

FIS President Johan Eliasch  
FIS Council members

Feb 14, 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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**Amelia Smart**, Canada, Ski Alpine  
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**Sarah Bacher**, Austria, FWQ Snowboard  
**Margaux Hackett**, New Zealand, Ski Freestyle  
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**Trey Seymour**, USA, Ski Alpine  
**Leon Hafner**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Josephine Trueblood**, USA, Ski Alpine  
**Benjamin Winzely**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Elsa Peterson**, USA, Ski Alpine  
**Michelle Niederwieser**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Ziga Erlac**, Slovenia, Snowboard Freestyle  
**Matteo Haas**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Fabio Walch**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Jakob Eisner**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
**Mattias Rönngren**, Sweden, Ski Alpine  
**Lina Stoll**, Italy, Ski Alpine  
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**Luis Tritscher**, Austria, Ski Alpine  
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**Antoine Bouvier**, France, Telemark  
**Maely Vernet**, France, Telemark  
**Augustine Carliez**, France, Telemark  
**Niklas Illig**, Germany, Ski Freestyle  
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**Axel Burmansson**, Sweden, Ski Freestyle  
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**Andreas Romar**, Finland, Ski Alpine  
**Buey Grossman**, USA, Ski Alpine  
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**Markus Riedl**, Austria, FWQ Snowboard  
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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 CO<sub>2</sub>. 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

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