

TÜRKIYE



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 (estimate)	85.7 Million (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2024)
Estimated number of persons with disabilities	Approximately 5 million (unverified; various sources estimate 6-7% of population)
Licensed athletes with disabilities	Approximately 52,861 athletes licensed within four national disability-specific federations: 8,996 (physically disabled, 22 branches); 24,914 (special athletes, 15 branches); 12,047 (deaf athletes, 24 branches); 6,904 (visually impaired). These are formally licensed competitive athletes; recreational and informal participants are not captured.
Paralympic Games 2024 (Paris)	94 athletes (46 men, 48 women); Medals - 28
Paralympic Games 2020 (Tokyo)	87 athletes (43 men, 44 women); Medals - 15
Paralympic Games 2016 (Rio)	81 athletes (48 men, 33 women); Medals - 9

Population: Turkish Statistical Institute (2024). Licensed athletes: Ministry of Youth and Sports administrative records via disability-specific federations. Note: the disability prevalence estimate varies across sources and methodologies; the 5 million figure is unverified. With 94 athletes at Paris 2024 and 28 medals, Türkiye fields one of the largest and most successful Paralympic delegations among the countries reviewed.

System Summary

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

Key Strengths

- Ministry-operated Accessible Sports Schools, delivered through provincial directorates, provide a structured national mechanism for introducing persons with disabilities to sport and building athlete pools for federations.
- The Talent Screening and Sports Orientation Programme issues Sports Report Cards directing identified students to relevant federations and sport branches, formalising the referral pathway from detection to organised sport.
- Disability sport competencies are integrated into mainstream coach certification pathways, building Para sport coaching capacity across the general sport workforce.
- Consistent growth in elite performance across three Paralympic cycles, with near gender parity in the Paris delegation.

Key Gaps

- Four disability-specific federations and multiple mainstream federations managing Paralympic disciplines operate without a dedicated cross-federation coordination mechanism. This creates risks of fragmented data practices, inconsistent pathway management, and uneven strategic planning across a large and institutionally complex system.
- No unified national monitoring system consolidates participation data across federations; monitoring is fragmented at federation level, limiting the ability to assess participation breadth, regional distribution, and pathway continuity nationally.
- While entry and talent identification mechanisms are structured at national level, progression from identification to sustained development depends heavily on local institutional capacity and varies significantly across provinces.

Legal and Policy Framework

Türkiye is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The right of persons with disabilities to participate in sport, as recognised in Article 30 of the Convention, is reflected in national legislation governing sport, disability rights, and public participation in physical activity.

The core legal framework regulating sport is Law No. 7405 on Sports Clubs and Sports Federations (2022), which governs the establishment, organisation, finances, and oversight of sport clubs and federations. The Law recognises Paralympic and Deaflympic sports within the national sport system and defines the institutional framework through which sport federations operate, including those responsible for disability sport branches.

Institutional responsibilities for the promotion of sport participation, including for persons with disabilities, are assigned through Presidential Decree No. 1 on the Presidential Organisation (2018) to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and specifically to the General Directorate of Sports Services. Within this mandate, the Ministry is responsible for promoting participation in sport, supporting the development of accessible facilities, providing training programmes and equipment, and coordinating with relevant sport organisations.

Within the broader disability rights framework, Law No. 5378 on Disabled People (2005) establishes measures aimed at improving accessibility and participation of persons with disabilities in public life, including sport. The Law includes provisions promoting disability sport and requiring adaptation of sports infrastructure in order to enable participation.

At policy level, the National Sports Policy Document (2012) sets general policy objectives for youth and sport development, including measures aimed at improving access to sport for disadvantaged groups. More recently, the First National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023–2025) includes actions related to improving accessibility and expanding opportunities for participation in sport and recreational activities for persons with disabilities.

Taken together, these legal and policy instruments place Para sport within the mainstream national sports governance system while establishing a broader disability rights framework that supports participation of persons with disabilities in sport.

Para sport System Overview

Governance Structure



Para sport in Türkiye is governed within the mainstream national sports system under the authority of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its General Directorate of Sports Services. The Ministry exercises the main strategic, regulatory, and funding role. It is responsible for promoting participation of persons with disabilities in sport, supporting accessible facilities, and overseeing the institutional framework through which federations and clubs operate.

At national level, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee (TNPC) represents Türkiye within the international Paralympic Movement and coordinates national participation in Paralympic competitions. The TNPC works with the Ministry and the relevant sport federations on national team preparation and international representation, but it does not replace the federations' responsibility for sport-specific governance and athlete development.

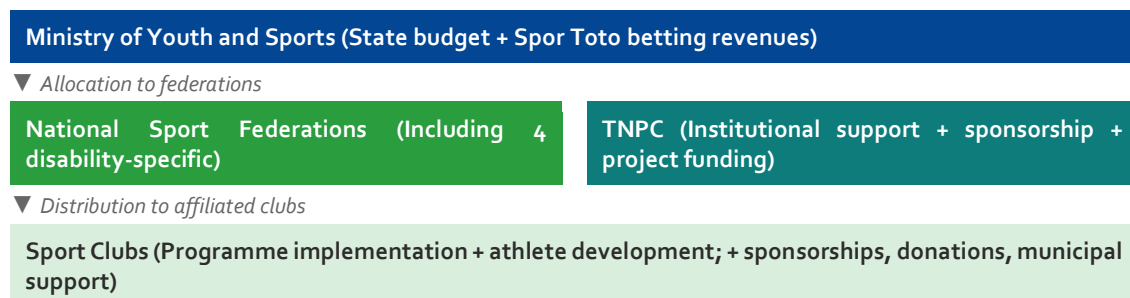
Sport-specific governance is carried out by a combination of four disability-specific federations and mainstream national sport federations that administer Paralympic disciplines within their respective sports. The disability-specific federations govern licensing, domestic competitions, and athlete development within their branches, while mainstream federations perform the same functions in disciplines integrated into their own sport structures. This creates a mixed governance model in which discipline-specific responsibilities are distributed across several recognised national federations.

At operational level, the Ministry's provincial directorates form the main link between national policy and local delivery. They support implementation of sport programmes, coordinate with federations and clubs, and facilitate access to local sport opportunities. Through this structure, national decisions on participation, facilities, and programme delivery are transmitted to subnational level.

At grassroots level, sport clubs represent the main entry point for participation. Administratively, clubs are affiliated with and responsible to the provincial youth and sports directorates. In terms of sport, clubs are affiliated with the relevant federations, organise training, prepare athletes for competition, and connect local participants with wider development pathways. In practice, local delivery depends on the capacity of clubs and the strength of provincial implementation.

In institutional terms, the Ministry and the General Directorate hold strategic authority, regulation, and budget control; the TNPC coordinates the international and Paralympic representation dimension; federations manage discipline-specific sport development; provincial directorates connect national policy with local implementation; and clubs provide the main participation base.

Funding Mechanisms and Distribution



Para sport funding in Türkiye is primarily centralised, with the **Ministry of Youth and Sports** acting as the main funding authority through state budget appropriations and earmarked revenues from sports betting mechanisms. These resources are allocated to national sport federations, including the four disability-specific federations and other federations responsible for Paralympic disciplines.

The **Turkish National Paralympic Committee** receives institutional support from the Ministry and supplements this with sponsorships and project funding, particularly for high-performance programmes and international representation. Its funding role is therefore linked mainly to the Paralympic and national team dimension rather than to broad-based sport delivery across all disciplines.

National sport federations use public allocations to support competitions, athlete licensing, training activities, and development programmes within their respective branches. Affiliated sport clubs implement these programmes at local level and may also receive additional support through sponsorships, donations, municipal contributions, and other local resources.

At grassroots level, funding therefore reaches clubs mainly through federation structures rather than through direct national grants to clubs. This creates a funding model in which national allocations are centralised, while club-level resources depend on successive distribution through federations and the availability of supplementary local or private support.

In practical terms, strategic budget authority rests with the Ministry, institutional support for the Paralympic dimension is channelled partly through the TNPC, and sport-specific

programme funding flows through federations to affiliated clubs. This provides a structured national financing framework, but the strength of local delivery may vary depending on club capacity and the availability of complementary support outside central allocations.

Coordination Mechanisms

National coordination of Para sport in Türkiye is structured through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which serves as the central policy, funding, and oversight authority. The Ministry provides the main institutional framework within which federations, clubs, and the Turkish National Paralympic Committee operate.

At national level, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee coordinates the Paralympic dimension of the system, particularly in relation to international representation and national team preparation. It works with the relevant sport federations responsible for Paralympic disciplines, while the Ministry retains the central role in policy direction and institutional oversight.

Sport-specific coordination is carried out through the relevant disability-specific federations and mainstream federations that administer Paralympic branches within their own disciplines. These federations organise competitions, manage athlete licensing, and oversee development activities within their sport areas. Coordination across disciplines therefore depends on interaction between multiple federations operating under the national sport governance framework.

At operational level, the Ministry's provincial directorates, present in all 81 provinces, connect national policy with local delivery. They liaise with federations, clubs, and local authorities in the implementation of sport programmes, including disability-specific activities. Through this structure, provincial directorates provide the main administrative channel through which national decisions are translated into local implementation.

Cross-sector coordination between sport policy and broader disability policy is supported through the First National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023–2025), coordinated by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. This links sport participation to wider disability inclusion objectives. However, no dedicated sport-specific coordination mechanism bringing together all Para sport stakeholders across the Ministry, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee, disability-specific federations, and mainstream federations has been identified.

Overall, coordination in Türkiye is structured through a combination of central ministerial oversight, federation-based sport governance, Paralympic coordination by the Turkish National Paralympic Committee, and local implementation through provincial directorates. This creates a functional coordination framework, but one in which cross-federation coordination depends on interaction across multiple institutional lines.

Data Collection

Data on Para sport participation in Türkiye is collected primarily through the licensed athlete registration system. Athletes must obtain a sport licence from the Provincial or District Youth and Sports Directorates, provided they meet the criteria set by the relevant disability sport federation or other authorised federations, in order to participate in organised competitions.

These directorates maintain administrative records on registered athletes, clubs, and competition participation in a digital database.

The commonly cited figure of approximately 52,861 licensed athletes with disabilities reflects formally registered competitive athletes within organised sport structures. It should therefore be understood as an administrative measure of licensed participation rather than a comprehensive estimate of all persons with disabilities participating in sport. Recreational and informal participation is not captured through this system.

Data collection is distributed across the four disability-specific federations, other relevant federations governing Paralympic disciplines, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. While these bodies report participation figures through administrative records, no unified national portal or centralised database consolidating access to Para sport participation data across all federations has been identified.

Comprehensive disaggregation by gender, region, age group, disability type, or level of participation is not systematically published through a single national system. In addition, the absence of a verified national disability prevalence figure makes it difficult to calculate reliable participation rates for persons with disabilities at population level.

As a result, existing data provides a useful picture of licensed competitive participation, but it does not offer a complete national view of broader Para sport participation, accessibility conditions, or programme reach. This limits the ability to track participation trends consistently, identify underserved groups, and assess the effectiveness of policies and programmes across the system.

Participation Pathway



⚠ Transition Gap: Movement from Accessible Sports Schools through SEMs and provincial directorates to federations and the TNPC is uneven outside major urban centres, where facility access and coaching capacity vary.

Entry

Entry into Para sport in Türkiye is supported through Accessible Sports Schools implemented under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which encourage persons with disabilities to participate in sport and help identify potential athletes. Additional entry routes are provided through the Sports Talent Screening and Sports Orientation Programme and the Sportive Talent Screening Service for Individuals with Special Training Needs, which identify students with disabilities and direct them toward the relevant sport branches and disability sport federations.

Development

Athlete progression is supported through the issuance of a Sport Report Card, which identifies suitable sport disciplines and allows students and families to apply to Athlete Training Centres (SEM) through provincial directorates. Where an appropriate sport is not available through these centres, provincial directorate staff may guide athletes toward alternative opportunities. Development pathways are then managed within the relevant disability-specific federations or other federations responsible for Paralympic disciplines.

Elite Preparation

The Turkish National Paralympic Committee coordinates national team preparation and international representation in cooperation with the relevant sport federations. Elite preparation is supported through federation structures, national team systems, and Ministry-backed high-performance arrangements. Professional pathways for coaches are managed by the Ministry in cooperation with the relevant federations, and licensed coaches may enter disability sport branches through direct practical training without repeating basic certification requirements.

Transition Gap

The transition between grassroots participation programmes and formal federation-based athlete development structures is uneven across the country. Accessible Sports Schools and talent identification programmes provide a broad entry base and help identify potential athletes. However, progression from these programmes into sustained club participation, federation pathways, and Athlete Training Centres (SEM) depends on the availability of local sport clubs, specialised coaching, and accessible facilities.

These resources are concentrated in larger urban centres, while in some provinces the number of clubs offering disability sport disciplines remains limited. As a result, individuals identified through school-based programmes or local initiatives may not always have a clear pathway into regular training environments or competitive structures. Where local delivery structures are weaker, talented athletes may face interruptions in their development pathway before reaching federation-level training or national team preparation systems coordinated by the Turkish National Paralympic Committee.

Key Challenges

Despite the presence of a structured legal and institutional framework, several structural and operational challenges continue to affect the development of Para sport in Türkiye.

Data and monitoring constraints

- The national estimate of approximately 5 million persons with disabilities remains unverified and varies across sources and methodologies. This limits the reliability of participation rate calculations and weakens the evidence base for planning and target-setting.
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- Although licensed athlete data is available, monitoring remains fragmented across disability-specific federations and other relevant sport bodies. No unified national system consolidates participation, accessibility, and programme data across the Para sport sector.

Athlete pathway constraints

- The transition from grassroots participation programmes into sustained club participation, federation development pathways, and Athlete Training Centres is uneven across the country. Facility access, coaching capacity, and programme availability vary significantly by province, which may constrain development opportunities outside larger urban centres.
- Although entry and talent identification mechanisms exist, continuity of progression toward elite preparation depends heavily on local institutional capacity and the presence of active clubs. This creates uneven athlete development conditions between regions and disciplines.

Inclusion and accessibility barriers

- Participation of women with disabilities in Para sport remains associated with structural barriers. No dedicated national outreach or recruitment programme targeting women and girls with disabilities has been identified, and general gender equality provisions do not translate into Para sport-specific measures.
- Accessibility of sports infrastructure remains inconsistent. Not all facilities meet accessibility requirements, and monitoring and enforcement mechanisms may need strengthening to support compliance by sport organisations and facility operators.

Coordination and system-development issues

- A dedicated sport-specific coordination mechanism bringing together the Ministry, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee, disability-specific federations, and mainstream federations governing Paralympic disciplines has not been identified. This may limit coordination on cross-cutting issues such as classification, shared infrastructure, and unified data reporting.

Context-specific pressures

- The longer-term rehabilitation and participation implications of the 2023 earthquake for affected provinces have not yet been fully assessed. Targeted support for newly disabled persons may need to be more clearly integrated into Para sport planning in the affected areas.

Opportunities

Several institutional and policy features provide opportunities to strengthen the development of Para sport in Türkiye.

- The Accessible Sports Schools network provides an existing national entry infrastructure for introducing persons with disabilities to sport and identifying potential athletes. Expanding its

reach and strengthening links with clubs and federations could improve continuity from initial participation to structured development.

- The licensed athlete registration system across disability-specific federations provides an administrative data foundation that could support a more coordinated national monitoring framework if indicators and reporting arrangements are harmonised.
- The Ministry's network of provincial directorates provides an established mechanism for linking national policy with local implementation. If used more consistently, this structure could help reduce regional disparities in access to clubs, coaching, and participation programmes.
- The strong institutional position of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the existing federation system provide a clear governance base for improving coordination across disability-specific and mainstream federations responsible for Paralympic disciplines.
- The First National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023-2025) provides a policy basis for linking Para sport more closely with wider disability inclusion measures, including accessibility and participation support.
- The scale of Türkiye's elite Paralympic performance provides a visible national platform that can support broader promotion of Para sport participation, strengthen public awareness, and reinforce the legitimacy of further investment in athlete pathways and accessible sport infrastructure.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports:

review and update the national sports policy framework to include measurable participation targets and disability inclusion objectives for Para sport.

Recommendation 2.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with relevant public authorities and sport organisations:

strengthen monitoring and enforcement of accessibility standards in sport facilities and support facility operators in meeting accessibility requirements.

Recommendation 3.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Turkish National Paralympic Committee and relevant sport federations:

develop a coordinated national monitoring framework for Para sport participation, accessibility, and programme outcomes, including stronger data sharing across federations.

Recommendation 4.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Turkish National Paralympic Committee and relevant sport federations:

strengthen the transition from entry-level programmes to federation development pathways by improving links between Accessible Sports Schools, provincial directorates, clubs, and Athlete Training Centres.

Recommendation 5.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports and relevant sport federations:

develop targeted outreach and participation measures aimed at increasing the engagement of women, girls, and young persons with disabilities in Para sport.

Recommendation 6.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Turkish National Paralympic Committee, disability-specific federations, and mainstream federations governing Paralympic disciplines:

establish a more structured coordination mechanism for addressing cross-cutting issues including classification, shared infrastructure, and unified reporting.

Recommendation 7.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports and relevant local authorities:

prioritise investment in accessible sport infrastructure, adaptive equipment, and assistive technologies, particularly in provinces where facility access and programme availability remain limited.

Recommendation 8.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with relevant public authorities and sport organisations:

assess the longer-term rehabilitation and participation implications of the 2023 earthquake and integrate targeted support for newly disabled persons into Para sport planning in affected provinces.

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