



74th FIL Congress Berchtesgaden, GER

Report of the General Secretary

Dear Colleagues, I would also like to offer a warm welcome from my side to all of you as delegates as well as our important stakeholders, to the 74th FIL Congress here in beautiful Berchtesgaden, Germany. As mentioned by the President, we are grateful to be back in Berchtesgaden that serves as home to the legendary Koenigsee track. We can't wait to resume world cup racing as well as the World Championships in 2028.

We are grateful and honored to be here for our important work. I would also like to thank the BSD as our gracious hosts who have organized this Congress. Hans Wolf von Schleinitz and Thomas Schwab, thanks to you and your team for the excellent preparations for this Congress. I would also like to recognize and congratulate the newly elected Mayor of Berchtesgaden- decorated Olympic Medalist Luge athlete-Alex Resch. Thank you Mayor for hosting us here!

This past season was very productive and with races on two continents, Europe and North America, with Senior and Junior World Cup events, World Championships along with Continental Cups, and of course highlighted by the Olympic Winter Games in Milano-Cortina Italy. I want to add my thanks to the race organizers as well as the host national federations and volunteer officials for helping us execute these important events throughout the season at a high level.

Let's take a look back at highlights from this past season.....

PLAY VIDEO

Ok, and now on to the 2026 Olympic Winter Games.....

The Olympic Luge events proved to be excellent and exciting. Every run of every race was thrilling and emotional. 90% of all the tickets were sold and the spectators added to the great atmosphere. As the President mentioned, the emotion at the finish area was exciting and electric. I don't think we could have squeezed one more person into that area.

Top political and sports officials along with IOC President Kirsty Coventry and former IOC President Thomas Bach got to witness exciting Men's and Women's Doubles races, with home team Italy taking two golds. Congratulations to all our participating athletes and national federations for proudly and professionally representing the FIL and the sport of Luge, on the biggest stage.

The media coverage for Luge at the Olympics was exceptional. We are still waiting for all the ratings information, but so far it is obvious that there have been huge gains in viewership and digital media. Special thanks to outgoing Communications Manager-Margit Dengler-Paar for over ten years of dedicated tireless work for improving the FILs media presence, culminating at the 2026 Olympics. You have earned a well-deserved retirement.

This past season the FIL continued to build on its commitment to offer a premium product to our television audience and our internet-based programming, with a combination of Live Streaming and pushing out interesting stories and clips on various popular social media platforms.

We know that the burden to our race organizers and national federations to share in the TV production costs has been significant, and your resources are better directed at supporting your athletes and programs. Which is why the budget that has been proposed for your approval at this Congress provides for the FIL to cover 100% of the TV production costs going forward.

As already touched on by President Fogelis, we will continue to focus on key areas to address operating efficiencies and increase revenue:

- We have significantly increased sponsor revenue, and we must and will continue to do this,

- We are actively working on increasing revenue from our media distribution partners in Europe as well as North America and Asia.
- importantly, we will work in close collaboration with our biggest stakeholder, the IOC,
- We need to find alternative ways to generate revenue by utilizing creative ideas and methods. We will take inventory of key properties the FIL controls, like we did with the racing shoes last season, to improve access by **ALL** NFs for high performance racing equipment and lower costs. Standardized sleds will make their debut next season is another example.

We are also working on a new initiative to create the “**International Luge Foundation**” to establish a permanent endowment for our sport. We will target ultra-high-net worth individuals, family offices, other foundations, philanthropic organizations and corporations to capitalize our Foundation.

The goal will be to establish and grow the endowment to provide annual operating support to the FIL and to support luge athletes for career counseling, mental and physical wellness, education, and hardship cases, to name a few.

We also need to carefully analyze how we are developing and growing the sport of Luge and improve access for young athletes with a global reach. Alpine Luge will play a key role in this process. We need to make Luge more accessible to those wishing to try Luge and start a career or to just have fun. Luge is already the most basic of all Winter sports as every child’s first instinct when snow hits the ground is to go sledding.

We also see Street Luge as a valuable summer version of luge that is easily accessible and can be practiced everywhere in the world and in urban settings. Many of our national federations have been using wheel sleds for many years.

All these development efforts support the athlete pipeline for the top of our development pyramid-Olympic Luge.

Following the successful events for Luge at the Olympic Games, the FIL has already enlisted the services of well-known Olympic sport media expert Uli Lacher based in Munich, to work with our new Media Division to develop and integrate all our media efforts into a well-coordinated plan.

Our new Media Division will ensure that the media plan will be driven not only to increase distribution in Europe, North America and Asia, but also in key markets around the world. It is an ideal time to take advantage of the heightened interest in our sport and capitalize on it by shaping the content we are producing and pushing it out through on our traditional live feed, internet-based programming and social media platforms.

The **IOC “Fit for the Future”** initiatives are expected to be adopted by the Extraordinary IOC Session in just 2 weeks, we now have certainty and focus for our future planning.

Based on the **IOC “Fit for the Future framework”**, the FIL will begin immediately to work with future organizing committees to improve the quality of the Luge events, while reducing cost and complexity. We will do this by working with the IOC to have more involvement from the FIL and the IBSF in the preparations of the venues and events themselves. Given our experience in executing major events every year, we are confident the FIL can achieve these goals for future Olympic Games.

Working with the IOC, the FIL has applied for an increase in athlete quota along with the inclusion of the Mixed Singles and Mixed Doubles events for the 2030 Olympics. This will allow for Luge to be 100% gender equal; have world’s best athletes competing; and to be more universal, with athletes from more countries competing. A decision on our application is expected soon.

We are entering an unprecedented era for our sport in terms of available tracks.

- This coming season, in addition to our tracks already in service, we added the spectacular new Cortina Olympic track to our 4-year schedule.
- The new renovations to the Innsbruck track are bringing it to the highest level in preparations for the 2027 World Championships.
- The Koenigssee track, not far from where are meeting right now, will be back online this season and will offer an amazing venue for the 2028 World Championships.

- In the US, ORDA has completed substantial renovations and upgrades to their track in Lake Placid and are looking forward to hosting the 2029 World Championships.
- And in preparation for world cup racing and importantly, the 2030 Olympic Games, the track in La Plagne, France is in the planning process for updates and renovations.
- Also, the hosts of the 2034 Utah Olympic Games and on-going world cup races, have significant renovations to the track in Park City underway right now.

With the good work of our Sport Director, the FIL has an approved calendar in place now for every race over the next 4 years through the 2030 Olympic games. Most of these races are on Olympic legacy tracks spanning 3 continents, demonstrating the FIL's commitment to the **legacy** of these important long-term venues and their supporting national federations and National Olympic Committees.

It continues to be our goal for the FIL to be a leading International Olympic Sports Federation, operating at the highest level for the sport of Luge, and meeting the high standards of good governance.

The FIL has taken the following concrete steps for good governance:

- As you will see from the financial report by VP Geoff Balme, the FIL is fiscally sound, and we have implemented solid accounting procedures that include a 4-year budget through the next Olympic cycle, while maintaining and growing a reserve account.
- The FIL has completed a full independent audit on fiscal year 2025-26.
- The statute changes proposed at this Congress will bring the FIL up to the highest standards and in full compliance with Austrian not-for-profit laws, as well as incorporating the best principals of good governance.
- The FIL continues to strictly adhere to the adopted WADA Anti-Doping Code. And we continue to retain and utilize the ITA for all our drug testing.
- The FIL also continues to provide Safe Sport infrastructure in place by employing the 3rd-party expert platform-Sport Radar.

With the implementation of Slide 2026, we have made significant progress, and we will present for your approval at this Congress, our updated strategic plan-***We Slide Forward 2030+4***. Our Sport Director will present this updated plan to you later in the agenda.

In closing, I would like to thank President Fogelis and our Executive Board for their leadership this past year, along with our dedicated, hard-working staff and volunteers. Also, thanks to the IOC for all the support and collaboration, and all our sponsors and stakeholders. Most importantly, thanks to all of you-the ***national federations***.

Although much work remains, we have never been as well positioned as we are now for the future!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you this past year as the FIL's Secretary General.

Thank you Colleagues!