



Games of the heart

Special Olympics
**EUROPEAN
SUMMER GAMES**
Antwerp 2014

Antwerp, September 15, 2014

MEDIA ALERT

Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014

KEVIN DE BRUYNE CALLS FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES TO BE HONOURED AT GALA SPORTS AWARDS

Special Olympics Ambassador football star Kevin De Bruyne has renewed his call for more attention to be paid to Special Olympics athletes and not just during the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014 running until Sept 20 in Antwerp. He is calling for permanent recognition of the talents and abilities of Special Olympics athletes through a 'Special Olympics Athlete of the Year Award'. By doing this De Bruyne believes it will go a long way towards changing attitudes and removing the stigma and discrimination that exists for people with intellectual disabilities in Belgium.

De Bruyne is calling for the Award to be made at the prestigious annual Sports Gala of the Year Awards held on the Belgium coast every year in December. The Awards are broadcast to a huge television audience.

Through a thought provoking publicity campaign launched to celebrate the 2014 Special Olympics European Games which also features athletics champion Kim Gevaert and table-tennis star Jean-Michel Saive, De Bruyne called for greater awareness and attention for Special Olympics athletes from the public.

"Our campaign left nobody unmoved and the massive media campaign was significant. The Opening Ceremony of the European Games was attended by 10.000 spectators at Palais 12 Brussels, which was a terrific boost for our athletes as they begin competition," says Mark Vanlombeek, spokesperson for the 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games.





Special Olympics Athlete of the Year Award

Every year top Belgian sportspeople are honoured at the Sports Gala of the Year Awards in six different categories: sports male, sports female, young talent, coach, team and paralympic athlete of the year. De Bruyne is calling for an additional category - **Special Olympics athlete of the year**.

"Why would we not give athletes with an intellectual disability the same credit as the other athletes?" asks De Bruyne.

By liking and sharing Kevin De Bruyne video's message on SpecialOlympianOfTheYear.be the campaign will spread and by December the aim of a new category added to the list of honours at the Sports Gala will be realised.

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 2014 Special Olympics European Summer Games

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.

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

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