

## How are the National Paralympic Committees involved in sport for people with intellectual disabilities (ID-sport) across Europe?

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### Introduction

**IDEAL** stands for "Intellectual Disability & Equal opportunities for Active and Long-term participation in sport" and it is a 3-year EU-funded project. The present study is a part of the **work package 2 –macro level- (WP2c)** (see IDEAL project Erasmus+1).

**This study aims to focus on the structure and involvement of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) in ID-sport across Europe.**

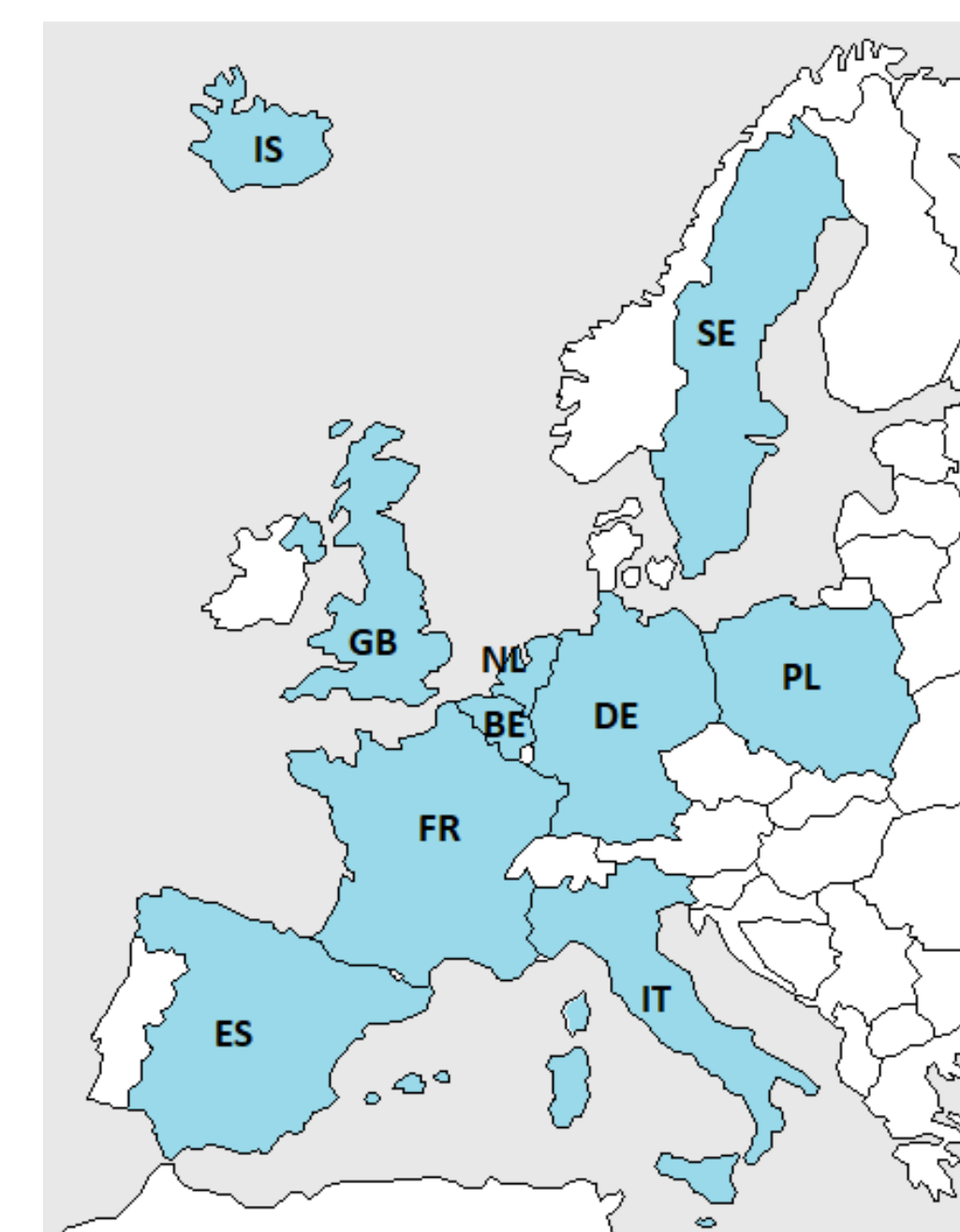
#### Facts about people with ID:

- Limitations in intellectual functioning (IQ  $\leq 75$ ) and in adaptive behaviour, both diagnosed before the age of 18<sup>2</sup>.
- 1% of the population in Europe<sup>3,4,5</sup>.
- Less physically active compared to individuals without disabilities<sup>6</sup>.
- Might benefit less from the positive effects that physical activity and exercise has on health<sup>7</sup>.

#### Facts about ID-sport:

- Special Olympics (SO), the International Federation for Athletes with Intellectual Impairments (INAS), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and their respective national members are the main sport organisations that are involved in the management and provision of sport and/or competitive opportunities for people with ID.
- People with ID have fewer opportunities for full and equal participation, and limited opportunity to specialize and excel in the sport of their choice (e.g., at the Paralympic Games).

### Methods



Belgium (BE), France (FR), Germany (DE), Great Britain (GB), Iceland (IS), Italy (IT), Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Spain (ES) and Sweden (SE).

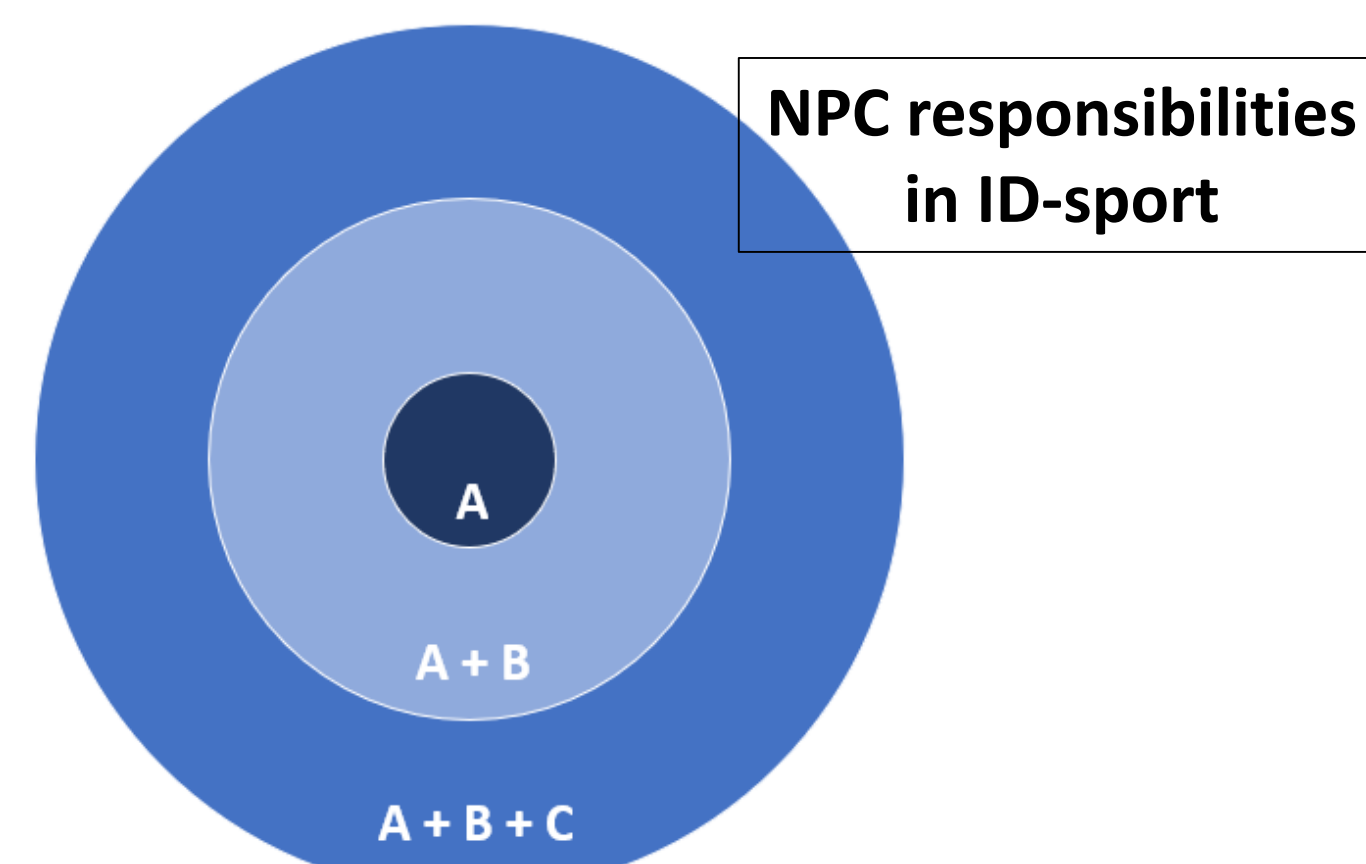
- N = 10 European countries.
- We contacted the 3 major ID-sport organisations in each country:
  - NPC
  - INAS
  - SO
- Data collection by a comprehensive questionnaire / interview to retrieve information (e.g., structure, collaboration, membership, offer, etc.) from the target organisations.
- Data analysis and comparison between countries.

### Results

#### 1. What is an NPC and how do their responsibilities in ID-sport differ between countries?

The NPC promotes and coordinates sport for athletes with various types of disabilities, **including athletes with ID.**

- Responsible for the participation of their athletes with disabilities in the Paralympic Games.
- National constituent of the International Paralympic movement.
- Member of the IPC and under its legislation.



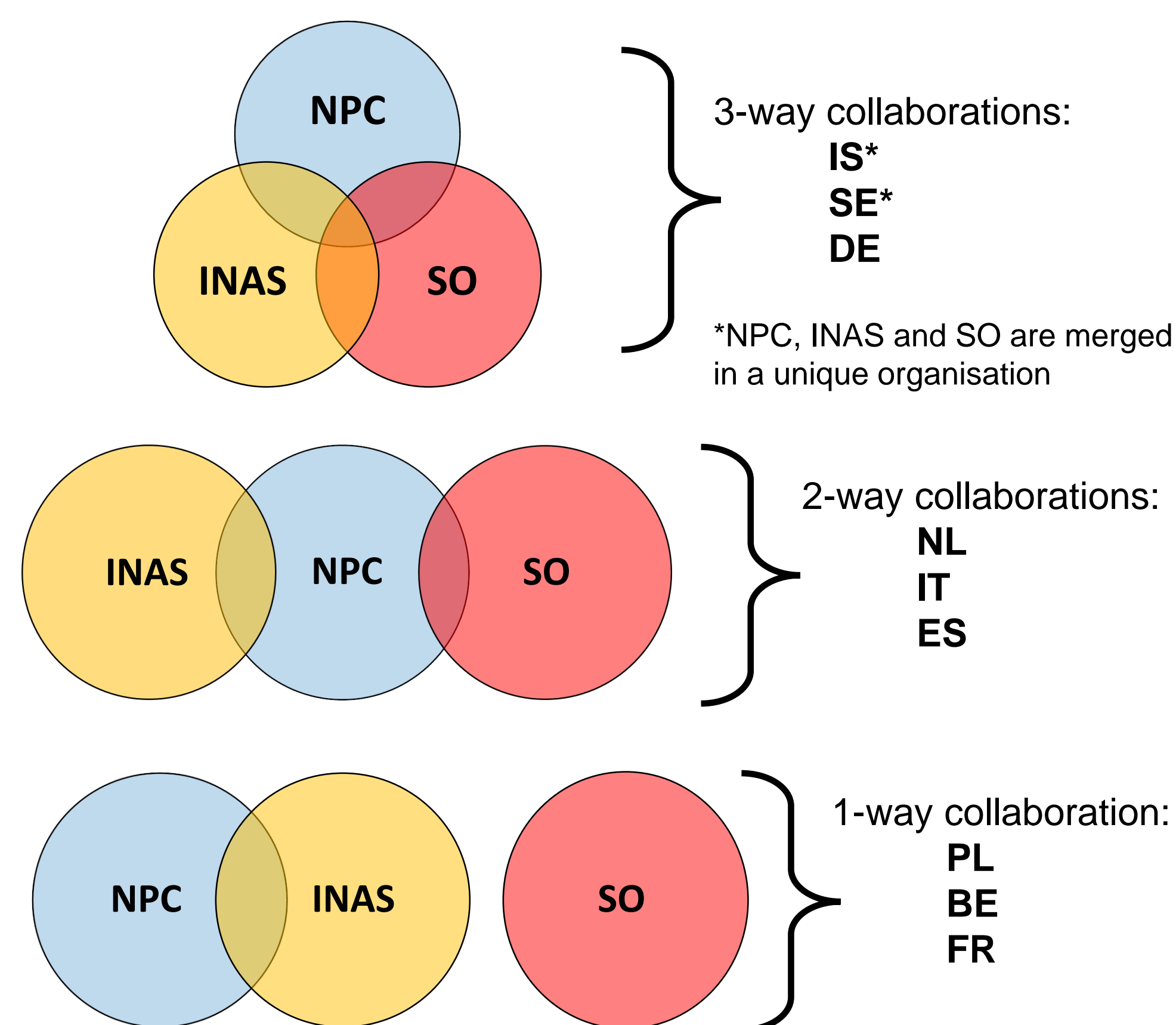
**A:** In charge of the participation of ID-athletes in IPC sanctioned events, but not sport provision (i.e., PL and NL).

**A + B:** Occasional sport provider of the 3 ID Paralympic sports to prepare and train the selected ID-athletes prior the Paralympic Games (i.e., ES); or to provide competitive events in few sports (i.e., DE).

**A + B + C:** Responsible of the management of few sports at national level (i.e., BE); or regular provider of some sports, since NPC is integrated as part of the national disability sport organisation (i.e., IS and SE).

(Data from the NPCs in FR, GB and IT was not able to be retrieved)

#### 2. How is the NPC nationally connected to the other major ID-sport organisations?



(GB presents a special collaborative network: NPC, INAS and the disability sport federations in each GB nation are connected, these disability sport federations are the ones connected to SO GB)

The **mainstream sport federations** are also playing a role in these 10 countries, since ID-sport has started to be integrated/included into the mainstream sport.

- ES, PL, FR and DE → premature process.
- NL → almost full integration.
- IS, BE, SE, GB and IT → several sport disciplines are integrated.

#### 3. How many ID-athletes participated in the last Paralympic Games?

- Re-inclusion since 2012.
- 3 sports.



Athletics (ATL)



Swimming (SWI)



Table tennis (TT)

	PARALYMPIC GAMES RIO 2016	
	ID-Athletes / total (%)	Sports, athletes
<b>BELGIUM</b>	3 / 29 (10.34%)	SWI, n = 2 TT, n = 1
<b>FRANCE</b>	5 / 126 (4%)	ATL, n = 3 TT, n = 2
<b>GERMANY</b>	1 / 155 (0.60%)	SWI, n = 1
<b>GREAT BRITAIN</b>	7 / 265 (4.76%)	ATL, n = 2 SWI, n = 5
<b>ICELAND</b>	1 / 5 (20%)	SWI, n = 1
<b>ITALY</b>	2 / 101 (1.98%)	ATL, n = 1 SWI, n = 1
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	3 / 126 (2.38%)	SWI, n = 3
<b>POLAND</b>	9 / 90 (10%)	ATL, n = 7 TT, n = 2
<b>SPAIN</b>	4 / 127 (3.15%)	ATL, n = 2 SWI, n = 1 TT, n = 1
<b>SWEDEN</b>	2 / 57 (3.51%)	ATL, n = 1 SWI, n = 1

Note: n: number of athletes.  
% representation of ID-athletes compared to the total Paralympic delegation.

### Conclusions

- There are noticeable differences across Europe on how ID-sport is managed by the NPCs in terms of ID-sport responsibilities and their collaborative network with the other major organisations.
- All countries have started to include/integrate ID-sport in the mainstream sport. Although the process is still premature in some countries compared to others.
- Further results from the IDEAL project WP2c will allow to improve the national and international ID-sport programmes and structures, as well as to build bridges across the main organisations dealing with ID-sport (IPC, INAS and SO).
- The most advanced countries (i.e., better structure and network, greater sport opportunities, successful integration, etc.) might serve as role models for the less advanced countries.
- A unique "IDEAL structure" might not be applicable for every country across Europe, since each country has its own peculiarities (e.g., culture and history, economy, geography, etc.).

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