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STORY HEADLINE: Flame lit for Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in Ancient Olympia

LOCATION: Ancient Olympia, Greece
DATE: 18 October 2021
LANGUAGE: English/Chinese

STORY SCRIPT: The Olympic flame for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 was lit today in ancient Olympia, Greece. This marks the start of its journey to China where, in just over 100 days, the Games will begin.

As a symbol of peace, unity and solidarity, the Olympic flame will convey the values of Olympism to all those that see it on its travels. The flame will help build anticipation amongst Olympic fans eager to witness the world’s best winter sport stars in action, whilst also inspiring thousands of athletes who are making their final preparations for these Games.

Speaking at the ceremony in ancient Olympia, which was held under strict conditions due to COVID-19 countermeasures, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Bach made it clear that the Olympic Games have always stood above conflict:

“In our fragile world, where division, conflict and mistrust are on the rise, the Olympic Games always build bridges. They never erect walls.

“The foundation for the ancient Olympic Games to take place in peace was a sacred truce – the ekecheiria. This Olympic Truce ensured a halt to hostilities, allowing athletes and spectators to travel safely to Olympia and home again. The ekecheiria demonstrates that already the ancient Greeks understood that for the Olympic Games to unfold their unifying power, they must stand above any political conflict. In this way, already 3,000 years ago, there was an inseparable link between the Olympic Games and peace.

“This peace mission, handed down to us since ancient times, requires that the Olympic Games be respected as politically neutral ground. Only this political neutrality ensures that the Olympic Games can stand above and beyond the political differences that existed in ancient times, as well as today.”

Turning to the host city, he added: “Beijing will write history as the first city ever to host both the summer and winter editions of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will connect the Chinese people with the world, bringing to life China’s vision
to engage 300 million people with sport on snow and ice, changing winter sport forever. The entire world will see this passion when China welcomes the best winter sport athletes."

IOC Vice-President, Special Representative and Vice-President of Beijing 2022 and Vice-President of the Chinese Olympic Committee Yu Zaiqing led the host city’s delegation at the ceremony.

He said: “The Olympic flame embodies our unswerving pursuit of excellence. It highlights our resolve to always challenge our limits and surpass ourselves. And it sheds light on our journey ahead, to overcome difficulties with greater solidarity and closer cooperation. Amid the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, the Olympic flame has brought us confidence, warmth and hope. It has been a source of strength in our fight to defeat the pandemic.”

The traditional ceremony, held near the Temple of Hera, celebrates the Olympic Games’ Greek heritage, connecting the modern Games to their historic origins.

As well as President Bach and Yu Zaiqing, a number of other guests were in attendance, showing their solidarity with the Beijing 2022 Games. These included the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou; the members of the IOC Executive Board; and the IOC’s Beijing 2022 Coordination Commission Chair, Juan Antonio Samaranch. The ceremony was hosted by the Hellenic Olympic Committee President and IOC member Spyros Capralos. Also present was the Mayor of Olympia, Georgios Georgiopoulos.

After the Olympic flame began its journey with Greek skier Ioannis Antoniou, an Olympian who also assumed the role of first torchbearer for the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014. The flame was then passed to Chinese Olympian Li Jiajun, a winner of five medals in speed skating at the 1998, 2002 and 2006 Olympic Winter Games (two silver and three bronze medals).

On Tuesday (19 Oct) the Olympic flame will be at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, the venue for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, where the official handover to the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee will take place before the flame departs for China.

A welcome ceremony will be held in Beijing on 20 October, with the flame initially going on display to the public at the Beijing Olympic Tower before setting off on a flame exhibition tour. Closer to the Games, a traditional Olympic Torch Relay will be held. More information will be announced by the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee after the arrival ceremony on 20 October.

Around 2,900 athletes, representing approximately 85 National Olympic Committees, will compete in what will be the most gender-balanced Olympic Winter Games in history, between 4 and 20 February 2022.

SHOTLIST:
00:02 Aerial of Ancient Olympia, Greece
00:07 Wide of Presidential Guard marching into ceremony
00:10 Midshot Presidential Guard marching
00:15 Wide of three flags - Greece, People’s Republic of China and Olympic flags
00:18 Tracking shot of entrance to ceremony: Olympic President Thomas Bach, President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellaropoulou and Hellenic Olympic Committee President/IOC member Spyros Capralos (far left)
00:37 Pull shot behind Soprano Vassiliki Karagianni singing Olympic anthem to delegates
00:42 Front shot of Soprano singing Olympic anthem
00:48 Pan across applause of officials and guests at ceremony ending close President Bach

00:55 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
“The foundation for the ancient Olympic Games to take place and to take place in peace was a sacred truce – the ekecheiria. This Olympic Truce ensured a halt to hostilities, allowing athletes and spectators to travel safely to Olympia and home again. The ekecheiria demonstrates that already the ancient Greeks understood that for the Olympic Games to unfold their unifying power, they must stand above any political conflict. In this way, already 3,000 years ago, there was an inseparable link between the Olympic Games and peace.

“In the Olympic Games, everyone respects the same rules. In the Olympic Games, we are all equal, irrespective of social background, gender, race, sexual orientation, or political belief. In this way, the athletes will show us that we can only go faster, we can only aim higher, we can only become stronger, if we stand together – in solidarity.

“The Olympic Games cannot address all the challenges in our world. But the Olympic Games set an example for a world where everyone respects the same rules and one another. They inspire us to solve problems in friendship and solidarity. They build bridges leading to better understanding and friendship among people. This is the timeless message that this Olympic flame will send from our spiritual home here in ancient Olympia, to Beijing, and to the world.”

03:32 Pan along seated officials and guest watching ceremony

03:38 SOUNDBITE: Yu Zaiqing, IOC Vice-President, Special Representative and Vice-President of Beijing 2022 and Vice-President of the Chinese Olympic Committee (subtitled)
“To President Sakellaropolou, President Bach, President Capralos and all the friends for your presence at the ceremony. The Olympic flame is the symbol of the lofty Olympic spirit. For thousands of years, the sacred Olympic flame has been the light of solidarity, friendship, peace and justice, shining on the world. The Olympic flame has been a witness of the glorious history of the development and progress of humanity.

03:57 Officials walk from seated ceremony and speeches towards the Temple of Hera lighting ceremony
04:04 Close of gong and entrance of Priestesses into the Ancient Stadium
04:10 Mid shot flute played by Priestess
04:14 Wide of Priestesses taking formation
04:18 Wide High Priestess kneels to light flame
04:27 Close lighting and raising torch
04:33 Wide High Priestess raises Olympic flame
04:39 Close of Olympic torch with flame burning
04:43 High Priestess uses flame to light bowl
04:48 Tracking shot Priestesses
04:54 Mid shot Priestess sounds gong
04:58 Wide of Kouroi ceremonial ritual dance
05:03 Mid shot Kouroi performing
05:08 Mid shot Priestesses ceremonial dance
05:12 Wide Priestesses ceremonial dance
05:16 Close flaming bowl held by Priestess
05:22 Mid shot of Priestess laying down flaming lantern
05:28 Close flaming bowl
05:34 Wide of torch lighting from bowl by Priestess
05:38 Wide Priestess carries lit torch
05:42 Close Olympic torch alight
05:46 Mid shot in to pan, Priestess lighting flame to first Olympic torchbearer
05:55 Close Priestess releases a dove
05:58 Wide shot of Priestesses watching dove fly from ceremony
06:02 Tracking shot dove in flight
06:06 Tracking shot as first torchbearer, Greek skier Ioannis Antoniou, departs
06:12 Aerial of Ioannis Antoniou running
06:16 Wide Ioannis Antoniou kneels in front of the Pierre de Coubertin Monument
06:20 Close of Pierre de Coubertin Monument
06:24 Mid shot flame being transferred to second torchbearer, Chinese Olympian Li Jiajun
06:30 Tracking shot from front of Li Jiajun running

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