

EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT ABILITY LINK*KIT PROJECT BEGINS



EWOS Ability Link*Kit Project Partners from left to right: Matthias Guett (SPIN Sport Innovation), Saskia Kanfer (European Paralympic Committee), Ulrike Wernert (City of Karlsruhe), Ulrike Garstenauer (University of Applied Sciences Salzburg), Shauna Kearney (Institute of Technology Tralee), John Petersson (European Paralympic Committee) Maxime Le Blanc (Sport & Citizenship), Dirk Steinbach (SPIN Sport Innovation), Philip Huterer (European Paralympic Committee)

VIENNA, 29/05/2015 The European Paralympic Committee (EPC) successfully launched the EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT PROJECT with a Kick-Off Meeting at the EPC Headquarters in Vienna, Austria. The first project meeting, which was held on 21 and 22 May 2015, brought together partners of the project in order to establish a toolkit to improve participation rates of people with a disability in the light of the inaugural European Week of Sport (EWoS).

Using the European Week of Sport 2015 as a platform, the project – which is co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme – will identify and test good practices in the organisation of awareness-raising events whilst also seeking to establish how to turn such ‘one-off activities’ into higher day-to-day para-sport participation rates.

The project intends to achieve this by hosting a local event with selected activities in Eger, Hungary, around the European Week of Sport which will showcase the para-sport sector and test the applicability of the approaches and good practices identified through the project.

The impact of these approaches will be monitored with the outcomes transferred into a practical Toolkit (The EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT). This will be followed by a final European Workshop to spread and share the practices, and to train relevant para-sport stakeholders towards the implementation of more events during the EWOS 2016 and beyond.

The project partnership includes the European Paralympic Committee, SPIN Sport Innovation (DE), City of Karlsruhe (DE), University of Applied Sciences Salzburg (AT), Hungarian Paralympic Committee, Movigo Sport e.V. (DE), Institute of Technology Tralee (IR), Bulgarian National Sports Academy, and Sport & Citizenship (FR).

The project was established in line with the EPC's continued commitment to represent their membership with regards to activities in para-sport at a European level, seeking to equip their members with the tools to take advantage of initiatives such as the European Week of Sport.

John Petersson, EPC President, reinforced this perspective by stating: *"In developing the EWOS Ability Link*Kit the EPC are seeking to strengthen its membership, drawing on their existing knowledge and expertise to increase awareness levels around para-sport and impact upon participation rates"*.

Furthermore, the project reflects the growing movement and understanding within the para-sport sector of the opportunities which exist in mainstream structures. Dr. Dirk Steinbach of SPIN Sport Innovation said: *"The project is a good example of how the para-sport sector in Europe is open to engaging with platforms outside of the disability sport sub-sector, putting Para-Sport onto the agenda and seeking inclusion within mainstream activities. The toolkit being developed will help not only the EPC membership but anyone seeking to engage people with a disability with Sport and physical activity on a long term basis."*

The **EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT PROJECT** is an initiative developed in close cooperation between the European Paralympic Committee and SPIN Sport Innovation. The project is undertaken in the light of the European Week of Sport (EWoS) 2015 and it is key to sustainably connect the Para-Sport sector to this new European flagship event for sports promotion. The vision is that – step by step – the EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT will help national and local disability sport stakeholders to contribute to future EWoS events and that these local events will also create sustainable higher day-to-day participation in sports and health enhancing physical activity for and with people with a disability.

The **EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT** (EWoS) is an initiative developed by the European Union for everyone – regardless of age, background or fitness level – that aims to encourage citizens from every walk of life to #BeActive! A flagship event in Brussels showcases the inclusive and creative environment of sport from all over Europe, and it identifies where progress is needed to inspire European citizens to #BeActive. Furthermore, EWoS encourages and supports national weeks of sport and initiatives in Europe, such as it is done through the EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT PROJECT.

ERASMUS+ is the EU's new programme for boosting skills and employability through education, training, youth, and sport. Erasmus+ activities in the field of sport aim to support actions that increase capacity and professionalism, improve management competence, and increase the quality of EU project implementation, as well as creating linkages between sport sector organisations. The EWOS ABILITY LINK*KIT PROJECT is one out of only five Collaborative Partnerships supported through the Erasmus+ Sport 2015 Funding Round 1 related to the European Week of Sport.

The **EUROPEAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE** (EPC) is composed of forty-nine National Paralympic Committees and the European branches of four disability-specific International Organisations of Sports for the Disabled. EPC's mission is to promote and contribute to the development of sport opportunities and competitions for European athletes with a disability as part of the world-wide Paralympic Movement. It ensures the growth and strength of the Paralympic Movement through the development of the European National Paralympic Committees and (as an ambassador) supports the activities and reflects on the needs of all EPC members.

For **FURTHER INFORMATION** please contact EWoS Ability Link*Kit Project Manager Ben O'Rourke (SPIN Sport Innovation) on e-mail (info@sport-innovation.de).