

Bach to stand for re-election as IOC President in 2021

By: Liam Morgan
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Thomas Bach has confirmed his intention to run for a second term as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Bach, who became IOC President in 2013, said he would stand for re-election at next year's 137th IOC Session.

It is likely the German, who is eligible to hold the top office in sport for a further four years once his first term finishes in 2021, will run unopposed.

The widely-expected announcement was made in Bach's speech during the first virtual IOC Session today.

Bach, the ninth IOC President, claimed several members had recently approached him to ask him about standing for re-election.

"If you, the IOC members want, I am ready to run for a second term as IOC President, and to continue to serve you and this Olympic Movement which we all love so much," Bach said.

The German's announcement was followed by nearly an hour of praise from numerous IOC members, who lined up to thank him for his decision to seek another term.

"I take your support more as an encouragement for the future to work even harder," Bach added.

Thomas Bach is the ninth International Olympic Committee President ©Getty Images

The Presidential election will take place at the first of two IOC Sessions planned for 2021.

The election is scheduled to be held during the 137th Session, awarded to Athens, in the spring, before a second gathering of the membership prior to the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Members unanimously approved a proposal to stage two separate Sessions, including one for the Presidential election, at today's virtual Session.

Bach admitted, however, that there is no guarantee the Greek capital will stage the Session - and the election - and conceded it may have to be held virtually depending on the coronavirus pandemic.

The Executive Board is set to discuss options for the Session in the coming months.

"We will now have to speak with our Greek friends," Bach said.

"The vast majority of IOC members are longing for a Session in person, there Greece would have the first right and we will take up the discussions with them.

"We have also been granted the right to look into the situation in the coming months, and then to decide whether this Session will take place in person, and where - hopefully in Greece - or whether we would have to organise a Session like today."

Thomas Bach confirmed he would seek re-election during the IOC's first virtual Session ©IOC

The German lawyer became an IOC member at the age of 37 and served in numerous high-ranking IOC roles, including a total of 11 years as a vice-president, before his elevation to the top job.

Bach was elected to succeed Jacques Rogge as IOC President at the Session in Buenos Aires seven years ago after triumphing in the second round of voting.

He received the most votes in the first round before defeating Puerto Rico's Richard Carrión, Ng Ser Miang of Singapore, Switzerland's Denis Oswald and Sergey Bubka of Ukraine in round two.

Bach has faced several challenges during his Presidency, notably the Russian doping scandal, a series of referendum defeats amid a decline in interest in hosting the IOC's flagship event and the first postponement of an Olympic Games.

He was President during the Sochi 2014 and Rio 2016 Olympic Games, both considered among the most difficult and problematic to have been held in recent memory.

Bach has also been criticised for centralising the power on the ruling Executive Board, but helped orchestrate the dual award of the 2024 and 2028 Summer Olympics to Paris and Los Angeles and oversaw the signing of a broadcast deal with *NBC* through to 2032.
