

Access to Sports for People with intellectual disabilities in European Countries: Bosnia; Germany; Greece; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia and Turkey

Intellectual Output #01 Report

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Abbreviations:

EU – European Union

EC – European Commission

EU-CRPD – EU-Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

LMU – Ludwig Maximilians University

ID – Intellectual Disabilities

UN – United Nations

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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Executive summary

In today's society, leisure time is a central area of life that is synonymous with well-being and quality of life, and is no longer characterized only by the absence of work. The freely available disposition time is characterized by a high degree of choice and freedom (Opaschowski 2008). This means that there is plenty of room for self-determined organization and for living out individual wishes and needs. Niehoff (2006) points out that especially the leisure time area contains a great potential for inclusion due to the manifold possibilities of choice as well as the "freedom from constraints and pressure to perform". Leisure sector has also a significant potential for implementing the human rights requirements formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). In addition to the General Principles from Article 3 - Article 8 on awareness raising, Article 19 on independent living and Article 30 on participation in cultural life as well as recreation, leisure and sport are particularly central.

Among the variety of leisure activities, sports are particularly significant. In addition to offering health-promoting exercise, sport also provides access to social interactions and can contribute to an increase in quality of life. For people with intellectual disabilities, this can mean more self-determination and independent mobility (Anneken 2009; BMAS 2016), of which is explicitly stipulated in Articles 19 and 20 of the UN CRPD.

Although the sports has a unique ability to transcend linguistic, cultural and social barriers and makes it an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation - people with disabilities still do not have all the necessary conditions for engaging in sport activities and they are still facing barriers connected to the accessibility of sport playgrounds, equipment and other sport resources. For this population, on the one hand, there are infrastructural and technical barriers, and, on the other hand, social barriers, such as stereotypes and prejudice (Council of Europe, 2016).

Studies from around the world show that people with intellectual disabilities in particular are more likely to spend their leisure time on recreational and passive activities. Taking into consideration solely the physical activity, various studies (Draheim, Williams & McCubbin 2002; Frey, Buchanan & Rosser Sandt 2005) show that the activity levels of people with ID are, on the one hand, below the recommended levels for a health-promoting level of sport and physical activity (American College of Sports Medicine), on the other hand, it is clear that people with intellectual disabilities participate significantly less in sports than people without disabilities.

The key objective of this research was to develop insight on participation and barriers to participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities in project partner countries. It also aimed to develop knowledge of good practice approaches in addressing the particular barriers identified and provide information on the funding opportunities which are available to support such actions.

At the scoping stage of the study a literature review was completed covering the subject of sport and disability participation. The review covers policy and official policy documents, papers and academic publications.

The second element of the research was to undertake a systematic review of available data and information and evidence on relevant programmes in partner countries.

A review of the literature has revealed the existing situation about participation of persons with (intellectual) disabilities in Europe and in the in SocPORT Project participating countries.

Reviewed articles and reports highlighted the following categories of benefits of sport participation for people with (intellectual) disabilities: personal health (mental and physical wellbeing), individual

development (cognitive benefits, for example increased self-confidence, etc.), and social/environmental (for example social integration).

Review of the articles and reports also revealed the barriers to participation in physical activities for persons with intellectual disabilities in terms of three distinct levels: individual – relating to functional limitations of the disability (or psychological/physical aspects); social - mainly referring to the lack of professional preparation among community sport and physical activity personnel in communicating and adapting physical activities to the needs of people with disabilities and environmental barriers - generally referring to the availability of facilities that are conveniently located and generally the opportunities available for people with disabilities to shift from mere physical activities to competitive sports.

Many challenges and barriers to inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in sports and leisure activities in the participating countries have been noticed, however, the results have also revealed good practice programmes initiated by disability sport organisations or non-governmental organisation in each and every project country.

The case studies of each participating country have also highlighted a number of key lessons that should be relevant to the funding, design and implementation of inclusive programmes for participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in the sporting activities, such as: **the role of dedicated professionals**: in order to engage people with disabilities in sporting activities it is inevitable to focus on the expertise of different actors; **Participative approach** - the importance of consulting with people with disabilities; **Inclusion**: the importance of inclusive activities that encourage the participation of people with and without disabilities; **The role of 'advocates'**: engaging people with and without disabilities who have taken part and benefitted from the activities, in promoting the programmes to harder to reach groups and **Networking**: development of new support systems for inclusive sport activities through stimulating inter-sectoral collaboration and regional/local partnerships between all of the relevant actors involved in working with people with intellectual disabilities.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

There are an estimated 80 m people with a disability in the European Union (EU) (European Commission, 2018), equivalent to approximately 15% of the EU population. People with disability are less likely to participate in organised sport practised in sport clubs than people without disability. The EU is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which specifically requires enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities. The EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 also aims to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society. The European Commission Communication to “Develop the European Dimension in Sport” (2011) emphasises the rights of persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis (with non-disabled people) in sporting activities.

According to the Article 1 of UNESCO’s International charter of physical education and sport, adopted by the General Conference in 1978 is “the practice of physical education and sport a fundamental right for all”.

The unique ability of sports to transcend linguistic, cultural and social barriers makes it an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation. Sport is, by its very nature, a driver of people's awareness too. UN “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” clearly states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights. This Agenda commits to promoting measures to facilitate equal access to public spaces, facilities, technology, systems, and services for persons with disabilities in urban and rural areas, and declares the sports a powerful tool for inclusion.

People with disabilities still do not have all the necessary conditions for engaging in sport activities and they are still facing barriers connected to the accessibility of sport playgrounds, equipment and other sport resources. For this population, on the one hand, there are infrastructural and technical barriers, and, on the other hand, social barriers, such as stereotypes and prejudice (Council of Europe, 2016).

1.2 Aims and objectives

The key objective of this research is to develop insight on participation and barriers to participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities in project partner countries. It also aims to develop knowledge of good practice approaches in addressing the particular barriers identified and provide information on the funding opportunities which are available to support such actions.

At the scoping stage of the study a literature review was completed covering the subject of sport and disability participation. The review covers policy and official policy documents, papers and academic publications.

The second element of the research was to undertake a systematic review of available data and information and evidence on relevant programmes in partner countries.

The main aims of the study are as follows:

- Identifying data collected at the project partner countries on participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities and for different types of disabilities.
- Identifying project partner countries programmes that represent 'good practice' in encouraging participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities.
- Identifying financial support (at the national and EU level) to support the development and implementation of projects focused on participation for people with intellectual disabilities.

1.3 Study method

At the scoping stage of the study a literature review was completed covering the subject of sport and disability participation at the European level and in the project participating countries level. The review covered policy and official policy documents, good practices and implementation methods presented in papers and academic publications. Around Fifteen relevant papers and ten documents (and/or Project reports) were identified.

The second element of the research was to develop a questionnaire to collect available information and evidence on relevant regulations and programmes in all project participating countries. The following countries were included in the sample: Bosnia and Herzegovina; Germany; Greece; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia and Turkey

The reviews covered the following:

- National policies and strategies aimed at increasing the sport participation of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Data collected at project participating countries level on participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities.
- Identifying financial support to development and implementation of projects focused on participation for people with disabilities.
- Identifying project participating countries programmes that represent 'good practice' in encouraging participation in sport amongst people with intellectual disabilities, without evaluating their effectiveness.

1.4 Structure of the study

The report is structured as follows:

- Section "Disability and sport participation" elaborates on the strategic and policy context on the European level and presents the key findings of the theoretical literature review on the benefits of sport participation for people with disabilities;
- Section "Approaches on sport and intellectual disability in participating countries - case study findings" provides an overview of data collection approaches on sport and intellectual disability in participating countries and presents the case study findings.

- Section “Key conclusions” brings the analysis together and highlights some important lessons from the analysis.

2 Disability and sport participation

The disability is commonly associated with functional limitations, which is the main reason for lack of participation in sports. Le Clair (2011, p. 1078) states that disability is “often equated with inferiority and deficiency rather than a neutral difference that may require some adaptation”.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2016) is the ‘disability’ an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. This definition is in line with the bio-psychosocial model of disability, which uses the following components to conceptualize disability: activity, body structures and functions, participation, environmental factors and personal factors. In this context, a change in one component means a shift in the entire net of components, which makes the model applicable for the assessment and interpretation of sport dynamics.

World Health Organization refers in its World Report on Disability 2011 to around 785 million (15,6%) persons aged 15 years and older worldwide living with some form of disability, with about 110 millions of them experiencing considerable difficulties in functioning.

In the European Union there is an estimated number of around 80 million disabled people, i.e. 15% of the entire population. Considering a higher risk of disability at older ages and global increase in chronic health conditions, which will influence the nature and prevalence of disability, the number of people facing disability may even increase (WHO, World report on disability, 2011). This implies that European countries will face further challenges regarding disability in the future.

Persons with disabilities often face societal barriers and disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination. As a result of “with disability associated stigma”, persons with disabilities are generally excluded from mainstream education, employment and community life which deprives them of opportunities essential to their social development, health and well-being. In some societies persons with disabilities are considered dependent and seen as incapable, thus fostering inactivity which often causes individuals with physical disabilities to experience restricted mobility beyond the cause of their disability.

Current report on the participation of persons with disabilities in Germany (see BMAS 2016) points out to the negative link between the severity of disability and participation in leisure time activities, culture and sports. An individual with severe disability experience more severe limitations in societal participation. Taken into consideration that 57% of 299.000 persons with intellectual difficulties have 90-100% severe difficulties and the rest of 43% have difficulties of 50-80% severity, this population could be considered as a group with special risk of limited access to sports. Individuals who are limited in their daily activities are more likely to allocate their time to passive leisure (e.g. reading, television, video, and radio) and less likely to spend their time in social entertainment (e.g. theatre, culture, and social events) as compared to non-disabled individuals (Pagan, 2014).

The unique ability of sports to transcend linguistic, cultural and social barriers makes it an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation. **Sport**, by its very nature, **is a driver of people's awareness**, an intelligent tool that can enhance individuals by focusing on the distinctive qualities

that they have developed over time. This is why **it is important to focus on the therapeutic and inclusive power of sport**, especially when considering the issue of disability.

Sport is still the primary way to achieve change, supported by work in health which has become critical. A lot of progress has been made in recent years. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the WHO World Report on Disability have helped to change views of people with disabilities as objects of charity, to viewing them as equal members of society who should be as self-reliant as possible. A variety type of sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other athletes and the community. This means strengthening focus on sports programming, supported by health work, so that athletes are fit and healthy, master skills, build confidence and self-reliance and perform at their best on and off the field.

Following chapter outlines the policy and strategic background considering EU level data collection on sport participation and disability. This section provides an introductory context to the research.

2.1 Policy context

According to the Article 1 of UNESCO's *International charter of physical education and sport*, adopted by the General Conference in 1978 is **"the practice of physical education and sport a fundamental right for all"**.

"1.1. Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life.

1.2. Everyone must have full opportunities, in accordance with his national tradition of sport, for practicing physical education and sport, developing his physical fitness and attaining a level of achievement in sport which corresponds to his gifts.

1.3. Special opportunities must be made available for young people, including children of pre-school age, for the aged and for the handicapped to develop their personalities to the full through physical education and sport programmes suited to their requirements."

UN "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" clearly states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights. This Agenda commits to promoting measures to facilitate equal access to public spaces, facilities, technology, systems, and services for persons with disabilities in urban and rural areas, and declares the sports a powerful tool for inclusion.

"37. Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives." (UN, 2015)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the first legally binding international instrument to address the rights of persons with disabilities and sport. Article 30 of the Convention addresses both mainstream and disability-specific sport and stipulates that "States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels". It also calls upon

Governments, States party to the Convention, to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sport and recreational venues — as spectators and as active participants. This also requires that children with disabilities be included in physical education within the school system “to the fullest extent possible” and enjoy equal access to “play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities”.

2.2 Disability participation on EU level

Even though the possibilities for persons with intellectual disabilities and disabilities in general to participate in sport activities have improved in the last 20 years, disability and especially intellectual disability was and still is the main barrier to participation. On the other side there is no systematically collected data on the participation of people with (intellectual) disabilities in sport at country and at EU level as well.

According to Special Barometer (European Commission, 2018) having a disability or illness is the third most mentioned reason (14% of respondents) for not practising sport. Since 2014 Erasmus+ projects make a notable contribution to the participation of people with disabilities in sports. Vast majority of the projects (33) focused directly on engaging people with disabilities in sport activities; other projects have focused on building a network among sport organisations, publishing toolkits of good practices or creating inclusive sport events (European Commission, 2018).

2.3 Benefits of sport participation for people with intellectual disabilities

There is a wide acceptance in the academic literature that sport and physical activity generates wider positive benefits for individuals beyond basic enjoyment (European Commission, 2018).

- Sport can help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability through transforming community attitudes about persons with disabilities by highlighting their skills and reducing the tendency to see the disability first, instead of the person.
- Participation in sport plays a significant role in personal development (Parnes and Hashemi, 2007; Lakowski and Long, 2011). It improves physiological and mental functioning and gives rise to feelings of physical, psychological and social competence. It is enjoyable as well and can increase a person's resistance to stress (Martin, 2013, Jaarsma, 2014; Saunders, et. al, 2007; Tenenbaum and Eklund, 2007). Through physical exercise and sport people can learn values and habits such as perseverance, constancy and competitiveness, fair play and sportsmanship.
- Sport plays a role in facilitating social participation, friendship and inclusion (Barfield and Malone, 2013). It can be important in generating goodwill within and between diverse groups, places and countries. It is thought that physical exercise and sport can be used to contribute to a range of societal goals such as increasing community regeneration and social capital and reducing truancy and youth crime.
- Positive effects of physical activity in persons with learning and physical and sensory disability that have been demonstrated include improvements in general health, physical fitness, bone metabolism and increased functional independence. There is also increased mobility and a reduction in chronic disease and secondary complications.
- Physical activity also has a mitigating effect on challenging behaviour (Moon et al, 1982; Lancioni et al, 1994 and 1998; Washburn et al, 2002; Boland, 2005).

- Physical exercise is important in maintaining fitness for daily living, reducing functional limitations, facilitating independent living and preventing, delaying and reducing chronic illnesses and secondary conditions (Fentem, 1994).
- In people who have acquired a disability, participation in sport/physical exercise can help them come to terms with their disability, regain self-esteem and social integration (Chawla, 1994).

Generally, sport participation for people with disabilities provides benefits at three different levels: personal health (mental and physical wellbeing), individual development (cognitive benefits, e.g. increased self-confidence, etc.), social/environmental (e.g. social integration) (European Commission, 2018).

2.4 Barriers to sport participation for people with intellectual disabilities

When analysing disability sports participation, common barriers include the following:

Negative self-image/lack of confidence – negative societal perceptions of disability (e.g. perception of people with disabilities as non-productive members of society as reported by Middleton (1999) and Priestley (1998); of being dependent and weak) and lack of the chances for the participation can have a devastating impact upon the self-confidence and self-image of people with disabilities. This perception of being a burden and feeling of guilt for being unable to do the same things as everyone else, especially in western industrialised societies, constructed on the Darwinian premise of ‘survival of the fittest’ (Barnes, 1991, p.19), are what can cause many people with disabilities to stop asking for help and thus to stop participating in different activities. Any requests for help, or ‘acts of charity’ as they may be perceived by some, can lead to a major lowering of self-esteem or even depression.

Costs of participation such as membership fees and transport costs etc. - Finances have an effect on the possibilities for people with (intellectual) disabilities to become involved in sport by restricting the means necessary to become involved in and sustain an interest in most sporting activities. Most of the people with intellectual disabilities do not have a work or are very likely to suffer exclusion from the work place due to perceived inabilities and, as a result, face a continued creation of dependency upon the state and those around them (Oliver, 1993), which exacerbate the problem of limited participation in sports.

Transport: Cavet (1998, p.98 cited in Brittain, 2009) states that ‘there is substantial evidence that disabled young people have more limited opportunities for leisure activities outside their own homes than non-disabled people of the same age’. People with disabilities who are dependent on specialised transport systems such as local authority provision, may miss the opportunity for elite careers in sports as they participate in the fewest leisure activities outside the home (GLAD report, 1988).

Lack of access in and around facilities: if people with disabilities have difficulty entering a facility it may put them off taking part in sport at all. Not only does it make access awkward, but it makes people with disabilities feel unwanted and unwelcome at the venue. Much has been written about problems of accessibility for people with disabilities (e.g. French and Hainsworth, 2001) and many buildings were designed and built with a conception of non-disabled users in mind.

Lack of organised programmes - Brittain (2004a) highlights the impact of schooling on the opportunities for children with disabilities to become involved in sport. In particular he highlights the impact of the move towards mainstreaming of children with disabilities and the implications this has both for children with disabilities and for teachers of physical education within mainstream institutions who are often unequipped to deal with them.

Low levels of media coverage/few role models to aspire to - The media plays a crucial role in informing society about the very existence of sport for people with disabilities and in creating role models that can inspire future generations of disabled athletes. Although media coverage of elite sport for the disabled is improving it still has some way to go. Another important issue is the way the media cover sport for people with disabilities. The language they use, the framing of shots to hide obvious disability in newspapers and the portrayal of disabled athletes as valiant heroes rather than just athletes have all come under academic scrutiny (see Smith & Thomas, 2005, Hardin & Hardin, 2004, Schantz & Gilbert, 2001).

Communication barriers: Information (e.g. letters, newspapers, laws and regulations, timetables, websites) have to be understandable and accessible to all involved and mostly to persons with ID.

Lack of specialist coaches/specialist clubs/competitions to access; lack of adapted/accessible equipment - The cost and availability of adapted equipment for use by athletes with a disability can have a major impact upon their participation. Just finding a coach willing to take on an athlete with a disability can be a task in itself. Finding one who has the knowledge, or the time and the inclination to gain an understanding, of the implications of a particular impairment on the coaching and training process can prove even harder.

Myths/stereotypes about the capabilities of disabled people; lower societal expectations; safety concerns — The relatively low number of people with disabilities taking part in sport, especially competitive sport, can have an impact on opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved and progress within a particular sport. This is further compounded by the athletes having to be split up into functional classification groupings in order to try and ensure fair competition. Another problem is gender - there is a large body of research regarding the participation of non-disabled women in sport but relatively little has been written about the participation of women with disabilities and intellectual disability within sport. However, it is likely that factors such as low self-confidence and self-esteem brought on partly by the body conscious nature of our society, especially with regard to women (Hargreaves, 2000), and transport problems (Barnes, 1991) etc are likely to have a big effect on the decision of a woman with a disability to take up sport or not and then progress to the highest level.

A positive personal attitude: the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities is also a matter of each one in the society and is reflected in our daily life, thinking, acting and language. The focus is on mutual respect, appreciation and recognition of our fellow human beings (DBS, 2014).

2.4.1 Decreasing the effects of barriers to participation

As the results of literature analysis show the sporting activities play an important role in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Those not just provide the opportunity to participate and be a part of society but those play a great role for the health and especially for the mental health of persons with intellectual disabilities.

A range of solutions are being implemented to try and decrease the effects of such barriers for people with intellectual disabilities, including the following:

- providing more opportunities for success; helping talented athletes reach the highest levels possible, e.g. the Special Olympics
- Increased investment in disabled sport; subsidise/make it more affordable
- providing transport to facilities; improved access in/around facilities, e.g. via local authority sport and leisure departments using specialist architects when planning facilities so that they meet the needs of disabled people
- improved technology
- increased media coverage; promote role models to relate and aspire to
- training of more specialist coaches; setting up more clubs to access for disabled people
- educating people on the myths/stereotypes about the capabilities of disabled people and challenging inappropriate attitudes
- designing activities or modifying existing activities to enable involvement in them
- specialist organisations (Special Olympics)

Sporting activities need to be considered as part of an inclusion spectrum (Nixon, 2007). Misener and Darcy (2015) argue that the aim of the inclusion spectrum is to “provide people with disability choice to participate in sport in the way they want to, with whom they want to participate, and in the way, they wish to participate”. Therefore, the inclusion spectrum demonstrates that there is a need for varying and different degrees of accommodation and inclusion to ensure participation in sporting activities.

3 Approaches on sport and intellectual disability in participating countries - case study findings

This section provides an overview of the availability of data on participation for people with disabilities and show how disability participation is measured in the sample countries.

3.1 Overview of the situation in project participating countries

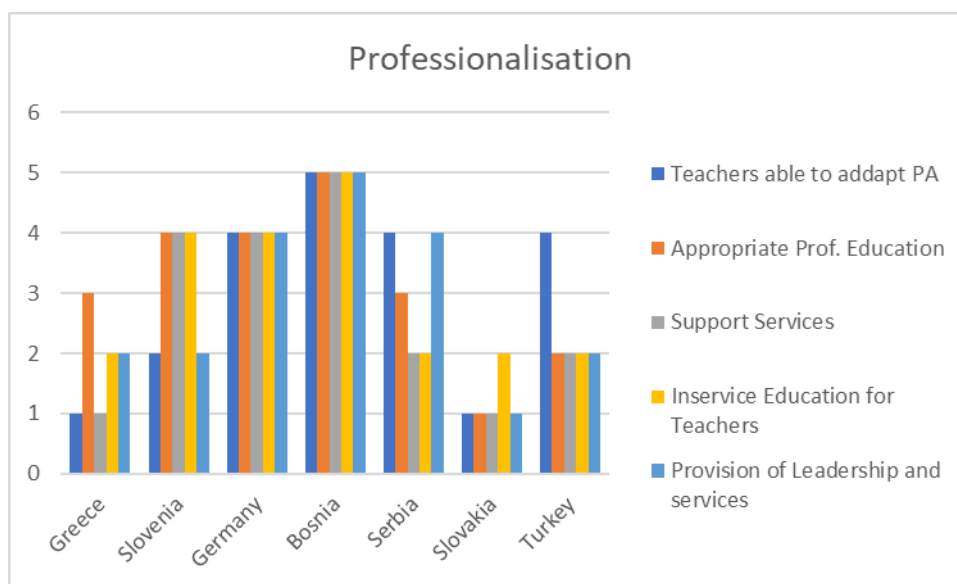
Based on the data from the questionnaires filled in by the in project participating countries, it has been possible to identify country level policies and strategies designed to tackle the issue of participation in sport activities for people with intellectual disabilities. The details on national policies, summarised in the table below, show that all of the sample countries have an explicit reference to the need to support people with intellectual disabilities to participate in sport, as this issue is not, or only partly regulated by the laws and regulations in the countries.

Country	Role of inclusive Sports and regulations
<i>Bosnien-Herzegowina</i>	Law on Sports in Bosnia and Herzegovina regulates the provisions for persons with disabilities. Generally poor financial situation, prejudice and lack of awareness have impact on the sports participation of persons with disabilities. Large percentage of children, youth and adults with disabilities do not have equal access to sports and health activities due to the lack of awareness of the impact of sport on people with disabilities, especially people with ID. The Special Olympics in B-H is the only sports organization at the state level that organizes trainings and competitions for people with ID. In spite of the legal regulations, examples of successfully implemented inclusion are rare.
<i>Germany</i>	Participation in sports for persons with disabilities is the responsibility of the federal states. Rather segregated sport structures with separated disability sport opportunities. More than half a million people with disabilities are registered in over 6,300 clubs. Index for Inclusion in and through sports as a guide for sports and groups on the way towards inclusion. The Special Olympics Germany is recognized body fulfilling the needs of athletes with intellectual disability (ID) through Unified Sports. Unified Sports – combine athletes with and without ID
<i>Greece</i>	Separate categories for participation in sport events for persons with/out disabilities. Tendency to give the opportunity of incorporation of people with disabilities. Institutional Framework is not binding. No grants by institutional framework. Rather segregated sport structures with mainly separated disability sports opportunities. No policy regulations in regard to inclusive sport and persons with ID
<i>Serbia</i>	Ministry of Youth and sports responsible for ensuring the inclusive sports activities. No current regulations in regards to inclusive sports in Serbia. There is a policy called „Sports for all“ im place that aims to make sports available for all members of the community. Inclusive sports activities provided by single organizations or institutions.
<i>Slovakia</i>	Position of inclusive sports within the national sport structure in Slovakia is at very basic level. Special Olympics Slovakia is recognized as National Sport Body since 2017. Nongovernmental organization work on introducing inclusion and raising awareness. The inclusion awareness of general population in very low. School law is only regulation, pointing out to the need of inclusive education.
<i>Slovenia</i>	11 sports in which persons with ID are included via Special Olympics exist in Slovenia. Special Olympics Slovenia is an independent organisation, and a part of Paralympic comitee of Slovenia. Financed by the Foundation for financing disability and humanitarian organisation, Paralympis comitee Slovenia. There is no connection to the national NGOs, except in judo, football and partly in swimming.
<i>Turkey</i>	Increasing awareness towards inclusive sports nationwide. Evidences: K-12 education & physical education. No special policies regulation participation in sport activities for children with ID. Eventhough the various options are available for children with ID, families hesitate to have their children attend those activities fearing the social stigma.

Table 1. Role of inclusive sport, laws and regulations in the project countries

Country	Characteristics of the sport clubs
<i>Bosnien-Herzegovina</i>	The main treats to the inclusion of persons with ID in the sport clubs are Insufficient and inadequate work with people with disabilities; Non-recognition of sports results; Insufficient promotion of inclusive sports; Insufficient funding; Inaccessible sports facilities for people with disabilities; Inadequate equipment. According to the Statute of SOBIH, special clubs, associations, day centers, special schools can participate in competitions. 72 organizations are officially registered
<i>Germany</i>	98 member organizations organized under the umbrella of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), with over 91,000 sports clubs, more than 27 million memberships and 8.8 million volunteers, demonstrate the potential of organized sport. The sports associations/clubs are active in various fields of activity and sports areas offering a wide variety of exercise, games and sports activities as well as events. There are sports associations and sports clubs that focus on specific types of popular and/or competitive sports (e.g., sports with or competitive sports (e.g., soccer, track and field, swimming, fencing, shooting, etc.) or offer a broad range of different e.g. preventive sports, popular sports, competitive sports, recreational sports, rehabilitation sports, sports for the elderly, games and sports festivals. Some focus on a specific setting (school, university setting (school, university, companies) or subject area (sports medicine, sports science). Others offer programs only for a specific target group (e.g., children and young people, the elderly, the very old, women, men, people with disabilities, etc.). Germany provides laws and structures for inclusive sports – awareness is still a major barrier. Index for Inclusion in and through sports – works actively on supporting the clubs on the way towards inclusion.
<i>Greece</i>	Single opportunities for inclusive sports. Treats include fear of stigma; financing the sport activities; provision and adaptation of material and general lack of choices; structures facilities and awareness.
<i>Serbia</i>	Lack of financial resources is a main threat to inclusive sports activity (rental of space for some activities, sports equipment provision, payment for professional staff). Special Olympics Serbia has 12 full time working sports clubs that offer inclusive sports.
<i>Slovakia</i>	Possibility of organizing the Inclusive activities in sport on basic level and on professional level with support of the National Federation. 51% of children with ID are excluded from inclusive activities in general 50% of children with ID do not have possibility to join the sport clubs 43% of children with ID do not have possibility to join after school sport activities According to this data children with ID in Slovakia are excluded by law and public system. Unified Sport by Special Olympics Slovakia is the only way in Slovakia to practice inclusion in sport. There are only few clubs, established within the special schools (therefore not inclusive) that are available for athletes with ID.
<i>Slovenia</i>	The main threats to the inclusion in the sport clubs are finances; prejudice, competences of trainers and gym instructors. Collective sport is still more competetive then focussed on the social inclusion. About 20 clubs in Slovenia are including people with ID.
<i>Turkey</i>	Support to small-size local sports clubs is one of the most impactful criteria on developing opportunities in inclusive sport whereas attitude of families/parents is also one of the threats that impact the participation in activities. Turkish Disabled Sports Federation is the managing authority, having athletes in 18 different fields such as soccer, weight lifting, swimming etc.

Table 2. Characteristic of the sport clubs in the project countries



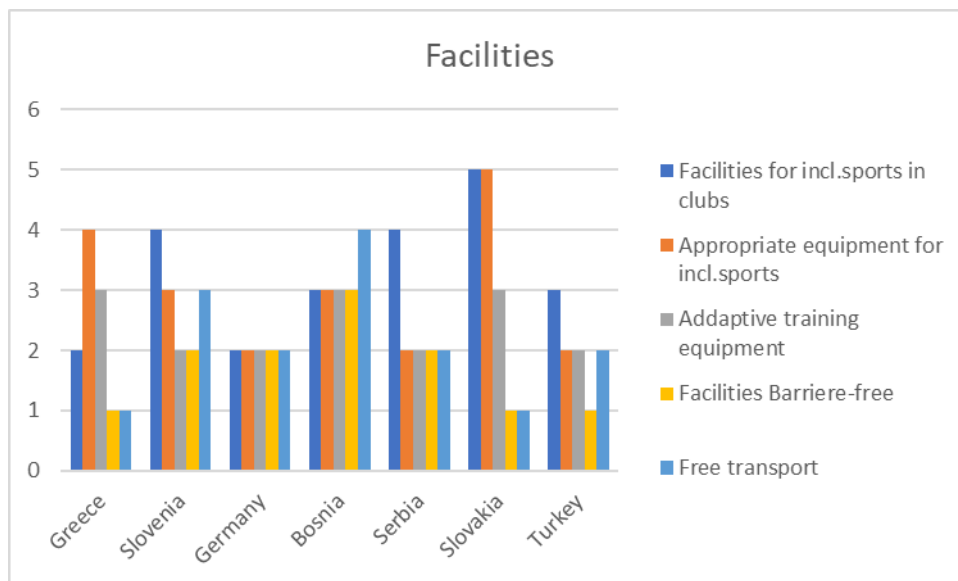
Graph 1. Professionalisation

The data from the participating countries suggest that there is a strong variation in levels of professionalisation and ability of the teachers, coaches, leisure centre managers and others stakeholders to adapt a physical activity; to develop their knowledge and skills to provide appropriate (adapted or modified) services to suit persons with intellectual disability. The details on professionalisation, summarised in the Graph 1., show that all participating countries, apart from Bosnia and Germany, have an explicit reference to the need for improvement of professionalisation of sport clubs/teachers staff.

May et al. (2019) stressed the importance of coaches possessing an inclusive attitude (e.g. everyone getting to participate, tailoring the sports program to fit athletes with disabilities' needs). Although, having positive beliefs about inclusion might not be enough for coaches to be open to coaching athletes with disabilities in their clubs, as adequate training on disability is an important factor as well.

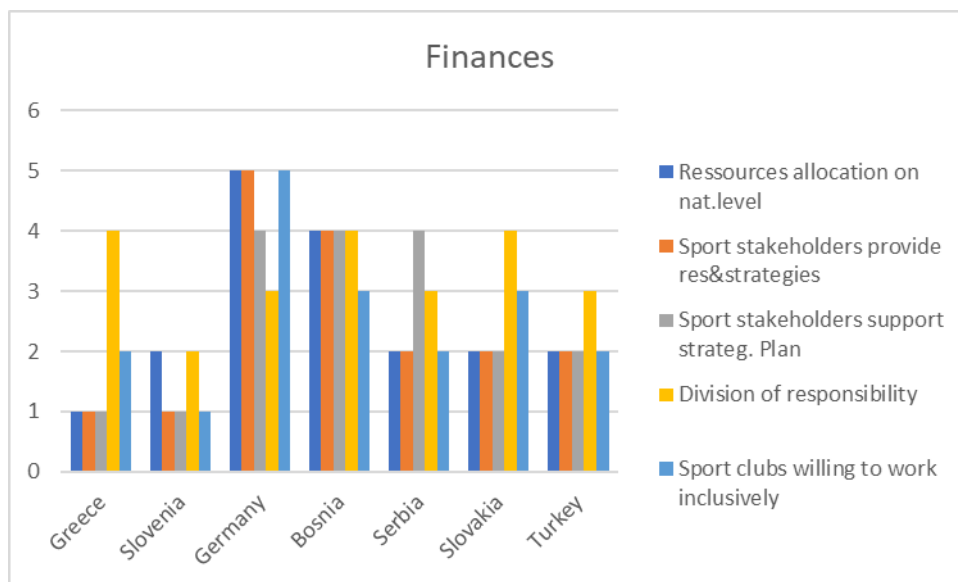
Coaches need to feel adequately trained in the field of disability and inclusion, to take on the responsibility of training athletes with disabilities (Kozub & Porretta, 1998). A recent systematic review (Walker et al., 2018) added to this view by stressing the importance of coach learning, especially in regards to informal learning. Although the mentioned review did not specifically focus on disability, learning about disability and inclusion is fundamental to establishing inclusive sport.

May et al. (2019) found two-thirds of coaches to have experience in coaching athletes with disabilities, but only one-third of the coaches had any education in regards to disability and coaches who did were more likely to seek help to include athletes with disabilities in their club. Finally, a critical review (Townsend et al., 2021) points out that adding topics such as inclusion and disabilities into the coaching education programs remains an issue of considerable debate. For coach education on disability to be effective, we have to keep in mind that achieving effective professional development for adult learners should be closely connected to their experiences, needs and context in which they work (Cordingley et al., 2015).



Graph 2. Facilities

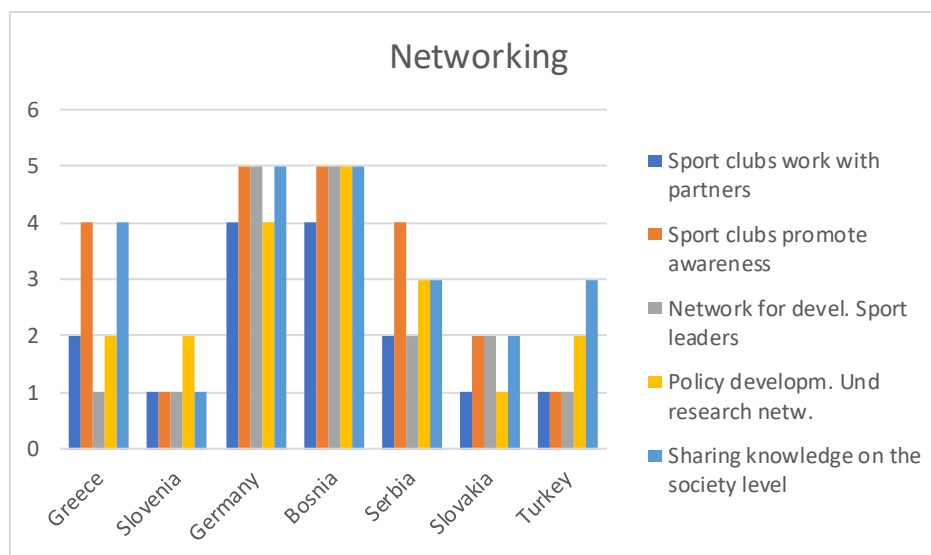
The data from the participating countries suggest that there is a strong variation in the facilities allocated for sport participation programmes for people with disabilities. The details in the Graph.2, show that all of the participating countries have an explicit reference to the need to provide adequate facilities; equipment and transport in order for people with disabilities to participate in sport.



Graph 3. Finances

The data from the participating countries suggest that there is a strong variation in levels of funding allocated to sport participation programmes for people with disabilities.

The data in the Graph 3 have highlighted the differences in approaches to management and funding: in some countries programme funding tends to be allocated via NGOs (Greece), or Paralympic committees and associations (Slovenia, Turkey), while in other countries key programmes are delivered directly by national sport agencies (Germany) or ministries for sport, health or education (Bosnia, Serbia).



Graph 4. Networking

The data from the participating countries suggest that there is a strong variation in levels of inclusion network in almost all countries with slightly better situation in Germany and Bosnia.

Without sports clubs, not many sports would be organised. Sports clubs, however, do not provide sports on their own. To offer sports to their members, sports clubs must collaborate with other clubs, and they depend on their local communities for members and volunteers. To obtain political and financial support, municipalities and local businesses are crucial partners. Sports organisations help clubs with their sports, and clubs hosting larger events might get assistance from the police and transport authorities with traffic and security.

Sports clubs – especially those providing inclusive sport activities are also a part of a broader political and organisational context. It is even more important how do various actors cooperate and thereby establish inter-organisational relations and, through these relations, build various types of networks that support inclusion of persons with ID in sports and leisure activities. Analysing these networks could teach us about how much and what type of cooperation exists (e.g. degrees, density) and how such relations are structured (e.g. centralisation, clustering). This could further tell us where we find influential actors and how these actors are positioned for cooperation and innovation.

Analysis of the data on the barriers to participation in physical activities show similar results in all participating countries. Barriers are to be found at individual, social and environmental level. Severe types of disability play an important role in preventing these individuals to participate in physical activities, as shown in the Report on the participation of persons with disabilities in Germany (BMAS, 2016). The data from Turkey show that the parents are often a barrier to participation in the inclusive sports activities due to their fear of the child getting hurt during the sports; being mobbed or being an object of social stigma, which is at the same time a barrier that relates to the social dimension of disability.

This barrier refers to the lack of professional preparation among community sport and physical activity personnel in communicating and adapting physical activities to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. This is the case in almost all the participating countries equally.

The participating countries also point out to the barriers related to the sport activities' environment. Facilities are inconveniently located, or there are not enough sporting opportunities, modified activities of equipment. Still the main barriers to the sport participation in all participating countries are strongly related to social and political factors such as lack of comprehensive policies, strategies or persistent advocacy (Greece; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Turkey).

The absence of responses at the political level plays a crucial role, as it results in a lack of resources and training to administrators and program providers, but also in a general lack of awareness by parents and youth with disabilities of their rights to access and participate in physical activity and sport programs.

Many challenges and barriers to inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in sports and leisure activities in the participating countries have been noticed, however, the results have also revealed good practice programmes initiated by disability sport organisations or non-governmental organisation in each and every project country. These examples of a good practice are shown in the following section.

3.2 Examples of the good practice in the participating countries

3.2.1 Bosnia-Herzegovina

<i>Example 1&2</i>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Special Olympics Bosnia and Herzegovina was founded in 1999, Mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with an intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. PARTICIPANTS (per the 2015 census): Registered athletes and Unified partners: 4,952 Coaches: 222 Competitions 50. 9 OFFICIAL SPORTS: Alpine Skiing, Aquatics, Athletics, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Football (Soccer), Table Tennis and Volleyball. OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: Athlete Leadership, Motor Activities Training Program (MATP), Young Athletes. (To date, within the SO B-H are included more than 25 associations such as Clubs of Special Sports, Divisions, Day Centers, Primary and Secondary Schools working with people with ID are currently engaged. About 20,000 persons with ID live in B-H and this movement is convinced that people with ID through sports training and competitions benefit in physical, mental, social and spiritual terms.</p> <p>Association for Human Rights and Social Inclusion is a non-profit organization of parents and professionals whose mission is to develop and improve the system of support for persons with Intellectual and developmental disabilities with the aim of full social inclusion, in cooperation with local authorities, non-governmental organizations and through education, information and awareness-raising. Our vision is a realization of the full potential of each person. We provide services and unique expertise by highly qualified personnel. Key competencies are experienced and well-trained staff, young and flexible team, a well-established cooperation with local, regional and international institutions; partnership with the kindergartens, schools and higher education institution in BiH, governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations. We have relevant experience in national and international projects. We are struggling for equal opportunity in education and sport, raising awareness of academic community about disability issue, recruitment of volunteers for help etc. Decreasing the effects of barriers to participation</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Young Athletes Project - inclusion of children without disabilities in sports programs for 2-7 years, 2. Development sports programs 3. Inclusion in schools 4. Health Programms 5. Sports Competitions
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Involvement of 8-year-old children in sports competitions ○ Creating young leaders ○ Organizing inclusive trainings and competitions, holding educational seminars, family forums ○ Creating inclusive teams ○ Implementation of the Strategy ○ Organizing sports competitions, holding seminars, sports forums, SOEE health check-ups ○ Creating inclusive schools and inclusion champions ○ Realization of health program: eye examination, dental examination, skin examination, motor skills testing, healthy diet

3.2.2 Germany

Example 1 Germany	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	Athlete spokespersons - National associations Special Olympics participation is a central component of Special Olympics Deutschland e.V. (SOD).
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	The athlete spokespersons are self-advocates representing the interests of the athletes. They are elected by the athletes in the respective national associations. elected. One of them will be elected every three years at the SOD (Special Olympics Deutschland) general meeting into the presidium of SOD. They take over various tasks in the representation of interests and public relations.
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	The SOD academy has developed special training modules to train and prepare the athlete for their tasks. Further information: Special Olympics Germany e.V. http://specialolympics.de/was-ist-sod/athleten/athletensprecher
Example 2 Germany	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	Wir gehören dazu - Menschen mit geistiger Behinderung im Sportverein We belong! People with intellectual disabilities in the sports club The goal is improving the participation opportunities of people with ID is underpinned by strong key figures. Between 6.000 and 8.000 people with ID are to be given access to sports clubs by 2024
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	A total of at least 100 sports clubs nationwide are to create inclusive structures with the support of the coordinators. 300 trainers will be qualified so that they can offer inclusive sporting activities in their clubs. To this end, the coordinators act at at least 25 project locations and create networks that support inclusive developments.
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free individual counselling ○ Support in the implementation of inclusive events ○ Strengthening the visibility through public relations work ○ Networking of regional partners ○ Access to numerous best practice examples ○ Targeted education and training, qualification modules etc https://specialolympics.de/schleswig-holstein/sport-angebote/projekt-wir-gehoren-dazu/

Example 3 Germany	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Advice and awareness for sports associations</p> <p>The German Disabled Sports Association (DBS) takes its role as a professional association for the sport of people with disabilities in the DOSB very seriously. The current developments in the field of inclusion in particular have led to an increased need for advice.</p> <p>The aim is to work together with the individual solutions that consider the relevant framework conditions of the association.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>For many years, the DBS has been sensitizing and informing other sports associations about the individual needs of people with or with disabilities. the individual needs of people with or at risk of disability or chronic illness in the area of exercise in the area of exercise, play and sport.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>The DBS will continue to use its expertise to advise associations and institutions.</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Deutscher Behindertensportverband e.V., http://www.dbs-npc.de</p>
Example 4 Germany	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Joint competence center for the Implementation of the UN Disability Convention in Lower Saxony</p> <p>The State Sports Federation of Lower Saxony e.V. (LSB) and Behinderten-Sportverband Niedersachsen e.V. (BSN) jointly initiate the inclusive process in organized sports in Lower Saxony. An academy forum on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held for the third time. The focus is on the question of how inclusion can be permanently integrated in structures and everyday life in clubs and associations.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Key findings of 3 years of constructive, successful cooperation at eye level is the founding of an the BSN, the joint representation of this topic at the government of the state of government of Lower Saxony, and, since 2014, the establishment of a full-time specialist position for inclusion through sport.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>Additional Information:</p> <p>LSB Niedersachsen e.V., http://www.lsb-niedersachsen.de bzw. Behinderten-Sportverband Niedersachsen e.V., http://www.bsn-ev.de</p>
Example 5 Germany	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>WERDER BEWEGT</p> <p>as an active athlete or young coach at "WERDER BEWEGT" everyone is "on the ball".</p> <p>The aim of the "Integrative Young Coach Training for Disabled football" is to enable and motivate interested young people to play and to motivate them to take on responsibility as coaches in disabled football. Due to the interest of many young people in becoming active in disabled football, this training program has been developed in cooperation with the Scort Foundation and its partner clubs Werder Bremen.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Athletes and coaches with and without disabilities are active in various sports at SV Werder Bremen e.V. Whether in soccer, handball, athletics or in the ball school. They take part in trainings for trainers and help with the organization and implementation of training sessions.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>Additional Information:</p> <p>SV Werder Bremen e.V., WERDER BEWEGT, http://www.werder.de</p>

3.2.3 Greece

Example 1 Greece	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>“To Ergastiri” is a non-profit organisation that aims to assist in the social integration and general wellbeing of adults with intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>Activities aim to provide quality services and creating new opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. As well as psychological support, counselling and social integration, support for development of self-image and identity, training, maintenance of family structure and relationships and social consciousness rising.</p> <p>Examples of the good practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Races /festivals / performances of choreographies involving rhythmic gymnastics & creative dance, with mixed teams. ○ Inclusion of athlete with intellectual disability, in swimming training with typical athletes.
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By sensitizing and creating awareness to typical athletes, about the needs of people with disability. ○ By giving the chance to parents/relatives of typical athletes, to understand by experience, that the right of participation and the need for participation of disabled athletes to sports, is equal to typical athletes. ○ By promoting the abilities and the talents of disabled athletes (e.g. rhythm, coordination, memory, perception, cooperation with other athletes etc.) ○ By cultivating team spirit to both, typical and disabled. ○ By cultivating to parents/relatives the acceptance of diversity, through socializing in training progress/participation to sports events.
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two athletes, one with medium intellectual disability & one with autism, were included in choreography programmes, training & performances. ○ Two trainers and one supportive client of the club, were used, in order to accomplish the training process. The process was successful, parents and athletes seemed to accept the disabled athletes. ○ Young athletes showed interest in accepting their fellow athletes, not only during training sessions but also, at other activities the sport club organized as well. ○ By participating in the whole process, the two disabled athletes and their parents, experienced the joy of participation and acceptance, combined with the experience of Fair Play.

3.2.4 Serbia

Example 1 Serbia	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Special Olympics Serbia aims to provide consistent sports training and over 100 competitions, including Unified Sports, as a means to contribute to the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in Serbian communities. Mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with an intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Founded in 2002. Participants (per the 2015 census):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered athletes and Unified partners: 14,696 • Coaches: 191 • Competitions: 136 <p>10 official sports: Alpine Skiing, Athletics, Basketball, Aquatics, Beach Volleyball, Table Tennis, Bocce, Cross Country Skiing, Football, (Soccer) and Volleyball.</p>
<i>How does the program/initiative (good practice example) demonstrate inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Inclusive sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, bocce...etc...that are offered as part of the Special Olympics activities, and are organized in a specific way and with specific rules.</p> <p>Every person that is part of a team is a equal and valued member of this team. There is very little to none „one person“ domination in any of our inclusive activities.</p> <p>Special Olympics is dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences.</p> <p>Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.</p> <p>In Unified Sports, teams are made up of people of similar age and ability. That makes practices more fun and games more challenging and exciting for all. Having sport in common is just one more way that preconceptions and false ideas are swept away.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>Serbia's Special Olympics began with active work in 2002. Our organization's goal is to organize trainings and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities throughout the country throughout the year, thus enabling their athletes to take part in almost all international competitions organized around the world for this population. For these 15 years of existence, our athletes have enriched Serbian sport with 131 medals, taking part in 4 leagues and 4 winter specials in over 20 different European championships and actively participating in many development projects.</p> <p>The problem of dealing with young people's sports with intellectual disability is great and our organization strives to address a part of the problem by doing so. Athletes with intellectual disabilities in our organization train by strengthening health, motorcycles, social skills, socializing, learning, traveling around the world enriching their lives with new knowledge and friendships. Thanks to the Special Olympics they have a rich and fulfilled life regardless of their disability.</p> <p>Work has been started on Inclusive (eng. Unificated) sports projects that are of multiple importance for both young people with special needs and those of regular population. The Special Olympics of Serbia is currently successfully conducting training sessions in the Inclusive Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Beach Volleyball and Athletics. This project has multiple implications for all those involved; enables better knowledge of young people with and without special needs and improves the co-operation of special and regular schools through sport.</p> <p>Since 2007, our organization is the only recognized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports as an Alliance that brings together clubs for people with intellectual disabilities, and since then has been supported by its program activities. This support of Serbia's Special Olympics could not provide its sportsmen participate in all major sports events we have participated in.</p> <p>All of the sports clubs are encouraged to develop Inclusive activities to the best of their Ability</p>

3.2.5 Slovenia

Example 1 Slovenia	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Centre Janeza Levca consists of six units: 3 schools with special curriculum, Departments of Education, Student dormitory, Labor and Employment Centre and Specialized mobile pedagogical service.</p> <p>Very active part of the CJL is a Department for project activities. Among the largest international projects of department is the International Year festival "Play With Me", which is covering over 30 events from various fields (sports, culture etc.) throughout the year. All events are international in nature and seek for the implementation of inclusion, therefore, for the active involvement of children and young people with special needs in the wider society and to demolish stereotypes about persons with disabilities that are present even today.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>CJL has together in all units over 200 special education teachers and other educators, psychologists, social workers and other technical staff and more than 400 students yearly. The target group of our activities are children and youth with special needs. Centre Janeza Levca Ljubljana is one of the biggest institutions, providing education and schooling for children and youngsters with special needs. Most of them are coming from emigrants, Roma, refuge and low socio-economic backgrounds. We enable them to acquire formal education. However, as the experiences have shown, the formal education is more successful if it includes the non-formal aspect. Having this in mind, different training courses have been organised, especially for young people, but also for parents, professionals in various fields and for the employees.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>As part of the programs "Youth", 'Youth in Action' and 'Erasmus + a number of international activities in last 15 years have been carried out. More than 50 international cooperations were realised within the centre.</p> <p>Different projects in program Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth Exchange, Training course, Seminar, Job shadowing...</p> <p>Since 2010 CJL is involved in the international voluntary projects (previous European Voluntary Service).</p> <p>JCL also organises the International festival "Play with me" which promotes active participation of children and youth with special needs and margin groups in society.</p>

3.2.6 Slovakia

Example 1 Slovakia	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>Special Olympics Slovakia Unified Sports</p> <p>Unified Football tournament</p> <p>Unified Gymnastics</p> <p>Unified Floorball</p> <p>Unified MATP</p> <p>Unified Young Athletes</p> <p>= inclusion awareness</p> <p>Mission of Special Olympics Slovakia is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with an intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.</p> <p>It was founded in 1990 Participants (per the 2015 census): Registered athletes and Unified partners: 3,764; Coaches: 275; Competitions: 20</p> <p>Special Olympics Slovakia has 18 official sports: Alpine Skiing, Aquatics, Athletics, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Bocce, Cross Country Skiing, Cycling, Equestrian, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Floorball, Football (Soccer), Gymnastics (Artistic), Gymnastic (Rhythmic), Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball. Other development programs: Athlete Leadership, Motor Activities Training Program (MATP), Young Athletes.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Young athletes are very good example of early child intervention in sport</p> <p>MATP programs are very good example of early child intervention in sport</p> <p>Unified Football programs are very good example of early child intervention in sport</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>Implementation methods by motivation, education, by organizing, by piloting, by good practicing communication, by media awareness, by PR awareness, by spectator’s awareness</p>

3.2.7 Turkey

Example 1 Turkey	
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	Thrace Nature Sports Specialty Club Association (TRAKDOSK) a non-governmental organization was established in Edirne on 25 January 2013 by the people who came together with the aim and mission to protect the nature and to help the residents of the region to continue their lives as healthy individuals
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Within the scope of activities of the club;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing nature sports activities, • To organize training courses in various sports branches, to train as athletes and coaches, • Contributing to the protection of public health by raising public awareness, • To create awareness about nature and to work for the protection of nature, • To plan and perform nature sports activities for disabled people, • It is organized various educational, sports, arts and cultural events in its activity areas in line with its annual plans.
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	TRAKDOSK has organized outdoor sports (hiking, trekking, mountaineering, camping etc.), underwater sports (diving), cycling and jogging activities for young people and its members. It continues to work as a open to cooperation, the association offers a variety of opportunities to contribute to the social and personal development of young people and their members and to help them develop their professional knowledge and skills. In addition, in order to improve the tourism of the region where the association is located, it educates its members, young people and volunteers in ecology and environment issues and carries out ecological activities.

Example 2	Turkey
<i>Example of the good practice and Objectives</i>	<p>ZİÇEV – Foundation of Raising and Protecting Children with ID The aim is to improve the self-confidence, reveal their talents and increase their quality of life while ensuring the socialization of individuals with mental disabilities.</p>
<i>Good practice example demonstrating inclusion in sports?</i>	<p>Sports activities are participated in approximately 11 different branches in our 13 sports clubs throughout Turkey. In addition, we participate in regional, Turkish and international championships organized by the Special Athletes Sports Federation.</p>
<i>Implementation methods of the program/initiative of inclusion in sports</i>	<p>Sports Branches Performed by Foundation for the "FIRST TIME" in Turkey</p> <p>SCOUTING: the first Scout Observatory in Turkey has been established. Accompanied by the scout leaders of ZİÇEV, with our thirteen mentally handicapped scouts, we were able to attend the Karabük 12th Local Camp, the largest national camp ever organized in 2002, as the only handicapped group in Turkey among 720 scouts. As a result of their compliance and discipline with the camp and scouting principles, our group consisting of mentally retarded students was selected and awarded with a plaque.</p> <p>BOWLING: In the field of special athletes, our Foundation started the sport of bowling for the first time in Turkey with its own means, a provincial championship was organized in this branch in Ankara in 2003 by ZİÇEV, then we managed to include the bowling branch in the Activity Program of the Mentally Handicapped Sports Federation. In 2004, we organized the Bowling Turkey Championship, sponsored and hosted by ZİÇEV, in Ankara. In 2007, our bowling team, led by Özer YİĞİTER, the athlete of ZİÇEV, became the World Champion as a team at the Special Olympics World Championship held in China, and our athlete Özer YİĞİTER achieved a great success by breaking the tournament number record. Today, nearly a hundred teams compete in bowling tournaments in this branch in Turkey.</p> <p>OPEN SEA SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP: Open sea swimming championship, all format and sponsorship of which belongs to ZİÇEV and organized by ZİÇEV for the first time in the world, was held in Fethiye Ölüdeniz in 2016. While this tournament made a great impression in our country and in the world, artists such as Hande YENER and Sinan AKÇIL, who participated in the tournament, also contributed to the resounding of this tournament in our society.</p> <p>STILL WATER SWIMMING MARATHON: With this marathon organized by ZİÇEV in 2011, our special swimmer named Caner EKİN with Down Syndrome swam across the Mogan lake in Ankara and went down in sports history as the first swimmer with Down Syndrome to swim in a still water marathon in the world.</p> <p>ISTANBUL INTERCONTINENTAL SWIMMING MARATHON: By breaking new ground in the world, ZİÇEV enabled our swimmer Caner EKİN with Down Syndrome to participate in this marathon held in Istanbul in 2011. Caner EKİN is six and a half kilometers away. has successfully completed this difficult track. Showing his success in swimming this marathon, Caner EKİN has written his name in the World Sports History with golden letters as the first swimmer with Down Syndrome to complete this course in the world.</p>

4 Key conclusions

In this section we want to summarise the main findings from all of the research tasks and key lessons to take forward.

A review of the literature has revealed the existing situation about participation of persons with (intellectual) disabilities in Europe and in the SocPORT Project participating countries. Reviewed articles and reports highlighted the following categories of benefits of sport participation for people with (intellectual) disabilities:

- personal health (mental and physical wellbeing),
- individual development (cognitive benefits, for example increased self-confidence, etc.), and
- social/environmental (for example social integration).

Review of the articles and reports also revealed the barriers to participation in physical activities for persons with intellectual disabilities in terms of three distinct levels:

- individual – relating to functional limitations of the disability (or psychological/physical aspects);
- social - mainly referring to the lack of professional preparation among community sport and physical activity personnel in communicating and adapting physical activities to the needs of people with disabilities and
- environmental barriers - generally referring to the availability of facilities that are conveniently located and generally the opportunities available for people with disabilities to shift from mere physical activities to competitive sports.

The literature review has also highlighted specific participation facilitators that can be used to overcome barriers to participation. These include: raising awareness and improving the communication on sport opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities; the role of elite sport development in encouraging wider participation in particular sports and the creation of accessible and adapted facilities that meet the specific needs of people with disabilities.

The questionnaire data have revealed a strong variation in data available relating to sport participation for people with intellectual disabilities and disabilities in general, which means that it is difficult to make consistent comparisons across countries in terms of the rate of participation.

Barriers to participation of persons with ID were similar in all countries – mostly referring to the lack of awareness, finances and professional preparation among community sport and physical activity personnel in communicating and adapting physical activities to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Facilities are inconveniently located, or there are not enough sporting opportunities, modified activities of equipment. Still the main barriers to the sport participation in all participating countries are strongly related to social and political factors such as lack of comprehensive policies, strategies or persistent advocacy (Greece; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Turkey).

Many challenges and barriers to inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in sports and leisure activities in the participating countries have been noticed, however, the results have also revealed good practice programmes initiated by disability sport organisations or non-governmental organisation in each and every project country.

These examples of a good practice suggest that increasingly general sport participation programmes are developing a strong inclusive component.

The programmes cover a range of different types of interventions, for example service and information provision, support for dedicated roles, grants for facilities and infrastructural

development and support to develop new partnerships and structures.

The case studies of each participating country have also highlighted a number of key lessons that should be relevant to the funding, design and implementation of inclusive programmes for participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in the sporting activities:

- **The role of dedicated professionals:** in order to engage people with disabilities in sporting activities it is inevitable to focus on the expertise of different actors (working in local municipalities, partnerships or mainstream sport federations) and in particular to support the roles of dedicated experts who can become leaders in promoting the importance of sport opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.
- **Participative approach** - the importance of consulting with people with disabilities: people with intellectual difficulties have over the past decades, become increasingly seen as 'reliable informants who hold valid opinions and have a right to express them' (Stalker, 1998). People with disabilities have unique perspectives that might not be considered by others. Including people with intellectual difficulties in their own planning processes yields valuable insights and it shows that the person's opinions and perspectives are respected and valued.
- **Inclusion:** the importance of inclusive activities that encourage the participation of people with and without disabilities.
- **The role of 'advocates':** engaging people with and without disabilities who have taken part and benefitted from the activities, in promoting the programmes to harder to reach groups.
- **Networking:** development of new support systems for inclusive sport activities through stimulating inter-sectoral collaboration and regional/local partnerships between all of the relevant actors involved in working with people with intellectual disabilities such as charities, health services and educational establishments; involving also different government levels to identify specific needs working with different sport organisations and to develop tailored provision that also takes into consideration the existing resources of their local areas.

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