

Dear Mr Banks,

Let me first take this opportunity to reassure you that the IOC will do everything it can to ensure that the Olympic Games in Sochi as well as any future Games' edition will be free of any form of discrimination. I reiterated and expanded on this important message during my speech at the Olympic flame lighting ceremony in Olympia last Sunday. Indeed, I stated that 'The Olympic message sees the global diversity of cultures, society and life choices as a source of enrichment.' (The full speech is available at http://www.olympic.org/Documents/IOC_President/2013-09-29_Speech_IOC_President_Bach_Torch_Lighting_English.pdf .)

Our task at the IOC is to ensure that the Charter is fully applied at the Olympic Games and is fully accepted at all venues for all participants from athletes and officials to media and spectators.

Assurances were given to the IOC again last week that this will be the case during the Sochi Games and clearly, this is what the IOC demands and expects. The IOC has also received written confirmation from Dmitry Kozak, the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Games, to that end.

He confirmed to us that:

"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."

Please also note that my colleague Jean-Claude Killy was misquoted last week – AP subsequently updated their report - and we would like to refer you to the following clarifying statement of the IOC: <http://www.olympic.org/news/statement-from-the-ioc/209817>.

However, it is important to stress that the IOC's remit does not extend to the internal affairs of sovereign nations, no matter how we may feel about them. We are not a supra-national parliament or government and we must leave such deliberations to the competent authorities. The IOC cannot hope to influence national legislation outside the scope of the Games and has to respect the law of each host country.

What we do know is that the Games, the Olympic athletes and, above all, the Olympic Village can be a powerful symbol that sets an example for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. This is what we are striving for at each edition of the Games.

I would welcome the opportunity to an open dialogue between our two organisations particularly with a focus on equality and non-discrimination in sport.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Bach

IOC President