



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between Special Olympics and Paralympics?

Special Olympics and Paralympics are two separate organizations. Special Olympics is recognized as the third member of the Olympic family, providing year-round sports, sports training, and local, regional, national and international competitions for all learning disability levels. Paralympics provides elite level sports competition for multi-disabled groups including physical and deaf.

What is Special Olympics?

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training and athletic competition and other related programming for more than 3.1 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 170 countries, Special Olympics has created a model community that celebrates people's diverse gifts.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship.

When is the next Special Olympics?

Special Olympics is happening every day. 30,000 competitions take place around the world on an annual basis including local, national, regional and World Games.

How many children and adults with intellectual disabilities are there across Europe/Eurasia?

There are approximately 26.5 million people with an intellectual disability in Europe/Eurasia. According to the World Health Organisation, up to 3% of the World's population have an intellectual disability - that equates to 200 million people, representing the largest disability population in the world.

How many people does Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia serve?

Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia (SOEE) works with half a million athletes in 58 countries across Europe and Central Asia. We are supported by 61,000 volunteers and 21,000 family members throughout the region.

What countries does Special Olympics Europe / Eurasia include?

SOEE includes 58 countries in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. They include:

Great Britain	Russia	France	Turkey	Spain
Romania	Ukraine	Germany	Greece	Italy
Poland	Switzerland	Sweden	Austria	Serbia
Belgium	Kazakhstan	Albania	Andorra	Armenia
Azerbaijan	Belarus	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Croatia
Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Faroe Islands
Finland	Georgia	Gibraltar	Hungary	Iceland
Ireland	Isle of Man	Israel	Kosovo	Kyrgyz Republic
Latvia	Liechtenstein	Lithuania	Luxembourg	FYR Macedonia



Malta	Moldova	Monaco	Montenegro	Netherlands
Norway	Portugal	San Marino	Slovakia	Slovenia
Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan		

What is the Special Olympics Athlete Oath?

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

What impact does Special Olympics have on athletes?

Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image. They grow mentally, socially and spiritually and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abilities and talents but "their voices" as well.

Who is eligible to participate in Special Olympics?

To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, you must be at least 8 years old and identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disabilities, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction. The Special Olympics Young Athletes™ program was created for children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7.

Can individuals with profound disabilities participate in Special Olympics?

Yes, through Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Program (MATP), developed by physical educators, physical therapists and recreation therapists. MATP emphasizes training and participation rather than competition.

What sports are SOEE involved in?

SOEE is involved in 27 sports in total – 20 Olympic type Summer and seven winter sports as well as the following recognized sports: Kayaking, Netball and Floorball.

The **Summer** sports are:

Aquatics	Athletics	Badminton	Basketball	Bocce
Bowling	Cycling	Equestrian	Football (soccer)	Golf
Gymnastics (Artistic & Rhythmic)	Powerlifting	Rollerskating	Sailing	Softball
Table Tennis	Team Handball	Tennis	Volleyball	Judo

The **Winter** sports are:

Alpine Skiing	Cross Country Skiing	Figure Skating	Floor Hockey	Speed Skating
Snowboarding	Snowshoeing			



What is divisioning?

In Special Olympics competitions, athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate, and every athlete is recognized for his or her performance. Through a process called divisioning, Special Olympics competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions.

When are Special Olympics World Games held?

The Special Olympics World Summer Games are held every four years. The 2007 World Summer Games were held in Shanghai, China, on 2-11 October; the 2011 World Summer Games will be held in Athens, Greece, on 25 June - 4 July. The Special Olympics European Games also are held every four years. The 2010 Special Olympics European Games will be hosted in Warsaw, Poland from 18 - 24 September. The first Special Olympics World Games were held in Chicago, Illinois USA, in 1968.

Where is SOEE headquartered?

SOEE is based in Dublin, Ireland. However team members also work from offices in Brussels, Warsaw and London. SOEE staff work in co-operation with National Programmes to help them grow. SOEE is led by Managing Director, Mary Davis.

What is European Football Week and European Basketball Week?

The concept is to have one week each year where everyone in the European football and basketball community commits to doing something to expand opportunities in their game for players with intellectual disabilities.

European Football Week usually takes place in May while European Basketball Week usually takes place at the end of November each year.

What is the Law Enforcement Torch Run?

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics is an international series of relays by law enforcement officers to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics.

What is Unified Sports®?

Special Olympics Unified Sports® enable people with intellectual disabilities (“athletes”) and without intellectual disabilities (“partners”) to play on integrated teams with the purpose of changing attitudes and breaking down barriers as well as providing another level of challenge for higher ability athletes.

What is the Healthy Athlete Programme?

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes helps athletes to improve their training and competition by focusing on overall health and fitness. This is achieved through basic health screenings during Special Olympics events, provision of preventative and treatment services, educational information, and referrals for follow-up care.

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