

**INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****FIS MEDIA INFO****FIS MEDIA INFO: High expectations on Oslo 2011**

23rd February 2011// - The 48th FIS Nordic World Ski Championships were officially opened on Wednesday evening, 23rd February. The 45-minute ceremony at the University Square in Oslo was attended by the Norwegian royal family along with 50'000 spectators, according to the Oslo Police. FIS President Gian Franco Kasper traditionally opened the event in all four FIS official languages. Oslo 2011 will last until 6th March and will see about 650 athletes from 50 countries participate in 21 medal competitions at the newly refurbished National Arena at Holmenkollen.

Highlights of the opening ceremony included 1'700 children from Oslo carrying the flags and signs of all participating countries and the performance by Maria Haukaas Mittet of the official World Championship song "Glorious."

Following the qualification races for the individual start classical technique races to be staged on Monday and Tuesday, the first title decision will be the Cross-Country sprints for men and ladies on Thursday. The Thursday competitions are sold out, and more than 300'000 spectators are expected during the championships. As of Wednesday, a total of 235'000 tickets had been sold. The female ski jumpers, appearing in their second FIS World Ski Championships, will have their title competition on Friday whilst Saturday will see a full program with the first Nordic Combined and men's Ski Jumping events along with the ladies' Cross-Country pursuit.

Beautiful winter weather with plentiful snow and perfectly groomed facilities have welcomed the teams in Oslo. Until Friday, true winter weather is forecast after which it is expected to become milder with potential precipitation on the weekend.

"We are expecting nothing less than excellent World Championships here in Oslo. For us, Oslo is like returning home to the cradle of Nordic Skiing. We have enjoyed excellent cooperation in the last five years with the Norwegian Ski Association and the Oslo 2011 organizing committee," stated FIS President Gian Franco Kasper.

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2011 in Oslo (NOR) will mark the first FIS Nordic Championships where prize money is awarded in addition to the medals and titles. For details, please click [here](#).

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For more background information please refer to:

*FIS FACT SHEET: FIS Anti-Doping Program enters the Worlds 2011 winter*

<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/press-releases-2010/anti-doping-20102011.html>

*FIS FACT SHEET: Q & A with Rasmus Damsgaard, FIS Anti-Doping Expert*

<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/press-releases-2010/rasmus.html>

## About FIS

Founded in 1924 during the first Olympic Games in Chamonix, France, the International Ski Federation (FIS) aims to promote the sport of skiing and snowboarding and directs the development of all ski and snowboarding activities world-wide. FIS administers the Olympic disciplines of Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Freestyle Skiing and Snowboarding, including setting the international competition rules. With the help of its 112 member nations (one currently suspended), it stages more than 6'000 ski and snowboard competitions annually. FIS also makes recommendations for recreational skiing and snowboarding in the interest of all and promotes play in the snow as a healthy leisure activity for children and the youth. For more information, please visit [www.fis-ski.com](http://www.fis-ski.com).