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## VISIT TO THE NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OF ALBANIA

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Date:	2-5 July 2013
Participants:	NOC of Albania Pamela Vipond, Deputy Director Olympic Solidarity Gianluca De Angelis, Head of Administration EOC Nils Holmegaard, IOC-NOC Relations Department
Objective:	To acquire a more in-depth knowledge about the National Olympic Committee of Albania in order to improve coordination and assistance, and to ensure that this NOC is fulfilling its duties towards the Olympic Movement

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### INTRODUCTION

This report is divided into three separate parts:

- General conclusions of the visit
- Observations relating to the specific subject areas covered during the visit
- Recommendations to the NOC (if any)

#### **1. General conclusions of the visit**

Overall, the evaluators obtained an excellent impression of the way in which the National Olympic Committee of Albania is functioning on the day to day basis. We were very warmly welcomed and the hospitality was excellent.

The NOC had gone to some trouble to efficiently prepare the visit in advance, providing interesting presentations by different staff members and NOC officials covering all topics included on the questionnaire. This made it very easy to discuss all the relevant points.

The NOC has a number of Commissions and we were fortunate to have a presentation of the activities of the technical, finance and marketing, sport for all and women and sport commissions.

We were also pleased to visit the headquarters of a number of national federations and received interesting reports from the following sport codes : athletics, weightlifting, volleyball, boxing, judo, shooting, taekwondo and swimming.

The deputy Minister of Culture, Education and Sport also received us in his office. Despite the fact that he was relatively new in the position and would not remain for much longer, he was clearly positive about the current relations existing between the Government and the NOC and was hopeful that more would be done for sport once the new Government officially takes up office in September 2013.

The NOC is mostly reliant upon the IOC and Olympic Solidarity for funding (68%). Despite these difficult circumstances, we can confirm that the National Olympic Committee of Albania is fulfilling its duties and has shown itself to be a small but well organised and focused organisation.



## **2. Observations relating to the specific subject areas covered during the visit**

### ***2.1 Institutional issues***

There did not appear to be any problems with the institutional life of the NOC apart from the situation with rivalling factions within one or two National Federations. However the problem is already well known to the IOC and is being closely followed. The current statutes were updated and approved by the IOC in May 2013. Normally the NOC statutes should be approved by the Government. This has not yet been done but the NOC expects the approval to be a formality once the new Government has been formed in September.

The next elective general assembly will be organised on 20 September 2013. The date was delayed from July whilst awaiting parliamentary elections in the Country.

Concerning elections and governance (lines of responsibility), everything is clearly defined and documented.

### ***2.2 Administration***

The NOC headquarters is centrally located and was purchased by the NOC in 2000 with support from the IOC. The value has now more than doubled. All the necessary facilities are available to guarantee a well-run organisation. The staff is well looked after, employed according to local labour laws and is offered ample opportunities for further training.

The NOC brands itself as a service organisation for the National Federations and provides computer access and other facilities where needed and upon request. We were particularly impressed with the huge database which has been built up by the NOC and which includes all the NOCs documents since 2006, duly scanned and backed up.

### ***2.3 Political and Social Environment***

In recent times, relations with the Government have not been brilliant and currently, there is no coordination of activities with each body providing funding to the NFs independently from each other. However, with the appointment of the new Prime Minister who is a former athlete and Minister of Sport, it is hoped that relations will improve and will open new doors for increased funding for sport. Otherwise the NOC enjoys good cooperation with the national sports associations and communicates well with its partners and stakeholders (with a comprehensive website and through email, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube).

The NOC has little representation on international sports bodies.

### ***2.4 Finance***

The NOC possesses very well organised and detailed accounting systems. The administration is run properly with frequent controls on a monthly basis. The fact that the NOCs auditor took part in the information sessions demonstrates the total transparency in all financial transactions. The auditor particularly outlined the fact that the controls requested of him by the NOC are much more stringent than those that would be performed under normal audit requirements.

The NOC should be congratulated on obtaining sponsors, even if they are only on board short term, by using relationships between certain board members and the corporate sector. The NOC should continue to pursue this line of action in the future.

### ***2.5 Activities***

The NOC has a strategic plan in place, which is clearly stated and communicated on the NOC's website. Activities are mainly based on elite sport and preparations for the different Games as well as world championships in which the NOC participates (Mediterranean Games, EYOF, Olympic and Winter Games).





The NOC technical commission is very active particularly in the selection and follow up of athletes nominated for Olympic scholarships and for analysing and approving different requests from national Federations for Olympic Solidarity funding. Indeed, the NOC believes that the best way to achieve recognition is through satisfactory results in international competitions and therefore they are working hard to ensure that athletes are properly prepared and in a timely manner.

There is currently not much focus on either youth development or coach development. However, it is hoped that this situation will improve once the new Minister of Sport will be in place and Government policies in relation to sport have been rolled out (in September 2013).

The NOC is extremely competent and should be congratulated on its promotion of the Olympic Values. It has a number of active Commissions, which organise activities on a regular basis in collaboration with local authorities.

Finally, the NOC is also very active in the field of sports management training with several national level and advanced courses already planned for this quadrennial plan. The NOC has also successfully nominated several participants for MEMOS training and many of these are now working in sport management positions on the national level.

### **3. Recommendations by the evaluators**

The National Olympic Committee of Albania is a very professional and efficient organisation, striving to develop and promote sport and the Olympic values. The evaluators did not reveal any major difficulties. The following recommendations are therefore linked to improving certain aspects but not to propose any radical changes:

#### **3.1 Institutional**

The NOC statutes have recently been approved by the IOC and are just waiting for final approval by the Government. This should be a formality.

Recommendation: to include an athletes' representative on the NOC EB and eventually form an athletes' commission.

#### **3.2 Administration**

To continue to provide training opportunities for staff. Staff numbers have not increased since 1997 however the number of activities undertaken has augmented and today there are even more opportunities and funding available, particularly through the OS programmes.

Recommendation: to bear in mind that it may be necessary to increase staff numbers in the future, in order to be able to take greater advantage of all the possibilities available from Olympic Solidarity.

#### **3.3 Political and Social Environment**

Recommendation: to improve the NOC's representation on continental/international sports organisations, where possible.

#### **3.4 Finance**

The NOC accounting systems are very well organised and detailed.

Recommendation: for security reasons, to adopt a double signature for bank payments over a certain amount.



Recommendation: to prepare for the additional OS audit (new financial control policy) which will take place at least once during the current quadrennial, by ensuring a clear separation of revenues in the NOC accounts.

### **3.5 Activities**

There is a good use of the Olympic Solidarity programmes and other opportunities available from the Olympic Movement in general, but it could be better.

Recommendation: To be more active in requesting funding and technical assistance from OS and the Olympic Movement. Do not be afraid to ask!

Recommendation: To continue building on the successful programmes promoting sport and Olympic values among young people.