

Press release
June 22, 2021

„Inclusion through sports for children with developmental disabilities” promotes equal opportunities through sports activities

Bucharest, June 22 - After the first 6 months of implementation, Motivation Romania Foundation organized an online event to mark the official launch of the project "Inclusion through sports for children with developmental disabilities".

The June 9th event brought together over 70 people from 9 partners' countries participating in the project. Among the notable guests took the floor Gian Luca Bombarda - Director of the Fund for Regional Cooperation of the EEA and Norway Grants, David Evangelista, Regional President & Managing Director for Special Olympics Europe Eurasia and Cristian Ispas, General Manager of Motivation Romania Foundation and National Director of Special Olympics Romania.

The project "Inclusion through sports for children with developmental disabilities" is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation. The project is managed by Motivation Romania Foundation in partnership with Special Olympics Romania, SO Iceland, SO Slovakia, SO Lithuania, SO Bosnia and Herzegovina, SO Montenegro, with support from SO Europe Eurasia Foundation and Poznan University of Physical Education.

Over the course of three years, from January 2021 to December 2023, the project will facilitate the organization of competitions for team sports, such as football and basketball games in which will participate over 5,200 children and youth aged 6 - 12 with and without intellectual disabilities. Participants come from more than 55 cities located in Central Europe, Southern Europe and the Balkans and will participate in sports competitions with the purposes of encouraging social inclusion and improving the cognitive, social and motor abilities of children with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Gian Luca Bombarda - Director of Fund for Regional Cooperation of the EEA and Norway Grants: „Sport and arts are really helping the full wellness, not only physical, of people with disabilities. In a crisis moment like this, this project could not be approved in a better time. Your project is very much needed in this specific moment.”

David Evangelista, Regional President & Managing Director for Special Olympics Europe Eurasia: „ We are not only honored, but humbled to have been chosen as

one of the beneficiaries to bring forth this work of social inclusion at a time when it is needed most. I think all of us can agree that the ongoing Covid crisis, and the ensuing health and economic pandemic have had such an adverse and negative effect on people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Both in developed and developing economies, the struggle and the challenges are only growing. So, this support is not only of a generous nature, but also of an urgent one."

Cristian Ispas, General Manager of Motivation Romania Foundation and National Director of Special Olympics Romania: „The project is the result of many years of work and innovation in the field of disabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed a lot of the ways we work, as well as people's perceptions, but together with our partners we will find methods and solutions to adapt our activities. The biggest challenge remains the social inclusion of children and youth with intellectual disabilities, and bringing them in sports activities, on the sports field."

Overall, the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation aims to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe, and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor countries and 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics. The three donor countries cooperate closely with the EU through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). The donors have provided €3.3 billion through consecutive grant schemes between 1994 and 2014. For the period 2014-2021, the EEA and Norway Grants amount to €2.8 billion.

"Inclusion through sports for children with developmental disabilities" benefits from of a € 1,195,000 grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation. The aim of the project is to support children with intellectual disabilities and their social inclusion, by encouraging sports practices and participating in sports games among children without intellectual disabilities.

About Motivation Romania Foundation

Motivation Romania Foundation is a non-profit organization, created in 1995 to support children and adults with disabilities. The services offered cover a wide range of needs, from assessment and adapted equipment for different types of mobility disabilities, to active recovery and training for independent living with a wheelchair instructor, advice for spaces accessibility and adapted sports. So far, Motivation has restored freedom of movement and hope in a fulfilled life for more than 25,800 people with disabilities in Romania. More information on www.motivation.ro.

Contact person:

Motivation Romania Foundation

Monica Tăutul, PR Specialist – m.tautul@motivation.ro; +40730.190.927