



Press release

Special Olympics World Winter Games 2029 Provisionally Awarded to Switzerland

The international Board of Directors of Special Olympics has provisionally awarded World Winter Games 2029 to Switzerland. The Games are scheduled for March 6 – 17, 2029, and 2,500 athletes from more than 100 countries will compete in nine sports and show the world the power of inclusion.

Zurich, Graubünden, 19 June 2021 – Special Olympics World Winter Games have been provisionally awarded to Switzerland, following a competitive bidding process. The World Winter Games bring together people with and without intellectual disabilities and are the world's largest sports and humanitarian event.

For twelve days 2,500 athletes from 100 nations will compete in nine sports. They will be accompanied by countless family members, volunteers, fans, and media from around the world. Prior to the Opening Ceremony at Letzigrund Stadium in Zurich on 6 March 2029, athletes will get to know all regions of Switzerland via the Host Town program. After the Closing Ceremony on 17 March 2029, the impact of the Games will live on in the hearts and attitudes of the people of the canton of Graubünden and across the country.

The legacy of Special Olympics World Winter Games Switzerland 2029

World Winter Games is about more than sports. The national Special Olympics program in Switzerland partners with Swiss sport federations and clubs to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Games provide an immersive experience for an inclusive Switzerland, one where everyone has equal access to sports, education, health, and all aspects of life.

Federal Councillor and **Sports Minister Viola Amherd** was at the forefront in supporting the candidacy. She is convinced of the sustainability of this well-thought-out sports and inclusion project: "I am absolutely certain that the World Winter Games 2029 in Switzerland will make a profound contribution to an inclusive society."

Bruno Barth, National Director of Special Olympics Switzerland and initiator of this bid, is delighted with the provisional award to Switzerland for the 2029 World Games: "In the coming years, we drive sustainable social and political change and to build inclusion in our country. The Games will help ensure that people with intellectual disabilities experience respect and appreciation and have equal access to social life."

Financing and organization

The provisional award is still subject to a funding guarantee which is expected end September 2022, at which time a formal signing ceremony will take place. Special Olympics Switzerland now begins an eight-year campaign for inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities in policies and practices, a timeframe requested specifically in the Swiss bid to ensure a sustainable legacy.



The World Games will cost 38 million Swiss francs, approximately the same amount as the Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020. The Federal Government, the cantons of Graubünden and Zurich, the cities of Chur and Zurich, and the communities of Arosa and Vaz/Obervaz (Lenzerheide) will provide 75% of the total funding. Final funding decisions from all public stakeholders will be made by August 2022.

Competitions hosted in Graubünden, Opening Ceremony in Zurich

The sporting events of World Games will be held in the canton of Graubünden. Floorball, floor hockey, short track and figure skating will be held in Chur. Alpine skiing and snowboarding will take place in Arosa. Lenzerheide will host cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and dance sports. The opening ceremony will be held at the Letzigrund Stadium in Zurich and the closing ceremony will be held in Chur.

All of Switzerland is involved

A specialty of the Special Olympics World Games is the "Host Town" program, which takes place in the week before the opening. Delegations will have the opportunity to travel across Switzerland to get to know the country, its climate, its culture and its people. This way, people from every region of the country will become part of the Games.

About inclusion

As a sociological term, the concept of inclusion describes a society in which every person is accepted and can participate with equal opportunities and self-determination, irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education, disability or any other distinguishing features. In an inclusive society, there is no definition of normality that each member of that society is supposed to achieve or satisfy. The only normal thing is that there are differences. These differences are perceived as enriching and have no impact on an individual's intrinsic right to participation. It is the responsibility of society to put structures in place in all areas of life that allow the members of that society to move about freely.¹

About Special Olympics

[Founded in 1968](#), Special Olympics is a global movement to end discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities. We foster acceptance of all people through the power of sport and programming in education, health, and leadership. With more than six million athletes and Unified Sports partners in over [190 countries and territories](#) and more than one million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers [more than 30 Olympic-type sports](#) and over [100,000 games and competitions](#) every year. Engage with us on: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [our blog on Medium](#). Learn more at www.SpecialOlympics.org.

Our media office will be happy to provide you with further information: Irene Nanculaf, media@specialolympics.ch
[You can find pictures here.](#)

¹Source: www.inklusion-schule.info/inklusion/definition-inklusion.html