



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

# FACTSHEET

## THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

### UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2008

### ORIGIN

The brainchild of Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, the Olympic Movement and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were officially established on 23 June 1894 at the Paris International Congress that was organised by Coubertin at the Sorbonne.

Coubertin's vision for the Olympic Games may be summarised as follows: *"Why did I restore the Olympic Games? To ennoble and strengthen sports, to ensure their independence and duration, and thus to enable them better to fulfil the educational role incumbent upon them in the modern world."* Coubertin is also the author of the famous phrase which characterises the Olympic Games: *"The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well."*

The host cities for both the first and second editions of the modern Olympic Games were quickly agreed upon during this Congress: Athens for 1896 and Paris for 1900.

### THE IOC

From a legal standpoint, the IOC is an international non-governmental non-profit organisation, of unlimited duration, in the form of an association with the status of a legal person, recognised by the Swiss Federal Council (ruling of 17 September 1981). Its official languages are French and English, but in the case of divergence in the provisions of the Olympic Charter, the French prevails. The administrative headquarters of the IOC were originally based in Paris, but, since 10 April 1915, they have been based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

### THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

*"Under the supreme authority of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Movement encompasses organisations, athletes and other persons who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter."* (Olympic Charter, 2007, Rule 1)

*"The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. [...] Belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC"*. (Olympic Charter, 2007, Fundamental Principles)

In addition to the IOC, the Olympic Movement therefore includes the International Sports Federations (IFs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs), all other recognised federations, institutions and organisations, as well as athletes, judges/referees, coaches and other sports technicians.

The goal of the Olympic Movement is clearly defined in the Olympic Charter: *"The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values."* (Olympic Charter, 2007, Rule 1)

### THE MEMBERS

The first membership list of the IOC in 1894 included a total of 15 individuals, but the number today is currently 110, including the President and the Executive Board. At present, the IOC also has one Honorary President, 25 honorary members and 2 honour members. The composition of the IOC's general membership today is reflective of the important part that is



also played by the other segments of the Olympic family. This is demonstrated via the current Olympic Charter stipulation that 15 representatives of the different Olympic family constituents (individuals holding leadership positions within an IF, NOC or athlete members of the Athletes' Commission) can become IOC members. Forty-four of the IOC's current members have taken part in the Olympic Games as athletes, of whom 26 are medallists. In more recent years, the IOC membership has also evolved in terms of gender. In 1981, Pirjo Häggman and Flor Isava Fonseca were the first women to be elected as IOC members, and today there are 16 in the IOC, of whom Mrs Gunilla Lindberg is Vice-President, while the others are members or honorary members.

## THE PRESIDENTS

It is a common misconception that, as the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin was also the first IOC President. Instead, following the original stipulation that the President should be from the country hosting the upcoming Games, it was the Greek Demetrius Vikelas who was the first IOC President. The original rule was quickly replaced, however, and modifications to it can be found in the various editions of the Olympic Charter. As a result, the number of individuals who have held the position of IOC President has been few, and the period of their presidency has varied considerably.

Today, in accordance with Rule 20 of the Olympic Charter, the President is elected by secret ballot for a period of eight years, with the possibility of a single extension of four years. **See table A.**

## THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board has the general responsibility for the administration and management of the IOC's affairs.

Along with the President, it is the Executive Board members who are responsible for overseeing the IOC's administrative affairs. Created in 1921, the Executive Board is currently composed of the IOC President, four Vice-Presidents and 10 other members, all

elected by the Session by secret ballot, by a majority of votes cast, for a four-year term. Board members may serve no more than two consecutive terms, and must then wait two years before being re-eligible for election to the Board.

## THE SESSION

The general assembly of the members of the IOC is called a Session. The Session meets at least once a year. The Session is the supreme organ of the IOC. It adopts, modifies and interprets the Olympic Charter. Upon the proposal of the Executive Board, it elects the members of the IOC. The Session also elects the host cities of the Olympic Games.

## THE COMMISSIONS

The President nominates special commissions or working groups to study certain specific subjects and make recommendations to the Executive Board. The composition of some of the commissions is mixed, and includes IOC members, representatives of the IFs and NOCs, athletes, technical experts, advisers and sports specialists. In 2008, there were 21 commissions and one working group preparing recommendations for the Executive Board.

## THE CURRENT COMMISSIONS

Athletes'  
Culture and Olympic Education  
Olympic Games Coordination  
(2008/2010/2012/2014) – 4 commissions  
Ethics  
Finance  
International Relations  
Juridical  
Marketing  
Medical  
Nominations  
Olympic Philately, Numismatics and Memorabilia  
Olympic Programme  
Olympic Solidarity  
Press  
Radio and Television  
Sport and Environment



Sport and Law  
Sport for All  
TV Rights and New Media  
Women and Sport  
2009 Congress

One of the most recent commissions, established in 1999 by President Juan Antonio Samaranch, is the Ethics Commission. Integrity within the Olympic Movement extends beyond the Fundamental Principles and the athletes' oath taken at the Games. Through the existence of commissions such as the Ethics or Medical Commissions, as well as via efforts to address problems such as the commercial abuse of the athlete, the IOC is working to uphold its ethical and fundamental principles in a changing world. For information on the other commissions, please consult specific factsheets and publications.

## **THE ADMINISTRATION**

The IOC administration is placed under the responsibility of the Director General, Mr Urs Lacotte. He runs the administration under the authority and guidance of the President. He is assisted in this task by the directors.

The main assignments of the administration include: preparation, implementation and follow-up of the decisions taken by the Session, the Executive Board and the President; preparation and follow-up of the work of all the commissions; and permanent liaison with the IFs, NOCs and OCOGs, including coordination of the preparations for all Olympic Games.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS (IFs)**

The International Sports Federations are international non-governmental organisations recognised by the IOC as administering one or more sports at world level. When the IOC was established in 1894, only a very small number of IFs existed. Today, however, there are 28 Summer IFs, 7 Winter IFs, and 29 Recognised Sports Federations that are currently affiliated to the Olympic Movement. The IFs are responsible for overseeing the technical aspects and

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management of their sport at the Olympic Games. They also establish the eligibility criteria for the competitions of the Games, in accordance with the Olympic Charter. They likewise play an active role in the applicant and candidate city evaluation process. They join the IOC in the fight against doping in sport. In order to discuss common problems and decide on their events calendars, the Olympic Summer Sports IFs, the Olympic Winter Sports IFs and the Recognised IFs have formed associations: the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), the Association of International Olympic Winter Federations (AIOWF), the Association of Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF) and the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), which also includes other sports federations.

## **THE NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES (NOCs)**

The 205 NOCs belonging to the Olympic family are essential "ambassadors" of the Olympic Movement in their respective countries, and the tasks assigned to them are clearly stipulated under Rule 28 of the Olympic Charter. The NOCs are responsible for sending participants to the Games and endorsing potential future Olympic host cities within their countries. Furthermore, they are assigned the task of promoting the Olympic Movement, its work, and its fundamental principles in their day-to-day activities. The NOCs form five continental associations, which are represented within the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

## **THE ORGANISING COMMITTEES FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES (OCOGs)**

The organisation of the Olympic Games is entrusted by the IOC to the NOC of the country of the host city as well as to the host city itself. The NOC forms, for that purpose, an Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG), which, from the time it is constituted, communicates directly with the IOC, from which



it receives instructions. The OCOG executive body includes: the IOC member or members in the country; the President and Secretary General of the NOC; and at least one member representing, and designated by the host city.

The OCOG must undertake its work in accordance with the Olympic Charter and the Host City Contract concluded between the IOC, the NOC and the city. Some of the aspects of an OCOG's work include:

- to give equal treatment to every sport on the programme and ensure that competitions are held according to the rules of the IFs;
- to choose and, if necessary, create the required facilities, competition sites, stadiums and training halls, and to arrange for the equipment required;
- to accommodate the athletes, their entourage and the officials;
- to organise the cultural events that are an essential element of the celebration of the Olympic Games.

### Figure A: The presidents

Demetrius Vikelas (GRE)	1894 – 1896
Pierre de Coubertin (FRA)	1896 – 1925
Henri de Baillet-Latour (BEL)	1925 – 1942
J. Sigfrid Edström (SWE)	1946 – 1952
Avery Brundage (USA)	1952 – 1972
Lord Killanin (IRL)	1972 – 1980
Juan Antonio Samaranch (ESP)	1980 – 2001
Jacques Rogge (BEL)	2001 –

### Figure B: Games of the Olympiad and Olympic Winter Games

<b>Games of the Olympiad</b>
Athens 1896
Paris 1900
St Louis 1904
London 1908
Stockholm 1912
Antwerp 1920
Paris 1924
Amsterdam 1928
Los Angeles 1932
Berlin 1936
London 1948
Helsinki 1952

Melbourne/Stockholm 1956
Rome 1960
Tokyo 1964
Mexico City 1968
Munich 1972
Montreal 1976
Moscow 1980
Los Angeles 1984
Seoul 1988
Barcelona 1992
Atlanta 1996
Sydney 2000
Athens 2004
<b>Beijing 2008</b>
<b>London 2012</b>

<b>Winter Games</b>
1924 Chamonix
1928 St Moritz
1932 Lake Placid
1936 Garmisch-Partenkirchen
1948 St Moritz
1952 Oslo
1956 Cortina d'Ampezzo
1960 Squaw Valley
1964 Innsbruck
1968 Grenoble
1972 Sapporo
1976 Innsbruck
1980 Lake Placid
1984 Sarajevo
1988 Calgary
1992 Albertville
1994 Lillehammer
1998 Nagano
2002 Salt Lake City
2006 Turin
<b>2010 Vancouver</b>
<b>2014 Sochi</b>

### IMPRINT

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