



**XIX ANOC General Assembly**  
*Bangkok (Thai), 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2014*

**REPORT BY**  
**ANOC VICE PRESIDENT FOR EUROPE AND EOC PRESIDENT**  
**PATRICK HICKEY**

Dear President,  
Dear Colleagues and Distinguished Guests,  
Dear Friends,

When I last reported to this Assembly I told you how the Continental Association of Europe had set itself some ambitious objectives. These were to:

- Improve support for our athletes
- Fully implement good governance
- Defend the autonomy of the Olympic Movement within Europe
- Develop our European Youth Olympic Festivals, in particular, enhancing the profile of these Games and support the Games of the Small States of Europe
- Launch the European Games, the inaugural edition of which will take place in Baku next June
- Make the EOC Commissions more functional and effective
- Further refine the format of our annual EOC Seminar
- Ensure that our General Assemblies are useful and productive meetings
- Ensure that the voice of our Olympic family be better heard, and directly contribute to decision-making at the highest levels within the European Union
- Further improve gender balance within our decision making bodies
  
- Concretely support WADA in its fight against doping

Today, with one year of the new quadrennial almost gone, I would like to share with you the results achieved.

Let me start with a general comment: I am confident that, despite the financial turbulence and uncertainty that has recently ravaged Europe and the world as a whole, we continue to be able to translate our objectives into real and meaningful achievements, the most important of which I shall now list.

### **Athletes**

In line with the Copenhagen Recommendations, our athletes continue to be at the centre of our focus. This quadrennial's European Athletes' Commission have shown themselves to be very hard working in addressing their mission, including initiatives aimed at resolving the dual career problem, the management of anti-doping, and the athletes' relationship with their NOC. Indeed, in line with the Copenhagen recommendations, high priority has been given to developing user-friendly and accessible channels for all athletes and all athlete organisations to disseminate and share information on a more regular basis. On this last point in particular, the European Athletes' Commission have made remarkable progress, as now virtually all European NOCs have a national athletes' commission, a fundamental tool with which to liaise with other athletes around Europe and the world, and a lobbying body that can engage with national governments and the Olympic Movement itself at all levels.

As I already told you in my last report, a reflection of how all this has translated into action is the way in which the network of national athletes' commissions have responded to WADA's call for contributions on how to upgrade the WADA Code, allowing the World Anti-Doping Agency to benefit from pan-European input from the main stakeholders in the Code - our athletes, whilst they in turn have also been empowered because they were able to make their voice authoritatively heard through the structures that the EOC has created for them.

But our attempts to empower our athletes have gone much further. Following the passing of the Lisbon Treaty, which has given the European Union competence over sport within European Union States, the athletes have now entered into direct talks with the European Union. This too is a show of how words have been converted into actions. I shall report more fully a little later on the work of our EOC European Union Office in Brussels, but I must here mention that it is thanks to their lobbying that it has been possible again to give our athletes a voice at a level that can make a difference within the European Union.

## **Good Governance**

In line with the IOC's Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance, our good governance practices have been refined and continue to be updated on an on-going basis. We have developed a very comprehensive administrative manual called "EOC Financial Guidelines and Administrative Procedures", which is regularly reviewed and fine-tuned.

All this because we believe good governance to be a corner stone of the Olympic Movement, without which we risk foundering.

Thanks to the introduction of good governance practice and principles, we have greatly improved the way we manage our money. And along with this we have embraced internationally accepted transparency first and foremost. This is something that should not be underestimated or understated, as it greatly adds to our credibility, and is indeed something without which bodies such as the International Olympic Committee and the European Union would not entertain relations with us. So, that is another achievement.

We have also managed to cut significantly costs in many areas, bringing our accounts well into line with the IOC's recommendations for what to spend in each area.

Before closing on the subject of good governance I want to focus a little more closely on what it means to us, because very often it is just thought of as based on transparency and accountability. It's true, these are the two basic elements, but for us good governance is much, much more.

For us good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

## **Autonomy**

We have successfully opposed quite a large number of attempts at government meddling in the business of our Members. As you know one of our most prized values is our autonomy, and this has been defended strenuously whenever it has been challenged, sometimes in very difficult conditions. This has mostly happened behind the scenes for obvious reasons of confidentiality and discretion, but I can assure you some have been very difficult contests. We've won them all so far, but no doubt there will be more, and as and when they arise we shall tackle them with the same determination. I think this is something we can put in the plus column.

## **European Youth Olympic Festival's**

We owe the European Youth Olympic Festivals to the vision of the then EOC President, Jacques Rogge, who in 1990 launched the European Youth Olympic Days (EYOD), which later became the European Youth Olympic Festival, generally referred to by its acronym EYOF. Until recently, this was the only multi-sport event on our Continent, with a summer and a winter edition held every other year. As you all know, as of 2015 we will also have our own full continental Games like all the other continents: the European Games. But these new Games will in no way diminish the significance and the value of the EYOFs.

Indeed, I must say with great pride that the EYOFs continue to go from strength to strength. The 2013 winter EYOF in Brasov, Romania, and the summer EYOF in Utrecht, in the Netherlands, the same year, were highly successful, setting new standards in terms of quality.

This event has gained great importance not just as a sports event, but also as an educational tool and a vehicle for social inclusion. It is the European Olympic Committees' showcase event for the youth of Europe and shows how the sports policy of the European Olympic Movement does not just focus on sport as competition, but also highlights its educational role. It is also an example of how, in the European vision, sport is one of the best tools we have to promote peace and understanding between peoples and nations.

Through the EYOFs we do this at grassroots level with the young athletes of Europe, in the knowledge that their experience will one day help them become better men and women, and promoters of peace and friendship. They in turn can then make a significant contribution to a better tomorrow. The EYOFs indeed represent a symbolic bridge that spans the length and breadth of Europe and shows how sport can go where politics and diplomacy sometimes fear to tread.

The EYOFs also point to how the European Olympic Movement is against gigantism. There is absolutely no largess about the EYOFs beyond their Olympic spirit. Very little investment is required, and care is taken to exploit existing facilities, and to defend the environment. The event always ends with a party rather than a closing ceremony, because we feel this is the best way in which to facilitate the bonding process between athletes, their friends and families from all over Europe, and the atmosphere that these parties generate is always absolutely fantastic.

The next round of EYOFs will take place in 2015, with the winter edition being held in Vorarlberg in Austria and neighbouring Liechtenstein, the first time the event has been jointly organised by two countries, while the summer edition will be held in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Let me drive the point of the value of the EYOFs home with a short video that will let you see for yourselves what the EYOFs are.

## **Games of the Small States of Europe**

The Games of the Small States of Europe bring together almost a thousand athletes from the nine smallest states in Europe, each with less than a million inhabitants. These are Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino. It is a highly successful event that is very strongly felt in the countries concerned, with each taking a turn to host the event. The 2013 event was held in Luxembourg, whilst the 2015 GSSE will instead take place in Iceland.

## **European Games**

And now let me tell you about our -concept the European Games.

As you know we were the only continent without its Games and after discussions over many years, we have now gone ahead with the project.

The inaugural European Games will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in June 2015. The Games will have 6,000 athletes who will compete in 20 different sports, and the 49 NOCs of Europe will participate.

I would now like to show you a video to give you an idea of what is planned.  
[Show VIDEO]

Let me now make a few important points about the European Games, the most important of which is that it is not a blueprint of the Olympic Games. This is a multisport event that includes non-Olympic sports but will act as a qualifying event for Rio 2016 for 11 out of the 20 sports on the programme. Our aim is to introduce innovative sports that appeal to the younger generation alongside more traditional ones. The sports programme also includes one Paralympic sport, blind judo, another clear break from tradition.

## Commissions

The Executive Committee elected in Rome in 2013 had a feeling that we needed to have more dynamic Commissions, so we designed a new format based on feedback received from our members. A key change is that now all but two of our Commissions are no longer chaired by Executive Committee members, this role having been entrusted to others so as to broaden the voice of the commissions. Each commission does however include an EC member who acts as liaison between their commission and the EC.

I am happy to say that these new Commissions have set to work with gusto.

Let me give you the list of our Commissions and their chairpersons:

OLYMPIC GAMES	George KATULIN	Secretary General Belarus
MARKETING & COMMUNICATION	Peter MENNEL	Secretary General Austria
EYOF	Victor SANCHEZ	Secretary General Spain
EUROPEAN UNION	Neinar SELI	President Estonia
ENVIRONMENT & SPORT FOR ALL	William O'BRIEN	Vice President Ireland
OLYMPIC CULTURE AND LEGACY	Susanna RAHKAMO	Vice President Finland
MEDICAL AND ANTIDOPING	Klaus STEINBACH	EOC Chief Medical Officer (GER)
GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT	Daina GUDZINEVICIUTE	President Lithuania

Although they only officially meet once a year, thanks to modern communication technology, the commissions work very effectively and consistently, producing some excellent results for the Olympic Movement of Europe.

## The EOC Seminars

The new format for our EOC Seminar continues to be a great success. This year's Seminar was held in Nicosia, Cyprus, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May.

As I told you in my last report, Olympic Solidarity are now involved in the planning and organisation of our Seminars. Indeed, the EOC Seminar is now run in conjunction with the Olympic Solidarity Forum for the continent of Europe, and this has proved to be a huge success. For this, I would like to thank Pere Miró, Pamela Vipond and all at Olympic Solidarity - they really are a fantastic team.

The main focus of our Seminars is naturally upcoming Olympic Games, YOGs and our own EYOFs, and, of course in recent ones the European Games have taken the lion's share.

Our seminar format is technical and practical, dealing with all of the themes of concern to our NOCs - giving our members an opportunity to present their points of view and discuss topics of common interest with their peers at workshops.

## **The EOC's General Assemblies**

Our 2013 General Assembly held in Rome, Italy, was an elective assembly and so saw the renewal of the Executive Committee, and the commissions and commissioners.

On that occasion I was re-elected President, Raffaele Pagnozzi was confirmed Secretary General and Kikis Lazarides was confirmed Treasurer, whilst Janez Kocijancic was elected Vice President.

As usual, for the assembly on the eve of a quadrennial, the policies for the four years to come proposed by the Executive Committee were discussed and defined.

## **The European Union & the Brussels EU Office**

We are making excellent progress with the Authorities in Brussels regarding all matters relating to Sport and the European Union.

As I have already occasion to tell you, the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2009, gave the European Union competence over sport in the 27 EU Member States. You will also remember the momentous impact of this event on European sport.

While there are only 28 member NOCs which are part of the European Union we are very much aware that the other 21 NOCs are very interested in what happens at European Union level as it can also have an impact on them as well, so we are very mindful to keep them informed also.

There has been very constructive dialogue with the EU in which our athletes have also taken part. True, the autonomy debate goes on, but, as I see it, the EOC can now boast the fundamentally important achievements that the EU has recognised the educational role of sport and its importance as a tool for social inclusion, and is now also prepared to work with the Olympic Movement to achieve its aims through sport while recognising also the value of the role model of the elite athlete. This is an immense leap forward, and shows how, with the great and indispensable help of the IOC, the Olympic Movement of Europe has managed to build a relationship of mutual trust and understanding with the EU, which acts as a sound and solid basis for talks on a whole range of issues that are close to our hearts. The EU has also understood the economic importance of the European Olympic and Sports Movement as a source of employment, with sales revenues so large they are a pillar to its economy. Surveys also underline how the economy that revolves around sport is three quarters made up of small and medium enterprise - the fundamental component to the economy of Europe that all of our continent's governments are trying so hard to prop up. We also appreciate greatly the financial input we receive from the European Union towards the organisations of our European Youth Olympic Festivals when they take place in a member state.

As you no doubt know, the European Union recently underwent elections, which means we now have to deal with new faces, but we are confident that we can continue to build on our past successes.

## **Gender Equality**

We have been unable to promote gender equality as much as would be desirable. Gender equality is however not just a matter of quotas. It would be foolish to, for example, say, "OK, half the Executive Committee must be women", when so few put themselves forward. I have recently given a lot of thought to this problem and have come to the conclusion that we need to work on gender participation at grassroots level, so that we can build up a pool of talented future female sports managers that can filter up through the system.

The IOC is quite rightly pressing the whole of the Olympic Movement to improve gender balance, particularly at the decision making level, and we have of course responded with several additional appointments within our Executive Committee and our Commissions but, as I have said, I see true gender balance as a long process that needs to start at grassroots level. In my opinion it is here

that we now need to act, and, indeed, with this in mind, we recently set up a 'Women and Equality in Sport' Commission - a very talented group – who have started work on finding ways to put this into practice.

### **Anti-Doping & Illegal Gambling**

On the subject of anti-doping, I want to say that the EOC fully and actively supports WADA and its Code, which will be implemented at the European Games.

We consider doping a menace to the Olympic Movement and will do everything in our power to block it, in the firm conviction that those who transgress are the few, and that in doing so they taint the name of their fellow athletes and the Olympic Movement.

The Olympic and Sports movement now also have to face the problem of Illegal Betting and we will be strongly supportive of the authorities in assisting them to combat this menace, together with the IOC and ANOC, with whom we are working on this issue of great importance to the Olympic Movement.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, as this quadrennial unfolds, these are our main goals, but I believe more than ever that it is now that we must look ahead and address the challenges The Olympic Movement of Europe faces for the future.

And let me here add that none of what we have achieved would have been possible without the continued excellent relationships with all the different bodies we deal with, in particular the IOC President and all the departments of the IOC, especially our great friends at Olympic Solidarity.

I also want to thank all the Members of the EOC Executive Committee for their great support and encouragement during this decidedly tough period, and, in particular, I want to thank our Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi for his great support at all times, and CONI – The Italian Olympic Committee for the facilities they provide us with in Rome, which, I must add, also translate into considerable savings in terms of money for our Association.

Lastly, I want to go on record as saying two things:

The first is that the EOC has welcomed President Bach's Agenda 2020 initiative and fully supports it. The second is that the EOC welcomes and supports President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah's policy for the renewal of ANOC. He is a man of principle and a firm believer in the values and ideals of Olympism. He has such a clear vision of what the interests of the NOCs are and is their most strenuous defender.

The winds of change are blowing through the halls of the Olympic Movement, and it will come out of this process better and stronger, with a new vision that will carry it forward to new heights!

Thank you for your attention.

Patrick Hickey