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**INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FIS MEDIA INFO**

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

Happy New Year to the entire FIS Family!

2017 is upon us and it is one that is sure to be filled with many highlights in the world of skiing and snowboarding.

With the change of the calendar come three major highlights -- all before we turn the calendar to February. Already underway is the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tour de Ski, which kicked off in Val Mustair (SUI) on New Year's Day. The Four Hills Tournament is also underway with packed stadiums at the first successful competitions. In its 65<sup>th</sup> edition the Four Hills has proven to be one of winter sports most successful and enduring season highlight events.

Finally, we are all looking ahead with great anticipation to tomorrow when Zagreb (CRO) will host the official birthday celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Alpine World Cup. This is sure to be a night to remember as the entire Alpine family is looking forward to the many surprises in story. That celebration will be followed by the traditional January highlights, our own FIS Three Kings of Alpine, Adelboden, Wengen and Kitzbühel.

And that's just January. In February and March our biggest bi-annual highlight will be staged on the slopes as St. Moritz (SUI) and Lahti (FIN) and Sierra Nevada (ESP) will welcome the world's best skiers at the FIS Alpine World Ski Championship, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championship and the FIS Freestyle Ski and Snowboard World Championships. This is the chance for our sport and our athletes to shine on skiing's biggest stage – and there is not a doubt in my mind that all three Organisers have prepared everything to the highest standards to allow the athletes to perform at their best.

The start of the 2016/17 competition season has proven to be both successful and challenging. Thus far, we have managed to save the bulk of our World Cup events from another early season of challenging conditions as the Organisers have worked extremely hard to stage the events through a combination of being prepared for such eventualities, as well as being resourceful and improvising. I thank each and every Organiser for their massive efforts to ensure that the World Cups can be staged no matter what Mother Nature brings our way.

We can only hope that with the start of the New Year, that together with the calendar, the weather will change and we can enjoy some traditional winter weather. Snow is not just needed for FIS competitions, but also for an entire industry that is struggling with the third straight difficult winter.

We have also unfortunately had too many recent headlines involving doping scandals. The second half of the McLaren report, with its focus on the corruption at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi (RUS), has stunned the winter sports family. These are never the headlines anyone wants in their sport. But with the storm comes the silver lining to the cloud, and I can only hope that for every scandal that is uncovered, it makes our sport that much fairer and cleaner. I hope 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 weather this storm to make all sports cleaner, fairer and stronger.

In just over one month, Pyeong Chang will officially celebrate the one-year-to-go mark until the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. They have a busy season ahead as FIS will hold multiple Test Events through the end of this season. The first of those competitions, in snowboard big air, is already concluded and was a big success. And when the next season starts, Pyeong Chang will be on the tips of everyone's tongues as the qualification process and pre-Games hype dominates the winter sports world.

But before the Olympics takes centre stage, this is the year to celebrate our sport within our ski family. I wish the hundreds of athletes preparing for the Alpine, Nordic and Freestyle Ski/Snowboard World Championships the best of luck. We all look forward to your outstanding performances and to crowning the next generation of World Champions. We also look forward to unforgettable World Cup performances and the many captivating storylines that await the ski world.

I wish all of our fans, organisers, athletes, media members and supporters a successful and peaceful 2017. 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 128 member nations, more than 7'500 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)