

UKRAINE



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)	39 million (UNFPA, 2025)
Estimated number of persons with disabilities	Over 6 million (Estimate as of June 2025); 3 million are formally recognized (ACAPS, 2025), significant rise from 2.7 million (UNDP, 2021 data)
Persons with disabilities in Para sport	Approximately 60,000 (National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine; includes participants across competitive and Invasport network activities)
Paralympic Games 2024 (Paris)	138 athletes (95 men; 43 women); Medals — 82
Paralympic Games 2020 (Tokyo)	137 athletes (79 men; 58 women); Medals — 98
Paralympic Games 2016 (Rio)	168 (91 men; 77 women); Medals - 117

Population: UNFPA Ukraine Population 2025. Disability prevalence: UNDP (2024) Report on Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine. Para sport participation: National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine. The 60,000 figure covers participants across the Invasport network and competitive structures; it may include both competitive and recreational engagement. Gender-disaggregated breakdown is not currently published.

System Summary

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

Ukraine's system for sport for persons with disabilities is best understood as comprising three interconnected pathways. Para sport constitutes the core of high-performance and Paralympic/Deaflympic sport, ensuring structured athlete development and international representation. Adaptive sport increasingly serves as an entry point for participation, rehabilitation, and community-based activity, particularly for persons who acquire disabilities later in life, including as a result of war. Sport for veterans has developed as a distinct but closely connected pathway focused on recovery, reintegration, and long-term engagement in physical activity.

Key Strengths

- The Invasport territorial network connects national, regional and local delivery centres, youth sports schools, specialised reserve schools, and national teams under a unified institutional framework, thus providing continuity of pathway from grassroots participation to elite preparation.

- The “Believe in Yourself” Spartakiad has since 1994 provided structured national youth competition across 24 disciplines, functioning as both a participation entry point and a talent identification mechanism.
- Presidential scholarships support children with disabilities and their coaches at the development stage of the pathway.
- Paralympic and Deaflympic achievements are recognised on an equal basis with Olympic achievements for state awards.
- Strong international performance maintained despite ongoing war.

Key Gaps

- The ongoing armed conflict has caused significant damage to sports infrastructure and training bases, reduced territorial coverage of the Invasport network, and led to a reported reduction in public funding for Para sport, directly affecting athlete preparation and pathway continuity.
- The declining Paralympic delegation trend indicates that wartime disruption is beginning to affect long-term pipeline depth, even as the system demonstrates resilience.
- Governance transparency concerns have been reported by stakeholders, particularly around limited involvement of regional organisations in funding decisions and resource allocation, creating tensions within the vertically integrated model.
- No unified national portal consolidating participation data exists, limiting visibility of territorial coverage, gender distribution, and system performance at sub-national level.

Legal and Policy Framework

Ukraine is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Provisions related to participation in sport, as set out in Article 30 of the Convention, are reflected in national legislation. In accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution of Ukraine, the provisions of the Convention form an integral part of national legislation.

The core legal framework governing sport is the Law “On Physical Culture and Sports” (1994), which defines the legal, organisational, and social principles of the sports sector and recognises sport for persons with disabilities as a distinct area within the national sports system. Amendments adopted in 2025 formally introduced the concept of “adaptive sports”, establishing a unified terminological basis for sport activities designed to reflect the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. This legislative development reflects the broader institutional recognition of adaptive sport as a distinct but connected pathway alongside high-performance Para sport and sport for veterans, responding to the growing demand for rehabilitation-linked sport participation in the wartime context.

The Law “On Support for the Olympic and Paralympic Movement and Elite Sports in Ukraine” establishes the legal foundations of state support for the Paralympic movement and elite sports, including the financial, organisational, and material-technical mechanisms supporting athlete preparation and participation in international competitions. The Law of Ukraine “On Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine” recognises physical culture and sports

rehabilitation as one of the components of the rehabilitation system and provides the legal basis for organising sport activities in a rehabilitation context.

Within the broader disability rights framework, the Law of Ukraine “On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine” establishes the general legal and organisational principles of state disability policy and guarantees equal opportunities and social integration, providing the wider framework within which sport is recognised as a tool for inclusion and adaptation.

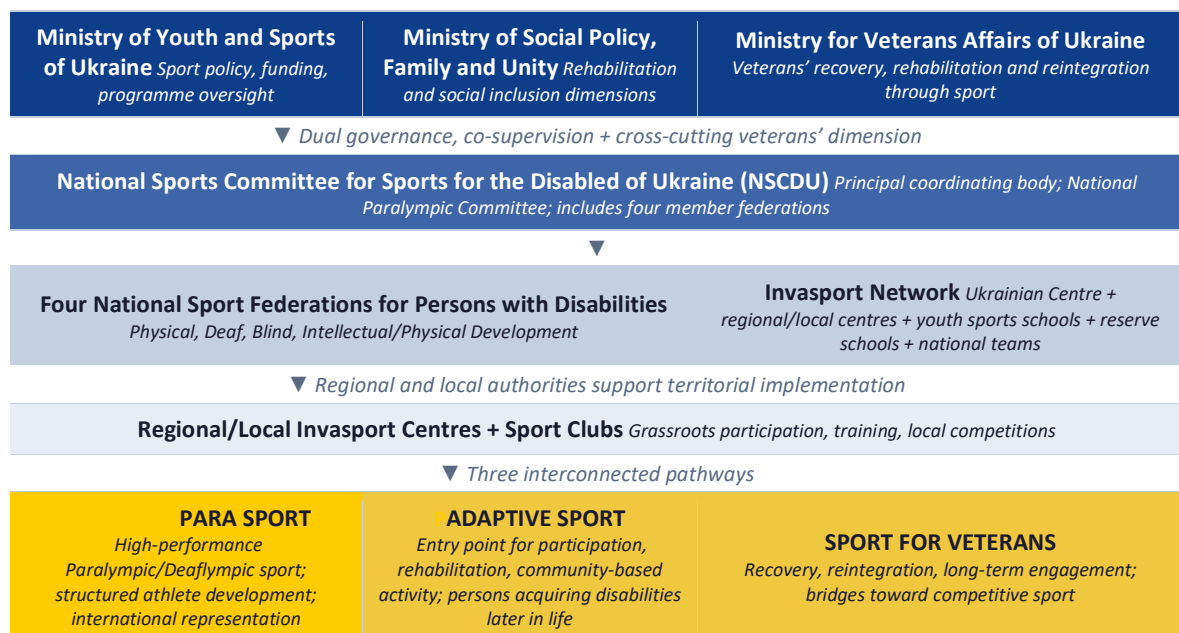
An extensive layer of subordinate regulation further implements national legislation through presidential decrees, Cabinet resolutions, and ministerial orders governing institutional structures, financing, incentives, and operational procedures, including the Invasport system. Key instruments include Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 766 of 2011 on the centres for physical culture and sports of persons with disabilities “Invasport” and Presidential Decree No. 1059/2001 on the development and support of the Paralympic movement in Ukraine.

In addition, the national “Barrier-Free initiative” supports the development of accessible sport spaces, inclusive physical activity opportunities, and training activities for professionals, contributing to improved accessibility of sport and physical activity environments.

Taken together, Ukraine’s legal and policy framework recognises sport for persons with disabilities as a distinct and institutionally supported part of the national sports system, while also linking sport participation to rehabilitation, inclusion, and wider disability policy objectives.

Para sport System Overview

Governance Structure



Ukraine has established a distinct multi-level system for sport for persons with disabilities, characterised by a dual state and non-governmental governance model.

Responsibility for sport policy, state funding, and programme oversight lies with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. In parallel, the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity supports the rehabilitation and social inclusion dimensions of disability sport, linking Para sport to the wider system of rehabilitation and social policy. In addition, the Ministry for Veterans Affairs of Ukraine plays an increasingly significant role within the broader Para sport landscape. In the context of the ongoing armed conflict, sport for war veterans has become a distinct and rapidly developing area closely linked to recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The Ministry for Veterans Affairs functions as a cross-cutting institutional actor, with relevance to governance, programme implementation, and the wider policy framework for veterans' reintegration through sport.

The central coordinating body for the Paralympic movement is the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, which performs the role of the National Paralympic Committee at international level. It serves as the principal intermediary between state authorities, sport federations, and international sport organisations, while also coordinating conditions for physical education, sport, rehabilitation, and elite athlete preparation for persons with disabilities.

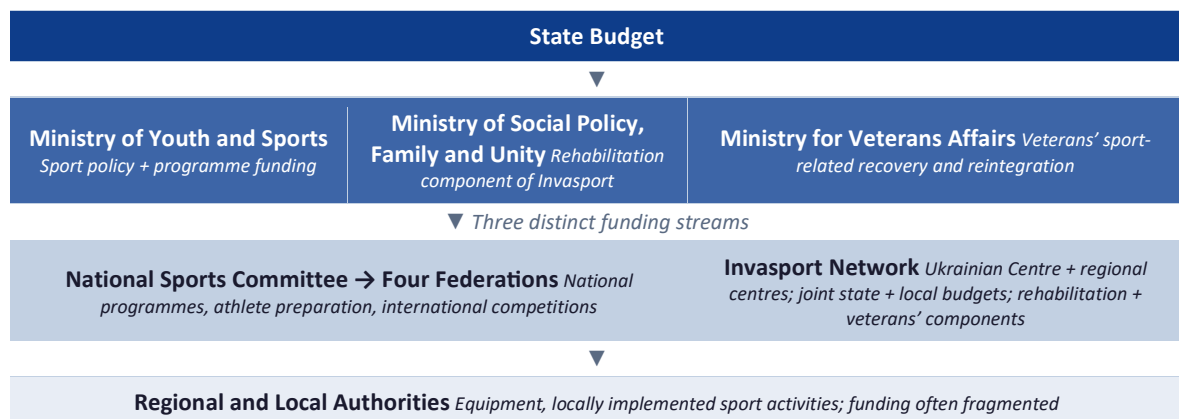
The Committee includes four recognised national sport federations for persons with disabilities: the federation for persons with musculoskeletal disorders, the federation of the deaf, the federation of the blind, and the federation for persons with intellectual and physical development disorders. These federations are responsible for sport-specific development in their respective directions, including competitions, athlete preparation, and participation in international sport events. They also operate through regional branches that coordinate training and competitions at territorial level.

A central feature of the Ukrainian model is the Invasport network, a system of specialised institutions established and jointly supervised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Sports Committee. The network includes the Ukrainian Centre "Invasport", regional and local centres, youth sports schools for persons with disabilities, specialised reserve schools, and national teams. It functions as the primary institutional infrastructure through which Para sport participation, athlete development, sport-rehabilitation activities, and national team preparation are organised across the country.

Regional and local authorities support territorial implementation through financing, institutional support, and cooperation with Invasport centres, federations, and local sport organisations. At local level, Invasport centres and sport clubs provide the main delivery structures for grassroots participation, training, and local competition.

In institutional terms, national policy direction and state funding are concentrated at ministerial level, the National Sports Committee coordinates the Paralympic and Deaflympic movement, federations manage sport-specific development, and the Invasport network provides the main territorial delivery system linking grassroots participation with elite athlete preparation.

Funding Mechanisms and Distribution



The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine allocates state funding to the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, which then distributes resources to the four National Sport Federations for Persons with Disabilities. Through this channel, funding supports national sport development programmes, high-performance athlete preparation, operational costs of national teams, and participation in international competitions.

A second funding stream supports the Invasport network, which forms the main territorial infrastructure for sport participation among persons with disabilities. The Ukrainian Centre "Invasport" and its regional and local centres are financed through a combination of state and local public budgets. Regional and municipal authorities support the operation of territorial centres, youth sports schools for persons with disabilities, and grassroots sport activities implemented at local level.

The Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity provides funding for the rehabilitation-related components of the Invasport system, reflecting the role of sport within broader rehabilitation and social inclusion policies.

The Ministry for Veterans Affairs also supports sport-related activities within veterans' recovery and reintegration programmes, contributing an additional institutional dimension to the financing landscape for disability sport in the wartime context.

At regional level, sports equipment procurement and many locally implemented sport activities are financed from regional and municipal budgets. These resources support territorial implementation but are often fragmented and vary between regions.

Since the start of the war, overall public funding for Para sport has reportedly been reduced significantly, while recent restrictions on capital procurement have further limited infrastructure and equipment investment. In practical terms, Ukraine's Para sport financing system remains structured through two main institutional streams, but wartime pressures have increased the importance of protecting core operational budgets and sustaining local delivery capacity.

Coordination Mechanisms

National coordination of Para sport in Ukraine is established through the legal framework of the Law “On Physical Culture and Sport” and related governmental regulations, which assign overall policy formation and programme coordination to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, while implementation is carried out in cooperation with the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, the four National Sport Federations for Persons with Disabilities, and other relevant executive authorities.

The National Sports Committee functions as the central coordinating body for the Paralympic and Deaflympic movement and works with the four national federations to align athlete preparation, competition systems, and international representation. In practice, the Committee serves as the main institutional link between state authorities, federations, and the wider territorial delivery structure.

Operational coordination at territorial level is ensured through the Invasport network, which links the national centre, regional and local centres, specialised sport schools, reserve schools, and national teams into a unified nationwide system. Through this structure, programmes for grassroots participation, athlete development, sport-rehabilitation activities, and competition preparation are coordinated across multiple administrative levels.

Regional and local authorities participate in coordination by financing territorial implementation, supporting local programmes, and working with federations, Invasport centres, sport organisations, and rehabilitation institutions. This means that Para sport coordination in Ukraine combines central policy direction with a territorially organised delivery network that connects national institutions with local implementation.

Data Collection

No unified national portal or centralised database consolidating Para sport participation data has been identified in Ukraine. Administrative information is maintained separately by the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, the four National Sport Federations for Persons with Disabilities, and the Invasport network for operational and programme management purposes.

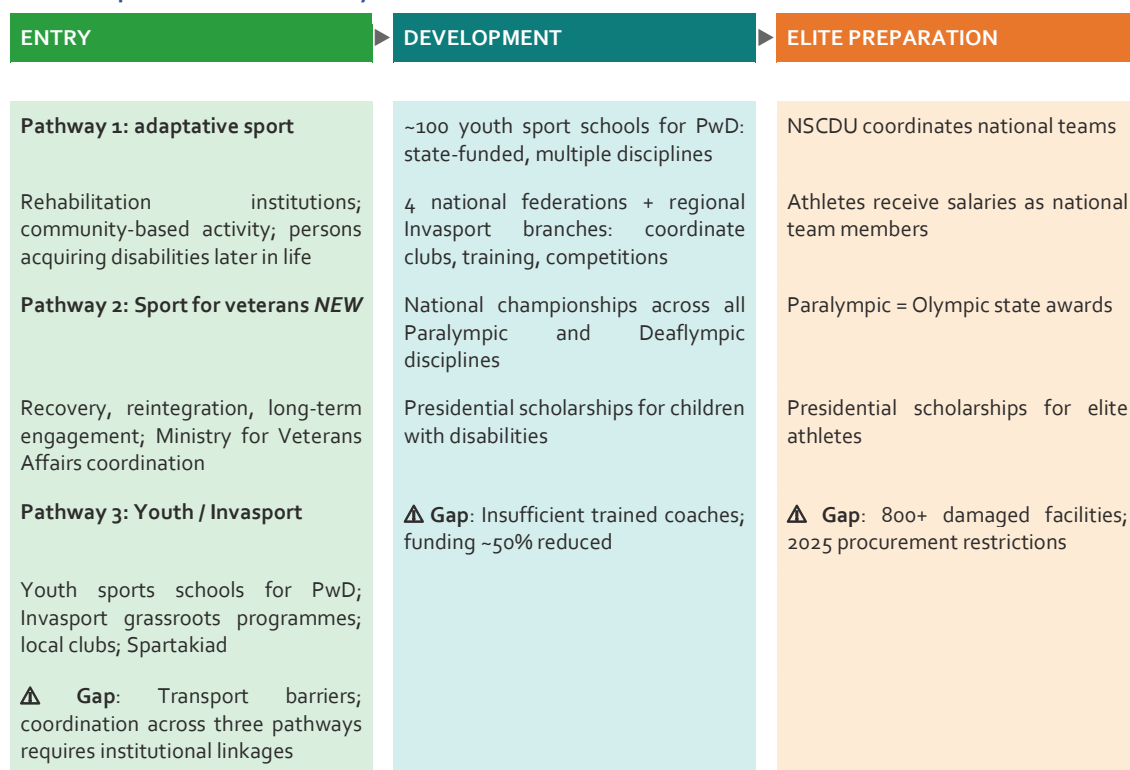
The commonly cited estimate of approximately 60,000 participants covers activities implemented through the Invasport network and competitive Para sport structures. It therefore appears to include both organised participation and broader programme engagement. For this reason, the figure should be understood as an aggregate administrative estimate rather than a fully standardised national participation statistic.

Data disaggregated by gender, age, region, disability type, or level of participation is not systematically published through a single national system. In particular, gender-disaggregated participation data is not currently available in a consistent public format, which limits the ability to identify and address gender disparities within the system.

Because data is held across multiple institutional actors and not consolidated in one national database, it remains difficult to track participation trends, compare regional coverage, or assess the reach of different programmes over time. This fragmentation also limits the ability of

policymakers and sector stakeholders to develop a fully evidence-based picture of grassroots participation, athlete development, and territorial disparities in access to Para sport.

Participation Pathway



⚠ Transition Gap: Wartime disruptions have reduced capacity and territorial coverage, creating new transition challenges. The emergence of sport for veterans as a distinct pathway alongside Para sport and adaptive sport creates additional coordination requirements across the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry for Veterans Affairs, and the National Sports Committee.

Entry

Entry into Para sport in Ukraine typically occurs through rehabilitation institutions, youth sports schools for persons with disabilities, and grassroots programmes implemented through the Invasport network, local sport clubs, and sport federations. The Invasport network functions as the main institutional entry structure, providing introductory sport activities, regular training, and local competitions through a nationwide system of specialised centres and schools. In the current context, adaptive sport and sport for veterans increasingly serve as complementary entry pathways, providing initial participation opportunities linked to rehabilitation and reintegration, with structured bridges toward the competitive Para sport system.

Development

Athlete development takes place through the combined work of the Invasport network, the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, and the four national sport federations. Athletes progress through local and regional training and competitions toward national-level events organised by the Committee and its member federations. A key element

of this pathway is the All-Ukrainian Spartakiad “Believe in Yourself”, which serves as a national talent-identification competition and an important feeder into reserve pools for Paralympic and Deaflympic teams. Presidential scholarships for children with disabilities and their coaches provide additional support at this stage.

Elite Preparation

Athletes who achieve strong results in national competitions may be selected for national Paralympic and Deaflympic teams coordinated by the National Sports Committee in cooperation with its member federations and the Invasport network. Elite athletes benefit from a state-supported high-performance system that includes specialised training facilities, coaching support, participation in international competitions, stipends, and performance-based awards. Athletes who achieve top results may also receive salaries through national team staff positions, and Paralympic and Deaflympic medal achievements are recognised on an equal basis with Olympic achievements for state awards.

Transition Gap

The Ukrainian pathway is structured because entry, development, and elite preparation are all institutionally linked through the Invasport network and national federations. However, the continuity of this pathway has been affected by the war. Damage to sports infrastructure, reduced access to training bases, and uneven territorial coverage in affected regions may interrupt progression from grassroots participation to sustained athlete development and high-performance preparation. The loss or inaccessibility of major training and rehabilitation facilities has further increased pressure on the remaining system.

Key Challenges

Despite the existence of a highly institutionalised Para sport system, several structural and operational challenges continue to affect participation, athlete development, and system sustainability in Ukraine.

Wartime system pressures

- Since the onset of the war, overall public funding for Para sport has reportedly been reduced significantly, while the loss or damage of training facilities and other material infrastructure has affected both athlete preparation and local programme delivery.
- Recent restrictions on capital procurement have further constrained equipment acquisition and infrastructure investment, limiting the system’s ability to replace damaged facilities and maintain training conditions.
- The emergence of sport for veterans as a distinct but connected pathway alongside Para sport and adaptive sport creates additional coordination requirements. Ensuring coherent progression from veterans' sport and adaptive sport into the competitive Para sport system requires institutional linkages across the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry for Veterans Affairs, and the National Sports Committee.

Infrastructure and access constraints

- The availability and condition of training facilities remain a major constraint. Damage to sports infrastructure, reduced access to some training bases, and delays in the completion of newly planned facilities continue to affect participation and preparation.
- Not all sport facilities are fully accessible for persons with disabilities, which limits participation opportunities and reduces the practical reach of programmes.
- Limited availability of accessible transportation remains an obstacle to regular participation in training and competitions, particularly where athletes depend on territorial mobility between centres, schools, and competition venues.

Regional coordination and territorial disparities

- Challenges are reported in regional-level coordination, communication, and information sharing, including limited transparency regarding funding decisions and resource allocation processes.
- Regional sport organisations are reported to have limited involvement in decision-making and financial allocation processes, while the development of sport disciplines remains uneven across regions, with some areas offering only a narrow range of sport options.

Institutional and workforce capacity constraints

- The number of trained coaches is reported to be insufficient, affecting the delivery, expansion, and continuity of sport programmes.
- There are also concerns regarding comparatively low remuneration levels for athletes, coaches, and sport personnel, which may affect retention and long-term system capacity.

Outreach and participation barriers

- Stakeholders report limited outreach and awareness, with funding opportunities and participation programmes reaching a relatively narrow group of beneficiaries. This may reduce the ability of the system to widen participation and identify new athletes.

Monitoring and data limitations

- There is no unified national portal collecting and publishing data on participation of persons with disabilities in sport, limiting the availability of consolidated information on the reach and performance of the system.
- Gender-disaggregated Para sport participation data is not systematically published. As a result, potential disparities in participation, access, and progression for women and girls with disabilities remain difficult to identify and address through policy or programme measures.

Opportunities

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

- The role of the Ministry for Veterans Affairs in supporting sport for war veterans creates an institutional bridge between rehabilitation, reintegration, and the broader Para sport system, offering the potential to expand participation pathways for persons with war-acquired disabilities.
- The Invasport network provides a nationwide territorial delivery structure linking grassroots participation, youth sports schools, reserve schools, and national teams. Maintaining and restoring this system creates a strong basis for preserving pathway continuity despite wartime disruption.
- The National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine and the four national federations provide an established institutional framework for coordinating athlete development, competition systems, and international representation across the country.
- The long-standing All-Ukrainian Spartakiad “Believe in Yourself” provides a well-established talent-identification mechanism feeding into reserve pools for national Paralympic and Deaflympic teams. Protecting its continuity can directly support the athlete development pipeline.
- Ukraine’s state-supported high-performance system, including stipends, scholarships, and equal recognition of Paralympic and Olympic achievements, provides a strong institutional basis for sustaining elite athlete motivation and performance.
- The national Barrier-Free initiative provides a policy framework that can support improvements in accessible sport spaces, inclusive physical activity environments, and training opportunities for sport professionals.
- The EQUALYMPIC television channel provides an accessible media platform promoting Paralympic and Deaflympic sport and can support wider awareness, visibility, and public engagement in sport for persons with disabilities.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with the Ministry for Veterans Affairs and the National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, the Invasport network, and regional authorities:

maintain continuity support measures for the Para sport sector, including protection of essential operational funding for training centres, sport institutions, and athlete preparation under wartime conditions.

Recommendation 2.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with regional and local authorities:
strengthen regional coordination by improving the involvement of territorial sport organisations in planning, decision-making, and resource allocation processes and by expanding information sharing across governance levels.

Recommendation 3.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with the National Sports Committee, the Invasport network, and relevant education and sport institutions:

expand coach education, retraining, and professional development measures in order to increase the number of qualified coaches working in Para sport.

Recommendation 4.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant transport and social service actors:

develop accessible transport solutions to support regular participation of persons with disabilities in training and competitions, particularly in regions with limited transport availability.

Recommendation 5.

The National Sports Committee for Sports for the Disabled of Ukraine, in cooperation with the Invasport network, federations, and regional authorities:
strengthen outreach, information, and awareness-raising activities so that participation programmes, funding opportunities, and support services reach a broader group of beneficiaries across regions.

Recommendation 6.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with the National Sports Committee, the four national federations, and the Invasport network:

establish the collection and publication of more consistent participation data, including gender-disaggregated information, in order to improve monitoring of territorial coverage, participation patterns, and gender disparities.

Recommendation 7.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with relevant public authorities and sport organisations:
prioritise restoration, accessibility improvement, and flexible use of training facilities and equipment within the Para sport system, taking into account wartime damage and current restrictions on capital investment.

Recommendation 8.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in cooperation with the Ministry for Veterans Affairs, the National Sports Committee, regional authorities, and post-conflict recovery actors:

integrate gender inclusion and broader participation objectives into reconstruction and recovery planning for the sport sector so that women, girls, and newly disabled persons are more effectively reached through future Para sport programmes.

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