

Andra Levite to discuss the current activities of the Paralympic movement in Latvia with leadership of Italian Paralympic Committee next week

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On 5 May, First Lady and Patroness of the Paralympic movement in Latvia, Mrs Andra Levite, met with Daiga Dadzīte, President of the Latvian Paralympic Committee (LPC), and Liene Apine, Secretary General of the LPC, in the Riga Castle to discuss the current activities of the national Paralympic movement, preparations for this summer's Paralympic Games in Tokyo and the construction of the Paralympic Sports Centre.

Mrs Andra Levite, who will be joining the President of Latvia on his official visit to Vatican and Italian Republic, will use this opportunity to meet with the leadership of the Italian Paralympic Committee in Rome on 12 May. As Mrs Dadzīte pointed out, Italy is a model country when it comes to supporting Paralympic movement, and LPC is keen to build a similar model in Latvia. Mrs Dadzīte also added that political will is the most important precondition for that. As opinion polls conducted late last year suggest, the support to Paralympic movement and sports in Latvian society is rather high.

Representatives of LPC also mentioned that COVID-19 has contributed to even greater demand for the Paralympic Sports Centre because most local training grounds that were previously used by Paralympic athletes all over Latvia are closed. Lack of funding is the main reason why private sports facilities cannot be used for these purposes. Mrs Levite raised concerns about the fast-approaching games in Tokyo. Paralympians will have to go to games soon, but they have had very little practice this year. 'You need a lot of energy to persuade authorities to treat you equally, give you a chance to train in appropriate conditions and have all the practical arrangements in place the way those 'papers' say, and that comes on top of all the preparations our Paralympians have to through as they get ready for the games,' said the First Lady.

Several Latvian Paralympians train and live abroad, including Italy, which has the right facilities for best preparation for championships and Paralympic Games.

In conclusion, when discussing the preparations for the Tokyo Paralympic Games this summer, Mrs Levite promised: 'If Paralympic Games in Tokyo go on as planned, I will be happy to go to Tokyo as the Patroness of the Paralympic movement in Latvia and support our Paralympians who always make us proud by bringing plenty of medals back home.'

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