



Antwerp, August 14 2014.

PRESS COMMUNICATION AND INVITATION

Press conference, August 21, Sportpaleis Antwerpen

Kevin De Bruyne makes people look at the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014 with different eyes

A very different picture of Kevin De Bruyne has been circulating on the internet: the image shows Kevin De Bruyne with Down syndrome. He shared the picture with his fans on his social media site with the question 'Does De Bruyne deserve fewer supporters now?' By doing this De Bruyne is putting his weight behind a campaign by Special Olympics to break down taboos and stigma that surround people with intellectual disabilities in Belgium. De Bruyne is urging his fans and the people of Belgium to support Special Olympics athletes and the upcoming Special Olympics European Games 2014.

'Why do athletes with an intellectual disability get so little attention? They train hard and also deliver top performances, says Kevin De Bruyne.

From September 9 until September 20, the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014 will, for the first time, take place in Belgium, in the province of Antwerp.





Over 2000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 58 countries will compete in 10 different sport. Never before, has an event of this size and magnitude been staged in Belgium for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Belgium has approximately 165.000 people with an intellectual disability. That means that one in 10 Belgians know a person with an intellectual disability yet nobody talks about it and people with intellectual disabilities essentially live in the shadows.

A great performance deserves a great audience!

The low key welcome home of the Belgian team following their great performance at the Special Olympics World Games in Athens in 2011 is an example of the public's disengagement with Special Olympics and people with intellectual disabilities. In spite of the fact that they brought home 83 medals, there were no supporters waiting for them in the arrivals hall of Zaventem airport apart from some family members. No applause. No cheering. Not a single banner to be seen.

Stunning campaign with Kevin De Bruyne, Kim Gevaert and Jean-Michel Saive.

Under the campaign theme "A great performance deserves a great audience" an "in your face" campaign has been launched in cooperation with communications agency LDV United. For this purpose, two of Belgium's top athletes also offered their support: Jean-Michel Saive and Kim Gevaert. Together, they are the face of this campaign and the word "face" should be taken literally. The pictures of the three athletes were reshaped to depict their eyes in a way traditionally associated with Down syndrome. (Watch the clip [here](#)). Do they deserve fewer fans because they have an intellectual disability? This bold statement aims to start the discussion around athletes with intellectual disabilities, which is necessary in order to banish negative attitudes and old taboos.





The Special Olympics athletes want the public to come to support them from September 9 until September 20 as they represent their countries at the European Games in what will be a thrilling display of skill, joy and community.

Tickets are available to purchase for the Opening Ceremony in the Brussels Expo Hall on Saturday September 13 and for the Closing Ceremony on September 20 in the Antwerp Sportpaleis with stage performances from Natalia, Stijn Meuris, Kate Ryan and Sandra Kim via so2014.com plus others. Entrance to all competitions during the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014 is free.

Press invitation: Presentation of the Special Olympics European Summer Games.

On Thursday August 21, top television personality Rob Vanoudenhoven and Special Olympics athletes will present the 'Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014' to the media in the Antwerp Sportpaleis. You are invited to the "Games of the Heart" Press Conference. Please confirm your attendance before August 18 to Elke De Mayer via elke@wavemakers.eu or by phone to 0485 75 28 66. Interview requests with Special Olympics athletes and spokespersons or sponsors can be made via email or by telephone.

DATE:

Thursday August 21, 11.00 a.m.

VENUE:

Sportpaleis Antwerpen, Schijnpoortweg 119, 2170 Merksem (Antwerpen)

Program Press Event:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 11h00 - 11h30 | Press welcome |
| 11h30 - 11h40 | Welcome by Marc Vanlombeek, spokesperson SO2014 |
| 11h40 - 12h10 | Presentation SO2014 by Rob Vanoudenhoven and Special Olympics athletes. |
| 12h10 - 12h30 | Photocall: Athletes challenge the attendants in different types of sport. |
| 12h30 - 13h30 | Sandwich lunch and interviews |





About the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014:

In 1968, Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the 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 in 33 Olympic sports annually. Every four years the World Summer and Winter Games are staged. This year, the Special Olympics European Summer Games 2014 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. During eight days of competition, they 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

For more information:

www.so2014.com

twitter.com/SOBelgium

www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympics.be

For images, interview or accreditation requests you can contact:

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

