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

This is the last year of the EOC quadrennial and it has been a highly productive one, crowned by the success of the Paris 2024 bid. We are delighted that the Olympic Games will return to Europe.

Today I would like to share with you the results of our labours, and show you how we continue to translate our mission concept into real and meaningful achievements for our Members, the most important of which I shall now list.

The Athletes
Our athletes rightly continue to be concerned and shaken by the events that have struck sport in recent times.

We are working hard to restore their trust in the Olympic Movement by continuing to support measures to ensure that clean athletes are protected and that a level playing field is ensured.

The Athletes of Europe held their 9th Forum in cooperation with the IOC in the Principality of Monaco last 18-20 October, when they also held an Assembly to elect the new EOC Athletes Commission for the coming quadrennial.

Good governance
Good governance must be the guiding light of the Olympic Movement, without which there can be no true dialogue with the world of politics and there can be no serious dialogue with sponsors, and also our fans.

For us it is important to have it clear that good governance goes beyond transparency and accountability, for us it has eight key characteristics. It is participatory; consensus oriented; accountable; transparent; responsive; effective and efficient; equitable and inclusive; and follows the rule of law. You will note how all this dovetails perfectly with the principles and ideals of the Olympic Movement. But above all good governance is today the best tool with which to combat bribery and corruption.

This is why we continue to focus on good governance across the whole of our Organisation and its Members, also through visits to NOCs conducted together with Olympic Solidarity, which in particular aim to help our smaller and newer Members to reach the required professional good governance standards, and become effective as vehicles for the promotion of the aims of the Olympic Movement.
Autonomy
The autonomy and the specific nature of sport are being challenged more and more and we must redouble our efforts to defend these fundamental values. But to be credible we need to be clean and above board: again, this means good governance.

At a European level the issue of autonomy presents complex legal aspects and also goes to touch some of the EU’s most treasured principles, principles that we share but that cannot and must not be applied to sport. The key here is “responsible autonomy”, which brings us right back to good governance.

The UN to recognise that sport is an important enabler for global social and economic progress, and this gives us the opportunity to work together with our governments. We encourage all our NOCs to establish a good working relationship with their governments, based on mutual respect.

European Youth Olympic Festivals
The EYOFs, Europe’s major multisport event for junior athletes, take place every two years, with a winter and a summer edition. Part of their purpose is to give young athletes a taste of an Olympic style multi-sport event and encourage them to go on to become elite athletes, and hopefully Olympians.

This year saw the Winter EYOF take place in Erzurum, in Turkey, in February, with 1,600 athletes and officials, whilst the summer EYOF took place in Gyor, in Hungary, in June, with 3,600 athletes and officials. These are thus big multi-sport events.

Both were remarkably successful, and both have set the bar very high in terms of standards.

Games of the Small States of Europe
The Games of the Small States of Europe bring together teams from the countries of Europe with less than a million inhabitants. At each edition almost 1,000 athletes from the nine smallest states in our continent come together to compete in an atmosphere of true friendship. It is an event that is highly regarded by the countries concerned, with each taking a turn to host them.

2017 saw a GSSE held in San Marino.

Gender Equality
The IOC is quite rightly pressing the whole of the Olympic Movement to improve gender balance, particularly at the decision making level. Our Gender Equality in Sport Commission - a very talented group - are very active, and pushing hard on this front, most recently jointly organising the first ‘Advancing Women in Leadership Roles’ Forum for Europe in Vilnius, Lithuania, together with the IOC.

Thanks to the dynamism of the Chair of the EOC Gender Equality in Sport Commission, Daina Gudzineviciute, gender equality has become a forefront topic within the EOC.

Olympic Agenda 2020
The Olympic Movement of Europe fully supports Olympic Agenda 2020 as the roadmap of the Olympic Movement.

Anti-doping and the fight against the manipulation of sports competitions
On the subject of anti-doping, I want to reiterate that the EOC and its members fully and actively support...
WADA and its Code, which is also implemented at the European Games. For the Olympic Movement there can only be clean sport, and this is why we constantly work to support clean athletes.

As recent events have clearly confirmed, we consider doping a menace to the Olympic Movement and will do everything in our power to block it.

But let’s not forget that another threat to the integrity of sport is the manipulation of sports competitions. Recently published statistics show how shockingly extended this phenomenon has become, also in semi-professional and amateur sport, and how easy it has been made by the advent of mobile technology and social media. The EOC believes there needs to be a global crackdown and is ready to play its part, but clearly this will require the will and involvement of governments and international institutions.

**European Games**

The aim of the European Games is to provide Europe with its own continental multi-sport event, which can act as a qualification event for Olympic Games, and provide European Athletes with Olympic Games environment experience.

Following the very positive experience of the Baku 2015 European Games, the 2019 European Games have been assigned to Minsk, Belarus, a city with impressive facilities and good track record in terms of organising major events. The dates are 21-30 June.

**Olympic Games**

Europe is very satisfied with the results achieved at Rio 2016, and all our NOCs are now focused on the next Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang next year, with the aim of maintaining Europe’s supremacy in Olympic winter sports as well.

Rio 2016 presented many issues, which we think we all need to learn from, and Europe is deeply concerned at the scandals regarding allegations of widespread bribery and corruption that have come out since.

**Accounts**

Under the attentive supervision of Treasurer Kikis Lazarides and the Executive Committee, the accounts are kept in strict observance of generally accepted international good governance standards and Olympic Solidarity rules and regulations.

The accounts are audited by external, independent, certified auditors, whose chief role is to ensure that everything is done legally and to the required rules and regulations. Furthermore, the EOC has an audit committee, the task of which is to ensure that the moneys of the EOC are properly, efficiently and effectively spent for the furtherance of the objectives of the Olympic Movement of Europe.

Both bodies report to the EOC Executive Committee and to the General Assembly.

Thanks to this professional and disciplined management, in the last quadrennial the EOC has managed to progressively increase the amount of OS Continental Programme funds distributed to NOCs, achieving 70% direct distribution to the NOCs; regarding its costs the EOC has on the other hand managed to progressively reduce its administrative requirements, which now stand at just 9%, whilst at the same time improving the standard of services to the NOCs.
EOC General Assembly
The EOC will hold its last General Assembly of its quadrennial in Zagreb on 24-25 November, and it will thus be called upon to elect a new Executive Committee that will lead the EOC for the coming quadrennial.

Conclusion
To conclude, our main focus remains the furtherance of good governance throughout the Olympic Movement of Europe, within the scope of the mission the Olympic Movement assigns us.

And I must add here that none of what we have achieved would have been possible without the strong and excellent relationships we have with all our different partners and stakeholders.

And, I again want to express the support of the Olympic Movement of Europe to IOC President Bach and Olympic Agenda 2020, and to thank ANOC President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah and Secretary General Gunilla Lindberg for continuing to push ahead with renewal at ANOC. The EOC welcomes, and strongly supports, this evolution, and aims to lead in its implementation.

To conclude, we are approaching the end of a difficult quadrennial for the Olympic Movement, and not least the Olympic Movement of Europe. Scandals of every sort are doing serious damage to the image of sport, including the Olympic Movement. This situation is not limited to the world of sport, of course; scandals and uncertainty extend to the world of politics, business and beyond. The Olympic Movement is extremely sound and solid and will weather the storm, but there is certainly a need for a return to more ethical behaviour.

How? By sticking to Olympic values and ideals, and ensuring alignment with Olympic Agenda 2020. The massive fan base of the Olympic Movement wants us to stick to our values and ideals, and this is exactly what we have done, this has been Europe’s guiding principle throughout, including in this quadrennial.

Thank you all for your attention.

20th October 2017