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Public Diplomacy in the News: Paris Olympics Opening Ceremony, Cuisine at the Games, and Snoop Dogg as Torchbearer [1]

"Public Diplomacy in the News" is a CPD Blog series by Andrew Dubbins that spotlights noteworthy stories on public diplomacy topics such as cultural diplomacy, nation branding, exchange programs, international events and conferences, digital diplomacy, and strategic global communications.

Riverside extravaganza opens Olympic games. Friday night's Paris Olympic Games' opening ceremony was a lavish riverside spectacle featuring athletes processing in boats

along the Seine (the first armada of its kind since Louis XV), dancers on high poles, and a performance of La Marseillaise atop the Grand Palais, all under torrential rain. Despite weather challenges and sabotage attacks on the rail network, the event showcased a blend of French themes and high-energy performances by Lady Gaga, Aya Nakamura, and other artists. The surreal show, directed by Thomas Jolly, highlighted themes of resilience and shared humanity, culminating at the Eiffel Tower with a dramatic lighting of the Olympic cauldron and a performance by Celine Dion.

Angelique Chrisafis / The Guardian

Paris Olympics blends global and local cuisine to feed athletes. Feeding 15,000 Olympians in Paris involves balancing health, cultural requirements, and culinary delight. The centerpiece of the Olympic Village is a network of six restaurants, each catering to different cultural and dietary needs. French bakers will produce over 2,000 baguettes and other pastries daily, adding a local touch. Renowned chefs will offer diverse dishes, while Sodexo Live ensures cultural sensitivity with chefs from around the world. Athletes' nutritional needs are prioritized, with delegations bringing familiar foods to avoid dietary issues. The dining experience aims to foster conviviality, creating memorable moments alongside optimizing performance.

Priya Krishna / The New York Times

Snoop Dogg joins star-studded lineup as Olympic torchbearer in Paris. Snoop Dogg carried the Olympic torch in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis, aiming to recreate the emotional impact of Muhammad Ali's iconic moment at the 1996 Atlanta Games. Other torchbearers included French actress Laetitia Casta, rapper MC Solaar, and Ukrainian pole-vaulter Sergey Bubka, as well as Arsene Wenger, Thierry Henry, Megan Rapinoe, and Jin from BTS.

David Mouriquand & AP / Euro News

A history of Olympic opening ceremonies. Olympic opening ceremonies have evolved into grand cultural spectacles that showcase the host nation's identity and values, with Paris 2024's unprecedented format along the Seine reflecting this trend. From the 1936 Berlin Games' propaganda to Tokyo 1964's symbol of a new peaceful Japan and Sydney 2000's tribute to Aboriginal culture with Cathy Freeman as torchbearer, these ceremonies blend Olympic rituals with national storytelling. More recent examples include Beijing 2008's assertion of China's historical prominence and London 2012's celebration of British diversity. These mega-events interweave nationalism and internationalism, as nations present themselves on the global stage.

Catherine Baker / The Conversation

Europe celebrates Olympic spirit through art exhibitions. A wave of art exhibitions inspired by the Olympic Games is sweeping across Europe, highlighting the intersection of sports, culture, and history. Paris, currently hosting the Cultural Olympiad, is offering events and exhibitions like "The Art of the Olympics" at Gagosian and the Louvre's "Olympism: Modern Invention, Ancient Legacy." Other exhibitions include "Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communiter" in Zagreb, "Paris 1924: Sport, Art and the Body" in Cambridge, and "Muscles & Mind: Irish Art Olympians" in Waterford. Each celebrates the Olympic spirit through diverse

artistic interpretations and historical artifacts.

Rebecca Ann Hughes / Euro News