



## **EGA President helps develop more opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities**

September 19<sup>th</sup> 2013

The President of the European Golf Association (EGA) Mr Antti Peltoniemi will attend a three day Sports Development Conference organized by Special Olympics. The Sports Conference commences today (September 19<sup>th</sup>) in Antwerp - the host city for the 2014 Special Olympics European Games. Former International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge is serving as Honorary Chair of the 2014 European Games.

The Sports Conference, hosted by Special Olympics Belgium, also brings together the Presidents of Tennis Europe Mr. Jacques Dupré, CEV (Confédération Européenne de Volleyball) President Mr. André Meyer, ETTU (European Table Tennis Union) Vice-President Mr Ronald Kramer and IFAPA (International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity) Dr. Claire Boursier, with more than 80 Special Olympics leaders including Sports Directors, Heads of Delegation for 2014 Games and experts from 50 countries within the Europe Eurasia region.

The Games Organizing Committee of the Special Olympics European Games 2014 will officially present their current plans and preparations which will include site visits to the Games venues. The Special Olympics European Games will take place in Antwerp from September 13<sup>th</sup> – September 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 involving 2000 athletes from 58 countries. <http://www.so2014.com/>

The European Sports Directors Conference will sanction the introduction of new sports to increase the number currently offered to Special Olympics athletes which stands at 32. The Conference will also consolidate existing partnerships between Special Olympics and European Sporting Federations. The Presidents in attendance, including EGA President Peltoniemi, will formally visit sports venues across Antwerp that will host sports competitions at the 2014 European Games.

“Building confidence, skill and fitness through sports training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities are the foundations of the Special Olympics sports experience and we know partnerships with sporting bodies such as the EGA are an integral component of this. EGA partners with Special Olympics for the benefit of athletes who enjoy professional training and practical guidance and support as we help them to reach their personal best on and off the golf course. The development of meaningful sports partnerships is important to the European Golf Association and we are proud of our association with Special Olympics. I look forward to attending this Sports Conference,” said Mr. Antti Peltoniemi, President EGA.

“The attendance at our conference by the Presidents of some of Europe’s leading Sports Federations is an endorsement of our work serving athletes with intellectual disabilities. Sports Federations partner with Special Olympics because they share our values, vision and commitment to develop the athletes’ experience ensuring better health, inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities in our communities. The practical support they provide is invaluable,” concluded Mary Davis, Regional President Special Olympics Europe Eurasia.

**About Special Olympics:**

Special Olympics is an international organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports every day around the world. Through work in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics addresses inactivity, injustice, intolerance and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities which leads to a more welcoming and inclusive society. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 4.2 million athletes in 170 countries. With the support of more than one million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and more than 70,000 competitions throughout the year.

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