

CYPRUS



Country Para sport Factsheet

February 2026

"Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities"

This country factsheet was drafted by ACT LLC in collaboration with the Council of Europe, the European Union and other Sport For All joint project partners.

The data in this factsheet is from the "Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities", a European Union (EU) and Council of Europe joint project, to create a more inclusive sports culture by addressing the barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in sport and fostering a safe and welcoming sports environments for all. One of the project goals was to generate a comparable, policy-relevant evidence base on disability inclusion in sport across eight countries and identify how Para sport systems are structured, where systemic constraints recur, and which strengthening priorities emerge.

►► To find more information about the project and other countries involved in the project, as well as a synthesis report and an educational toolkit created to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport settings, have a look at the project website: www.coe.int/sport/sportforall

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Country Context

Indicator	Data
Population	983,000
Estimated number of persons with disabilities	Approximately 19.2% of the population aged 16+, equivalent to around 189,000 persons (statistical estimate based on EU-SILC disability prevalence data; Cyprus does not maintain a unified national disability register)
Persons with disabilities in Para sport	No consolidated national estimate available. Administrative data is held by the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC), sport federations, and the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO), but these figures are not aggregated or publicly published at national level.
Paralympic Games 2024 (Paris)	3 athletes (1 men; 2 women); Medals - 2
Paralympic Games 2020 (Tokyo)	3 athletes (1 men; 2 women); Medals - 2
Paralympic Games 2016 (Rio)	2 athletes (1 man; 1 woman); Medals - 0

Population: Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT), end of 2024. Disability prevalence: Eurostat EU-SILC (hlth_silc_12). The absence of published Para sport participation data limits evidence-based planning and should be considered an institutional priority.

System Summary

The summary below highlights the main systemic strengths and constraints shaping Para sport development in Cyprus.

Key Strengths

- From January 2025, support conditions for Olympic and Paralympic athletes, including allowances, insurance, preparation support, and professional reintegration measures are formally equalised within the national high-performance framework.
- Para sport is embedded within the mainstream national sport governance system, avoiding parallel administrative structures and aligning disability sport with general sport development.
- The National Strategy and Action Plan on Disability 2024–2028 addresses sport participation within a multi-sectoral inclusion framework.

Key Gaps

- All Para sport delivery is channelled through mainstream sport federations; no dedicated outreach or inclusion workforce, municipal delivery layer, or community-based participation structure exists independently of federation activity. Where federation capacity is limited, participation reach is directly constrained.

- No consolidated national participation data is available; participation figures are not publicly aggregated across the CSO, CNPC, and federations.
- National classification capacity is limited, requiring athletes to travel internationally for classification and creating delays in progression into competitive pathways.

Legal and Policy Framework

Cyprus is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Article 30 of the Convention recognises the right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport, including equal access to mainstream sporting activities, facilities, and opportunities for development and participation.

At national level, the core legal framework governing sport is established by the Cyprus Sports Organisation Law (1969). This law establishes the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO/KOA) as the statutory national sport authority responsible for promoting sport development, recognising sport federations, administering public sport funding, and overseeing national sport programmes. Within this legal framework, the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC) is formally recognised as the national body responsible for representing Cyprus within the international Paralympic movement.

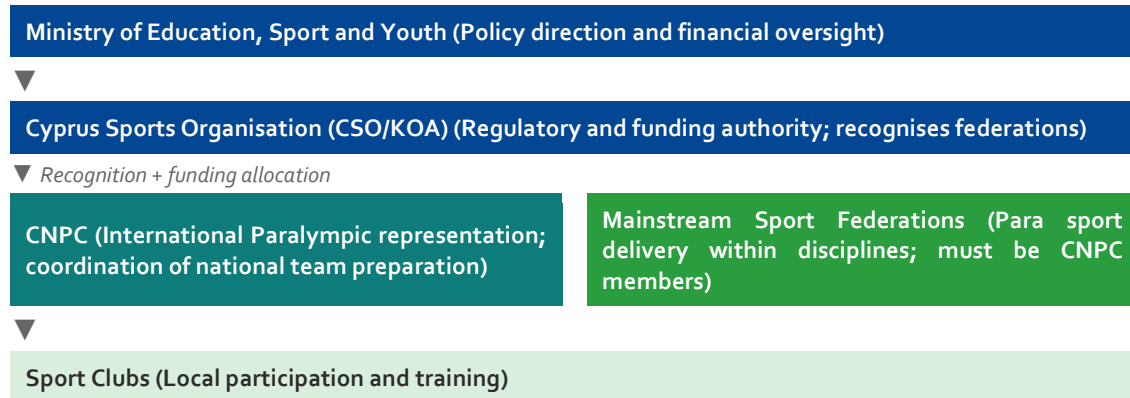
The broader disability rights framework is provided by the Law on Persons with Disabilities (2000), which recognises the right of persons with disabilities to participate in recreational and sporting activities and establishes the obligation of public authorities to support inclusion in these areas.

At policy level, the National Strategy and Action Plan on Disability 2024-2028 provides the main strategic framework for disability inclusion across sectors. Within this strategy, sport is addressed under Pillar 7: Participation in Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sport, which highlights the importance of improving accessibility of sports infrastructure, expanding opportunities for participation, and strengthening inclusion of persons with disabilities within existing cultural and sporting systems.

Taken together, this framework establishes the legal recognition of the right of persons with disabilities to participate in sport, while implementation largely occurs through the general sport governance system managed by the Cyprus Sports Organisation and national sport federations.

Para sport System Overview

Governance Structure



In Cyprus, responsibility for sport policy lies with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, which provides overall policy direction for the sport sector and oversees the functioning of the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO/KOA). The CSO operates as the statutory national sport authority responsible for implementing national sport policy, recognising sport federations, and administering public sport funding.

Within this governance framework, the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO) exercises the primary regulatory and financial authority for sport development in the country. It administers the Organisation Fund, through which public subsidies are distributed to recognised sport federations, clubs, and sport programmes. The CSO also defines the National Plans governing athlete support and participation programmes.

The Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC) is the legally recognised national body responsible for representing Cyprus within the international Paralympic movement. The CNPC coordinates Cyprus' participation in the Paralympic Games and other international competitions and ensures that national sport federations and athletes comply with International Paralympic Committee (IPC) regulations and qualification requirements.

Para sport activities in Cyprus are delivered primarily through mainstream sport federations, which incorporate Para sport disciplines within their organisational structures. These federations must be recognised by the Cyprus Sports Organisation and be members of the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee in order to participate in Paralympic sport governance and international competitions.

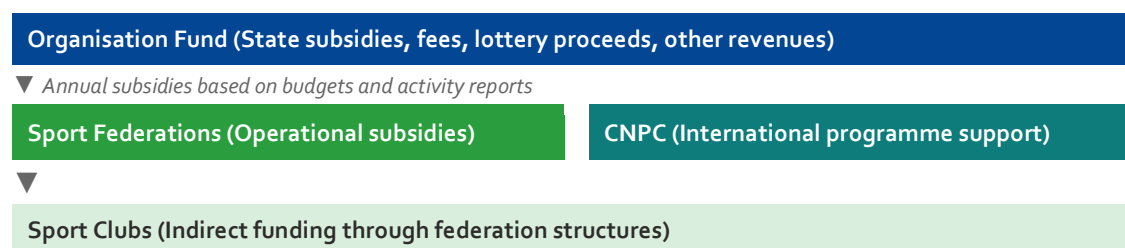
In practice, the distribution of responsibilities across institutions can be summarised as follows:

- The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth provides overall policy direction for sport.
- The Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO) regulates the sport sector, recognises federations, and administers public sport funding.

- The Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC) coordinates national participation in the Paralympic movement and serves as the institutional interface between national federations and the International Paralympic Committee.
- Sport federations organise discipline-specific sport activities, manage athlete development programmes, and integrate Para sport within their sport structures.
- Sport clubs provide local training environments and entry points for participation.

As a result, Para sport governance in Cyprus operates through a mainstream-integrated model, in which athletes with disabilities participate within the structures of national sport federations rather than through separate disability-specific sport organisations, with the exception of the Pancyprian Organisation of the Blind (affiliated with the International Blind Sports Federation, IBSA), the Cyprus Transplant Association (participating in transplant sport competitions), and the Cyprus Athletic Federation of the Deaf (operating as a dedicated federation for persons with hearing impairment within deaf sport competitions). While the CSO retains authority over funding allocation and federation recognition, the CNPC manages the international dimension of the system and coordinates participation in Paralympic competitions. Operational delivery of Para sport activities therefore depends largely on the capacity and engagement of individual sport federations and clubs.

Funding Mechanisms and Distribution



Public funding for sport in Cyprus is administered through the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO), which manages the Organisation Fund established under the Cyprus Sports Organisation Law. The Fund aggregates several revenue streams, including direct state subsidies, administrative fees, lottery-type proceeds, and other revenues allocated to sport development.

Sport federations and recognised sport bodies receive annual operational subsidies from the Organisation Fund. In order to access public funding, subsidised organisations are required to submit annual budgets, activity plans, and financial reports to the Cyprus Sports Organisation. These submissions form the basis for determining subsidy allocations and monitoring the use of public resources.

Athlete support is provided through the National Plans of the Cyprus Sports Organisation, which define programme-based support mechanisms across the sport system. Within these plans, athletes with disabilities participating in internationally recognised Paralympic and Deaf sport competitions are eligible for the same support mechanisms available to other high-

performance athletes. This includes financial support for training, competition participation, and athlete preparation.

In addition, the Cyprus Sports Organisation administers the programme “Sport for Persons with Disabilities and Support for Vulnerable Population Groups.” Through this programme, sport federations may receive grants to support participation opportunities for persons with disabilities across multiple disability categories, including physical, visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities. The programme also supports adapted physical activity initiatives and the provision of specialised sports equipment to organisations of persons with disabilities.

At local level, sport clubs may access resources indirectly through their respective federations or through project-based initiatives supported by the Cyprus Sports Organisation. However, no dedicated national funding line specifically targeting the development of grassroots Para sport clubs has been identified.

The financing model for Para sport in Cyprus can be characterised as partially centralised and programme-based. The Cyprus Sports Organisation controls the primary public funding channels, while sport federations act as the main intermediaries distributing resources to athletes and clubs within individual sport disciplines. As a result, the expansion of Para sport participation often depends on the organisational capacity and priorities of individual federations rather than on a dedicated grassroots Para sport development mechanism.

Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination within the Para sport system in Cyprus takes place primarily through the institutional framework linking the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO), the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC), and recognised sport federations.

The Cyprus Sports Organisation serves as the central operational coordinating body for the sport sector. It recognises sport federations, administers public sport funding through the Organisation Fund, and monitors compliance with national sport policy and programme requirements. Federations receiving public subsidies are required to submit annual activity plans and financial reports, which creates a formal administrative channel linking federations with the CSO.

The Cyprus National Paralympic Committee coordinates Cyprus’ participation in the international Paralympic movement and works with sport federations to organise national team preparation and participation in international competitions. Federations responsible for individual sport disciplines therefore interact with both the CSO and the CNPC: the CSO in relation to funding and institutional recognition, and the CNPC in relation to international competition governance and compliance with International Paralympic Committee regulations.

In practice, coordination between these institutions occurs mainly through programme planning, subsidy administration, and preparation of national teams for international competitions. Regular interaction takes place through funding applications, reporting processes, and operational cooperation between the Cyprus Sports Organisation, the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee, and sport federations.

Beyond the sport sector, no dedicated cross-sector coordination mechanism linking sport policy with education, rehabilitation services, or disability support systems has been identified. As a result, institutional coordination related to Para sport remains largely concentrated within the sport governance framework rather than being integrated across broader disability inclusion policies.

Data Collection

No unified national system consolidating participation data for Para sport in Cyprus has been identified. Administrative information related to Para sport participation is held across several institutions, including the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO), the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee (CNPC), and individual sport federations.

Available data appears to be collected primarily for administrative and programme management purposes, including athlete registration, participation in competitions, and eligibility for national support schemes. However, this information is not systematically consolidated or publicly reported through a centralised national database.

As a result, comprehensive statistics on Para sport participation by disability type, gender, age group, or geographic distribution are not readily available. The absence of regularly published participation data limits the ability of policymakers and sport authorities to assess participation trends, monitor gender equality in Para sport, or evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion policies.

Strengthening national data collection and reporting mechanisms could therefore support evidence-based planning for Para sport development and improve the monitoring of participation outcomes within the broader sport policy framework.

Participation Pathway



⚠ Transition Gap: Limited national classification capacity creates delays and barriers to progression, disproportionately affecting emerging athletes.

Entry

Entry into Para sport participation in Cyprus typically occurs through sport federations responsible for individual disciplines. Initial identification of athletes with disabilities often takes place through federation networks, referrals from coaches, or individual initiative. In some cases, prospective athletes may be recommended for inclusion in youth development programmes administered through the Cyprus Sports Organisation.

However, no dedicated national referral mechanism linking schools, rehabilitation institutions, disability organisations, and sport federations has been identified. As a result, entry into Para

sport pathways largely depends on the outreach capacity and recruitment practices of individual sport federations.

Development

Athletes demonstrating potential may enter structured development schemes administered by the Cyprus Sports Organisation. The National Support Plan for Young Athletes with Prospects provides financial and training support for athletes identified as having development potential across both Olympic and Paralympic sports.

In addition, Scholarship Plans for Student-Athletes provide support enabling athletes to combine sport participation with education. These programmes contribute to the development of athletes progressing from early-stage participation toward higher levels of competition.

Elite Preparation

Athletes achieving higher performance levels may enter the High Performance / Elite Athlete Framework administered by the Cyprus Sports Organisation. From 2025 onwards, the framework explicitly includes athletes with disabilities alongside Olympic athletes.

Athletes included in the framework receive structured support measures including financial allowances, training support, insurance coverage, and participation in training camps. Coaches working with these athletes may also receive corresponding support. In addition, athletes achieving major international distinctions may access financial awards and support through the Professional Reintegration Plan, which provides financial grants or employment-related assistance.

Transition gap

Despite the existence of athlete support programmes, national capacity for Para sport athlete classification remains limited. There are no trained classifiers in Cyprus; however, the CNPC arranges and hosts an international classifier in Cyprus approximately every two to three years for the classification of athletes with disabilities. This classification is valid for participation at local level only. Official classification for international IPC competitions requires evaluation by a committee of classifiers at international events. . This creates delays and additional barriers for emerging athletes seeking to progress within the international Para sport system.

Limited national classification capacity therefore represents a structural constraint affecting the accessibility and efficiency of athlete development pathways.

Key Challenges

The development of Para sport in Cyprus is supported by a structured national sport governance framework and dedicated athlete support programmes. However, stakeholders identified several structural constraints affecting the expansion of participation opportunities and the development of sustainable athlete pathways.

Participation and outreach constraints

- Engagement of persons with disabilities in sport in Cyprus remains limited. Stakeholders report that sustained outreach and awareness-raising activities are required in order to increase participation. Regular visits to rehabilitation institutions, schools, and disability organisations are considered important for identifying potential athletes and promoting participation opportunities. However, the absence of a dedicated outreach workforce and the limited availability of trained volunteers restrict the ability of sport organisations to systematically identify and recruit new athletes.

Gender participation gap

- Participation of women with disabilities in Para sport remains low. Available evidence indicates that female athletes are underrepresented within Para sport federations and national delegations. Although gender equality principles are formally reflected in the governance frameworks of the Cyprus Sports Organisation and the Cyprus National Paralympic Committee, no targeted recruitment or retention programmes focusing specifically on women and girls with disabilities have been identified. Structural barriers, including disability stigma, gender norms, and unequal access to sport opportunities, may contribute to this participation gap.

Funding and organisational capacity constraints

- Stakeholders report that financial resources available for Para sport development remain limited. Funding constraints affect the ability of federations and sport organisations to expand training programmes, support athlete development, and facilitate participation in international competitions. Limited funding also affects the organisational capacity of sport federations to conduct systematic outreach activities and strengthen grassroots participation structures.

Infrastructure and training capacity

- Training opportunities for para-athletes are constrained by the limited availability of suitable sports infrastructure. Athletes currently rely primarily on facilities owned or managed by sport federations, which may not always provide sufficient training capacity. Although accessibility improvements have been reported across parts of the national sport infrastructure, stakeholders indicated that facility availability remains insufficient to fully meet training needs. The absence of dedicated Para sport training centres at local level was also identified as a structural gap affecting the development of athlete training pathways.

Technical and classification capacity

- National capacity to conduct athlete classification remains limited. CNPC arranges local-level classification, but official IPC classification still requires international assessment, limiting progression into competitive pathways. . This creates delays and additional barriers for athletes seeking to enter international competition pathways and may slow the progression of emerging Para sport athletes.

Opportunities

Despite the structural constraints identified above, several institutional and policy conditions provide opportunities to strengthen the development of Para sport in Cyprus.

- Policy alignment with elite sport frameworks. The explicit inclusion of Paralympic athletes within the High Performance / Elite Athlete Framework from 2025 establishes parity between Olympic and Paralympic support structures and provides a stronger institutional basis for elite Para sport development.
- Small-scale national sport system. Cyprus' relatively small sport system creates conditions in which targeted interventions, such as the development of national classification capacity, establishment of regional training hubs, or strengthening outreach programmes, could generate measurable impact at national level.
- Access to European Union funding instruments. As a member of the European Union, Cyprus has access to programmes such as ESF+ and Erasmus+, which can support projects aimed at expanding grassroots participation, improving sport accessibility, and strengthening inclusion of persons with disabilities in sport.
- Strengthening national classification capacity. Developing national capacity to conduct Para sport athlete classification could remove an important structural bottleneck currently affecting athlete progression and improve access to international competition pathways.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

Cyprus Sports Organisation

Review the allocation methodology of the Organisation Fund in order to strengthen support for grassroots Para sport development. Allocation criteria should include participation indicators and inclusion targets, and Para sport-specific funding should be reported annually within the Cyprus Sports Organisation's sport sector reporting.

Recommendation 2.

Cyprus Sports Organisation and Cyprus National Paralympic Committee

Strengthen national capacity for Para sport athlete classification through targeted training of national classifiers and cooperation with international sport bodies in order to expand classification opportunities within Cyprus.

Recommendation 3.

Cyprus Sports Organisation, Cyprus National Paralympic Committee and sport federations:

Develop structured outreach programmes aimed at increasing participation of persons with disabilities in sport, including cooperation with schools, rehabilitation centres, and disability organisations in order to identify and support new athletes.

Recommendation 4.

Cyprus Sports Organisation and sport federations:

Develop targeted initiatives to increase participation of women and girls with disabilities in Para sport, including gender-sensitive outreach programmes and systematic monitoring of gender-disaggregated participation data.

Recommendation 5.

Cyprus Sports Organisation:

Strengthen access to sports infrastructure for Para sport training and competition by improving accessibility of existing facilities, increasing training capacity, and facilitating coordinated use of sport infrastructure by Para sport athletes.

Recommendation 6.

Cyprus Sports Organisation and sport federations:

Explore the development of regional Para sport training hubs in order to strengthen athlete development pathways and support athlete progression.

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