



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE SKI
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FIS MEDIA INFO

FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2009 open in Liberec (CZE)

Oberhofen (SUI), 18th February, 2009/-- The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2009 will be staged in Liberec (CZE) from 18th February – 1st March. FIS President Gian Franco Kasper will open the championships at the official Opening Ceremony in the Liberec Tipsport arena beginning at 20:00 CET on Wednesday, 18th February. Along with the official part, the entertainment planned during the Opening Ceremony will include an appearance by the music star Karel Gott as well as a performance by the legendary hard rock band Deep Purple.

“The organizing committee led by Katerina Neumannova has worked very intensely to deliver a great ski festival. The preparations over the years were not always easy, including major organizational and financial challenges. But now, on the opening day, FIS is optimistic that it will be great FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2009 in Liberec,” commented FIS President Kasper in the opening press conference. “It was 39 years ago, in 1970, that the Nordic championships were held in Czechoslovakia, in Vysoke Tatry, which also hosted the event in 1935 whilst Johannisbad served as host in 1925.”

He added: “We are very pleased to welcome almost 600 athletes representing a record number of nations to Liberec 2009 – we see this as a sign of a continuing growth of our sport around the world.”

589 athletes representing 61 nations have been entered to compete at Liberec 2009. Whilst 155 ladies and 239 men from 60 nations are registered to compete in Cross-Country, approximately 77 athletes from 18 nations will participate in the Nordic Combined events and 79 athletes from 22 nations in Ski Jumping. In the premiere FIS world championship in Ski Jumping 39 ladies from 13 countries have been entered to start. More than 1'500 international media will be on-site to report on the event.

A total of 60 medals will be awarded in the 20 title events – the highest number of competitions in the history of the championships – as the competitions began with the newly introduced qualification races for the first Cross-Country Skiing races, the individual start races in the free technique, carried out on the opening day. The Nordic Combined mass start will also make its title event debut on the first competition day, 19th February. On Friday, 20th February, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2009 will be the first to welcome the female ski jumpers at the highest level of FIS competitions.

“These first open championships in ladies’ Ski Jumping are an important opportunity for the female ski jumpers to convince the International Olympic Committee of the quality of their performances and ensure the inclusion in the Olympic program of Sochi 2014,” President Kasper remarked.

Liberec 2009 is the first time that the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships will be carried out in the independent Czech Republic and represent the largest sports event ever held in the country. It will also be the biggest TV event in the history of Czech Television (CT), the host broadcaster. CT expects to produce more than 60 hours of international coverage with the help of a total of 54 TV cameras connected with 60 kilometers of cables. Managed by FIS TV and marketing partner, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) broadcasters in 15 countries as well as Eurosport, including Eurosport Asia, will be transmitting the event. EBU's marketing partner APF reports that the event's sponsoring has been sold out.

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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. It 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 110 member nations, FIS 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.

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