The 1984 Winter Olympic Games played a central role in the identity of the region. Seen as a symbol of strength and a way to celebrate peace-building and inter-regional cooperation, the Games continue to foster a spirit of solidarity among people and nations.

**A successful event**

For the city of Sarajevo, hosting the Winter Olympic Games in 1984 was among the most significant events in the history of Yugoslavia. The Sarajevo Olympics were not boycotted by any nation (compared to 1980 Games and 1984 Summer Games) and were instead a shining moment of global unity centred around sports. As such, Yugoslavia, and Sarajevo specifically, felt a tremendous personal responsibility to go above and beyond in its role as host nation and host city. The Olympic Games allowed the City to showcase its treasures to the world. The Olympic Games boosted the image of the City and developed locally a genuine and long-lasting Olympic Spirit.
Immediately following the closure of the Olympic Games, the public organisation "Winter Olympics 1984" (Zimskih Olimpijskih Igrar 1984, ZOI 84) was created to manage the overall legacy of the 1984 Olympic Games, the promotion of resorts abroad, and the city’s candidacy for subsequent Winter Games. It is also responsible for the Olympic complex Bjelašnica-Igman. ZOI 84 is in charge ski pass sales, the snow cannons, the operation of the ski lifts, and the organization of the resort’s emergency services.

A tragic war
In 1992, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started (BiH). Sarajevo endured the longest siege in the modern history of war. In an IOC article, Nedzad Fazlija, a five-time Olympian and Sarajevo City Council Administration Representative recounts his experience: “The first objects destroyed in Sarajevo were the Olympic facilities. It was very difficult to live in the city, to cope without water, food, warmth. For sport, of course, it was not a good time. But the Olympic spirit of the city gave people the strength to endure another day, another week, another month. The people helped each other as they could.”

For a city, losing sport facilities is not only a material loss. Sport facilities allow people to practice sport, to gather, to share collective emotions, and to express local or national pride. This is the reason why sport facilities are seen as war targets. This is also the reason why rebuilding these facilities is a priority.

Time to rebuild
Both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 1984 Olympic Games were held at Kosevo, the Olympic Stadium. Built in 1947, it was thoroughly renovated and expanded for the Olympic Games. After the war it was rebuilt into a multi-purpose facility and is currently home to football club FK Sarajevo and to the Bosnia and Herzegovina national football team. The stadium is named after Asim Ferhatović-Hase, a legendary player on FK Sarajevo – the city’s Premier League team which plays its home games in this stadium. The stadium currently has a seating capacity of 36,500.

With help from the International Olympic Committee, Zetra Olympic Hall was able to undergo reconstruction at the end of the 1990s. Since that time, it has been known as Juan Antonio Samaranch, in memory of the long-term President of the IOC and a great friend to Sarajevo. It has served as the venue for several international speed skating events and several world records were broken here. Recently, it served as the main venue for the 2019 European Youth Winter Olympic Festival. Hosted in Zetra Hall, the New Olympic Museum reopened in 2004, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Olympic Games.

The iconic cable car connecting Sarajevo with Mount Trebevic reopened in 2018. It offers the greatest panoramic view of the city. The mountain is known for bob and sledding competitions. Over the years, the bobsleigh track has become one of the most recognisable landmarks in Sarajevo. It was abandoned and vandalised but is now undergoing a new renovation thanks to the Bobsleigh and Luge federations. The Olympic ski area of Bjelašnica is close to Sarajevo and three ski resorts (Bjelašnica-Igman, Mount Bjelašnica with Babin Do, and Mount Igman with Veliko et Malo polje) which are managed by ZOI 84. The other Olympic site for alpine skiing is the Jahorina ski resort, today the largest ski resort in BiH.
VISION

Legacy is...

Olympic legacy in Sarajevo includes all of the 1984 Olympic sites. Most of the facilities have been renovated and a few are still damaged. However, even those facilities not yet restored are encompassed into a vision that transforms damage into an asset. In addition to Olympic facilities, Sarajevo benefits from an exceptional and deeply rooted Olympic spirit and pride, ensuring that the Olympic flame will live on.

Thanks to the combination of facilities and Olympic spirit, Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo hosted the 2019 European Youth Olympic Festival, a sort of mini-Olympic Games for European Youth. The EYOF brought together 1,000 young athletes aged 14-18 from 46 countries in Europe. Biathlon, curling, ice hockey, figure skating, short track speed skating, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing and snowboarding were the eight sports on the program.

What's next?

“Join us and be convinced why Sarajevo has been declared the best Winter Olympic Games host of all time.” This is the City’s motto for boosting “Olympic Tourism”. The city strategy is to promote its Olympic history as a means of increasing tourism. Guided tours of the Olympic legacy in the city are already operating and the objective is to increase the capacity and visibility of Sarajevo as an Olympic City.

OBJECTIVES

Promote the City by leveraging its affiliation with the Olympic Movement

Sarajevo is a member of the family of Olympic cities and, even though some time has passed since the XIV Winter Olympics in 1984, memories of this glorious time for Sarajevo are still very much alive, and a lot of work has been done to renew iconic facilities and places.

When searching for “Sarajevo’s Olympic spirit”, it’s best to start at the Olympic Museum of BiH. The old museum was engulfed in flames in 1992, so the collection is now located in the same building as the BiH Olympic Committee, next to the Juan Antonio Samaranch Olympic Stadium (Zetra). As for Edin Numankadic, the director of the Olympic Museum, “If you look at the history of Sarajevo in the 20th century, people know about the beginning of the First World War, they know about the siege [1992 to 1995], and they know about the 1984 Winter Olympic Games. The Olympic Games is the only positive, and that’s why we care about
this cultural heritage." Most of the collection was salvaged and transferred to the Zetra Olympic Complex and the new BiH Olympic Museum was opened in 2004 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Games. Many items related to the Games have been donated, which has helped replenish the museum’s collection, and renovation of the Olympic Museum is in progress.

Many other places are worth a visit, such as the Olympic Mountains – Trebević, Bjelašnica, Jahorina and Igman--; the Sarajevo neighbourhoods and former Olympic Villages, Mojmilo and Dobrinja, which were built as part of the preparation for the XIV Winter Olympic Games.

**Promote Olympism and its values**

The Olympic Games continue to play a key role in the definition of the identity of the region. Games are perceived and used as a way to celebrate peace-building and inter-regional cooperation.

“This atmosphere, which ruled for the Games, created something that we call the Olympic spirit, which has remained to this day. We built facilities, but the most important benefit has been the Olympic spirit. It drives and motivates people to get involved in sport, to train, or to just be fans” says Nedzad Fazlija. “Very soon after the end of the war, the youth began sports activities again, but without any facilities. Day after day, the focus was on repairs. But that desire for success, proving that you are fighting for your country in sports competitions, gave new hope to people to begin a new fight: to restore the ruined city, and to continue to fight for the country on the sports field.”

Olympic values give hope to the youth. The Olympic spirit continues to be a central part of the region’s identity and the recent European Youth Olympic Winter Festival marked a new chapter in its Olympic history. In 2019, Sarajevo organised the European Youth Olympic Festival.

The most lasting benefit of the 1984 Olympic Games is the spirit that is transmitted from generation to generation. The City of Sarajevo can build upon the human legacy of Sarajevo ‘84 to prepare its future and connect its youth with past and future. This Olympic spirit creates new athletes of all levels.

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

**Internal & External Stakeholders**

- City of Sarajevo (Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina)
- National Olympic Committee of Bosnia & Herzegovina (OC BiH)
- ZOI 84 (Zimské olympijské igré 1984) created upon the closure of the OG
- Olimpijski Centar Jahorina, Centar Skenderija
- International Cooperation
**Finance and Cost**

National efforts for the rebuilding of facilities

Grants and partnerships with the IOC, the European Union and other Olympic Cities such as Barcelona. (e.g., IOC, European Union and the City of Barcelona: Acts of solidarity with Sarajevo did not end with the Closing Ceremony of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona). Once the war ended in 1995, the City of Barcelona and its people provided help with the rebuilding of the city. Through numerous associations, Spaniards financed more than 450 projects totaling €2.3 million in reconstruction aid. Following the war, Barcelona opened the Local Democracy Embassy in Sarajevo, which to this day serves as Barcelona’s representative office in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Barcelona also took charge of rebuilding the Sarajevo Olympic Pavilion and the Olympic Village. Since 2000, Barcelona and Sarajevo have been twin cities.

Support from sports federations (e.g., Luge and Bobsleigh Federations).

**Use of the Olympic Brand**

Many sites are explicitly designated as “Olympic”: Skenderija Olympic Hall; Bjelašnica, Olympic Mountain; or the Olympic Stadium. The Olympic Rings can still be spotted around the city and, in the centre, many shops continue to sell souvenirs related to the Games (the mascot, Vučko, is especially popular).

Olympic Rings are displayed in the following city locations:

- Roundabout (intersection) Mojmilo-Dobrinja
- On the plateau in front of the BBI Shopping Center
- Signs at the entrance to the city
- Cable car at Trebevic mountain
- Zetra (boiler room chimney)
- In the renovated Olympic Museum

The Olympic flame podium was exhibited at the Koševo Stadium.

**Human Resources and Time**

The Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina (OC BiH) has 8 permanent employees. Since its establishment in 1992, OC BiH, in accordance with its capabilities and available Olympic Solidarity programs, has been implementing projects aimed at promoting Olympic values and the Olympic heritage.

**EVALUATION**

A core obligation and a priority of the NOC (National Olympic Committee is to participate in multi-sport Olympic competitions and to develop the sports system in BiH. The OC BiH is dedicated to the preservation of the Olympic heritage and the promotion of Olympic values. Currently, the NOC has not designated a concrete
strategy for preserving the Olympic heritage and promoting Olympic values. It is likely that in the future, the City of Sarajevo will need to develop a strategy with the help of the OC BiH.

The Olympic Museum is key to this nascent strategy. It was renovated in 2004, after the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, it has received approximately 10,000 visitors every year.

**KEY CHALLENGES**

**A place dedicated to the history and legacy of the Olympic Games**

The most important project for the preservation and promotion of the Olympic heritage for the OC BiH has been the maintenance and preservation of the Olympic Museum, which was managed by the OC BiH, until 2020. The main challenge, during this period, was to ensure financing for the preservation of the Museum. OC BiH managed to reopen the Museum, with great effort and dedication. However, due to insufficient funding, the Museum suffered from a lack of employees. Only one person worked in the Museum, with reduced working hours and an inability to work weekends. It is also important to point out that there were no funds for the promotion and modernisation of the Museum.

Mostly due to the contributions of the City of Sarajevo, Olympic Solidarity, Sarajevo Canton, UNESCO and the Council of Ministers of BiH, OC BiH renovated the museum building (reopened in 2020). Since then, OC BiH has handed over the maintenance of the newly renovated Olympic Museum to the City of Sarajevo via a 10-year contract (with the possibility of extending cooperation), which provided a budget for the maintenance of the Museum and the employment of experts for its management. The Museum currently employs 5 people, and the number of tourists visiting the Museum is anticipated to increase due to the strategic location of the Museum in the city centre.

**Priorities in promoting the Olympic legacy**

1984 Olympic Games contribute to the positive image of the City and it remains a very positive element to be built upon. The city attracts tourists and increases the Olympic sightseeing offer by renewing its venues. To achieve this strategy, it is essential that places and venues are clearly and visibly identified as Olympic sites. To complement this greater visibility, souvenirs and mascots are present in shops.

**Facing political and institutional challenges**

The war damaged not only the Olympic venues and facilities, but also destroyed archives and land registers, so it is sometimes very difficult to identify the “owners” of some venues.

In addition, Olympic venues and facilities are present on territories that have different rulings. Bosnia and Herzegovina is comprises two politico-administrative entities: BiH Federation and Republica Srpska. The City of Sarajevo itself also underwent post-war politico-administrative changes. Istočno Sarajevo (East Sarajevo) is a city located in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It consists of a few suburban areas of pre-war Sarajevo which are now in the Republika Srpska and in newly built areas. Both entities worked together to organise the successful European Youth Olympic Festival in 2019.
Set up strategic partnerships to maximise development opportunities

In addition to the Olympic Museum, OC BiH has implemented other projects aimed at promoting Olympic values and legacy, in accordance with its capabilities and with the available Olympic Solidarity programs.

In line with these efforts, OC BiH recently organised an art workshop with Sarajevo primary and secondary school students on Olympic legacy of BiH. The project aimed to generate interest in BiH's rich Olympic legacy among students. The second in a series of art workshops, the event was organised in the newly opened Olympic Museum. The first one took place in 2019, just before the beginning of Sarajevo/East Sarajevo European Youth Olympic Festival (YEOF). An Olympic education project will feature lectures given to primary school children on the topic of Olympic values – excellence, respect and friendship. It is also important to emphasise that every year, OC BiH organises the Olympic Day celebration in June. This event promotes Olympic values and provides an opportunity for as many students as possible to discover and be initiated into a wide variety of sports. The Olympic Day is organised in Sarajevo, Travnik, and Mostar.

The year 2014 saw the inception of the “Olympic Arenas and Environmentally Sustainable Development,” a partnership project implemented by OC BiH in collaboration with the “Let's Do It” project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main activities are focused on education in primary and secondary schools as well as on cleaning and afforestation of Olympic sites. The activities are directly focused and carried out directly or in the vicinity of the Olympic arenas. Education as a key segment of sustainable development has proven the need to act in this direction as we pass on the knowledge of Olympism and Olympic values while conveying the essential importance of the relationship with nature and the environment to the younger generations. Projects in this field are recommended by IOC and are in line with the IOC Agenda 2020. Projects of this kind are necessary for BiH society, since the Olympic arenas, especially in the summer, are not in an enviable state of cleanliness, and thus are functionally unusable for citizens.

OC BiH has also been a partner in the project "Youth Sports Games" for many years, which brings together boys and girls from all over BiH, demonstrating the principles of the Olympic Games through project activities and removing barriers on all possible grounds of discrimination and negative sociological phenomena in every society. In addition to participating in sports activities, each generation of children visits the Olympic Museum, during which they have the opportunity to listen to an educational lecture on Olympism, Olympic values and the rich Olympic legacy of BiH.

Due to the exceptional response and great media coverage, it can be stated that all projects have been very successful, and we plan to repeat them in the future, in accordance with an availability of Olympic Solidarity projects.

Mobilisation of volunteers

The energy of volunteers was vital in rebuilding the Olympic legacy, just as it was vital during the organisation of the Games nearly 40 years ago. The youth in Sarajevo are particularly involved, as they need facilities to practice. The human
legacy of 1984 represents the future. The city dealt with the legacy and damage of the conflict in an admirable manner. International and inter-organisational cooperation, plus volunteer energies were key in this renovation process.

The population has been mobilised in order to collect, create and recreate collective memories within the city. Post-Games, the Olympic bobsleigh and luge track had been frequently used, but became an artillery position for Bosnian-Serb forces. Heavily damaged, in 2014, restoration efforts began with the help of volunteers, the national bobsleigh federation, and a grant from the International Luge Federation, which also provided on-site support.

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