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# Athens games director quits

By Kerin Hope in Athens

Doubts about the ability of Greece to stage the next Olympics resurfaced yesterday with the resignation of Petros Synadinos, managing director of Athoc 2004, the organising body for the games. He was the third senior Athoc manager to resign in six months.

Mr Synadinos, an architect with long experience of public works contracts and close ties to the governing pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, said he was stepping down for personal reasons.

He was appointed in June by Costas Simitis, the prime minister, who has taken responsibility for making the Athens games a success. But Mr Simitis has been unable to rally his party behind the Olympic effort, partly because prominent personalities from the Conservative opposition are also involved.

Political infighting at Athoc had prompted speculation the international Olympic committee might step in and transfer the 2004 games to Seoul or Barcelona. But Jacques Rogge, chairman of the IOC committee overseeing preparations for 2004, said in Athens last month he expected Greece to stage a successful games.

Mr Synadinos' departure was rumoured before the IOC visit, amid mounting friction between Socialist appointees and the Conservatives who dominate sports administration.

Mrs Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, Athoc president, is a former MP from the rightwing faction in the opposition New Democracy party. She was chosen in May by Mr Simitis to head Athoc, with IOC approval.

Mr Synadinos is understood to have complained his responsibilities were being curtailed. A specialist in designing sports facilities he was expected to speed the construction of an Olympic equestrian centre, rowing and sailing facilities.