EOC

WELCOME 2017 - “There are many reasons to feel optimistic about the year ahead in 2017 for the European Olympic Committees,” - EOC acting President Janez Kocijančič.

2016 saw the EOC award the hosting rights for the second European Games, in 2019, to Minsk, Belarus; the unveiling of a new identity based around a blue and azure 50-piece mosaic; and the ongoing preparations for both the winter and summer editions of the European Youth Olympic Festivals, which are now upon us starting with the winter edition in Erzurum, Turkey, in February, and the summer edition in Győr, Hungary, in July.

In the year ahead, the IOC will decide whether Budapest, Los Angeles, or Paris will host the 2024 Olympic Games, while preparations for the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games will gather speed.

Additionally, the EOC will host elections for positions on its Executive Committee (EC).

It is set to be another busy year with plenty to look forward to.

Good luck to one and all!

Executive Committee meeting - As is tradition, the EOC’s first EC meeting of the year was hosted by the IOC in the Olympic Capital, Lausanne, on 26th January. IOC President Thomas Bach welcomed the representative body of the European Olympic Committees at the Lausanne Palace hotel, currently used by the IOC for meetings whilst the new IOC headquarters in the Vidy district are built.

The meeting began with EOC acting President Janez Kocijančič welcoming Thomas Bach and thanking him for his guidance of the Olympic Movement throughout 2016.

President Bach gave an update on the IOC’s latest activities and on all current key issues from across the Olympic Movement, with a particular focus on anti-doping. In addition he answered questions from EC members who expressed their unanimous support for the IOC’s handling of the completed McLaren Report concerning doping in Russia.

The EC then received reports from Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi, Treasurer Kikis Lazarides, and European Games Senior Consultant Pierce O’Callaghan.

The meeting’s key outcome was the appointment of Spyros Capralos as Chair of the EOC Coordination Commission for 2019 European Games in Minsk. Members voted for Spyros Capralos with unanimous approval.

ENOCs

ANDORRA - Josep Antoni Guerra Álvarez is the new Secretary General of the Andorra Olympic Committee, and Jaume Martí Mandicó has been re-elected as president.

On 25 January, the General Assembly of the Andorra Olympic Committee met in Andorra-la-Vella, where participants elected the new Executive Board for a four-year term. The election result was as follows: President - Jaume Martí Mandicó; 1st Vice President - Albert Coma Zamboni; 2nd Vice President - Jordi Cerqueda Sierra; Secretary General - Josep Antoni Guerra Álvarez; Treasurer - Jordi Minguillon Capdevila.
Josep Álvarez, who replaces Manuel Fernandez Hermoso as Secretary General, was Chef de Mission at the inaugural European Games in Baku, in 2015. He believes the European Games is a “very important event for the future of sport”.

BELGIUM - Jean-Michel Saive, the former table tennis champion and Chair of the EOC Athletes’ Commission, officially announced his candidacy for the presidency of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) at a press conference held at the Belgian Olympic House on 19 January. Pierre-Olivier Beckers-Vieujant, Belgian Olympic Committee (COIB) President and IOC Member, and Roland Delhoux, President of the Belgian Royal Table Tennis Federation, gave their full support to Jean-Michel Saive. Jean-Michel Saive retired from table tennis in December 2015 after an excellent career. He was a world and European champion in 1994, a Belgian champion 25 times, spent over 500 days as world number one and was twice named Belgian Sports Personality of the Year (1991 and 1994). He participated in seven consecutive Olympic Games, his first in Seoul in 1988 and his last at London 2012, and on two occasions was the flag-bearer for Belgium.

He has extensive experience in the administrative side of sport. He is ex-officio member of the EOC Executive Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Belgian NOC.

BULGARIA - The annual awards ceremony, the “Night of Champions 2016”, took place in Sofia on 21 December for the second year running.

NOC President Stefka Kostadinova presented the Athlete of the Year award to Rio 2016 high jump silver medallist Mirela Demireva. The Rio champion received a cheque worth 50,000 levs from Sports Minister Krassen Kralev.

CROATIA - For the first time since gaining independence 25 years ago, Croatian sport has its own office. The newly formed Central Office for Sports means Croatian sport is no longer “assigned” to one of the relevant ministries of the Government. The office will focus on the development and promotion of sport and its role in society, the funding of sports programmes and sports development programmes, the status of top athletes, a national sports development programme, administrative and inspectional supervision of sports activities, and preparation and implementation of EU projects.

The most successful Croatian Olympian in history, Janica Kostelić, was appointed the first Secretary of State for Sports. Janica Kostelić is the most successful Alpine skier in the history of the Olympic Winter Games with four gold and two silver medals. After taking up her new position, she relinquished her role as Assistant Minister of Science, Education and Sports.

GERMANY - NOC President Alfons Hörmann awarded Federal President Joachim Gauck the highest honour of the DOSB - the honorary medal of German sport. The ceremony took place on January 23 in Berlin on the occasion of the awarding of the Grand Star of Sports in Gold, one of the most important events of the ”Breitensports” in Germany.

Gauck had always supported the German sport, far beyond the patronage to DOSB. He has held the position of President since March 2012.

LATVIA - The first two volumes of the Olympic Encyclopedia, a work expected to be 12 volumes in total, were completed by the Latvian Olympic Committee at the end of last year.

The project is the result of more than 50 years of research by a Latvian team led by Olympic historian Genadijs Macievs. Once completed, the Olympic Encyclopedia will contain 120 years of unique insight into the Olympic world. Over 120 NOCs, the IOC Olympic Studies Centre, the archives of Olympic host cities, and a number of other parties have assisted the NOC of Latvia’s efforts. The EOC contributed to the financing of the work.

Latvian NOC President Aldons Vrublevskis presented copies to both IOC President Bach and ANOC President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah during the ANOC General Assembly in Doha last November.
LIECHTENSTEIN - Just under 50 Olympians gathered for an Olympic-themed exhibition, including all five of Liechtenstein’s medallists at the Olympic Games: Hanni Weirather-Wenzel, Ursula Gregg-Konzett, Andy Wenzel, and Willy and Paul Frommelt. Olympians in attendance were unanimously in favour of founding a National Association of Olympics in Liechtenstein, which will be set up in the coming weeks. The exhibition “Mythos Olympische Spiele” in the Landesmuseum provided the perfect setting for the event.

SPAIN - A seminar entitled, “The digital transformation of the Olympic Games: from Rio 2016 to Tokyo 2020” was organised by the Spanish Olympic Committee, together with TOP sponsor Atos. The special occasion, hosted at the NOC’s Alfredo Goyeneche congress hall, showcased the activities of Atos and its contribution to the Olympic Games. Spanish NOC President Alejandro Blanco welcomed the 300 participants, who received reports from Atos’s Group Executive Vice President / Chief Commercial Officer - Olympics & Major Events, Patrick Adiba; members of the Rhythmic Gymnastics Team, silver medallists at Rio 2016 Lourdes Mohedano and Artemi Gavezou; and the Director of Marketing for Bridgestone Spain, Luis Miguel Alvarez. The seminar, mediated by a top sports journalist from channel TVE, was concluded by the Spanish Secretary of State for Sports José Ramón Lete. The event was an extraordinary success on social media, where it was trending for several hours in Spain.

2017 WINTER EYOF - The 13th European Youth Winter Olympic Festival (EYOF) takes place from 11 to 18 February in Erzurum, Turkey. All the venues are ready for action and are currently undergoing test events. The Athletes’ Village, where the Closing Ceremony and medal ceremonies will be held, is ready and waiting for the arrival of competitors. Due to the concerns of some NOCs, security measures have been boosted.

Over 1,300 athletes and team staff are set to be involved in the festival. In preparation for the festival, there has been considerable support from national and local authorities, who are involved on a daily basis. For more information on Erzurum and the 2017 EYOF visit www.eyof2017erzurum.org, the official website of the games, and also www.eyof.org. Follow Erzurum 2017 EYOF on social media. “@EYOF2017erzurum” is the festival’s official account on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

2019 SUMMER EYOF - During his visit to the Azerbaijan capital city in early January, EOC acting President Janez Kocijančič, and the Vice President of Azerbaijan’s National Olympic Committee, Chingiz Huseynzade, announced that Baku will host the 2019 summer festival. The event had originally been awarded to Minsk, but because the city is now set to host the 2019 European Games, a new EYOF host city was needed. In awarding Azerbaijan the Games, Janez Kocijančič highlighted that Baku had successfully hosted the inaugural 2015 European Games, as well as a European Grand Prix Formula One event. “Azerbaijan has also attained high results at Rio 2016 and secured 18 medals. This is the best result in the Olympic history of the country,” added President Kocijančič.

Janez Kocijančič and Chingiz Huseynzade said the official agreement would be signed on 26 January, in Lausanne, at the time of the first Executive Committee meeting of the year.
EUROPEAN GAMES

The President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, Spyros Capralos, has been elected Chair of the EOC Coordination Commission for the second edition of the European Games in 2019. He was voted in by unanimous approval of members at the first Executive Committee meeting in Lausanne last 26 January.

Spyros Capralos had the same role for the inaugural European Games in Baku, in 2015.

Of his appointment, EOC acting President Janez Kocijančič said: “Spyros’s chairing of the Baku 2015 Coordination Commission was very impressive and we are delighted that he is able to continue in this role for Minsk 2019. We are very excited that preparations for the second European Games are gathering speed in Minsk.”

Spyros Capralos responded by saying: “I am very happy to be taking on this responsibility once again. The Coordination Commission has a vital role to play in shaping the final concept of the European Games and my work starts with immediate effect.”

The first Coordination Commission visit to Minsk is expected to be in the spring.

The facilities for the 2019 European Games are ready, according to the EOC’s European Games Senior Consultant, Pierce O’Callaghan, following his three-day visit to the Belarusian capital in January.

The Irish consultant visited the main sites that will be used during the competition in two and half years’ time, such as the rowing channel in Zaslavl, the Minsk-Arena and the Sports Palace.

“I can state with full responsibility that the Minsk sports facilities are 100% ready to host the second European Games,” said Pierce O’Callaghan, who was accompanied on his tour by NOC of Belarus Vice President Maksim Ryzhenkov and Secretary General Anatol Koto. “During the visit, I was able to visit a few hotels of a very high standard. These facilities meet all the requirements for receiving VIP guests.”

The inaugural European Games, from 12 to 28 June 2015, saw just under 6,000 athletes from 50 countries competing in 20 sports.

OLYMPIC GAMES

PYEONGCHANG 2018 - A busy test events season gets underway - The 2017 test events season for the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Games kicked off in mid-January with the FIS Alpine Far East Cup & President Cup taking place at the YongPyong Alpine venue.

The event attracted record entries this year with athletes all eager to test out the slopes before they take to the main stage next February.

Known as the “rainbow slopes” of the YongPyong Resort, the venue was completed back in 1998 and has since hosted four FIS Alpine World Cup Games. For the Olympic Winter Games, the venue will be home to the Alpine skiing slalom and giant slalom events, and will have the capacity for up to 6,000 spectators.

The winter sports action continues in February with the FIS Cross-Country World Cup kicking off a busy month of excitement and entertainment across the PyeongChang 2018 venues.

Official sport pictograms unveiled - The official sport pictograms for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games, comprising of 24 images, were unveiled in January by the PyeongChang 2018 Organising Committee (POCOG).

They have been designed based on the Korean alphabet known as “Hangeul”, which was also used in the design of the official Games emblems. From the 16 vowels and 14 consonants of the Hangeul alphabet, four consonants and three vowels were selected for use in the pictograms.

The pictograms represent the 24 sporting competitions across the 15 disciplines of the Olympic Winter Games. These easily identifiable symbols will become synonymous with the different sports during the Games, and will be used to guide fans to events.
The vision of the PyeongChang 2018 Games is “New Horizons” - as the Bid Committee hopes to showcase Korea and what it has to offer as a winter sports and tourist destination through the world’s biggest winter sports event. This vision has also been incorporated into the design of the pictograms to ensure a local look and feel. With the pictograms, the aim is for the beauty of this alphabet to be reflected in these symbols and shared with the global audience, giving people the chance to learn and understand more about Korean culture.

**YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES**

**LAUSANNE 2020** - There are less than three years to go until the Lausanne 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG), which begin on 10 January 2020. The Lausanne 2020 Organising Committee’s core team has an average age of less than 30. To ensure that young people are involved throughout the decision-making process, Lausanne 2020 has also formed a Youth Council to discuss ideas and give young people from around Switzerland the chance to have their voices heard.

Lausanne is known as the “Olympic Capital!”, and has been home to the Olympic Movement for more than 100 years. As well as the IOC headquarters and The Olympic Museum, more than 50 international sports organisations are based in Lausanne, meaning sport is well and truly in the city’s DNA.

Lausanne 2020 will extend across the whole of Switzerland. The luge, bobsleigh and skeleton events are all set to take place in St Moritz, in the east of the country. The town’s historic bobsleigh track first opened in 1904, and hosted events at both the 1928 and 1948 Olympic Winter Games as well as a record 22 FIBT World Championships. Other sports will be spread across Lausanne and the Vaud Alps, while the neighbouring French Jura will also be used to host events.

**ANOC**

An ANOC delegation led by ANOC Secretary General Gunilla Lindberg visited Prague in mid-January, as the Czech capital city begins its preparations to host the 23rd ANOC General Assembly this autumn.

The ANOC General Assembly is the largest meeting of representatives of the Olympic Movement and will take place from 31 October to 3 November 2017. It will also include the ANOC Awards ceremony.

The Czech Olympic Committee President Jiří Kejval and Vice President Roman Kumpost welcomed the delegation to their historic headquarters in Prague for a two-day site visit, which included a visit to the hotels that will accommodate the delegates of NOCs from across the world during the General Assembly.

**EUROPEAN UNION**

Malta took over the presidency of the Council of the EU from Slovakia on 1 January.

During the next six months, the presidency will focus on six key areas: migration, the single market, security, social inclusion, Europe’s neighbourhood and the maritime sector.

As the last country of the current Troika programme (the Netherlands, Slovakia, Malta), Malta will continue to work on inclusion, one of the main priorities of the European Commission, by fighting poverty and social exclusion. Equal treatment is also a priority, focusing on gender equality, social equity and social inclusion. Focusing on sport, Malta will reaffirm EU Council conclusions that sport can contribute greatly towards social inclusion. SportMalta, the official sponsor of the Malta Olympic Committee, will be responsible for organising and hosting a number of important events during the EU presidency.
There was some sad news at the start of 2017 for several NOCs from the European Olympic family.

PORTUGAL - Carlos Ribeiro Ferreira, the former Olympic sailor and Secretary General of the Association of Olympic athletes of Portugal, passed away on 12 January. Ferreira participated in three Olympic Games: Rome (1960), Tokyo (1964) and Munich (1972) and competed in several national sailing championships. He also represented Portugal in a home European Championship in Cascais.

POLAND - Ryszard Parulski, one of the greatest players in the history of world fencing passed away on 10 January at the age of 79. He was an extremely talented competitor and won world championship medals in foil, épée and saber. During his administrative career, Ryszard Parulski was the President of the Polish Fencing Association and the Vice President of the Polish Olympic Committee.

MALTA - Lino Bugeja, the former Secretary General of the Malta Olympic Committee passed away aged 86. He was a key figure in Malta’s sports scene for several decades and will be remembered as one of the athletes who participated in the first edition of the Mediterranean Games in Alexandria in 1951. He was known for his love of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. He worked as a teacher at the Olympic Academy in Greece and was a member of the Maltese Olympic Committee Hall of Fame.

IRELAND - Frank Murphy, the middle distance runner who competed in the 1968 Mexico and 1972 Munich Olympic Games, sadly passed away aged 69. In 2014 he was inducted into the Athletics Ireland Hall of Fame, on the 45th anniversary of him winning a 1500m European Championship silver medal in Athens in a time of 3:39.51, which was a new Irish record. Frank Murphy will be remembered as an outstanding Irish athlete and Olympian.

GREECE - Yiannis Stamatopoulos passed away aged 62. He was the First Vice-President of the Greek Athletics Federation and was elected as a member of the HOC Executive Committee (2013-2016).

TURKEY - Mustafa Yener, the former Secretary General of the Turkish Sports Writers Association (TSYD) and member of the Turkish National Olympic Committee, passed away on 10 January after a heart attack.

ALBANIA - Ymer Pampuri, the legendary Olympic weightlifter, passed away at the age of 73 on 18 January. At the 1972 Olympic Games, he became the first Albanian to break an Olympic record by lifting 127.5 kg. He was also the first Albanian to become a world champion.

The EOC offers their families and the respective NOCs their deepest condolences.

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