



SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
**WORLD GAMES**  
BERLIN 2023

#ZusammenUnschlagbar  
#UnbeatableTogether



## Host Towns excited to get program started

### More than 500 participants join digital kick-off of Germany's biggest inclusion movement

More than 500 representatives of the Host Towns participated in the online kick-off event to start Germany's biggest inclusion movement. 216 Host Towns are preparing the reception for the international delegations of the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023 and are implementing inclusive projects on site. "I am impressed by the high level of participation in our kick-off event, which shows us how much effort the Host Towns are putting into the implementation of their plans," said Christiane Krajewski, President of Special Olympics Germany after the event on March 9: "The participants have developed creative ideas and projects that they want to show their guests in the days before the Special Olympics World Games. They are all united by the will to use the program to promote the long-term participation of people with disabilities in their communities. To this end, many local collaborations have already been established with our regional associations. We are very happy about this development!"

"Enthusiastic athletes from many countries will bring their stories to the communities," promised Mark Solomeyer, athlete spokesman, vice president of Special Olympics Germany and member of the World Games Committee in his welcoming message. "We are ready to assist, for example, in events, in working groups or in public relations. Volunteers and athletes will experience a strong cohesion. For us, togetherness is inclusive."

Special Olympics athlete and LOC employee Arthur Hackenthal hosted the event together with moderator Dörte Maack. Dr. Markus Mempel, as representative of the German County Association and the other municipal umbrella organizations, as well as the Chairman of the Sports Ministers' Conference (SMK) and Minister of State of the Ministry of the Interior and Sports of Rhineland-Palatinate, Roger Lewentz, also welcomed the representatives of the Host Towns. Dr. Mempel

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emphasized the unity in the plan "not only to design and host sporting communities, but also to create inclusive living spaces in the cities, counties and municipalities."

Minister of State Roger Lewentz emphasized the important role of SOD and the Special Olympics World Games in regards with the inclusive sports development in Germany. Lewentz pointed to the 189 international delegations expected in 2023 as an "unbeatable statement that the world wants to and will stand together." Already in her welcoming speech, the SOD President had explicitly thanked the participating Host Towns, the municipal umbrella organizations and the SMK for their cooperation and support.

Together with Aktion Mensch, the LOC and the Special Olympics state associations presented funding and cooperation opportunities to the Host Towns. "Our World Games are a lighthouse event to create awareness for inclusion in society. However, we need to create places of encounters nationwide so that we can change attitudes. Locally, where inclusion and participation get implemented on a daily basis, new networks are created through the Host Town Program. With the help of athletes, schools, sports clubs, workshops and other partners, the Host Towns will improve access to sports and other areas of life for people with intellectual disabilities. We are happy that the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023 will not only take place in Berlin but in at least 216 locations across Germany," said Sven Albrecht, National Director SOD and Chairman of the Management Board of the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023.

Host Towns will be provided with communication materials and a planning guide. In May, the LOC will announce the allocation of the international delegations. On this occasion, the official Host Town Program Signet will be presented.

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