

The seven files were examined closely by the IOC before being distributed to the members in mid-February.

Before the one hundred and first Session in Monte Carlo, each candidate will receive a visit by the IOC Enquiry Commission chaired by Mr Gunnar Ericsson, member in Sweden, and made up of representatives of the different components of the Olympic Movement: members of the IOC, the IFs, the NOCs and the IOC Athletes' Commission. The investigations and their results will be presented to the members before the final vote which will take place on 23rd September.



*Seven cities try their chance for the Games in 2000.*

## **GOLD OLYMPIC ORDER FOR YELTSIN**

It was under the gilded ceilings of the Kremlin that the President of Russia, Mr Boris Yeltsin, received the Gold Olympic Order from the IOC President, H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch, who has cherished a particular affection for the country since his ambassadorship in Moscow in the seventies. President Samaranch highlighted the active contribution made by the President of Russia in favour of the participation of a Unified Team in the Games last

year and his constant interest in the Olympic cause. The results obtained by the Unified Team, which won the largest number of medals at the Games in Barcelona - 112, 45 of them for the Russians, and in Albertville, 22 out of the 23 medals won by the Unified Team were Russian - testify to the great place occupied by Russia within the Olympic Movement. "It is also thanks to the Russians and their constant interest in the development of sport and high-level competition that the Games have become what they are today", he said, after referring to the excellent results obtained by the various athletes at the Winter and Summer Games last year.

Thanking the IOC President, Mr Yeltsin said with humour that he considered the award as an advance on those which would not fail to come in Lillehammer next February. Expressing gratitude, he observed that the decoration was a mark of the IOC's confidence in the future of Russia: "This means that the Olympic Movement will develop in Russia, that competition will continue at world level, and that the world will not be dominated by a single sports power, the USA. The age of communism is over and it will doubtless be simpler to hold the Games on non-ideological bases", President Yeltsin continued before urging the Russian sports leaders at a meeting of the NOC with President Samaranch and Mr Vitaly Smirnov, IOC member, to prepare seriously for the forthcoming Olympic competitions. "We need changes in the system of preparation for the athletes as well as additional resources. This is the concern of the President and the government, and we shall do all we can to ensure that Russia proves worthy at the next Games", concluded Boris Yeltsin.

The 1994 Games will see the participation of a Russian Olympic delegation for the first time since the Games in Stockholm in 1912.

A gala evening given earlier in honour of past participants in the Games and, in particular, the athletes of the Unified Team present in Albertville and Barcelona presented an opportunity for the President of Russia to call upon future energies. "As a former athlete myself, I know what these medals and these rewards can cost, especially those at Olympic level. It is a hard task, an exhausting effort of



*Mr Boris Yeltsin thanks the IOC President after receiving the Gold Olympic Order.*

personal sacrifice and daily training. Hard labour, beyond doubt. And you, the Olympic champions of 1992 who achieved an immense success in a Unified Team, you had first of all to prepare yourselves in difficult conditions. Our country has been through a difficult period, but its difficulties are temporary and the glorious future is not for the third millennium. We can say now that in one or two years, Russia will certainly make a new start thanks to the enormous potential at its disposal: territorial, natural, human, sporting and cultural. I believe in this future for Russia."



*The Russian's NOC's emblem, inspired by the onion domes of the Kremlin, has just been approved.*