

August 2011



Istanbul Launches 2020 Olympics Bid

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has announced Istanbul's intention to bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games. At a press conference in the city, Turkey's economic and cultural capital, Erdogan pledged to establish laws to smooth the way for necessary investments and tenders.

Turkey has hosted numerous high-profile sporting events in recent months, including last month's Youth Olympic Games in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, and the Winter Universiade, which took place in Erzurum in February.

Istanbul is shortly to take its place on the global sporting stage as host city for the World Indoor Athletics Championships in March 2012.

The country's rapidly growing economy and much-improved infrastructure is sure to count in Istanbul's favour; the 75,000-seater Ataturk Olympic Stadium built in 2002 as part of a previous, unsuccessful bid to host the games is sure to play a pivotal role in the tender. Ongoing improvements to transport in the city include the Marmaray rail project, the world's deepest undersea rail tunnel, scheduled for completion in 2013.

The International Olympic Committee will announce the winner in Buenos Aires on 7 September 2013.

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