

**With three days to go until the official start of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, the 126th IOC Session opened tonight with a vibrant ceremony in the host city's Zimny Theatre.**



President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Russian Olympic Committee President and IOC member Alexander Zhukov, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak and Sochi 2014 President and CEO Dmitry Chernychenko were in attendance.

During his opening speech, IOC President Thomas Bach, an Olympic champion himself, said: "Tonight, just three days away from the opening of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, we can tell the athletes: the stage, your Olympic stage, is ready." He added: "To realize what a great achievement this is, we should remember how things were seven years ago. At that time, this great winter sport nation, after the dissolution of the USSR, no longer had a winter sports center. Russian national championships had to be held in foreign countries. Then Russia decided to solve this deficit by using a candidature for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games as a catalyst for the development of sport, a city and a whole region."

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Before the Opening Ceremony of the Session, the IOC members were personally welcomed by Russian President Putin during an official reception.

The [IOC](#) Session, which is the general meeting of the [members of the IOC](#) and is its supreme

decision-making body, will feature discussions about the future of the Olympic Movement and a strategic roadmap, the so-called Olympic Agenda 2020, reports from different areas of the IOC's activities, a presentation by Sochi 2014 on the final preparations for the Games, the election of new IOC members, and votes on positions on the

[IOC Executive Board](#)

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