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Press release – 6 March 2018

**Baqueira Beret to host the FIS cross-country skiing OPA Continental Cup Finals**

**The Val d’Aran and Valls d’Àneu resort will be the venue for the finals of the International Ski Federation (FIS) OPA Cup, a sports event it is hosting for the first time in its history on 16-18 March and where the winners of the European cross-country skiing cup will be decided.**

From 16 to 18 March Baqueira Beret will be the venue for the finals of the OPA Cup (also known as the Alpen Cup), which this year is to feature more than 150 elite European cross-country skiers.

Over the three days there will be competitions in a number of disciplines: The first day will start with a 1-km Sprint at distances of between 1.4 and 1.6 km based on category. It will be followed on the 17th by a mass start Distance competition where the top categories will compete over 15 km for men and 10 km for women while in the junior category it will be 10 km for men and 5 km for women.

The last competition, the pursuit, is scheduled for the 18th. In this exciting race the competitors’ departures are staggered by their times, so the sprint winner sets off first, the second starts after the leader and so on. Victory goes to the skier who crosses the finishing line first. Points will be worth double, so the winner of the event will take away this year’s OPA Cup.

Forecast numbers for the tour are between 150 and 160 skiers. In addition there will also be technical teams, physiotherapists, ski mechanics and other services that can involve up to 400 people at the event.

Spain has a good chance of getting some good results in the race. Imanol Rojo, a member of the Royal Spanish Winter Sports Federation (RFEDI) cross-country team who is planning to take part, is one of the best prospects as he has achieved several top 15 finishes in the OPA Cup in other seasons. Lydia Iglesias and Martí Vigo, who are also in the RFEDI team, will compete as well. Finally, the participation of more Spaniards who are in the RFEDI Monitoring Group or from Winter Sports High-Performance Centres is being considered.

**AGENDA**

Telemark and Friends: from 7 to 11 March there will be five days of Telemark, ski touring, mountain safety activities and a lot of high-altitude gastronomy at an event that combines a love for the mountains with enjoying the fine cuisine of the Val d’Aran. Activities programme and registration at [www.telemarkandfriends.com](http://www.telemarkandfriends.com/)

Jesús Serra Foundation Trophy: the weekend of 10-11 March will see the 11th edition of this open competition with lots of prizes for all entrants as well as hefty study grants for the winners. More information at [www.esquifjs.com](http://www.esquifjs.com/)

**More information:**

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