

**INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION**

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Oberhofen, Switzerland 01.01.2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FIS MEDIA INFO****New Year's Message from FIS President Gian Franco Kasper**

It's hard to believe but the much anticipated Olympic year, 2018, has arrived and it is sure to hold many highlights in both PyeongChang and around the rest of the globe for skiing and snowboarding.

January is the peak season for the FIS World Cup with many of our traditional highlights already underway. The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tour de Ski is once again the focus of the FIS Cross Country World Cup and its Nordic counterpart, the Ski Jumping Four Hills Tournament is enjoying packed stadiums. It is the 66<sup>th</sup> edition and interest is at an all-time high with organisers reporting sell-out crowds and massive television interest.

We have enjoyed spectacular winter conditions so far this season, which has been tremendous news for the entire sport, especially for youngsters to be able to train and compete locally. The white December has provided the ski industry and tourist resorts with a strong start to the season and busy slopes through the important holiday season. We can only hope that the good snow conditions will endure through the entire season.

For FIS, the winter weather has been both a blessing and a challenge. Thus far, we have managed to run the bulk of our World Cup events, but sometimes the massive snowfalls were too much for even the best-prepared Organisers leading to some early-season cancellations that we hope can be made up before the Season Finals.

I am also happy to report that PyeongChang is in its final preparations to welcome the world's best athletes for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. The venues are well on track to be completed on schedule, alongside preparations on the field of play. The stage is set for an unforgettable Olympic Winter Games that will create the next generation of heroes in our six Olympic disciplines. With 51 medal events in just under three weeks, the Olympics are sure to be a busy, but memorable, time for the entire FIS family.

In a generally highly positive start to the competition season, there have also been negative issues that have blighted the past months. The doping scandal involving Russian Sport has rocked the entire international community and left virtually no sport unaffected. But in this dark chapter, it is a silver lining that all stakeholders have stood together to ensure fair and just decisions are made. My hope is always that for every athlete that is caught cheating, it prevents another from considering doping. It is a high price to pay, but for the sake of clean sport, we need to be prepared to be decisive to make all sports cleaner, fairer and stronger.

The FIS family also tragically lost two Alpine athletes in training accidents. I would like to express my deepest condolences once more to the friends and families of David Poisson and Max Burkhardt. Both were taken from our world far too early.

The Olympic season is the moment when Winter Sports can shine on a global stage. The stakes are high, the rewards are great and the memories will endure a lifetime. I wish the hundreds of athletes striving for selection and preparing for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games in Korea the best of luck and we all look forward to your outstanding performances.

As we welcome the New Year 2018, we will firstly admire the many unforgettable World Cup performances and the captivating storylines that await the ski and snowboard world in the year ahead.

May I wish all of our member associations and their athletes, organisers and their dedicated volunteers, media representatives, sponsors and partners, fans and supporters a successful and peaceful 2018. There is no better way to start this New Year than heading out and enjoying the snow!

Gian Franco Kasper

FIS President

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#### **About FIS**

FIS is the governing body for international skiing and snowboarding, [founded in 1924](#) during the first Olympic Games in Chamonix, France. Recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIS manages the Olympic disciplines of [Alpine Skiing](#), [Cross-Country Skiing](#), [Ski Jumping](#), [Nordic Combined](#), [Freestyle Skiing](#) and [Snowboarding](#), including setting the international competition rules. Through its 130 member nations, more than 7'000 FIS ski and snowboard competitions are staged annually. Specific initiatives are undertaken by FIS to promote snow activities as a healthy leisure recreation, [notably for the young](#). For more information, please visit [www.fis-ski.com](http://www.fis-ski.com)