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Successful Speed Clinics in Saalbach and Sölden

As part of the ongoing implementation of the **FIS Education Strategy**, the FIS Speed Clinics in Saalbach and Sölden marked an important step in strengthening structured, safety-focused coach education in alpine speed disciplines.

At a strategic level, the clinics represent the first practical implementations of the FIS Speed Coach Education Framework that is currently developed. One of its objectives is professionalising practice on the hill and strengthening safety literacy among coaches. By combining experiential learning, expert input and international exchange, the clinics supported sustainable capacity building and contributed to a shared understanding of safety responsibilities across the alpine speed community.

In the long term, this approach supports FIS's strategic objective of **sustainable capacity building**, ensuring that safety and professionalism in alpine speed disciplines are not dependent on individual experience alone, but are reinforced through structured education, international knowledge exchange and continuous development pathways.

"The FIS Speed Clinics show how structured education and close cooperation with National Ski Associations like FESA can strengthen safety and professionalism in alpine speed skiing. By sharing knowledge internationally, we build sustainable capacity that goes beyond individual experience" said **Alexandra Meissnitzer, Special Projects at President's Office**.

The first Speed Clinic was held from **16 to 20 March 2026 in Saalbach (AUT)**, followed by the **FIS–FESA Speed Clinic from 6 to 9 April 2026 in Sölden (AUT)**, which was delivered as an integrated element of the FIS–FESA Speed Academy.

Both clinics promoted experiential learning in real event environments, the close integration of theory and practice, and a strong focus on safety literacy for coaches working in alpine speed disciplines. Embedded within this broader development framework, the FIS–FESA Speed Clinic in Sölden was complemented by the athlete-focused training activities of the FIS–FESA Speed Academy. Overall, both clinics proved to be a full success, offering high-quality, practice-oriented learning environments and enabling valuable international knowledge exchange.

The clinics underlined the central role of structured education and professional standards in the sustainable development of alpine speed skiing, particularly with regard to course safety, event preparation and coaching responsibilities. In total, they brought together **11 coaches from 8 different nations** and were conducted under professional conditions on FIS-homologated courses, providing direct access to practical learning opportunities closely aligned with elite-level operations.

Strong Focus on Safety Installations

In both clinics, coaches took part in extensive on-hill practical sessions during which safety netting was installed and course setting was observed and supported under real-life conditions — for the Europa Cup Finals in Saalbach and for the FIS–FESA Speed Academy courses in Sölden. Coaches received detailed guidance on the correct setup of safety nets, the identification of critical areas and the protection of relevant terrain features in speed events, under the leadership of **Jean-Philipp Vuillet** (Saalbach), **Hans-Peter Pilz** and **Osi Inglin** (Sölden).



On-hill practical sessions focusing on safety installations during the FIS Speed Clinics in Saalbach and Sölden.
Photo: Pia Reindl, Cornelia Blank

The practical sessions were complemented by theoretical inputs focusing on safety-related decision-making in alpine speed racing, athlete–coach communication and facilitated exchange among coaches. Using videos and case studies, key scenarios were analyzed and discussed.

“Experiencing on-hill practice and theory together in a real event setting makes the Speed Clinics especially valuable for coach education,” said **Pia Reindl, FIS Education Coordinator**.

Participant feedback further highlighted the impact of the clinics:

“I was very satisfied with the high level of organization and the quality of teaching during the FIS–FESA Speed Clinic. I gained valuable new knowledge on safety standards for speed training, exchanged with colleagues from several nations and further developed my coaching skills. Many thanks to the organizers — I am already looking forward to future opportunities,” said **Tymofii Iershov (UKR)**.

“The experience was very positive. The expertise of Hans-Peter Pilz as FIS Technical Delegate and Osi Inglin as a coach had a strong impact on our approach to training and

*competition. Working alongside highly experienced coaches further enriched the exchange. It was an excellent experience that we will confidently adapt for Spanish Technical Delegates and coaches,” said **Sala Perez Juli (ESP)**.*

Exchange and Dialogue on Safety

In response to insights from the FIS needs assessment with National Ski Associations and coaches, structured opportunities for dialogue with experts were included in both clinics.

In Saalbach, all participants of the Europa Cup Finals — not only Speed Clinic participants — were invited to attend a presentation on safety installations led by **Philipp Hopfgartner** (Alpina). The session provided insights into state-of-the-art safety solutions and encouraged open discussion on best practice and shared responsibilities on the race hill.

In Sölden, a dedicated round table discussion further enriched the program. Moderated by **Cornelia Blank** (FIS Senior Education Manager), the exchange brought together **Alexandra Meissnitzer** (FIS, Special Projects at the President’s Office), **Osi Inglin** (SwissSki), **Hans-Peter Pilz** (FIS Technical Delegate, Ski Austria) and **Benjamin Prantner** (FESA). The discussion addressed safety standards, course preparation and shared coaching responsibilities in alpine speed disciplines.



Round table discussion on safety held during the FIS–FESA Speed Academy in Sölden. Photo: Pia Reindl

*“Creating space for open dialogue between coaches, technical experts and organizers is essential. These exchanges help translate safety principles into daily practice and strengthen a shared understanding of responsibility across all roles involved in alpine speed events,” said **Cornelia Blank, FIS Senior Education Manager**.*

Building Capacity in Developing Nations

An important component of both Speed Clinics was the targeted support for coaches from developing nations, whose participation was enabled through the **FIS Development Department**. The close cooperation between **FIS Development and FIS Education** ensures that strategic education concepts are translated into concrete, inclusive learning opportunities.

“By supporting the participation of coaches from developing nations, FIS Development programmes have gained an additional lever to further strengthen and translate education

strategies into tangible learning opportunities. Delivering the Speed Development camps in Zermatt, Bjelasnica and Crans-Montana in conjunction with the Education Department's activities ensures that initiatives like the Speed Clinics are not standalone events, but part of a broader effort to build safety competence and coaching capacity across all regions" said
Dimitrije Lazarovski, FIS Development Program Director.

Strong Partnership and Looking Ahead

Following very positive feedback from both clinics, FIS will continue and further strengthen its coach education initiatives in close cooperation with National Ski Associations. The successful implementation of the FIS–FESA Speed Clinic — alongside the Speed Academy — once again highlighted the value of strong partnerships in jointly supporting coach education, safety standards and long-term capacity building.

FIS would like to sincerely thank **FESA** for the excellent cooperation, shared expertise and continued commitment to this joint educational approach. This partnership plays a key role in the ongoing development of structured, high-quality education pathways for coaches and officials in alpine speed disciplines across Europe. Expanding partnerships to ensure a global reach remains a priority, as high-quality education pathways will continue to be a cornerstone of future initiatives under the **FIS Education Strategy**.