



Report of the General Secretary

June 16, 2022

Dear Colleagues, as I write this report, the 70th FIL Congress is going to take place in Hall, Tyrol, Austria in just a few days. It will mark the first time that I will not be with you in person since I attended my first FIL Congress held in Albertville, France in 1989. It would of course take something extraordinary for me to miss the Congress. A few weeks ago, my wife and I had our youngest daughter get married and now our oldest daughter is getting married on the same weekend as the Congress, so I am very thankful for you all excusing my presence this weekend.

And now for my report, last year I reported that 2020-21 was perhaps the most challenging year in the history of the FIL. But little did we know, that the 2021-22 season would be even more challenging. Once again, because of Covid-19, extreme pressure was put on our entire Luge family. World Cup races were once again cancelled in North America and Asia. The international training weeks for the Beijing 2022 Games, which are essential for fairness and safety in our sport, were compressed into a three-week time frame in November of 2021, not long before the Olympic competition in February of 2022. This presented immense challenges to the FIL and the National Federations due to the covid restrictions present in China. The FIL implemented the use of a charter flight to assist with the travel logistics. As the FIL was one of the first Winter International Federations to conduct such training and a world cup race, we were testing all the covid protocols that were put in place by Beijing 2022 and the IOC, this proved to be very challenging and a real strain on all our athletes, coaches, officials, and stakeholders. And then, with over 30 sled boxes being held up leaving China, the FIL family had the unprecedented challenge, of having to share sleds and equipment between the national federations and our officials had to get creative to execute training and races. This cooperation between teams highlighted the very definition of sportsmanship and fair play.

The pressure continued on our Luge family all the way to the Olympics as we had to make do with protocols, positive covid tests limited participation from key members of

our family leading up to and including the Olympic competition, and a compressed Olympic qualification process.

But despite all these challenges, the athletes, coaches, officials, and FIL staff persevered, driven by a passion for our sport. By all accounts the Beijing 2022 Olympic Luge competition was successfully held without incident and with a lot of exciting competition. On behalf of the FIL, I want to thank you all for this amazing achievement. Congratulations to all and a sincere thanks from the FIL. The season concluded with the Sepp Benz Memorial Race in St. Moritz, Switzerland. In addition to honoring our dear friend and colleague, Sepp Benz, this race offered an opportunity for our Luge family to unwind and relax in a wonderful setting. The weather and atmosphere were superb and a nice way to end the season in a positive way. Thanks to Swiss Sliding for hosting us.

Only a few days after the Beijing 2022 closing ceremonies, we were presented yet another challenge as the government of Russian invaded the sovereign country of Ukraine. The human suffering and destruction being imposed on Ukraine by Russia is incomprehensible. When the invasion began, the FIL Executive Board moved swiftly and for purposes of safety and security, cancelled the Natural Track Luge world cup race in Moscow and got all teams and personnel out of Russia as soon as possible. A special thanks to Executive Director, Christoph Schweiger for leading this effort. Throughout the sporting world, all International Federations are grappling with how best to respond to this situation from a human suffering, safety, and security perspective. As was decided by the FIL Executive Board, the FIL condemns this invasion in the strongest terms, and the FIL stands in solidarity with our friends in Ukraine.

I want to also thank our partners at the IOC for standing by us during this challenging season. The financial support and full complement of support services from the IOC was a huge help to us this season.

With the leadership of President Fogelis, the FIL continues to implement the FIL's strategic plan-Slide 2026 which was approved by the Congress last year. The FIL has hired a full-time Development Director to assist our national federations as well as help develop and coordinate public sledding activities. Under the guidance of VP of Finance-Harald Steyrer, we have now hired a full-time accounting manager that will be stationed in the FIL head office. Steve Harris has now completed a rigorous curriculum with the IOC and will graduate in September and will become the FIL Safeguard Officer. Thanks to Steve for agreeing to serve us in this important role. To further the FIL's commitment to gender equality, Erin Warren has been appointed the Chair the FIL Gender Equality and Women in Leadership Working Group. These are just a few examples of the new steps being taken by the FIL to grow and strengthen our organization for the future.

Speaking of the future, preparations are already underway for the 2024 Gangwon Youth Olympic Games, where Luge will be featured on the PyeongChang track. The FIL is also turning its attention to the Milano-Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games. A new track is planned to replace the historic track that was built over 100 years ago and used for

the 1956 Olympics. The Town of Cortina d'Ampezzo and the Veneto Region are teaming up to build and maintain this new track. The FIL supports this track as it will become a core long term facility for many FIL sanctioned events and also a national sliding center for the Italian program. As the timeframe to build this new track has compressed, it will be essential that the officials in Italy move forward as soon as possible for it to be completed in time for official training and pre-Olympic activities. The FIL is getting deeply involved in assisting our partners in Italy along with our friends at the IBSF.

The FIL has also made an application to the IOC to add Women's Doubles Luge to the program in 2026 to reach gender equality and allow women to compete in this exciting event. Last year, at the FIL Congress, a decision was made to not make an application for Natural Track Luge based on the IOC Executive Board resolution limiting new events to existing venues and no additional athlete quota for 2026. But with the encouragement of key stakeholders, including South Tyrol and Italian sports officials, the FIL also applied to add Natural Track Luge to the 2026 program. A decision will be made by the IOC Executive Board on these applications in July.

I want to thank all of you for allowing me the honor to serve you and the FIL as General Secretary. We have faced the challenges of the past several years together. I wanted also to thank President Einars Fogelis for his leadership this past year and his focus on implementing Slide 2026. Thanks also to the FIL Executive Board and Executive Director Christoph Schweiger and our entire FIL team for the hard work and dedication to the FIL. I would also like to express our appreciation for our sponsors, suppliers, TV partners, and key stakeholders.

And now, finally, I wanted to offer a very special thank you to outgoing VP of Finance, Harald Steyrer, for your decades of service and dedication to the FIL. You have earned the right to hand off the baton and enjoy retirement. We will not let you get too far away, as you will still be forever part of the FIL family.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight Bell

General Secretary