

Only 6 of 9 Media Hotels Ready in Sochi Mountains, IOC Urges Response

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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IOC head Thomas Bach arriving at his room in the coastal athletes' village. **Pascal Le Segretain**

SOCHI — The IOC is urging Russian Olympic organizers to move quickly to resolve the issue of accommodations that are not ready for accredited media personnel in the mountains outside Sochi.

According to the Sochi organizing committee, only six of the nine media hotels in the mountain area are fully operational.

Some media have arrived and found they had no place to stay, and thousands more journalists are expected to arrive Monday.

The matter was examined Sunday at a meeting of the International Olympic Committee executive board.

"There are still some issues to be solved as always just before the games," IOC President

Thomas Bach said. "We are in contact with the organizing committee and we hope that the situation will be solved in the next couple of days."

The Russian government has spent \$51 billion on the Olympics in the hopes of turning the Black Sea summer resort into a year-round tourism destination.

While pre-games attention has focused on cost overruns, threats of terrorist attacks and the Russian law banning gay "propaganda" among minors, the hotel situation could become an embarrassment for local organizers.

Organizers estimate that up to 6,000 media will be arriving in Sochi on Monday. About 11,000 media overall are expected to be covering Russia's first Winter Games.

IOC vice president John Coates of Australia said he was expecting an update on the situation from Sochi organizers. "It's obviously very important," he said.

IOC press commission chairman Kevan Gosper took the issue to the executive board and was working with Gilbert Felli, the executive director of the Olympic Games, in discussions with Sochi organizers.

"We've alerted them that a lot of people are coming in and particularly of the difficulty still in the mountains," Gosper said. "They are aware it's a serious issue."

Gosper said servicing of the hotels was now the major problem.

"The accommodation is there, but serving the accommodation is the challenge," he said.

Organizers said in a statement Saturday that media who arrive to find an incomplete room will be given new accommodation, some with an upgrade.

"Within the three remaining hotels, the rooms are currently going through the final testing process and check of their services," the organizing committee said. "At the end of the testing process guests will then be accommodated in the hotels they initially booked."

Bach, meanwhile, praised Sochi's overall readiness for the games, which open on Friday.

"Things are going very well," he said. "I had a good opportunity yesterday to visit the Olympic Village and to speak with a lot of athletes and they were all very happy and excited about the conditions in the Olympic village."

"The sports facilities are ready. The stage is set for the best winter athletes of the world, and we are very confident that we will have an excellent Games."

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