

Press Release n°8

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## Welcome Monaco!

Today, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August, the Principality of Monaco was officially welcomed to the Olympic village by the Mayor, Ms Chen Zhili. Just after 3 p.m. in the main open-air amphitheatre in the "international area", the traditional welcome ceremony was held in the company of Guinea-Bissau, Belarus, the Fidji Islands and Spain.



Even though the athletes had been there for several days, this event officially marked the installation of the delegations in the village.

One by one, the heads of mission were invited to the platform, before a large number of athletes, managers and key figures, including H.S.H. Prince Albert II who was visiting the Olympic village for the first time.



**And the music of the Monegasque national anthem filled the air...**

They took part in the raising of their flag whilst the national anthem was played. The first intense and strong moment of the Games as the Monegasque anthem filled the skies of Beijing.



Sylvie Bertrand, the Monegasque head of mission, also exchanged gifts with Chen Zhili. A simple welcome ceremony, regulated like a manuscript (as is the Asian tradition), the highlight being a traditional song performed by young Chinese school children.

The “red and white” delegation, its emotion palpable, included Ms Yvette Lambin-Berti, Secretary General of the Monegasque Olympic Committee, H.E. Mr Rainier Imperti, the ambassador of Monaco to China, and Ms Charlene Wittstock.

An emotion-packed moment which will undoubtedly be repeated tomorrow Friday with the opening ceremony scheduled at the National Olympic Stadium. But prior to the official opening of the XXIX Olympiad, the whole Monegasque delegation had dinner on Thursday evening in “Block 8”, a major establishment in the capital housing three restaurants.

An evening spent in a relaxed setting, much appreciated by the representatives of the Principality not too disorientated even thousands of kilometres from the Rocher. They stumbled across Sébastien Noat, a 33-year old dynamic Monegasque, living and working in the Chinese capital, who runs the establishment and who has just opened other restaurants. He was delighted to welcome the Monegasque delegation; another Monegasque supporter who can be counted on to cheer on the representatives of the Principality.