



FIS Public Relations and Mass Media Committee

Spring Meetings – Vilamoura, Portugal

Date: 7 May 2025

Time: 09:00 – 10:40 (Portugal time)

Participants

Present:

- Markus Aichner (AUT)
- Philipp Bärtsch (SUI)
- Radovan Cagala (SVK)
- Victoria Gosling (GBR)
- Espen Graff (NOR)
- Mirna Grozdanic (CRO)
- Tomas Haisl (CZE)
- Georgios Nikitidis (GRE)
- Ken Odashima (JPN)
- Mladen Pesic (SRB)
- Elitza Popova (BUL)
- Tomi Trbovc (SLO)
- Caroline van den Boogaard (NED)
- Jernej Damjan (SLO - Athletes' Commission)
- Joost Vandendries (BEL - Athletes' Commission)
- Patrick Lang (AIJS)
- Bruno Sassi (FIS)

Excused:

- Kenneth Bøggild (DEN)
- Mine Kasapoglu (TUR)
- Tatu Lehmuskallio (FIN)
- Lauren Ryan (AUS)
- Pierre Teyssot (AIJS - represented by Patrick Lang)
- Tom Kelly (USA)



The meeting was opened by FIS Communications Director, Bruno Sassi at 9:00 a.m. (local time).

Meeting Summary

1. Introduction of a Revamped Committee

The Committee discussed its evolving purpose, aiming to become more practical and relevant by adjusting its structure and workflow. With the Chair position vacant following Chris Robinson's (CAN) departure, NSAs will soon be invited to nominate candidates, with the goal of formal Council approval by 12 June. This would enable the newly composed committee to convene at the FIS Autumn Meetings in September.

The Communications Director introduced a proposal (discussed with FIS General Secretary Michel Vion) for a restructured model featuring:

- A **broad committee** focused on field-of-play and day-to-day FIS communications realities.
- A **smaller Core Experts Group** (~10 members) composed of media professionals and communications leads from NSAs and World Championship hosts, aimed at increasing agility and producing concrete outcomes.

2. Core Experts Group

The group will work in two-year cycles and tackle specific communication-related challenges. For example, they may develop guidelines for awards ceremonies across all FIS disciplines. The group will convene regularly online and present actionable recommendations to the full committee that gather twice a year, at the Spring and Autumn Meetings.

3. Summary of FIS Communications 2024/25

Presentation Summary (please, find the full presentation attached):

The Communications Director provided key metrics and insights from the 2024/25 season. Among the main goals of the past year was to improve collaboration between communications and digital teams and clarify responsibilities—particularly distinguishing between sport-result content (managed by FIS M&M) and broader communications (handled by the Communications team).

Key outcomes:



- **96% increase in media reach** and **52% increase in total mentions**, including engagement from mainstream outlets like *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *Associated Press*.
- Growth in reach included both positive and crisis-related coverage (e.g., the Ski Jumping suit manipulation case). The strategy has been to engage proactively, even on difficult topics.
- Corporate content production ramped up through a new group of dedicated editors covering sustainability, integrity, development, and more. Initiatives like *#SnowStories* spotlighted developing nations and athlete stories beyond results.
- Strategic transparency, e.g., explaining the Alpine World Cup calendar openly, helped shape public perception and media narratives.

On digital platforms:

- **LinkedIn** has become a key tool for corporate visibility. The **Inside FIS Newsletter** and newly launched **LinkedIn Newsletter** have driven audience growth.
- Collaboration with content creators and media coordinators in the field has improved discipline-specific coverage on FIS.com and social media.
- Emphasis has been placed on being **proactive, transparent, and digital-first**.

4. Update on Communications Strategy

Future goals include:

- Expanding regional communication strategies in cooperation with NSAs.
- Increasing FIS participation in corporate events and press opportunities.
- Clarifying the role of FIS Media Coordinators.
- Strengthening internal communication tools and photography protocols.
- Introducing a possible annual media event (e.g. post-Congress).

Questions & Answers

Tomi Trbovc (SLO): Suggested that guidelines for World Cup award ceremonies could be implemented as early as October by adapting existing WSC rules.

Bruno Sassi (FIS): Agreed. There's a blueprint from WSC ceremonies that could be applied, tested, and refined over the season.



Jernej Damjan (Athletes' Commission): Raised concerns over crisis communication during the Ski Jumping suits case, stressing the need for a coordinated system to protect the sport's integrity.

Bruno Sassi (FIS): Clarified that a basic crisis communication framework exists but acknowledged limitations when multiple entities are involved. Emphasized openness and collaboration, highlighting how quickly FIS responded and the complexities of inter-organizational messaging.

Markus Aichner (AUT): Asked what the learning outcome was.

Bruno Sassi: Admitted FIS should have communicated more loudly at the outset. Noted the importance of early coordination and clear messaging while navigating differing stakeholder priorities.

Espen Graff (NOR): Highlighted the importance of synchronized messaging during live events. Suggested that FIS protocols should be reviewed and possibly shared with NSAs for unified action during crises.

Bruno Sassi: Welcomed the idea. A framework exists for WSC events and could be adapted by the Experts Group to be more precise and applicable across NSAs.

Jernej Damjan: Stressed that communication during crises must be concrete and definitive to avoid escalation.

Bruno Sassi: Agreed. Observed that frequent informal communications within the tight-knit ski jumping community inadvertently fueled confusion. Advocated for tighter messaging control in future protocols.

Tomi Trbovc: Raised concerns over the timing of the Azerbaijan partnership announcement, as it triggered numerous media inquiries shortly after the press release.

Bruno Sassi: Explained contractual confidentiality prevented prior notice. However, agreed that detailed Q&As and media positioning on sensitive issues (e.g., human rights, sustainability) should be prepared in advance and shared with the Experts Group for alignment.

Patrick Lang (AIJS): Emphasized FIS's role in promoting snow sports globally. Noted that partnerships like the one with Azerbaijan could help build awareness in underrepresented markets and suggested such initiatives be better contextualized for the media and the public.



Conclusion

The Committee approved the proposed revamp and next steps:

- Nomination of a new Chair.
- Formation of the Core Experts Group.

Next meeting

In September (precise date to be confirmed) at the FIS Autumn Meetings in Zürich (SUI).

The meeting concluded around 10:40 a.m. (local time).