

IOC rejects EBU bid for 2014-16 Olympic Games rights

The International Olympic Committee has rejected the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) bid for the European broadcast rights for the Olympics Games 2014-2016.

In a statement to the press, EBU President Fritz Pleitgen, said: "We very much regret the decision of the IOC. We have worked with the IOC since 1956 to deliver the Olympic Games to the broadest possible audience, and ensured maximum exposure of the Olympic Games, and also Olympic Sports between the Games. We note that there are different views about the future monetary broadcast value of the Games. EBU Members were surprised by the high financial expectations of the IOC. We regret that, it seems, little account is taken of the additional high level of investment by the EBU in rights for, and the production and quality editorial coverage of, World-, European- and National Championships, across many Olympic Sports"

EBU President-elect, Jean-Paul Philpott, added: "The worldwide financial crisis will not stop at the doorstep of free-to air television; it will also have an impact on the value of broadcast rights for sports events. The EBU's offer reflected the maximum price public service broadcasters could pay for the rights, our philosophy of investing in Olympic sports throughout the Olympiad (the four years between the summer Games), and the value of offering Olympic sports free of charge to all citizens.

"We are sorry that we did not manage to convince the IOC of the importance of our global support of Olympic sport. We will now carefully analyse the consequences of the IOC decision on our sports-rights acquisition policy".

The EBU, the largest association of national broadcasters in the world with 75 active members, has already bought the rights for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games and the 2012 London Olympics for more than \$700 million. The IOC's biggest source of revenue is broadcasting rights deals which are expected to bring in close to \$4 billion for the next two-Games period of 2010-2012.

The 2014 Winter Olympics will be held in Sochi, Russia, while the host of the 2016 Summer Games will be selected next year.

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