



**Anastasia Smirnova,
representing a coalition of LGBT
organizations:**

**Russian LGBT Network
St Petersburg LGBT organization
'Coming Out'
Side by Side LGBT Film Festival
Russian LGBT Sport Federation
Arkhangelsk LGBT organization
'Rakurs'
Out Loud project**

**Lausanne, le 16 Decembre 2013
Réf. No MAS/acf
Envoi par courriel**

Dear Mrs Smirnova,

Thank you for the constructive meeting we had in Paris on 30 November 2013 and for your letter addressed to the IOC President which summarises your concerns in regard to LGBT rights in the context of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games. President Bach asked me to come back to you on his behalf.

The IOC agrees with you that it has the responsibility to ensure that every edition of the Olympic Games, and of course including Sochi 2014, must be free of any form of discrimination. This is clearly stipulated in the Olympic Charter which is the Olympic Movement's guiding document.

We have repeatedly sought and received assurances from the Russian government that the principle of non-discrimination will be upheld for all participants at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, including LGBT athletes, coaches and spectators. In our opinion these assurances are not vague. The most recent one was given personally to President Bach by President Putin during a private meeting just a few weeks ago, and his comments were later widely picked

up by the media where he expressed his desire to "do everything to make sure that athletes, fans and guests feel comfortable at the Olympic Games regardless of their ethnicity, race or sexual orientation".

Dmitry Kozak, the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Games, has also addressed this issue in explicit and unequivocal terms: "Russia has committed itself to comply strictly with the provisions of the Olympic Charter and its fundamental principles, according to item 6 of which 'any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement'."

We expect these commitments to be honoured and will continue to insist on compliance with the Olympic Charter's prohibition against discrimination within the context of the Games. We put the highest priority on ensuring that the safety and human rights of all Games participants are protected.

However, it is important to stress, once again, that the IOC's remit does not extend to the internal affairs of sovereign nations, no matter how we may feel about them, nor to issues that are not directly related to the Games. We are not a supra-national parliament or government that can change or influence national legislation. We must leave such deliberations to the competent authorities.

The IOC firmly believes though that the Olympic Games can set an example and showcase an environment where athletes and spectators from around the world interact in harmony and mutual respect. In a very diverse world, the Games show that people from different backgrounds, different cultures and different religions can find unity through a global celebration of sport that highlights the values of excellence, friendship and respect.

We would like to come back to some specific points you have raised:

- The IOC strongly believes that Games are about uniting people, not separating them. This is why we created the Olympic Village, as a place where athletes from around the world and of all different backgrounds could live together in peace. This is also why we do not run specific Houses during Olympic Games and why Pride Houses at previous Games were run privately. Some National Olympic Committees do run Houses and in the specific context of Sochi, we will continue working with them to

ensure that athletes, officials and spectators can fully enjoy the Games and take advantage of leisure locations such as their hospitality houses.

- The IOC has a clear rule (rule 50 of the Olympic Charter and bye-laws) in place that asks athletes to only wear their official uniforms on the field of play and during ceremonies and that also states that the venues of the Olympic Games are not a place for proactive protests or demonstrations. This rule has existed for many years and aims to separate sport from politics, honour the context of the Olympic Games and ensure the peaceful gathering of athletes, officials and spectators from different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. If we were to be made aware of a potential breach of rule 50, we would treat each case individually and take a sensible approach depending on what was said or done. The IOC will not speculate on potential scenarios.
- Participants at the Olympic Games may of course express their opinions and will have many opportunities to do so whilst respecting the Olympic Charter, for instance to answer questions if asked in a press conference or mixed zone, in a media interview or on social media and discussing with their fellow athletes, officials and others – to name but a few.
- Sochi pledged, in its bid book, excellent working conditions for the media at the Games and the IOC is working with Sochi 2014 to achieve these objectives. We expect that the approximately 14,000 accredited media which will be at the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi will be able to report freely on the Games.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and we hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Jochen Färber
Head of President's Executive Office



Mark Adams
Communications Director