

FIS President Johan Eliasch
FIS Council members

October 26, 2023

Our sport is endangered

Dear Mr. Eliasch,
Dear FIS Council members,

As FIS athletes we are already experiencing the effects of climate change in our everyday lives and our profession. More and more often competitions have to be canceled due to extreme weather events or lack of snow. Pre-season training slopes are getting rarer and shorter every year, because glaciers are shrinking at a frightening pace. A heatwave in January brings the next lack of snow to Europe. Soon we won't be able to produce artificial snow at some classic World Cup slopes anymore as winter temperatures rise above zero in low altitude ski resorts more frequently. The public opinion about skiing is shifting towards unjustifiability. This will also bring the industry into trouble.

Our sport is threatened existentially and urgently.

That's why we as a winter sports community have to take the lead in the fight against climate change and make our sport climate neutral as soon as possible. To do so we need progressive organizational action. We are aware of the current sustainability efforts of FIS and rate them as insufficient.

We request the following actions by FIS:

- FIS representatives must commit to reaching net-zero for all of FIS operations and events by 2035 or prior.
- FIS has to create a sustainability strategy of how to achieve the 50% emissions reduction by 2030, as committed to through the UN Sports for Climate Action framework and present it to the public before the start of 2024 season.
- FIS has to install a sustainability department that ensures that sustainability becomes a key aspect of all governance processes and operations, which must be controlled and certified by an independent organization.
- Full transparency is needed to back up FIS' role as a much needed pioneer.

Attached to this letter you will find a list of actions we think are the most important and a few sources that back our statements with evidence.

This is our most important race, let's win it together.

Yours sincerely,
FIS athletes

Signatories:

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Sara Hector, Sweden, Ski Alpine
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Eva Pinkelnig, Austria, Ski Jumping
Akito Watabe, Japan, Nordic Combined
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Molly Armanino, USA, FWT Ski
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Tommy Ford, USA, Ski Alpine
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Arianna Tricomi, Italy, FWT Ski
Sandra Näslund, Sweden, Ski Cross
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Matteo Marsaglia, Italy, Ski Alpine
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Stephanie Venier, Austria, Ski Alpine
Katharina Truppe, Austria, Ski Alpine
Manuela Mandl, Austria, FWT Snowboard
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Pia Zerkhold, Austria, Snowboard Cross
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Olivia Asselin, Canada, Ski Freestyle
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Luke Jager, USA, Cross-Country
JC Schoonmaker, USA, Cross-Country
Samantha Smith, USA, Cross-Country
Walker Hall, USA, Cross-Country
Maximilian Walcher, Austria, Telemark
Faye Gulini, USA, Snowboard Cross
Alex Deibold, USA, Snowboard Cross
Senna Leith, USA, Snowboard Cross
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Breezy Johnson, USA, Ski Alpine
Elvedina Muzaferija, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ski Alpine
Jeffrey Read, Canada, Ski Alpine
Kiki Alexander, Canada, Ski Alpine
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Kaitlin Keane, USA, Ski Alpine
Arnaud Gaudet, Canada, Snowboard Alpine
Erika Pykalainen, Finland, Ski Alpine
Alice Merryweather, USA, Ski Alpine
Sam Maes, Belgium, Ski Alpine
Kjersti Moritz, USA, Ski Alpine
Troy Murphy, USA, Ski Mogul
Jared Shumate, USA, Nordic Combined
Sydney Palmer-Leger, USA, Cross-Country
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Liam Wallace, Canada, Ski Alpine
Bella Wright, USA, Ski Alpine
Brodie Seger, Canada, Ski Alpine
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Inni Wembstad, Norway, Ski Alpine
Cassidy Gray, Canada, Ski Alpine
Maximilian Hammer, USA, Ski Alpine
Fabienne Dirksen-Reuteler, Switzerland, Snowboard Freestyle
Jeanee Crane-Mauzy, USA, Ski Freestyle
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Fabian Obmann, Austria, Snowboard Alpine
Chiara Mair, Austria, Ski Alpine
Anna Schilcher, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Tanja Kobald, Austria, Snowboard Cross
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Vincent Wieser, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Sam Baumgartner, Austria, Snowboard Freestyle
Hana Rose Beaman, USA, Snowboard Freestyle
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Matteo Haas, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Mattias Rönngren, Sweden, Ski Alpine
Lina Stoll, Italy, Ski Alpine
Kilian Himmelsbach, Germany, Ski Cross
Antoine Bouvier, France, Telemark
Maely Vernet, France, Telemark
Augustine Carliez, France, Telemark
Niklas Illig, Germany, Ski Freestyle
Elie Nabot, France, Telemark
Mathias Minarovic, Austria, Snowboard Freestyle
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Christoph Pöll, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Ioannis Antoniou, Greece, Ski Alpine
Axel Burmansson, Sweden, Ski Freestyle
Maria Finnbogadottir, Iceland, Ski Alpine
Janni Reisenauer, Austria, Ski Jumping
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Andreas Kroh, Austria, Snowboard Cross
Leon Ulbricht, Austria, Snowboard Freestyle
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Ponthus Kristensson, Sweden, Ski Cross
Erik Mobärg, Sweden, Ski Cross
Elliott Baralo, Sweden, Ski Cross
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Lisa Grill, Austria, Ski Alpine
Mirjam Puchner, Austria, Ski Alpine
Michael Strauss, Austria, FWTQ Ski
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Lara Fletzberger, Austria, Ski Alpine
Amanda Salzgeber, Austria, Ski Alpine
Christoph Karner, Austria, Snowboard Alpine
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Florian Rainer, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Katrin Hirtl-Stanggaßinger, Germany, Ski Alpine

Florian Winker, Germany, Cross-Country
Sara Rask, Sweden, Ski Alpine
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Craig Murray, New Zealand, FWT Ski
David Pickl, Austria, Snowboard Cross
Avery Leonard, USA, Ski Alpine
Seigo Kato, Japan, Ski Alpine
Valentina Rings-Wanner, Austria, Ski Alpine
Philipp Lackner, Austria, Ski Alpine
Nico Rathgeb, Austria, Nordic Combined
Eva Schachner, Austria, Ski Alpine
Katharina Haas, Germany, Ski Alpine
Emerson Facer, Australia, Ski Cross
Guillem Bosch, Spain, Ski Alpine
Barnabas Szollos, Israel, Ski Alpine
Luca Gstrein, Austria, Ski Alpine
Roni Remme, Germany, Ski Alpine
Kira Weidle, Germany, Ski Alpine
Nejc Naralocnik, Slovenia, Ski Alpine
Sarah Hoefflin, Switzerland, Ski Freestyle
Axel Lindqvist, Sweden, Ski Alpine
Carmen Spielberger, Austria, Ski Alpine
Juliusz Kierkowski, Poland, Ski Alpine
Jaakko Tapanainen, Finland, Ski Alpine
Nadine Kapfer, Germany, Ski Alpine
David Mobärg, Sweden, Ski Cross
Maja Wozniczka, Poland, Ski Alpine
Celine Sommerová, Czech Republic, Ski Alpine
Roy-Alexander Steudle, Great Britain, Ski Alpine
Moritz Thönen, Switzerland, Snowboard Freestyle
Christopher Francis, Australia, FWTJ Ski
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Lena-Maria Stechl, Germany, Ski Alpine
Nanaho Kiriyaama, Japan, Ski Freestyle
Mariel Kufas, Norway, Ski Alpine
Anna Galler, Austria, Snowboard Cross
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Sarah Mangeng, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Elisabeth Glaser, Italy, FWTQ Ski

Alexander Köll, Sweden, Ski Alpine
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Stefanie Freimann, Austria, FWTQ Ski
Charlie Raposo, Great Britain, Ski Alpine
Fredrik Nilsson, Sweden, Ski Cross
Maks Jan Mirnik, Slovenia, Ski Alpine
Yoshito Watabe, Japan, Nordic Combined
Marceline Forsberg, Sweden, Ski Alpine
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Emil Johansson, Sweden, Cross-Country
Nicole Eibl, Austria, Ski Alpine
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Maximilian Uber, Germany, Telemark
Hilma Lövblom, Sweden, Ski Alpine
Arne Ackermann, Switzerland, Ski Alpine
Jonathan Midol, France, Ski Cross
Andreas Zampa, Slovakia, Ski Alpine
Tommi Aalto, Thailand, Ski Alpine
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Daichi Ihuri, Japan, Ski Alpine
Joana Hählen, Switzerland, Ski Alpine
Enni Rukajärvi, Finland, Snowboard Freestyle
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Marion Thénault, Canada, Ski Aerial
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Charlie Woodbridge, France, Ski Alpine
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Ebba Stenman, Sweden, Cross-Country
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Alfons Peterson, Sweden, Cross-Country
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Alva Svahn, Sweden, Cross-Country
Hedda Samuelsson, Sweden, Cross-Country
Olof Jonsson, Sweden, Cross-Country
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Jonna Sundling, Sweden, Cross-Country
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Addendum to letter to FIS decision makers

Following we bring up practical suggestions on how to make FIS more sustainable and back our statements with evidence.

Season adaptation

With the first World Cup race every season we are the ones who basically start winter, even if there's barely any snow like this season. This World Cup opener reminds people of how great winter is and gets them in the mood for the following season. But the seasons have shifted and in the interest of us all we need to adapt to those new circumstances because organizing World Cup races with no snow around will backfire and will take any anticipation for winter away.

So we recommend planning the first races of the season in late November and extending it to late April.

Geographical race calendar

Most of the team's carbon emissions are caused by traveling far distances. For example: This season the men's alpine world cup travels from Europe to North America and back two times. The races of Beaver Creek in November and those in Aspen in February are 50 km away from each other. Planning those two races one after the other would reduce approximately 1.500 tons of CO₂. There are more cases like this in other FIS sports. So we recommend a geographically reasonable race calendar.

Encouraging national federations

A lot of the organizational decisions are done by national federations. We see big carbon reduction potential in these decisions. Ski teams could question where they hold their training camps, if they should change their fleet to electric vehicles, or if they want to partner with fossil fuel companies. So we recommend encouraging national federations to track their carbon footprint and then building a reward system for sustainable operating or limit the annual CO₂ emissions for the federations and/or athletes.

Events

Events are the place where the public watches us, that's why the impact of organizing best practice events would be big. There are a few possibilities for improvement, like energy management, waste management or catering, but most of the emissions of FIS events are emitted by the public traveling to the event. Organizers have to take action to shift all those spectators to public transport and avoid air-travel. Also, we recommend implementing a standardized sustainability management system for events like ISO20121.

Environmental management system

To reach credibility it is required to implement a standardized environmental management system and to get it certified by an independent organization. We recommend the management systems ISO14001 or EMAS.

Education

Reducing our carbon footprint as a sport is very important, but to be really effective we have to make sure that everyone in this community supports these actions and many others follow that example. So we recommend an internal education program for officials, athletes and coaches, as well as a marketing campaign to inform the public about our engagement and how to act more sustainably as a non-professional in winter sports.

Political action

FIS as an international winter sports federation has political power, which could be used to speak up, show real commitment and take a stance on the climate crisis.

Carbon offsetting

The problem with carbon offsetting projects like rainforest conservation is that by burning fossil fuels carbon stored for millions of years is extracted and put into the fast carbon cycle, where it cannot be stored over such a long time. So keeping fossil fuels in the ground must be the priority, therefore the main climate efforts must lay in mitigation of emissions. The halving of emissions has to happen through avoiding and reducing climate-damaging activities. Offsetting should only be applied to the remaining unavoidable emissions.

Sources

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