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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIS MEDIA INFO

FIS Doping Panel sanctions former head coach of Austrian Cross-Country team for violations against FIS Anti-Doping Rules during the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino (ITA)

Oberhofen, 29th February, 2008/ -- The FIS Doping Panel has issued its decision in the case of the head coach of the Austrian Cross-Country team Emil **Hoch** during the XX Olympic Winter Games in Torino 2006 who was found to have committed anti-doping rule violations upon the occasion of the Games.

The allegations raised against the Austrian team officials Markus **Gandler**, Dr. Peter **Baumgartl**, Andreas **Eder**, Gerald **Heigl**, Markus **Kürschner** and Dr. Hannes **Lechner** were dismissed, since they were not found to meet the standard of proof required to sanction the officials according to the FIS Anti-Doping Rules.

The hearings of the officials by the FIS Doping Panel took place on 18th September and 5th December 2007. Following the hearings and a thorough review of the cases, the FIS Doping Panel found that Emil **Hoch**, head coach of the Austrian Cross-Country team during the Games in Torino, committed anti-doping rule violations contrary to Article 2.6.2 (Possession of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method in connection with an athlete) and to Article 2.8 (Assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, covering up or any other type of complicity involving an anti-doping rule violation or any attempted violation) of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules.

Regarding the violation of Article 2.6.2, Emil **Hoch** is declared ineligible from participating directly or indirectly in any capacity in any FIS sanctioned events for a period of two years. Furthermore, regarding the violation of Article 2.8, Emil Hoch is declared ineligible from participating directly or indirectly in any capacity in any FIS sanctioned event for life.

In the case against Markus **Gandler**, Director of the Austrian Cross-Country Ski Team, the FIS Doping Panel found the evidence regarding a violation of Article 2.6 of the Anti-doping Rules (Possession of Prohibited Substances and Methods) insufficient to warrant a sanction. With respect to Article 2.8, no evidence exists upon which to find that a violation has occurred.

Accordingly, no sanctions were imposed against Markus **Gandler**. However, the FIS Doping Panel admonished him for not having shown greater diligence and active initiative in the supervision and control of the athletes and officials which comprised the Austrian Cross-Country (and Biathlon) teams at the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin 2006.

In the case against Dr. Peter **Baumgartl**, the FIS Doping Panel did not find a violation of either Article 2.6 or 2.8 of the FIS Anti-Doping Code and accordingly imposed no sanctions. Yet, the Panel found that in view of Dr. Peter **Baumgartl's** position as the team's Head

Medical Director, he shares in the collective fault of the Austrian Ski Association in not having exercised more thorough organizational control and supervision over the athletes in question, especially after having received a warning from the IOC following the dangerous and prohibited practices that had taken place at the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (USA).

Regarding the cases of team officials Andreas **Eder**, Gerald **Heigl**, Markus **Kürschner** and Dr. Hannes **Lechner**, the FIS Doping Panel determined that there is insufficient evidence to establish that violations of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules occurred.

The decisions of the FIS Doping Panel may be appealed within 21 days to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Decisions of the CAS are final.

The proceedings by the International Ski Federation related to these cases are independent of any proceedings by the International Olympic Committee relating to the Austrian Olympic Committee and its officials or athletes at the Olympic Winter Games in Torino 2006.

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For further information, contact Sarah Lewis, FIS Secretary General on +41 79 310 22 44

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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 to direct the development of all skiing 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 108 member nations, FIS stages more than 4'000 ski and snowboard competitions annually. FIS also makes recommendations for recreational skiing in the interest of all skiers and promotes skiing as a healthy leisure activity for children and the youth.

For more information, please visit www.fis-ski.com.