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

**Webinar**

**Media representation of persons with disabilities in sport**

**Tuesday 24 March 2026  
10.00 am – 12.30 pm (CET)**

**Online on Zoom platform**

**Concept note and Programme**

## **Background**

The Council of Europe has placed sport within its agenda of reinforcing human rights, democracy and social inclusion for a long time. Thanks to its Revised European Sports Charter (2021), “governments have committed themselves to providing their citizens with opportunities to practice sport under well-defined conditions”.

The Council of Europe Sport Division promotes the “Sport for All” philosophy: every person, regardless of their background, has the right to engage in sport. The Sport For All project builds on ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive sports culture by addressing the barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in sport and by fostering a safe and welcoming sport environments for all.

The way media tell stories about athletes with disabilities shapes how society perceives them, not only as competitors, but as people. Although the visibility of persons with disabilities in sport has increased, particularly at major events such as the Paralympic Games, media coverage often relies on simplified narratives that highlight their “inspirational” or “exceptional” nature, rather than recognising them as skilled and ambitious athletes competing at the highest level. These perceptions have an impact on people's real lives: how athletes are valued, funded, supported and understood.

This webinar seeks to create a space for honest conversations between researchers, journalists, sports governing bodies, advocates and athletes to reflect on these realities and work towards a more respectful and human-centred narrative in sport.

## **Objectives**

This webinar aims to:

- 1) analyse how media narratives about disability in sport are produced and maintained;
- 2) explore the role of journalists, sports governing bodies, advocates and athletes in shaping media representation;
- 3) highlight the experiences of journalists and athletes with disabilities in relation to media visibility and operations;
- 4) identify practical pathways towards more ethical, inclusive and athlete-centred media practices;
- 5) develop concrete recommendations for media professionals and sports organisations.

Based on the webinar discussions, a short set of practical recommendations will be identified and published on the Sport For All website.

## **Structure and practical arrangements**

The online webinar is scheduled to last 2 hours and 30 minutes. Participants will be invited to pose questions through the chat function of the Zoom platform to be asked to the speakers during the panel discussion (session 2), and to share their own insights, challenges and recommendations.

Automated transcription will be enabled during the event. The webinar recording will be made available afterwards on the Sport For All website.

The working language of the webinar will be English.

**10.00 am – 10.10 am**

**Opening**

*Stanislas Frossard*, Head of Sport Division, Executive Secretary of Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, Council of Europe

*Sarah Lynch*, Deputy Head of Sport Unit, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission

Moderated by *Céline Guth*, Senior Project Officer, Sport Division, Council of Europe

**10.10 am – 11.10 am**

**Mapping the present: Analysis, reflection and action**

- *Toni Bruce*, Professor of Sociology of Sport, University of Auckland
- *Martina Caironi*, Paralympic champion in Para athletics
- *Andy Stevenson*, Sports Presenter, Reporter, Commentator
- *Craig Spence*, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, International Paralympic Committee
- *Felipe Quintela*, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, VLP Sports

Moderated by *Céline Guth*, Senior Project Officer, Sport Division, Council of Europe

**11.10 am – 11.15 am**

**Break**

**11.15 am – 12.20 pm**

**Towards more ethical and inclusive sports media landscape: Roundtable discussion**

During the roundtable discussion, speakers will address the following topics:

1. Support for more visibility
2. Inspiration Vs legitimacy
3. Intersectionality and inclusion
4. Priorities and impact
5. Recommendations and next steps

Moderated by *Francine H. Raveney*, Deputy Executive Secretary of Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, Council of Europe

**12.20 pm – 12.30 pm**

**Closing**

*Céline Guth*, Senior Project Officer, Sport Division, Council of Europe