimal wear.

"In 2012, our circular ambition was bold but the technology wasn't quite there. As they say, with every challenge there's an opportunity - and we've continued to push ourselves to do better by applying our strengths as well as acknowledging and improving on our weaknesses," said Heiko Desens, PUMA's Creative Director. "We hope that progress made during the RE:SUEDE experiment: 'No Time For Waste' will help us continue to raise the bar in circularity testing – enabling our consumers to make better fashion choices in the future, so their sneakers can go 'from Suede to Soil', without compromising on product style or durability during ownership."

About the partnership with Ortessa, Desens further comments: “We’re excited to partner with the experts at Ortessa, who share our passion in developing proactive and pragmatic solutions to the industry’s waste problem. Their expertise is fundamental in helping us learn more about the after life of the RE:SUEDE, so we can continue moving forwards on our exploration of circularity.”

Rob Meulendijks, CEO of Ortessa comments: “As a family owned challenger in the waste industry, we pride ourselves in creating surprising innovations and fresh concepts to tackle real waste issues in a different and open way. There is a lot more we can all be doing to help tackle waste management, but taking on that challenge alone can be a difficult task for any brand. We are delighted to be working in partnership with PUMA on this special project, where we can apply our deep knowledge and insights on waste, use tried and controlled methods, to assess the biodegradability of the future, next-generation SUEDE.”

PUMA aims to share the results and insights gained from this experiment within the industry to achieve an even bigger impact when it comes to addressing the challenge of waste management in the footwear industry in general. Circularity is one of the pillars of PUMA’s FOREVER BETTER sustainability strategy. By 2025, PUMA aims to reduce waste by increasing the level of recycled polyester in its products to 75%, setting up product takeback schemes in its major markets and developing recycled material options for leather, rubber, cotton and polyurethane.

Since its first iteration in 1968, the PUMA SUEDE has been at the forefront of cultural turning points, transcending style and trends. With the RE:SUEDE, PUMA wants to give its consumers a stylish and more sustainable choice, while showcasing the latest technologies.

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**PUMA**

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PUMA is one of the world’s leading sports brands, designing, developing, selling and marketing footwear, apparel and accessories. For more than 70 years, PUMA has relentlessly pushed sport and culture forward by creating fast products for the world’s fastest athletes. PUMA offers performance and sport-inspired lifestyle products in categories such as Football, Running and Training,

Basketball, Golf, and Motorsports. It collaborates with renowned designers and brands to bring sport influences into street culture and fashion. The PUMA Group owns the brands PUMA, Cobra Golf and stichd. The company distributes its products in more than 120 countries, employs about 14,000 people worldwide, and is headquartered in Herzogenaurach/Germany

## **ORTESSA**

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Ortessa Group is a group of five enterprising waste companies: veyzle, Lammertyn.net, van Kaathoven, Rondo and Valor Composting. Together the subsidiaries control all the links in waste management, collection and processing and prove every day the power of smart partnering. Each with its own specialism in the field of waste, but with one clear joint mission: to be open about waste. With a realistic, pragmatic and results-oriented view, the Ortessa Group helps clients deal with waste challenges in a (financially) responsible way. More information at <http://www.ortessa.com>.