

1985-2008 From OLYMPHILEX to OLYMPEX

Maurizio Tecardi, General Secretary of the IOC/FIPO and Member of I.O.C. Commission for Philately, Numismatic and Memorabilia

All over the world there are thousands of Olympic and sport philatelists who, through their National Associations, belong to the International Federation of Olympic Philately, which was founded by the International Olympic Committee's President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, on December 7, 1982.

Since then, the initial structure of the FIPO has changed and some of our friends are no longer here. Initially, FIPO was an association of Olympic and sports philatelists but now it is a real Federation of National Associations of Olympic and sports philatelists. To date thirty National Associations are members of FIPO- which I should mention- is recognised by the International Olympic Committee and is presided over by Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Today FIPO is a big family with thousands of philatelists scattered all over the world and who speak only a single language, made of friendship; a big family which has gathered most of its members through "Olympihlex", the international exhibition of Olympic and sports philately. From 1985, when the first exhibition was inaugurated by President Samaranch in Lausanne, to Rome (1987), Seoul (1988), Varna (1990), Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000) and Athens (2004), its success has always increased and we hope it will obtain even more success now in Beijing with its new name "Olympex".

It was President Samaranch who first had the idea of an important exhibition at international level. He was in fact a keen philatelist and



wanted to learn more on and admire the best of what was present in the exhibits of the best Olympic and sport philatelists of the world. The first edition in Lausanne, held at the Palais de Beaulieu from 18th to 24th March 1985, gathered sports and Olympic exhibits of over one hundred collectors distributed in about 1150 frames. In addition, there were more than 20 postal administration services with sale stands, certain of which commemorated the exhibition in Lausanne with the issue of stamps and the use of special cancellations.



Among the stamps dedicated to Olymphilex 1985 in Lausanne we can mention the ones from Libya, Hungary, Albania, Spain - this was the first occasion upon which Spain had issued a stamp to commemorate a philatelic exhibition held outside her national territory - the Central African Republic, Niger, Congo, the Comores, Mozambique and also postcards and one aerogram that were issued respectively by the United Nations, France, United States and San Marino.

There were also numerous postmarks commemorating the first Olymphilex from: Switzerland, South Korea, Rumania, Libya, Hungary, Albania, Poland, the Peoples' Republic of China, Iceland, the Central African Republic, France, the United States, Bulgaria, San Marino and Italy.

The second edition of "Olymphilex" was always decided by President Samaranch on the occasion of a meeting with the officials of FIPO in Lausanne at the closing of Olymphilex'85. It was he who suggested it be held in the city of Rome which two years later would have hosted the Athletics World Championships.

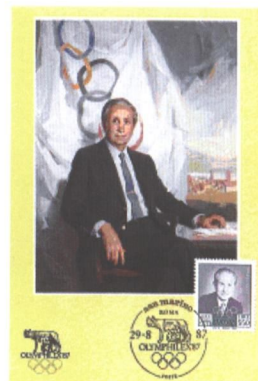


Organized from 29th August to 9th September 1987 by the Italian Olympic Committee during the World Athletics Championships, the second World Olympic and Sports Philately Exhibition, following the original one held in Lausanne in 1985, proved to be a great success in terms of its organization, visitors and, most important of all, with regards to the high level of quality of the participations presented, where the Italian philatelists were the winners of the day.

The setting for this second edition of Olympihlex was CONI's Headquarters, situated in the marvelous Italic Forum. Twenty stands of Postal Administration Services were set up in the gardens and which, throughout the entire event, used numerous commemorative postmarks. In all it is considered that more than 50.000 people literally assaulted the Stands and the exhibition itself.



For the first time in history, the Postal Services of the Vatican issued an Olympic-Sports set to commemorate Olympihlex'87: four values, issued in a souvenir sheet, which reproduced four athletes taken from the mosaics at the Terms of Caracalla that are nowadays exhibited in the Vatican Museum.



To commemorate the World Athletics Championships and Olympihlex'87, the Italian Postal Administration Services issued two stamps.

The first of these has as its motif the Olympic Stadium in Rome, home of the Championships, and the emblem corresponding to the event. The second shows the Italic Forum, headquarters of the CONI, with the legend "World Olympic Philately Exhibition", with the emblem of the exhibition and name Olympihlex'87. The postal Administration Services offices which were installed by the Italian postal services within the Exhibition's enclosure registered sales of over 55.000 series commemorating Olympihlex'87 as well as the aforementioned World Athletics Championships.



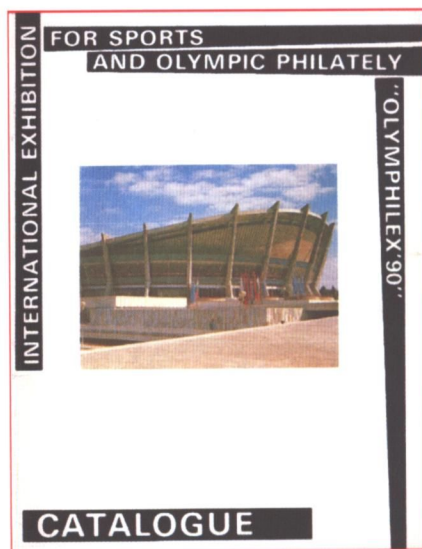
In addition to the various commemorative stamps, Olympihlex'87 in Rome was celebrated by over 20 special cancellations of different postal administration services from all over the world.

At the closing of the roman edition, FIPO and its President decided that in the future, Olympihlex should be held, possibly, at the same time as the summer Olympic Games.



The third edition of Olympihlex took place in Seoul from 19th to 28th September 1988, as part of the Cultural Program of the XXIVth Olympic Games, under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee and the International Olympic and Sports Philately Federation (FIPO) and sponsorship of the International Philately Federation (FIP). Finally the fortunate and flawless idea of the IOC's President, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, to celebrate a World Olympic and Sports Philately Exhibition at the same time as the Olympic Games, was realized in Seoul. On this occasion, 270 collections from 140 countries and 12 Postal Administration Services were present in Olympihlex'88 and, as in the editions in Lausanne in 1985 and in Rome 1987, this third edition took place in a majestic setting, the Korea Exhibition Center. Thousands of visitors, day after day, crowded into the enormous hall where the exhibition was installed. The Korean Postal Administration Services roused great attention, with their Olympic series, small blocks and postal stationeries commemorating Olympihlex'88 and where one could request the use of the numerous special cancellations - one for each day of the event - all of them of great beauty. The twelve Postal Administration Services present at Olympihlex'88 used commemorative cancellations which contributed to reinforce the success of this third edition of this important Olympic and Sports Philately event. During his visit to the Exhibition, the President of the IOC and of the FIPO, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, informed the Minister of Communications of Korea of his sincere admiration for the excellent organization and grandiose execution.

In spite of the fact that FIPO had previously decided that "Olympihlex" exhibitions should be held within the cultural program of the summer games President Samaranch, in order to satisfy the Bulgarian Olympic Committee, philatelists and the Bulgarian postal service, agreed that an edition of Olympihlex be held "outside of the Olympics".



From 19th to 25th October 1990, the fourth edition of Olympihlex was held in Varna, Bulgaria, this representing the most important exhibition of Olympic and Sports Philately. In spite of the political situation, and above all the economic one, in force in Bulgaria at that particular time, the organization of Olympihlex'90 proved to be a great success. In the grandiose "Sport Salle" in Varna, 273 Olympic and Sports Stamp Collection from 27 countries were exhibited. The quality level of the material was considered higher than average - only a few low-quality participations had found their way into Olympihlex'90, which proved to be due to the behavior of a Commissioner

who evidently considered that quantity was more important than quality.

The Bulgarian Union of Philatelists and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication Services, accomplished their task: the fourth edition of Olympihlex was visited by a very high number of enthusiasts during the days the show was open. The event especially aroused the attention of young people, who admired the collections on show or queued up at the Postal Administration stands in order to obtain the material, stamps or cancellations, necessary to enrich their collections. The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications issued a set and a souvenir-sheet to commemorate Olympihlex'90; it also issued a series of postal stationary ran out during the first days of Olympihlex.



As had happened in the previous editions Olympihlex'90 was commemorated, in addition to the issues of the Bulgarian postal service, by various other philatelic issues and by many special cancellations from other postal administrations.

Once again, philately and sport proved a winning combination. In Barcelona in the context of the "Cultural Olympiad", Olympihlex celebrated its fifth edition, which was decidedly impressive and very significant for the future of sports and Olympic philately.



There were some 250 collections on display from all parts of the world; and the standard of entries had notably improved. The



promotional activity which FIPO had been conducting over the past ten years to this end and the increasing creation of national associations of sports and Olympic philatelists had undoubtedly helped to raise both the number and the quality of exhibits - in both sports philately in general and the Olympic field in particular. Proof was obtained in Barcelona that the highest standard is undoubtedly to be found among German and Italian philatelists; the Italian sports and Olympic philatelists were in fact the first in the world and the Italian sports and Olympic exhibits received the most medals. From the first years of 1990 the Germans have caught them up. Alongside these groups, we also find a few outstanding individual collections among the English, Spanish, Americans, Swiss, Swedes, Norwegians or Greeks.



Returning to the exhibition in Barcelona, I would like to emphasize the fact that it was very well attended, demonstrating the importance of having a prestigious, large and spacious venue as proved to be the Economics and Business Science Faculty at the University of Barcelona. The quantity and quality of the exhibits on display were good.



This Olymphilex'92 was marked by extensive and interesting philatelic documentation. Stamps were issued both by the Spanish postal administration services and by other postal administrations and over 30 special cancellations can be counted!

Olymphilex'92 in Barcelona saw for the first time the presence of Olympic "memorabilia" next to philately! One of the halls contained an important and very interesting exhibit of Olympic "pins"; thousands and thousands of them

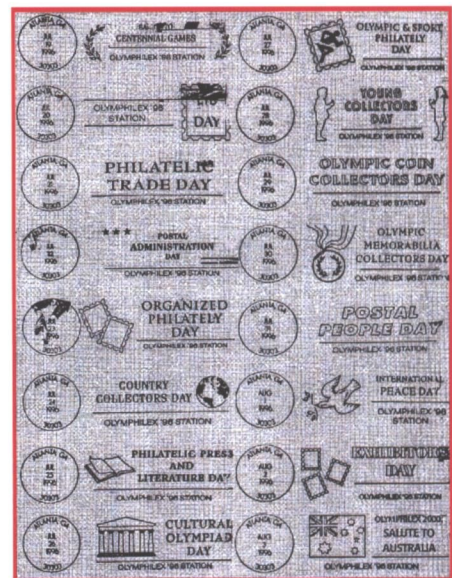
attracted the interest of the public at the head of which was President Samaranch.

It was on this occasion that was born the idea of putting together, in the future editions of Olymphilex, memorabilia and numismatics with philately in order to allow Olymphilex to become an always more important instrument for increasing the culture on the history of Olympism. Documentation concerning the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement, which was previously increased with stamps and other postal-philatelic material will be enhanced and amplified with the presence of souvenirs and documents such as posters, brochures, books, post-cards, diplomas, pins, medals, identity cards, programs, torches, etc. which are recuperated and looked after by collectors.

An excellent demonstration of this was the Olymphilex'96 in Atlanta. The Games of the XXVth Olympiad held from 19th July to 3rd August attracted in the capital of the state of Georgia, hundreds of sport fans, many of which together with Olympic sport collectors (not only philately) admired the very high level exhibits which were worthy of being exhibited in important museums.

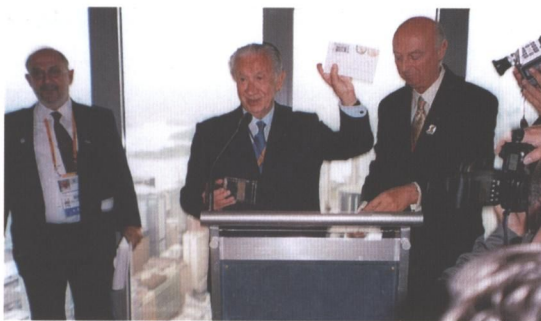
This attraction was also useful to the main sector of Olymphilex, philately, where 200 exhibits, from all over the world, were present. Also what surrounded the event was important with the presence of over 50 Postal Administrations and an important number of dealers from USA and Europe.

In fact, many Postal Administration had accepted the invitation of the organizing committee and they were present with sale booths and special cancellations. The United States Post used various commemorative cancellations during the exhibition and these were made available to visitors at their post office located at the Merchandise Mart. For the first time, in addition to philatelic exhibits and to the presence of dealers in this sector, Olymphilex also saw the presence of exhibits, dealers and collectors of Olympic and sport numismatics and memorabilia; in particular this sector represented the aspect of major attraction for non specialized public.





The seventh edition of Olympilex, held in Sydney from 15th to 28th September 2000, during the Games of the XXVIIth Olympiad, had the participation of around 100 exhibits in over 800 frames. For the first time, in addition to the Postal Administrations, 20 with their temporary Post office, and to 20 dealers for philately, numismatics and memorabilia, two Australian Mints were present. Always during this Olympilex, a new regulation was used for the first time; it foresaw for exhibits having received a gold medal, another classification established, always by the Jury, after having examined once again the above exhibits, following which it granted to three of them the bronze, silver and gold medal. This new initiative created a similar classification to that of the Olympic competition winners.



Olympilex' 2000 in Sydney confirmed

the excellence of the idea of putting together in a single exhibition all the sectors of Olympic and sports exhibits: philately, numismatics and memorabilia. Success was guaranteed by thousands of visitors, although the space allocated to the Olympilex exhibition proved insufficient. Olympilex'2000 in Sydney was commemorated by many special cancellations used at the headquarters of the exhibition.

The eighth and last edition of Olympilex was held in Athens from 16th to 22nd August 2004 on the occasion of the Games of the XXVIIIth Olympiad. Over 250 exhibits in 1200 frames participated and 10 Postal Administrations and 10 dealers were present.

This edition of the Olympilex was marked by an important number of



exhibitors to which correspondent an equally important high level of quality of exhibits. In fact 10 exhibits received the gold medal thus beating the average of four golds awarded in previous editions; unfortunately these exhibits were admired only by the exhibitors who were present and by very few visitors. In fact the location chosen by the organizers was at the extreme suburb of Athens;



normally used for exhibitions and commercial fairs it however lacked any form of direct communication with the city!



12 August 2004



13 August 2004



16 August 2004



18 August 2004



21 August 2004

The only day with public, even too much, was on the official opening of 16th August 2004 attended by IOC President Jacques Rogge, Honorary President Juan Antonio Samaranch, various ministers of the Greek government, the Mayor of Athens and many other personalities of the Olympic family, of sport and of culture. An unforgettable day, but unfortunately only one!

However the few lovers of philately who came to visit Olymphelex on the other days were able to obtain without queuing the various commemorative cancellations of the postal administrations present and to purchase numerous Olympic stamps, leaflets and postal stationery at the post office of Greece.

And now we have reached our new date. From 8 to 18th August 2008 collectors and lovers of philately or other forms of collectables connected to Olympism and to the Olympic Games will meet in the impressive halls of the Beijing Exhibition Centre where the world exhibition "OLYMPLEX, THE OLYMPIC EXPO" will be organized within the events foreseen by the Cultural Program connected to the Games of the XXIXth Olympiad. It will be sponsored by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), the Beijing Organizing Committee for Olympic Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) and China Post Group. It will be organised by China Post Group with the collaboration of the IOC Commission for Philately, Numismatics and Memorabilia and of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie Olympique (FIPO). Over 200 exhibitors from 20 countries will be present and their exhibits will be placed in more than 1200 frames for a total of around 20000 sheets. In addition there will be numerous booths of Postal Administrations and Philatelic dealers. This 2008 edition of Olymphelex will certainly be a great happening of Olympic and sport philately for stamp lovers of all over the world.

To Go Beyond

For the Opening Ceremony of OLYMPEX, the Olympic Expo Beijing 2008

CHEN Zheng, Secretary-General of the Chinese Sport Stamps Collectors' Association (CSSCA)

"Isn't it a great pleasure to have friends coming from afar?" CSSCA and Chinese stamps collectors hereby wish to extend our warm welcome to friends coming from different continents to Beijing - the host city for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad.

It is well known that as a member of the Olympic family, CSSCA was founded under the care and support Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, honorary President for Life of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Chairman of the Olympic Philately, Numismatic and Memorabilia Commission (OPNMC).

As early as 1983, Mr. Samaranch visited the 5th National Games of China on invitation. He suggested establishing a national sport stamps collectors' association in China during his attendance of the opening ceremony of the sport stamps collection in Shanghai. Soon afterwards, the former Physical Culture and Sports Commission of China set up a preparatory team. After two years of arduous preparation, the Chinese Sport Stamps Collectors' Association (CSSCA) was officially inaugurated in the Palace Museum in Beijing on April 29, 1986. Many distinguished guests also attended the opening ceremony to show their support for the association, including Mr. Zhu Xuefan, the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Mr. Yang Taifang, the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Mr. Rong Gaotang, the Secretary General of CPC Central Advisory Committee, and officials from the Physical Culture and Sports Commission. Mr. Samaranch also attended the opening ceremony and delivered a message of warm congratulations. He said, "I'm very happy to be here with you to attend the inauguration of CSSCA. I'm particularly satisfied with one thing.

You did as I suggested in 1983. The key of the suggestion is to establish CSSCA..." He finally added, "We're looking forward to having a large-scale international Olympic stamps exhibition in the People's Republic of China in the near future."

In October 1987, CSSCA was formally accepted as an organizational member of the International Olympic Federation



Mr. Samaranch was making a speech in the China Physical Philately Association. The fifth on the right was Ms. Lang Ping, the first president of the China Physical Philately Association.



of Philately (FIPO), making CSSCA the only legitimate organization representing China to attend international sports philately and collection activities. (Mr. Samaranch is delivering a speech at the inauguration ceremony of CSSCA. On the right-hand side: Ms. Lang Ping, the first Chairwoman of CSSCA)

CSSCA is always one of the most active members in FIPO. We have altogether participated in six out of the 8 Olympic stamps exhibitions organized by FIPO. We did better and better for each exhibition and won great credits for China in the Olympic cultural contests.

I. From March 18 to 24, 1985, the first Olympic Stamp Exhibition kicked off in Lausanne, Switzerland, where the headquarters of the IOC is located. At the invitation of Mr. Samaranch, the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) selected and submitted 6 stamp albums for the exhibition, which only won 6 commemorative awards. Although we hadn't achieved satisfactory results, but we established links with FIPO, laying a solid foundation for the establishment of CSSCA.

II. In 1987, the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) proposed for IOC and FIPO to hold the 2nd Olympic Stamps Exhibition simultaneously with the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Italy. China won 7 bronze medals. The significance of the 2nd Olympic Stamps Exhibition for China is that Mr. Samaranch signed and issued the FIPO membership certificate to CSSCA, indicating that CSSCA had become an official member of FIPO.

III. The 5th Olympic Stamps Exhibition was held from July 29 to August 8, 1992 during the 25th Olympic Games in the hometown of Mr. Samaranch. China submitted 13 stamp albums and one literature for the exhibitions and won 3 silver awards, 5 silver-plated awards, 2 bronze awards, and 4 participation certificates.

IV. The 6th Olympic Stamps Exhibition was held from July 19 to August 3, 1996 during the 26th Olympic Games. It was the third time that the exhibition was held simultaneously with the Olympic Games. China selected and submitted 17 stamp albums and one literature for the exhibition. What's pleasing was that there were 3 albums from China winning grand silver awards.

V. The 7th Olympic Stamps Exhibition was held from September 15 to 28, 2000 in Sydney, Australia. During the exhibition, China submitted 19 stamp albums, 10 of which attended the competition exhibition and won one grand gold-plated award, 2 gold-plated awards, one grand silver award, 4 silver awards and 2 silver-plated awards and 9 of which attended the promotion exhibition and won one grand gold-plated award, one grand silver award, 4 silver awards and 2 silver-plated awards. All the works sent by China won awards and it was also the first time that China's sport stamps won gold-related award.

VI. The 8th Olympic Stamps Exhibition was held from August 12 to 22, 2004 in the European Exhibition and Promotion Center (EKEP) in Greece. It was the fifth time that the exhibition was held simultaneously with the Olympics since the Seoul Olympics in 1988. CSSCA submitted 10 stamp albums and won 5 gold medals and 5 silver medals, starting to showcase the level and growing trend of China's sport stamps collection.

CSSCA kept forging ahead and going beyond our limits, which was a result of constant efforts of China's sport stamps collectors united by CSSCA.

To embrace the philatelic exhibition of the Olympic Expo Beijing 2008 and upgrade the level of China's sport stamps collection, CSSCA put forward the fine works strategy. Focusing upon this

strategy, relying on the big platform of comprehensive national games and drawing upon support and help from various sides, CSSCA have held 7 national sport stamps exhibitions in the past five years, including the 5th National Sport Stamps Exhibition in Suzhou in 2002, the Urban Games Sport Stamps Exhibition in Changsha in 2003, the National Minority Games Sport Stamps Exhibition in Yinchuan in 2003, the 10th National Games Sport Stamps Exhibition in Nanjing in 2005, the Fine Sport Stamps Exhibition in Nantong in 2006, the Olympic Stamps Selection Exhibition in Panjin, Liaoning in 2006, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games Stamps Selection Exhibition sponsored by FIPO and held during the 13th World Olympic Collectors' Fair in 2007.

It takes a long time and lots of hard work to accomplish a great task. The activities greatly improved the level of China's stamps collection and laid a solid foundation for CSSCA to participate in the Olympic Expo Beijing 2008 (Olympex).

Hereby I'm proud to state that we have successfully completed the task of organizing the 13th World Olympic Collectors' Exhibition under the guidance of OPNMC and under the leadership of BOCOG, COC and China Post.

The 13th World Olympic Collectors' Fair was held from June 23 to 28, 2007 in Beijing. Liu Qi, Chairman of BOCOG and Mr. Samaranch, IOC Honorary President for Life and OPNMC Chairman opened the Fair and cut the ribbon together with Liu Peng, President of COC and Executive President of BOCOG and Liu Andong, President of China Postal Group (CPG).

Liu Qi extended warm congratulations on the opening of the 13th World Olympic Collectors' Fair on behalf of BOCOG. He pointed out that culture is one of the three pillars of the Olympic movement. The combination of sport and culture is an important concept and practice of the modern Olympic movement. As an important part of the Olympic culture, the Olympic collection records the history of the Olympic movement, recounts touching and inspiring stories, and reflects the grand ideal and humanistic value of the Olympic movement in pursuit of peace and progress. The Olympic collection work plays an important role in carrying forward the Olympic spirit, enriching the Olympic culture and advancing the Olympic movement.

Mr. Samaranch said, "It is the first time that the World Olympic Collectors' Fair came to Beijing, a beautiful city that will soon host the 2008 Olympic Games. Remarkable achievements have been made in the preparations for the Olympics. We firmly believe that the 2008 Beijing Olympics will be the most outstanding Games in the Olympic history."

IOC President Jacques Rogge also sent a letter of congratulations for the Fair, extending his best wishes for the success of the Fair.

At the awarding ceremony, Mr. Samaranch represented IOC President Jacques Rogge to present the Certificate of Outstanding Organization and Commemorative Silver Plate to commend CSSCA for successfully holding this event.

CSSCA took, is taking and will take it as our mission to carry forward the Olympic spirit, disseminate the Olympic culture and promote the Olympic philately and collection.

A happy and harmonious Olympic family is always our common home.

