

Introductory remarks by Coen Teulings, Chairman of Merifin Capital, hosting an AECA Conference Luncheon with speaker Dr. Jacques Rogge, Honorary President of the International Olympic Committee, in Brussels, Belgium, on 9 April 2014

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must be happy to have an enemy again. Nothing unifies better than a common enemy and we therefore ought to be grateful to Mr. Vladimir Putin – it is him of course – who has managed to give a real boost to the *raison d'être* of the European Union and a real boost to NATO by marching into the Krim straight after the elegant Olympic Games in Sochi. It is in this complex world that the IOC has to navigate its course not by running away but by facing challenges in their own manner.

The IOC itself too is not without challenges either and seems more and more dictated if not terrorised by the media and numbers of spectators thereby risking reducing Olympic Games to a sports circus of sensation rather than a classic sports competition.

As we all know Dr. Jacques Rogge has been the President of the International Olympic Committee for the last 12 years. His presidency has in particular enlarged and intensified the activities for young people and young athletes by providing them with facilities and education. And of course, some of these young athletes may become top athletes over time. The Youth Olympic Games, this year in Nanjing, China, are a testimony to this and also the creation of Olympic Youth Development Centers the first of which stands in Lusaka, Zambia, and which is gradually becoming a resounding success.

Jacques Rogge has been a most distinguished and outstanding President of the International Olympic Committee and I therefore consider it a particular honour and a privilege to host this AECA Luncheon Meeting for him.

Coen Teulings, 9 April 2014