



**MALTA
PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE**



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

FORWARD

Dear Athletes and Members,

It is our privilege to be presenting you with the Third Annual Report of the Malta Paralympic Committee (MPC), covering the period from **1st January 2021** to **31st December 2021**. In this Annual Report we look back at the unforgettable experiences we lived at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and reflect upon the legacy that the MPC has pledged to build on the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games' experience. Undoubtedly, Malta's historic participation at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, which saw Malta's contingent being comprised of more than one Paralympian for the first time since the 1980 Arnhem Paralympic Games, has left a profound mark on the local Para sport community and has captivated a fresh impetus for the MPC in its mission to empower individuals through Para sport.

This Annual Report also marks the end of the first cycle of Malta's first ever elected Executive Committee that was elected at the inaugural first elective annual general meeting of the MPC held on 6th July 2018. This cycle has been a learning curve for the MPC on many levels, over the course of which the MPC has faced various challenges and has actively pursued new opportunities.

Despite the unprecedented obstacles precipitated by the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, and with great satisfaction, the MPC proudly notes that Para sport in Malta has witnessed a resurgence in interest, with a marked update in Para sport by individuals across a range of ages and diverse impairments. Specifically, the MPC started this journey in 2018 with only a handful of active and competitive Para athletes in a select range of Para sport disciplines. Fast forward to 2021 and the MPC notes that the local Para sport community has grown to a total of *circa* 40 active Para athletes, across a wider age group span and a more diverse range of Para sport disciplines (we even reached our first Para athlete residing in Gozo!). This development is a step in the right direction and is the result of a concerted effort to educate and empower individuals through the virtues and values of Paralympic sport. Furthermore, it is reflective of the culture change and mindset that the MPC has sought to cultivate - that of being fearless of one's limitations and fully focused on one's abilities instead. It is through this culture change that our ethos of ***Inclusion meets Excellence*** is materialised.

As we look towards the second phase in the development cycle of Para sport in Malta & Gozo, the MPC's ambitions and strategic objectives for the 2022-2024 remain that of working on its two guiding pillars. On the one hand, the MPC will continue to strengthen its educational and outreach initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of youth Para athletes and supporting the long-term development of Para athletes from a young age. Simultaneously, the MPC is desirous of better supporting competitive Para athletes in attaining their goals at the highest levels of Para sport.

The members of the Executive Committee express their sincere gratitude towards all those sports associations, clubs, coaches, Para athletes, parents, stakeholders (including, in particular, Sport Malta and the Maltese Olympic Committee), for their support in shaping the Para sport scene over the 2018-2021 Paralympic cycle. Without your support, our work would not have been possible.

Yours sincerely,

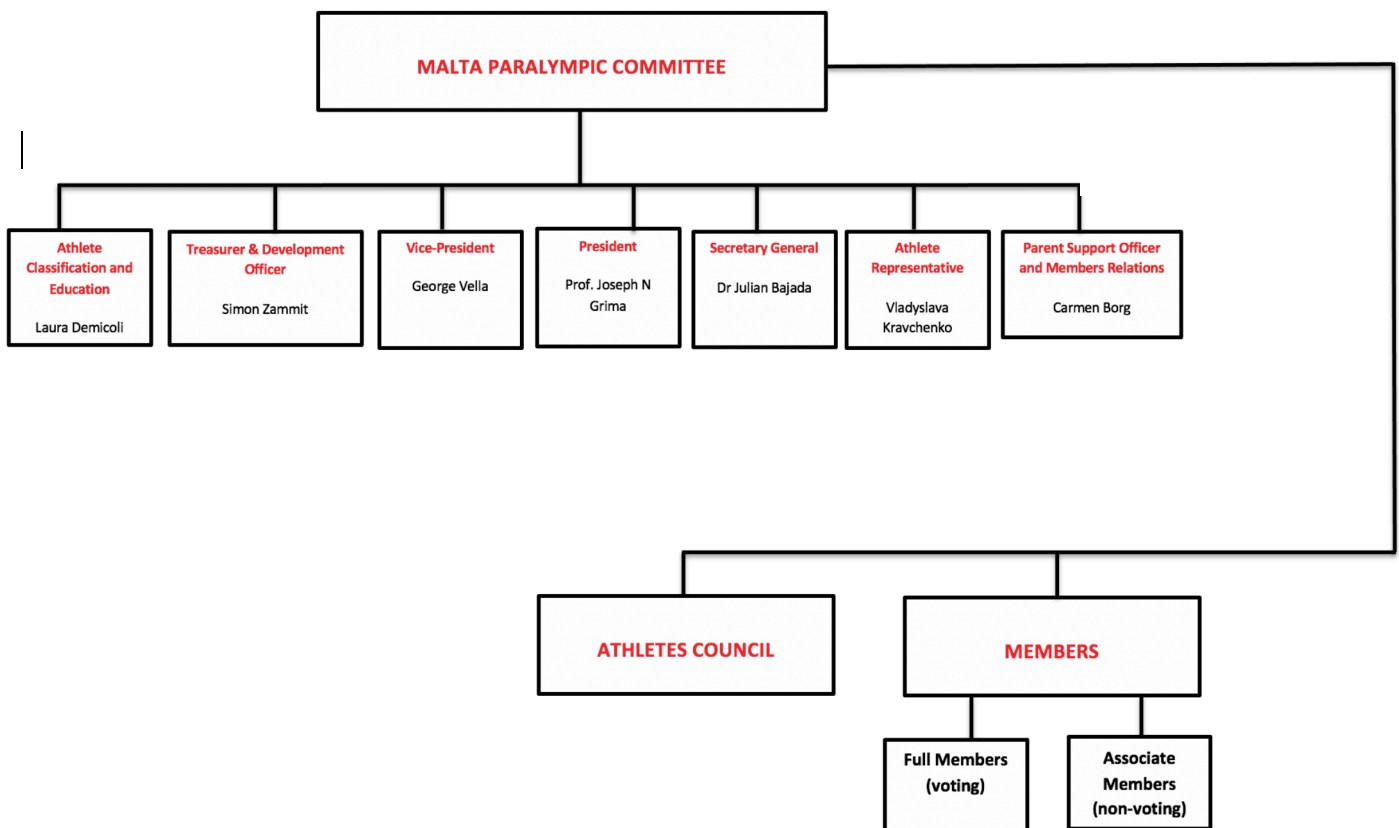
Executive Committee of the Malta Paralympic Committee

CONTENTS

1. Organisational Structure
2. Education & Awareness
3. Marketing & Promo
4. Para-Sport Development
5. Events & Competitions
6. Relations
7. Concluding Remarks

1/ ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MPC

1.1 Organisational Structure



- i. **Executive Committee:** responsible for *day-to-day* management and operations of the Malta Paralympic Committee. The current Executive Committee was elected at the First-Elective Annual General Meeting of the Malta Paralympic Committee, held on 6th July 2018 and approved unanimously by the voting members present for a 3-year term (2018-2021). At the forthcoming elective annual general meeting of the MPC, due to be held on 3rd January 2022, the full voting members of the MPC shall elect the new Executive Committee of the MPC to serve for the next cycle running between 2022-2024.

- ii. **Members:** in terms of the statute of the Malta Paralympic Committee, membership is divided into Full Membership and Associated Membership. Full Membership is reserved for national sports associations and federations governing a sport on the Paralympic Programme, whereas Associated Membership is available for national sports associations and federations governing a sport not on the Paralympic programme, and other entities and individuals, such as honorary members.

Full Members:

- Malta Archery Association
- Malta Badminton Association
- Malta Canoeing Association
- Malta Cycling Federation
- Malta Judo Federation
- Malta Football Association
- ParaVolley Malta
- Malta Rowing Association
- Malta Taekwondo Association
- Malta Triathlon Federation
- Malta Table Tennis Association
- Malta Tennis Federation
- Malta Wheelchair Basketball Association

Associated Members:

- Athletics Malta
- Aquatic Sports Association of Malta
- Malta Wheelchair Dancesport Association
- Frame Football Malta Association
- Futsal Malta Association
- Malta Sailing Federation

- iii. **Athletes Council:** the Para Athletes' Council is the collective voice of para athletes, acting as a consultative body providing advice, feedback and support to the Executive Committee of the Malta Paralympic Committee, ensuring that the interests of para athletes are placed at

its epicentre. The Para Athletes' Council meets regularly to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Para athletes and to propose solutions. Between 2018-2021, the council was composed of the following Para athletes:

- Vladyslava Kravchenko (Chairperson, Para swimming)
- Noel Aquilina (Vice-Chairperson, Wheelchair Basketball)
- Darren Fenech (Para athletics)
- Antonio Flores (Para athletics)
- Thomas Borg (Para athletics)
- Stephen Fenech (Wheelchair Dancing)

1.2 Status of the MPC as a Voluntary Organisation and Sports Association

The Malta Paralympic Committee is a non-profit and independent entity, registered with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations as a voluntary organisation (VO/1616) and registered as a Sports Association with SportMalta (No.SM/A170). Through these enrolments, the MPC endeavours to always act in a most transparent manner, as required by Maltese law, for the benefit of its athletes and members and on the basis of principles of good governance, integrity and disclosure.

The MPC has maintained its banking relationship with Bank of Valletta p.l.c., and the MPC holds a current deposit account with Bank of Valletta p.l.c. You are invited to see the MPC's financial statements for further information on the financial performance and position of the MPC for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.

1.4 Membership with International Paralympic Committee

The Executive Committee works closely with the International Paralympic Committee to ensure that Malta enjoys the benefits of full membership within the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), as well as the European Paralympic Committee (EPC). Such memberships ensure that MPC is recognised world-wide as the national entity responsible for Paralympic sport in Malta.

The IPC international governing body of the Paralympic Movement. Its purpose is to organise the summer and winter Paralympic Games and to act as the International Federation for ten sports, supervising and coordinating World Championships and other competitions. It is run as a non-profit organisation based in Bonn, Germany and aims to develop sports opportunities for all people with an impairment from the beginner to elite level.

The MPC's membership with the IPC was officially ratified In November 2019 at the 30th General Assembly of the IPC held in Bonn, Germany. In practice, this translates into a number of benefits, including:

- ✓ Eligibility of national Para athletes for international IPC Classification
- ✓ Eligibility to compete at IPC approved competitions
- ✓ Eligibility to compete at the Paralympic Games
- ✓ Access to funding through the Agitos Foundation and other international partners
- ✓ Collaboration with other National Paralympic Committees

- ✓ Assistance with Para sport development
- ✓ Access to educational, awareness and development programmes

2/ EDUCATION & AWARENESS

One of the principal focus areas of the MPC during 2021 was the strengthening of its educational, outreach and awareness initiatives. The MPC believes that through its initiatives in this area, the development of local Para sport will be supported by:

- ✓ *Raising awareness on Para sport and its benefits*
- ✓ *Integrating Para sport into holistic patient care (from rehabilitative to preventative care)*
- ✓ *Guiding individuals with a congenital physical impairment, or individuals who suffered traumatic incidents resulting in a physical impairment (ex. amputation or spinal cord injury)*
- ✓ *Developing local expertise in Para sport and classification*
- ✓ *Creating a collaborative network between the MPC and the medical and healthcare community*
- ✓ *Performance testing and evaluation for competitive Para athletes*
- ✓ *Expertise in adaptative equipment (prosthesis, etc.)*

Some of the initiatives pursued by the MPC on this front include joint projects between:

2.1 University of Malta, Institute for Physical Education & Sport Foundations in Coaching

For the 3rd year running, members of the Executive Committee were entrusted with delivering a module dedicated to the Adapted Sports and Paralympic Sports Movement to students studying for the Foundations of Coaching course at the Institute for Physical Education & Sport at the University of Malta.



L-Università ta' Malta
Institute for Physical
Education & Sport

In addition, the MPC was invited to participate in a panel discussion for students enrolled in the Masters in Sports Management at the University of Malta, entitled 'Sport for Special Populations'. The discussion brought together representatives from the Maltese Olympic Committee, Malta Paralympic Committee and Special Olympics Malta and focused on the organisation and running of the three entities and the challenges and opportunities experienced by them in their respective sporting fields.

The Executive Committee will work towards rolling out further units and cementing the same on the national sport and educational curriculum.

2.2 Introduction to Paralympic Sport, Classification and Coaching collaboration with Malta Medical Students' Association, Malta Health Students' Association and the University of Malta Degree Plus Unit

Once again, the MPC collaborated with the Malta Medical Students Association (MMSA) and the Malta Health Students Association (MHSA) to deliver a Degree Plus Unit at the University of Malta. Through this unit, students medical and health students gained both theoretical and practical experience relating to Para sport and aimed at integrating Para sport as an intrinsic element of holistic patient care and rehabilitation.

This unit was also intended to allow participants to gain first-hand insight into the benefits and social impact of Para sport through the outreach and awareness activities forming part of this unit. A series of three webinars were held as part of this unit, covering:

- **Session 1:** Introduction to Para sport and the development of Para sport in Malta
- **Session 2:** The Classification system in Para sport and medical aspects of Para sport
- **Session 3:** Coaching Para sport and meet our Para athletes

Degree+



2.3 I'mPOSSIBLE Programme - Pilot Project 2021/2022

Building upon the preparatory work undertaken by the MPC in 2019/2020, the MPC formally spearheaded a pilot project to delivery the I'mPOSSIBLE Programme across four participating schools as from the scholastic year 2021-22 (San Andrea School, St. Michael's Foundation, Chiswick House School and St. Monica Girls School (Gzira).

The I'mPOSSIBLE Programme is a global educational programme spearheaded by the Agitos Foundation, which seeks to raise awareness on Paralympic Sport and to instil the Paralympic values of courage, determination, equality and inspiration among school children.

The programme is being coordinated by Mrs. Rachel Bonett and Mr. Antonello Calleja on behalf of the MPC, both of whom have successfully completed the I'mPOSSIBLE Educator's Course conducted by the International Paralympic Committee in 2021. Over the course of the first term of the 2021-2022 scholastic year, the I'mPOSSIBLE Educators delivered training to the teachers and physical educational teachers at the participating schools. Going forward, theoretical lessons and practical activities will be delivered at the participating schools in the second and third term of the 2021-2022 scholastic year, together with activities such as the 'Meet your Para Athletes' and 'Para sport open days' to be organised at these schools. Furthermore, the MPC also intends to expand the programme to other schools from one scholastic year to the next.



2.4 National Sports School (NSS)

The MPC held preliminary discussions with the National Sports School (NSS) and other stakeholders, including the Ministry for Education, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Sports and Special Olympics Malta, with the aim of supporting the enrolment of Para athletes and Special olympics athletes within the NSS. The objective of the proposed collaboration is two-fold. On the one hand, the proposals discussed seek to support inclusivity by ensuring that the sport entry criteria are, where appropriate, adapted to Para sport requirements. On the other hand, the proposed collaboration is also geared towards affording an equal opportunity to aspiring competitive Para athletes to pursue their educational and sporting programmes within the right environment. Discussions are still ongoing at the time of this report.



Furthermore, in October 2021, Para athletes Thomas Borg and Julian Bajada were invited to deliver a session entitled 'Tolerance in Sports' to students the NSS together with Sports Phycologist Dr Adele Muscat. The session was organised as part of a wider ErasmusPlus+ sports and educational project. During the session, Thomas Borg and Julian Bajada shared their experiences in Para sport and how they approach adversity and obstacles, drawing upon their personal experience with sports psychology as an effective tool to gain a competitive edge as Para athletes.

2.5 Private Educational Service Providers

MPC has always believed in the value of education and training and is open to collaboration with all entities who provide training to athletes and coaches. In particular, in 2021, MPC set the foundations for a long-term collaboration with Learning Works and the Mediterranean College of Sport. The collaboration hinges upon a number of areas of mutual interest in the educational and sporting spheres. Specifically, the MPC, Learning Works and the Mediterranean College of Sport are exploring three main areas of collaboration, namely: (i) supporting the enrolment of Para athletes within the Mediterranean College of Sport and Sixth Form; (ii) the hosting of local and international training camps at the sports science facilities to be established at the Mediterranean College of Sport; and (iii) integration of Para sport programmes and educational initiatives within the educational framework delivered at the Mediterranean College of Sport.

3/ OUTREACH AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The MPC values the importance of creating a brand identity to which society can relate to, a brand centred upon the abilities of its Para athletes and a brand embodying the Paralympic values. Through its website, social media channels, and relations with independent media houses, the MPC has put together a multi-faceted distribution platform to effectively deliver its message to the widest audience possible.

3.1 Online and Social Media Channels

Website: www.maltapara.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MaltaParalympicCommittee/>
Instagram: [paralympics_malta](https://www.instagram.com/paralympics_malta)

Over the course of 2021, the MPC saw its following on social media increase significantly, reaching 3,800+ followers on Facebook, up from 2,800+ followers at the beginning of the year and attaining a steady and consistent average reach of 5,000 + per post.

The MPC notes with satisfaction that the increased engagement across its social media platforms resulted in direct leads and contact with individuals, or their parents, who were interested in learning more about Para sport and how they can start practicing a Para sport. This trend demonstrates the MPC's effective use of social media to reach new prospective Para athletes, as well as encouraging the wider sporting community and Maltese society to feel encouraged and inspired through the activities undertaken by the MPC and the achievements of local Para athletes. These outreach initiatives play a significant role in attracting new Para athletes and the MPC remains committed to maximising the outreach through its social media channels.

3.2 MPC and Para athletes featured on various media

Over the course of 2021, multiple members of the Executive Committee, Para athletes and Para sport coaches were invited to share their experience in Paralympic sport and their vision for the future of Paralympic sport on various television programmes and were featured by various printed and online media houses, including interviews on TVM News, TVM Sports Panorama, TVM Sport, Zona Sport, Sport Extra, FIT AM, , Times of Malta, Lovin Malta, Malta Today, The Malta Independent, Net TV, One News, Newsbook, Side Street Media, FreeHour, Bay Radio and Bulletproof Culture, among others.

Through these interviews, audiences obtained an insight into the aspirations of local Para athletes and the challenges they face – and, more importantly, how they seek to overcome them. Moreover, these interviews afforded coaches with the opportunity to demonstrate how to integrate Para athletes within able-bodied clubs and teams, whilst also adding value by working closely with Para athletes to better understand how to enhance their sporting performance through adapted training techniques.

3.3 Introductory meetings with prospective Para athletes and their parents/relatives

The MPC carried out a concerted effort to support prospective Para athletes and their parents/relatives by hosting a series of introductory meetings for young individuals with eligible impairments (physical, visual and, or intellectual, as the case may be).

These introductory sessions were aimed at providing an overview of the role and functions of the Malta Paralympic Committee and the objectives and values of the global Paralympic Movement. Moreover, the MPC provided attendees with an insight into the types of Para sports practised in Malta and how the MPC may support them in getting started.

The MPC hopes that introductory sessions such as those held in 2021 will serve not only as a guide to individuals with impairments to take up a Para sport, but to also instill a culture and mindset that is engrained in the Paralympic values and a 'can-do' attitude. This will, in turn, support young Para athletes and their parents in knowing that they have a future in Para sport and the benefits are theirs for the taking, in the foreknowledge that the Malta Paralympic Committee and local Para sport community will be there to support them in every step of their Para sport journey.

The MPC is encouraged by the positive feedback attained over the course of the introductory sessions and the immediate results registered, with a number of attendees subsequently keeping in touch with the MPC and taking the necessary steps to take up a Para sport.

The MPC wishes to thank, in particular, the physiotherapy team at **Walk this Way Malta**, where its dedicated team assists various children with physical and mobility impairments to strengthen their physical condition and prospects of independent living from a young age. The MPC is proud to have teamed up with Walk this Way Malta in delivering introductory sessions to children between the ages of 4 to 12 years. The physiotherapy team at Walk this Way Malta shares our philosophy that physiotherapy and related therapies goes hand in hand with the gradual introduction of children with physical or mobility impairments and the MPC looks forward to assisting more children to pursue the two in parallel.

4/ PARA SPORT DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Para sport Development

In 2021, the MPC's Para sport development initiatives remained primarily focused on its core set of Para sport disciplines, namely:

- *Para Swimming*
- *Para Athletics*
- *Wheelchair Basketball*

In this respect, the MPC wishes to underline the following developments and progress made:

- i. ***Para Swimming***: the MPC commends the significant strides made in Para swimming, in great part owing to the efforts made by Exiles Swimming Club (Exiles SC).

Lead by coaches Mr. Tim Hartley and Dr Edward Caruana Dingli, Exiles SC now boasts the largest number of Para swimmers in its squad, with a diverse range of physical impairments and across different age groups. The club has provided support and assistance to various parents and upcoming Para swimmers in the youth section, with Para swimmers as young as 5 years old within the squad. This area of grassroots development is key to the MPC's own strategic objectives of ensuring that Para athletes are coached and trained in Para sport disciplines from a young age, to promote the coaching philosophy of long-term learning and gradual Para athlete development. At the same time, the club coaches competitive Para swimmers and has led Malta's para swimming team at various high-level international competitions, including the European and World Para Swimming Championships. Moreover, coach Edward Caruana Dingli has also been key in para swimming administration, including matters relating to classification and international Para swimming competitions. Dr Edward Caruana Dingli was also selected to form part of the MPC's official delegation at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games in his role as Para swimming coach.

In addition, the youth and grassroots branches of Para swimming is supported by other swimming clubs, coaches and instructors, including Rob's Swimming School, I am Aqua and Fitness Instructor, Inspire Swimming Club and Neptunes Swimming Club. Between them, they have supported Para athletes having various impairment types and across different levels, with the majority being beginners in Para swimming.

Para swimming remains the most widely practised Para sport in Malta and the MPC aims to continue supporting this trend in light of the suitability of the sport to different impairments.

- ii. ***Para Athletics***: the relations between MPC and Athletics Malta went from strength to strength thanks to the goodwill and forward-looking approach adopted by Athletics Malta.

In particular, MPC expresses its gratitude towards Athletics Malta President, Mr. Andy Grech, who has shown support to Para athletes since taking on the role. In addition, the MPC commends coach Mr. Kevin Galea in the technical and preparatory work carried out over the 2020/2021 season in the build-up to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games at which one of his Para athletes, Thomas Borg, competed. Mr. Galea has shown high levels of professionalism in his coaching methodology and preparation of Para athletes and has demonstrated an ability to adapt to the specific needs and biomechanics of Para athletes. Going forward, the MPC and Athletics Malta are seeking to support Para athletes further from a technical sporting perspective through participation in international training camps for both able-bodied and Para athletes.

- iii. **Wheelchair Basketball:** notwithstanding the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, including being restricted to intermittent training sessions, the Malta Wheelchair Basketball Association (MWBA) was successful in attracting new athletes to join the fold once training resumed in the third quarter of 2021. In addition, the MWBA concentrated its efforts on attaining affiliation with the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF), officially becoming a member in March 2021. Through its membership with IWBF, the MWBA will be able to participate at various regional and international wheelchair basketball competitions, as well as access other resources and opportunities, such as international training camps.

The rationale behind the concept of a core set of Para sport disciplines was driven by the strategic objective of building the right foundations by adopting a '*start small and start smart*' approach. The Executive Committee hopes that this will serve as a model for the development of further Para sport disciplines, and a learning curve to understand the needs, obstacles, and opportunities, and to share these experiences with other national sports associations and Para athletes. **In the longer run, the intention is to shift emphasis toward the development of 'team sports', so as to foster family ties between Para athletes and the sporting community.**

In addition, the MPC is pleased to note that other Para sport disciplines registered an increase in participation in 2021:

- *Para Karate*
- *Para Taekwondo*
- *Para Rowing*
- *Para Cycling*
- *Frame Football*
- *VI Judo*
- *VI Boxing*

In this respect, it is noteworthy that:

- i. **Para rowing:** the MPC has worked closely with Siggiewi Rowing Club to introduce Para athletes to para rowing. Siggiewi Rowing Club now boasts various Para athletes within its membership base, within the physical and intellectual impairment classes respectively. Furthermore, Siggiewi Rowing Club is working on a collaboration with Dar Tal-Providenza, aimed at establishing a well-equipped and suitable gym within the premises of Dar Tal-Providenza, which collaboration will see a commitment to the continued development of indoor rowing as a sport for individuals with various types of impairments, including Para athletes.

On the competitive end of the spectrum of Para rowing, the MPC also notes with satisfaction that Para athlete Owen Mallia successfully competed at the British Indoor Rowing Virtual Championships held in September 2021, finishing first in his classification in the 1 minute and 4 minute competition events. This athlete was classified virtually for the purpose of this event.

Moreover, through a joint initiative between Malta Rowing Association and Malta Paralympic Committee a national classification scheme based on internationally accepted guidelines was adopted and implemented for the first time at the Malta Indoor Rowing Championships. This permitted two physically impaired individuals and an athlete with an intellectual impairment to compete in the Malta National Indoor Rowing Championships held on the 20th November 2021 in the 2000m and 500m races. In the following weeks, PR3-ID athlete Isaac Borg established new world records in the 100m and 1 minute in the PR3-ID and PR3 (overall) 17-18 years M-HW category.

The Club, with the support of MPC, is also aiming to increase the number of active para rowers training and competing, both locally and abroad.

- ii. **VI judo:** the MPC has worked together with the Malta Judo and Associated Disciplines Federation to introduce judo for visually impaired athletes in Malta, known as 'VI Judo'. Under the guidance of coach Denis Braidotti, four visually impaired Para athletes (ranging from a level of completely blind to a level of severe visual impairment) are now training regularly, together with able-bodied athletes. In addition, one VI judoka – Andrew Briffa (15 years old) participated in a judo international training camp in Italy organised by the Malta Judo and Associated Disciplines in September 2021. During this training camp, athletes were coached by an Italian Paralympic medallist in VI judo.
- iii. **Frame Football:** following the 1-year hiatus due to Covid-19 restrictions, the year 2021 saw the comeback of Frame Football Malta to the local Para sport scene. Frame Football Malta provides weekly training sessions for individuals with physical impairments, the majority having cerebral palsy or spina bifida. The MPC notes that Frame Football Malta has been

successful in increasing the number of participants, with *circa* 12-15 Para athletes who regularly attend frame football training sessions.

The MPC is pleased to announce that the number of active Para athletes in 2021 grew significantly:

Para sport discipline	Number of active Para athletes
<i>Para Swimming</i>	<i>20 athletes</i>
<i>Para Athletics</i>	<i>4 athletes</i>
<i>Para Karate</i>	<i>1 athlete</i>
<i>Para Taekwondo</i>	<i>1 athlete</i>
<i>Wheelchair Basketball</i>	<i>10 athletes</i>
<i>Para Rowing</i>	<i>4 athletes</i>
<i>Para Cycling</i>	<i>1 athlete</i>
<i>VI Judo</i>	<i>4 athletes</i>
<i>VI Boxing</i>	<i>1 athlete</i>
<i>Frame Football</i>	<i>15 athletes</i>

4.2 Training and Coaching Opportunities

The Executive Committee has initiated discussions with its international counterparts at the International Paralympic Committee, World Para Swimming and World Para Athletics in order to roll out a coaching and training scheme for local coaches and athletes. The objective of this scheme is to develop local expertise (from classifiers, to sport scientists, physiotherapist, and coaches), a pivotal objective in creating the right environment in which national sport associations and individual Para athletes feel supported in a professional and effective manner. It is hoped these schemes may be implemented as Covid-19 restrictions are restricted over the course of 2022.

4.3 Classification

The Executive Committee is cognisant of the challenges surrounding the classification process and rulebook, including the necessity, at present, of having to travel overseas to obtain official classification. In an effort to ensure local Para athletes and coaches are better supported in aligning the training regime according to the sports class and sports events across different Para sport disciplines, the MPC is evaluating the possibility of setting up a national classification panel comprised of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical consultants and other eligible professionals in accordance with the international rules and standards of classification. This has been tested in para rowing (indoor) with the result that three athletes could compete in the Malta National Indoor Rowing Championships.

5/ EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS

5.1 *Para sport national and international competitions*

Although the events and competitions calendar for 2021 remained overall severely disrupted due to the prolongation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions, Maltese Para athletes competed at a number of high-level Para competitions, including:

- British Para Swimming International Meet – Sheffield (April 2021)
- World Para Swimming - European Championships, Madeira (May 2021)
- World Para Swimming - World Series, Berlin (June 2021)
- World Para Athletics - European Open Championships (June 2021)
- Malta Swimming National Championships (June 2021)
- British Rowing - Indoor Rowing Virtual Championships (September 2021)
- Malta Indoor Rowing National Championships (November 2021)

5.2 *Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games*

2021 marked the end of the 2016-2021 cycle with our much-anticipated participation at the Tokyo 2020(1) Paralympic Games. The MPC is deeply satisfied with the outcome of Malta's participation as these Games - a historic Games which saw Malta's contingent being comprised of more than one Paralympian for the first time since the 1980 Arnhem Paralympic Games. This fact is noteworthy in that despite Malta being the smallest country (by geographical size) to be competing at the Games, it was not the country with the smallest number of Para athletes competing thereat.

Our two Paralympians – Vladyslava Kravchenko (30 years old, Para swimming class S5) and Thomas Borg (19 years old, Para athletics T47 class) registered positive performances, with Vladyslava competing in the 50m backstroke and 50m butterfly events, and Thomas competing in the 100m and 400m events. Beyond the immediate results and life-changing experience of the Games, the MPC believes that team Malta's experience at Tokyo 2020 has left a profound mark on the local Para sport community and has captivated a fresh impetus for the MPC in its mission to empower individuals through Para sport. Against this backdrop, the MPC adopted the theme of inspiring the next generation of Maltese Para athletes as the overriding message relating to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Game and is committed to building on the legacy of the Games in the years to come.

The MPC wishes to thank its partners and sponsors who made Malta's participation at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, including the International Paralympic Committee, Sport Malta, Charles & Ron and Hudson Holdings plc, official local distributors of Nike.

6/ RELATIONS WITH KEY PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

International Paralympic Committee and Agitos Foundation

Over the course of the year, the MPC continued to strengthen its relations with its main international counterparts, the International Paralympic Committee and the Agitos Foundation. The MPC has been working on a number of potential projects with the IPC and Agitos Foundation and has laid down the groundwork for the local implementation of such projects in the very near future.

Maltese Olympic Committee

The Malta Paralympic Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the Maltese Olympic Committee for its support and practical guidance which has benefitted the Malta Paralympic Committee in implementing its objectives. Together, the national governing bodies for Olympic Sport and Paralympic Sport are actively seeking avenues for collaboration. An important development in this respect, is the Maltese Olympic Committee's announcement that para sport will be on the sports programme of the Games of the Small States of Europe which will be hosted in Malta in 2023. The MOC and MPC also collaborated closely on the preparations for Malta's participation at the Commonwealth Games, Birmingham 2022. In addition, discussions surrounding a long-term framework of collaboration between the MOC and MPC were held over the course of 2021, with the expectation being that a formal agreement will be entered into in early 2022, following the completion of the elections for the Executive Committees of the MOC and MPC respectively for the 2022-2024 period.

Sport Malta

Our relations with Sport Malta continue to deepen and we are pleased to report that Sport Malta has supported our initiatives, including by way of the granting of financial assistance for Para athletes and coaches for participation at international competitions and events. The MPC is seeking to strengthen these ties by working closely with the Sports Promotion Unit within Sport Malta to raise awareness on Paralympic Sport and drive its uptake.

Deaf Sports

The MPC is honoured to have as its Vice-President, Mr. George Vella, one of Malta's foremost deaf athletes in long-distance athletics event and President of the Malta Deaf Sports Association. This ensures that our two entities work hand-in-hand for the benefit of their members and affiliated athletes. The MPC and Malta Deaf Sports Association are currently in discussions on the creation of a new organisational structure that is better suited and equipped to develop Deaf Sports in Malta and meet the requirements of Deaf Athletes in Malta, with a view to establishing a structure that will see the two entities work closer with one another, thus alleviating administrative burdens.

Athletes' Council

The MPC is devoted to implementing the IPC's commitment of putting athletes at the heart of Paralympic Sport. Strong athlete representation in decision-making processes was one of the top priorities for the newly elected Executive Committee and the first Malta Paralympic Athletes' Council was formed. To date, members of the Malta Paralympic Athletes' Council have actively contributed towards the agenda set out in the 'National Strategy for Para Sport'.


7/ CONCLUDING REMARKS

Guided by the over-arching principle that *'Inclusion meets Excellence'*, the Malta Paralympic Committee is committed to remaining steadfast in its mission to empower individuals with physical impairments to fulfil their full potential, leaving a positive impact on society in the process.

Finally, the Malta Paralympic Committee wishes to thank its dedicated Para athletes, coaches, parents, sports administrators and other stakeholders who are fundamental in seeing our vision for Paralympic Sport in Malta come to fruition.

2022-02-12

Signed by:



Prof. Joseph N. Grima
MPC President



Dr Julian Bajada
MPC Secretary General

2021 - YEAR IN REVIEW





**MALTA
PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE**



CONTACT US

Website:

<https://www.maltapara.com>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MaltaParalympicCommittee/>

Instagram:

paralympics_malta

Email:

maltaparacom@gmail.com

Postal Address:

Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector Volunteer Centre
181, Melita Street, Valletta
VLT 1129, Malta.

Vo/1616

SM/A170