



Antwerp, September 18 2014

PRESS RELEASE

100 Gold medals for Belgium

ABUNDANCE OF MEDALS AND HIGH VISITS AT THE 2014 SPECIAL OLYMPICS EUROPEAN SUMMER GAMES

Host Belgium is the leading delegation in the medal classification of the 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games with a tally of 260 medals of which 100 are gold. The performance of runner Evy Ploegaerts in the 1500 meters competition saw the 100th gold medal go to Belgium. Special Olympics cyclists today had the pleasure to meet professional Belgian rider, Johan Vansummeren, who came to support the Special Olympics athletes.

Mieke De Mot, ambassador of the Belgian delegation opened the Belgium medal tally by winning gold medal in the 400 meters freestyle swimming. By now Belgium has won 25 gold medals in swimming, 21 in athletics, 46 in badminton, 6 in bocce, and 2 in cycling. with Evy Ploegaerts taking the 100th medal. So far, Belgium has collected 68 silver medals and 98 bronze medals so far.

Johan Vansummeren à Balendijk

After the visit of Eddy Merckx and Paul Van Himst yesterday, it was Johan Vansummeren's turn today to pay a visit to the riders in Balendijk (Lommel), and present medals. The Belgian professional cyclist took time out of his training for next week's World Championship in Spain. *It is the first time that I have attended a Special Olympics competition, thanks to my spouse! There is little difference with regular competitions that I take part in. I am particularly moved by the motivation and enthusiasm of the athletes,*" says Johan Vansummeren.

At the gourmet table

Today, the maître chocolatier Dominique Persoone was the cooking guest in the 'Unified cooking' restaurant in the "Olympic Town" and prepared a tasty lunch together with the students with an intellectual disability from the Emmäus institute and the Stedelijk Lyceum in Merksem. *This is a fantastic initiative. It was a pleasure for me to work with this group today and to learn how to create a relationship with them. We started early this morning and we have done all the work together. Everyone is motivated, and that is really heart warming!"*

More medals for Belgium

The Belgian judo athlete, David De Witte, took less than 40 seconds to win gold in his category during the





second day of the finals. *'I trained hard, but I had not imagined to grab the gold that quickly, I am extremely happy,'* David De Witte said. Female judo athletes, Rita Spruytte and Julie Bourgeois won silver and bronze respectively after three fights.

Friday September 19: Famous visitors and a Finals in unified basketball

The athletes and gymnasts in Den Uyt will be visited by Her Majesty Queen Mathilde tomorrow. After declaring the Games open last week she is looking forward to meeting the athletes of Special Olympics at 10 AM.

Meeting and press briefing on Friday September 19 at 9.30AM at the entrance of the stadium **Den Uyt in Mol**. Address: Rode Kruislaan, 20 2400 Mol.

Tomorrow will be the last day of the 2014 Special Olympics Summer Games competitions. After four days of Round Robin competition (whereby each team competes once against all the other teams), the finals of basketball and football will take place in the different categories. In the morning, the sports centre of Het Rooi in Berchem will welcome **Christian Karembeu**, former French international player. Address: Berchemstadionstraat, 75, 2600 Berchem at 10.30am.

But if there is one final you cannot miss, it is the female unified basketball opposing two Belgian teams, and the male final. As a reminder, "Unified" means that athletes with an intellectual disability play together with basketball players without disabilities.

We want to draw your attention to the fact that Special Olympics serves people with intellectual disabilities. Please do not confuse with Paralympics which serves people with a physical disability.

About the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014

In 1968, Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister to President John F Kennedy. Today this Movement serves 4.3 million athletes with intellectual disabilities in 170 countries and holds more than 70.000 competitions offering 33 Olympic sports annually. Every four years the World Summer and Winter Games are staged. This year, the 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games take place in Antwerp from September 9 until September 20. During this period Belgium will welcome 2000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 58 countries in the Europe Eurasia region including 1,000 coaches and more than 6,000 volunteers. During six days of competition, athletes will compete in 10 sports at five locations across Antwerp. Special Olympics Belgium has been active in Belgium since 1979 and organizes National Games annually. The 'Games of the Heart' aims to create a legacy in Belgium of inclusion and acceptance of people with an intellectual disability.

During the Games, journalism students make press reports. You can find trace their articles via:

Link: https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bx8n0_uKzuNkTGtDMmZtTDJxSFU&usp=sharing





Games of the heart

Special Olympics
**EUROPEAN
SUMMER GAMES**
Antwerp 2014

You can download all the videos of the 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games via the Rambla server:

<http://specialolympics.rcms.rambla.be>

login :media : Password: SO2014

You can download all the images, logos, press communications and press alerts on the 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games via following link:

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bx8n0_uKzuNkTGtDMmZtTDJxSFU&usp=sharing

For additional information :

<http://www.so2014.com>

twitter.com/SOBelgium

www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympics.be

For all requests regarding visuals, interviews, or accreditations, please contact: (do not publish)

Wavemakers PR & Communications

Amélie Putmans

amelie@wavemakers.eu

+32 (0)477 20 09 70

Elke De Mayer

elke@wavemakers.eu

+32 (0)485 75 28 66



Project co-funded by the EU

