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## **EDITORIAL**

### **The IOC in Lausanne for ninety years**

Ninety years ago almost to the day, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) established its headquarters in Lausanne. It was on 10 April 1915, in fact, during the First World War, that Coubertin took it upon himself to move the IOC – of which he was the President – to the capital of the Canton of Vaud. A brief ceremony took place on that date, following a sitting of the Municipality during which the Syndic, Mr Maillefer, took note of the establishment of the establishment of the IOC's headquarters in his town. The Chairman of the Canton's State Council was excused from the meeting, while the President of the Confederation sent a short telegram to wish the IOC welcome.

As we can see, the welcome was far from being an effusive one. The IOC was a little-known entity without a clearly defined legal status (it only took on that of an association in 1974!) and whose headquarters had previously been at Coubertin's home in Paris. Sheltering the IOC in a neutral country, beyond the grasp of the Germans – who were in theory to organise the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1916 – was frequently cited as the official explanation for the move. In fact, however, Coubertin had a hidden motive. He wished to turn Lausanne into a "modern Olympia", i.e. the permanent headquarters of the Olympic Games, which at the time were finding it hard to find and keep their host cities. To this end, he had already organised an architecture competition in 1911, whose first prize "Olympia on the right bank of Lake Geneva", permitted E. Monod and A. Laverrière of Lausanne to win a gold medal the following year at the art competitions organised at the Stockholm Games. Their vast project was never to see the light of day, but the venues planned for Vidy and Dorigny are today the sites of outstanding public sports facilities.

Coubertin also had another idea in mind: that of creating an Olympic Institute in Lausanne that would be independent of the IOC and aimed at making sport accessible to all, within a pedagogical and cultural framework. From 1917 to 1919, the institute operated from the premises of the Casino de Montbenon, loaned by the City of Lausanne. It combined the practice of sport and theoretical lectures. Coubertin saw it as a tool for what today would be called a municipal sports policy, and an inspiration for other cities to recreate a gymnasium from the antique period. He also believed that he would find work at the university there once his period in office as the IOC President was over. Today, a distant successor of Coubertin's concept is the AISTS (International Academy of Sports Science and Technology), founded in 2000 by the universities and graduate schools of the Lake Geneva region (UNIL, UNIGE, EPFL, IDHEAP), the City of Lausanne, the Canton of Vaud, and the IOC. The academy

notably accepts around thirty participants per year from all over the world for its Master in Sports Administration and Technology programme which permits the graduates, on returning to their respective countries, to raise awareness of the "Olympic Capital".

In fact, however, Lausanne and its region became a modern Olympia in another way. Since the 1980s, and with President Samaranch as its driving force, around twenty International and European Sports Federations have settled in the Canton of Vaud and in Lausanne in particular. The Olympic Museum always planned by Coubertin, the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the European Office of the World Anti-Doping Agency and other organisations linked to international sport complete this galaxy of Olympism.

The authorities are in favour of establishing these headquarters. We are witnessing a veritable public economic and tourism development policy based on hosting such entities and sports events. Today, policies of this kind have been put in place in many towns, regions or even countries, and in particular regarding the hosting of major events.

A scientific conference, to be organised by IDHEAP in June 2006 within the framework of a European project, will analyse this emerging phenomenon.

Some ninety years after Coubertin's decisive initiative, all that now remains for the French-speaking region of Switzerland is to reconsider the possibility of organising the Olympic (Winter) Games...

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