



EUROPEAN DEAF PADEL ASSOCIATION.

A STUDY OF PADEL FOR DEAF PLAYERS IN SPAIN AND EUROPE: STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION, SOCIAL IMPACT AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Funded by:



Carried out by:

CREMADES & CALVO-SOTELO
ABOGADOS



TITLE:

Study of padel for deaf players in Spain and Europe: structure, organisation, social impact and proposals for improvement

Publication date: July 2026

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www.europeandeafpadel.com/

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Executive summary

Padel for deaf people already has players, clubs and competitions in Spain and in various European countries. Its growth as a sport, however, has not been accompanied by an equally clear and stable institutional and federation-level structure that integrates and recognises the sport.

In Spain, the lack of operational capacity within the Spanish Federation of Sports for the Deaf (FEDS) has left players without an effective channel for obtaining a specific licence, national representation and organised access to certain forms of support. Some players resort to licences from the Spanish Padel Federation or regional federations, but these allow them to compete in general padel and do not replace the specific recognition required for the sport for the deaf.

In Europe, the official European Championships organised by the European Deaf Sport Organisation (EDSO) coexist alongside the regular circuit organised by the European Deaf Padel Association (EDP). The existence, promotion and growth of the circuit do not, in themselves, give EDP the powers of a federation, nor do they resolve the issue of the official participation mechanism for Spanish athletes.

The information gathered also highlights shortcomings in sports governance: a lack of effective channels for players to voice their concerns, difficulty in accessing information and decisions, the absence of a federation structure that recognises them, and limited stable funding.

The current model clearly has room for improvement. The most robust approach involves coordination amongst the relevant bodies within the Spanish sports framework to establish a recognised structure for padel for the deaf, within which EDP has its place, clearly defining licences, international representation, the organisation of the circuit and the channels through which players can participate.

Explanatory note on terminology

Throughout this study, the terms ‘deaf people’, ‘deaf players’ and ‘people with hearing impairments’ are used interchangeably to refer to the same group, in line with accepted usage in both Spanish legislation and the main international documents on sport and inclusion.

This study does not distinguish between degrees of hearing loss for the purposes of analysis, unless a specific source so requires. Similarly, when reference is made to ‘padel for the deaf’, this refers both to organised play within the framework of sports associations and federations for the deaf and to informal play or play in general facilities, as both forms are part of the scope of this analysis.

Furthermore, references in this study to ‘players’ and/or ‘athletes’ should be understood to apply to both men and women without distinction, unless the context expressly indicates otherwise.

Foreword

Padel for deaf people does not need anyone to prove that it exists. It exists.

It is embodied in every player who steps onto a court, trains for months, travels hundreds of kilometres or crosses a border to compete. They prepare, compete and organise their own travel, accommodation and entry fees. They put in the same effort and feel the same pride when competing under the banner of their country or their community.

On the court, the only thing that sets them apart is their deafness. The problem has never been on the court: it begins when we step off it. When we need to know which licence applies, who recognises a result or which door to knock on.

That is why this study was launched. There came a point when it was no longer enough simply to keep describing a reality we knew from the inside. We had to study it: organise the data, review the regulations, learn about other European models and, above all, listen to players and coaches.

We wanted to know where we stand, what difficulties exist and how this situation is being addressed in other countries. Not to arrive with a pre-written answer, but to have a sound and well-researched basis that would allow us to better understand the situation, facilitate dialogue and help us move forward.

As president of the organisation that initiated this study, I felt it was necessary for our perspective to give way to an external and independent analysis. We have contributed documentation, data, experience and the knowledge of a community of which we are a part. It is for the authors to study and analyse it and to draw their own conclusions.

Our thanks go to the Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD), Spain's national sports authority, because its support has made it possible for what we have been trying to convey for so long to finally be studied, organised and brought to the table. This study originated in Spain and looks towards Europe, and hopefully what we learn from it may serve other deaf athletes in the future, wherever they may be.

Same court.

Same racket.

Same ball.

Same rules.

The same pride in competing under our country's name, whatever that may be.

The only difference is deafness. And deafness should never leave an athlete without a place to belong.

Pilar Moreno
President of the European Deaf Padel Association
(EDP)

Introduction

Padel has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, establishing itself as a sport with a strong international presence. According to data published by the International Padel Federation in its '*Padel Report 2025*', more than 35 million people currently play the sport worldwide. Spain plays a particularly significant role in this expansion, with more than six million players.

This growth is reflected not only in the number of players, but also in the increase in facilities, the consolidation of competitions and the development of organisational structures. In Spain, this evolution has made padel a widely practised sport, with a large player base and an ever-increasing competitive presence.

The deaf community is a diverse group comprising people with varying degrees of hearing loss and different forms of communication. In sport, this reality does not prevent participation or performance, but it does require that competition information, technical instructions, referee signals and interactions with coaches and organisers are communicated in an accessible and predictable manner.

Within the field of adapted and inclusive sport, padel offers a significant advantage: it can be played on standard courts and under the sport's general rules, with adaptations focusing primarily on communication, refereeing, training and the organisation of competitions. However, its development has not been uniform. Whilst padel in general is expanding in terms of infrastructure and competitive structure, deaf players continue to face a lack of recognition and institutional representation.

The European Deaf Padel Association (hereinafter EDP) is the organisation behind this study and has applied to the CSD for the grant that funds it, in the belief that a thorough understanding of the current situation is the first necessary step towards improving it.

The EDP was established in 2023 with the aim of promoting and consolidating the sport of padel amongst deaf people in Europe. Since its foundation, the EDP has established itself as the leading organisation in running Europe's premier padel circuit for deaf people, bringing together players, coaches and associations from various countries across the continent.

Against this backdrop, the study analyses the development of padel for deaf people in Spain and Europe from an essentially sporting perspective: the situation of players, licences, clubs, circuits, competitions, federation structures, international reach and funding opportunities.

The aim is to organise the available information, identify the obstacles affecting competitive development and propose an institutional and federation-level framework that enables athletes to compete under clear rules, with appropriate licences and a stable pathway for participation at national, European and international levels.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach that combines a legal analysis of the regulatory and institutional framework applicable to sport for deaf people in Spain and in the European countries included in the comparison, with surveys of deaf players to gain first-hand insight into their situation, their conditions of access to the sport and their main demands. This dual approach allows the regulatory reality to be compared with the lived experience of those who play padel, providing the study with a comprehensive and well-founded perspective.

For the European comparison, France, Belgium and Germany were specifically selected, as these are countries with significant experience in the development of padel for deaf people and for which it has been possible to access sufficient information to carry out a reasonably consistent analysis.

Furthermore, as part of the qualitative methodology, interviews were conducted with deaf players and federation officials.

The interviews, included as an Annex, were conducted in sign language and subsequently transcribed, which has enabled us to directly capture the perceptions of the group concerned and of some of the stakeholders involved in the development of the sport.

01. General framework of padel for deaf people in Spain

Disability in the Sports Act

Law 39/2022 of 30 December on Sport (hereinafter **the ‘Sports Act’**) incorporates, for the first time, disability and inclusive sport into the general principles of the Spanish sports system. The legislation recognises the need to ensure that people with disabilities can practise sport and to promote their participation under conditions of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination.

Article 6 of Law 39/2022 is the key provision concerning sport and disability. To clarify its content, we set out its main provisions alongside their impact on padel for deaf people:



Inclusion and equal opportunities

Public policies must guarantee that people with disabilities can practise sport on equal, accessible and non-discriminatory terms, fostering their independence and full social inclusion.



General interest

The inclusion of people with disabilities through sport, and the programmes that promote it, are considered to be of general interest.



Technical aids

The right to use assistive products and technical aids during sport, including hearing aids, is guaranteed where they are necessary for equality and do not unduly affect performance.



Integration into federations

Sports for people with disabilities must be integrated into the corresponding Spanish federation for that sport where such integration has already taken place at international level.



Representation of the group

Integration processes must guarantee a proportionate presence of representatives of sport for people with disabilities on federation governing bodies.



Promotion by sports organisations

Sports organisations must encourage sport among people with disabilities and promote inclusive activities.



Visibility

The presence of sport for people with disabilities in the media is promoted, especially in publicly owned media.



Funding

Public authorities must establish grant schemes and other funding channels to make inclusion and sport for people with disabilities a reality.

KEY IDEA

For the first time in Spain, a Sports Act recognises inclusive sport. The problem lies in how this recognition is put into practice. In the case of padel for deaf people, some of these elements — such as organisational structure, recognition, visibility and financial support — still leave room for improvement, as will be detailed below.

In figures

Sport participation amongst people with disabilities is a significant reality in Spain. Within this field, people with hearing impairments form a large and diverse group, with specific needs regarding communication, access to competition information and participation in federations. Although not all of them practise sport or are part of federated structures, the available data justify the existence of accessible, visible and stable sporting channels.

KEY IDEA

The discrepancy between the size of the group and the number of specific federation licences reflects the wide gap that still exists between the social reality of people with hearing impairments and their visibility within formally registered sporting structures.

Key figures in Spain



4.32 million

People with disabilities
in Spain



1.23 million

People with hearing
impairments



533

Licences issued by the
Source: INE, FIAPAS and CSD

Padel for the deaf at federation level

At federation level, padel for the deaf falls under the remit of the Spanish Federation of Sports for the Deaf (hereinafter the **FEDS**). The FEDS, in Article 5 of its Statutes, approved in September 2016, recognises padel as one of the sports disciplines and specialities it promotes and develops.

Consequently, the FEDS is responsible for the administration, organisation and regulation of padel for deaf players, which includes, amongst other things:

- Overseeing official competitions at national level
- Representing Spain at international level
- Training, certifying and qualifying referees and coaches within its remit
- Promoting and organising sporting activities aimed at deaf players.

Until 2024, the FEDS organised the Spanish Padel Championships for Deaf Players by Clubs, which enabled clubs to be selected to represent Spain in international competitions.

RELEVANT TO THE STUDY

In turn, the institutional situation of the FEDS is a key factor in understanding the current difficulties facing padel for deaf people in Spain.

Background and cessation of activities

The FEDS had been facing significant financial difficulties for years, to the extent that it had to enter into insolvency proceedings as a means of addressing its insolvency. This culminated in Order 206/2026 of the Second Commercial Division of Seville, within the framework of the FEDS's insolvency proceedings, which declared the conclusion of the insolvency proceedings and the provisional closure of its register due to insufficient assets. In practice, unless there are grounds for reopening the insolvency proceedings, this situation effectively brings the federation's activities to a standstill and places the organisation in a position of dissolution and a lack of effective operation.

Adverse effects on players

The specific place of padel for the deaf within the Spanish sports system has been organised through the FEDS, but this body has ceased to operate effectively following the aforementioned court ruling.

The Spanish Padel Federation, for its part, does not currently have a specific, operational framework in place to take on the organisation and representation of padel for the deaf. Whilst the FEDS formally retains its recognition as the competent federation for sport for the deaf, padel for the deaf continues to have its natural place within that federation, as it is recognised as one of its sports disciplines or specialities. This situation makes it difficult for the Spanish Padel Federation to assume this role directly without a statutory amendment, a reorganisation of the federation, or an administrative decision clarifying the sport's status. In practice, this creates an operational vacuum and a twofold impasse: there is a formally competent federation, but one with no effective activity, and a federation for the sport which does not currently recognise padel for the deaf within its structure.

The impasse therefore affects the specific licence for the sport for the deaf and official representation, but does not prevent a player from obtaining a general padel licence. The latter allows the player to compete, although it does not in itself certify the athlete's federation status within the sport for the deaf, nor does it guarantee access to the rights, resources and competitions linked to that representation.

In figures

163

Licensed deaf players
(FEDS, 2023)

≈ 500

Indicative estimate of the actual
number of deaf padel players in Spain

*Source: FEDS Annual Report (2023 and
indicative estimate based on the sporting
context analysed)*

According to the FEDS annual report, in 2023 there were approximately 163 licensed deaf players. However, bearing in mind that a significant proportion of sporting activity takes place outside the federation's remit, that not all players require or apply for a licence, and that the FEDS' institutional situation may have hindered the updating of the federation's register, it is reasonable to estimate that the actual number of deaf padel players in Spain in 2026 is significantly higher than the available federation figures. A conservative estimate would be approximately **500 players**.

Furthermore, the EDP's internal register lists 552 registered players from 30 countries, of whom 112 are registered in Spain.

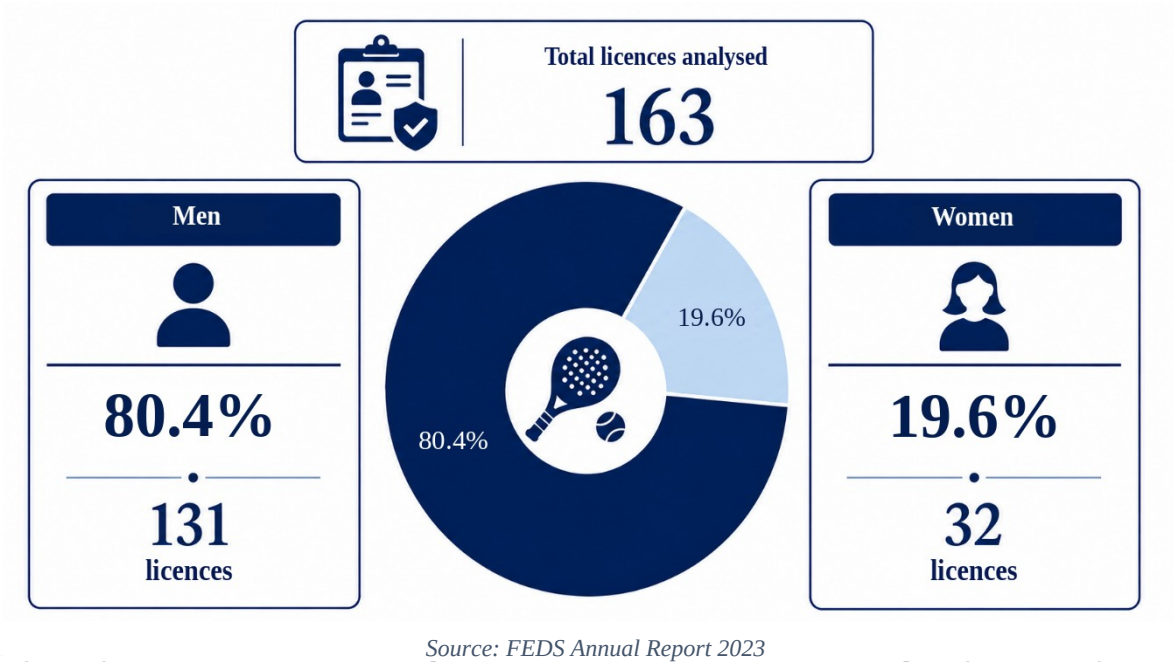
These figures relate exclusively to players registered with EDP and do not constitute an estimate of the total number of deaf padel players in Spain.

*Source: European Deaf Padel Association
(EDP) internal player register.*

KEY IDEA

The number of federation licences does not necessarily reflect the total number of deaf padel players in Spain. Given the level of competitive and club-based activity in recent years, it can be estimated that the actual number of deaf padel players in Spain could be around 500, at the very least.

The **gender breakdown** of padel licences for deaf people shows that participation is still clearly dominated by men: according to data available from the FEDS, the majority of licences are held by men, whilst the number of female players remains low. This disparity is more pronounced than in general federated padel in Spain, where data from the CSD for 2024 show 65.3 per cent of licences held by men and 34.7 per cent by women. Consequently, the **participation of deaf women in organised padel appears to be one of the key areas for improvement**, particularly in terms of recruitment, visibility and specific support.



Sports licences and the detriment to players

A sports licence is not a minor formality: it identifies the federation framework within which the player competes, may be necessary for entry into official competitions, and carries associated safeguards such as sports insurance cover in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

The licence is the prerequisite for competing officially, and obtaining it is, in turn, a necessary condition for entry into international competitions.

To structure this analysis, it is useful to distinguish between three instruments with different effects. We therefore identify:

- **FEDS licence.** This is the specific licence that should link the player to the Spanish structure for deaf sport and to the corresponding national representation. The lack of operational capacity at the FEDS has halted the issuing of these licences, leaving this specific aspect unresolved.
- **Federation padel licence.** As a practical solution, some players resort to a licence from the Spanish Padel Federation or a regional federation, such as the Andalusian Padel Federation. This licence enables the holder to compete within the general scope of the sport and provides the coverage specific to that framework, but it does not replace the specific licence for deaf sport nor does it confer official representation of Spain in EDSO competitions.
- **EDP registration or accreditation.** EDP organises a European association circuit and may set registration requirements for participation in it. This registration or accreditation should not be confused with an official federation licence or with authorisation to represent a country, unless there is express recognition by the relevant European body.

The cessation of the FEDS' activities has brought the issuing of federation licences for deaf padel players to a halt, with specific and direct consequences.

Consequently:



The lack of a specific licence limits players' ability to prove, in a uniform way, their membership of the federation structure for deaf sport, which hinders access to grants, financial assistance and programmes that require this status.



At the same time, the absence of a national licence makes it difficult for players to receive grants under calls for applications that require a sports licence, accreditation, recognition or sporting results.



This situation particularly affects players who, in many cases, wish to develop their sporting careers at European level **without official institutional backing or support**.

Padel for the deaf at club level

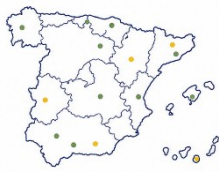
Alongside the federation level, padel for deaf people in Spain has also developed through a network of clubs, associations and sports organisations. This community-based dimension is particularly significant, as it has enabled the sport to be organised, players to be brought together, activities to be organised and participation in competitions to be facilitated, even within a context of limited institutional structure.

We can identify two types of organisations.

- **On the one hand**, there are clubs or projects specifically geared towards padel for deaf people, amongst which only Club Pádel Soul and Club UPX OS Xarabins stand out as organisations particularly linked to this sport.
- **On the other hand**, there are sports clubs for deaf people – usually referred to by acronyms such as CDS, CDPS or CES – which are not necessarily limited to padel, but instead encompass a range of different sports and have incorporated padel into their activities.

On 11 April 2022, a collaboration agreement was signed between the Spanish Padel Federation and the Spanish Federation of Sports for the Deaf, providing institutional support for padel for deaf people. This agreement provided, amongst other things, for the creation of a specific padel category for deaf people in competitions organised by the FEP, the requirement for a sports licence issued by the FEDS, and coordination mechanisms between the two federations. This precedent demonstrates that a framework for coordination at federation level of the sport did exist, although its practical effectiveness was dependent on the operational capacity of the FEDS, which is currently affected by the situation described in this study.

KEY IDEA



The sport is practised across different regions of Spain, demonstrating that padel for the deaf has a diverse regional presence and a sporting foundation upon which to build a more stable structure. Of particular note are the padel tournaments for the deaf that have taken place in towns such as Mijas (Málaga), Alcorcón (Madrid), Alcalá de Henares (Madrid) and Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

The role of the players

The information gathered for the study enables the identification of problems that should not be treated as a social or welfare issue, but rather as shortcomings in sports governance that affect the functioning of the circuit, players' confidence and the relationship with the relevant institutions.

Following the interviews with the players, the main diagnostic findings identified are:



1. PLAYERS' VOICE

Some testimonies describe fear of voicing criticism, a lack of any real ability to influence decisions, and the absence of effective, protected channels for raising complaints, proposals or concerns.



2. INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Difficulties have been identified in accessing rules, selection criteria, decisions and data on how competitions are run. The information available is fragmented and, at times, it is also hard to obtain clear answers from the relevant federations.



3. PERCEIVED INSULARITY

The limited flow of information between certain stakeholders in the deaf community and outside parties creates a perception of a closed community, reduces trust and makes it harder for federations, sponsors and public authorities to understand the circuit accurately.



4. INSTITUTIONAL VACUUM

Organisations in the mainstream sports system are not always aware of the extent of the problems affecting deaf players. Without a stable line of dialogue, issues remain within the circuit itself and do not reach, in an orderly way, those who could resolve them.



5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The lack of stable grants, sponsors and recognised financial planning holds back the continuity of competitions, travel, the recruitment of new players and technical development.

Testimonies from players are included in Annex 1

02. The European and international dimension of padel for deaf people

The development of padel for deaf people is not limited to the national level. In Europe, there is a specific sporting structure for deaf people that coexists alongside the organisations responsible for regulating and promoting padel as a sport.

Understanding the relationship between these two structures is important for analysing the level of recognition of padel for deaf people and, subsequently, for comparing the different approaches adopted in other European countries.

The organisation of sport for deaf people in Europe

At European level, the **European Deaf Sport Organisation (EDSO)** is the leading organisation for sport for deaf people.

As part of the international structure for sport for the deaf, it coordinates and promotes sporting activities and organises continental competitions in various disciplines.

Padel has gradually been incorporated into this competitive landscape through the staging of specific European championships, reflecting the growth of this sport amongst deaf athletes.

At the same time, the **International Padel Federation (FIP)** is the leading international body for padel as a sport and sets the main rules and technical standards applicable to international competition.

Thus, padel for deaf people is developed at the intersection of two distinct sporting structures:

EDSO – FIP: Two structures that converge in padel for deaf people



KEY IDEAS

The development of padel for deaf people in Europe is taking place within a context where the organisations specific to sport for the deaf coexist alongside those responsible for padel as a sport.

The degree of coordination and integration between these two structures varies significantly from one country to another.

This institutional diversity is also reflected in the organisation of competitions. Whilst EDSO develops the competitive side of sport for deaf people at European level, there are also initiatives specifically linked to padel for deaf people that help to expand opportunities for participation and international competition.

There is, therefore, no single European model for organising padel for deaf people. The practice of the sport, institutional recognition and integration into federations vary significantly between different countries.

It is precisely for this reason that analysing the experiences of other countries enables us to identify different organisational models and assess which elements might be of interest for the future development of padel for deaf people in Spain.

The European experience shows that the existence of sporting activities and competitions does not necessarily mean that all countries have adopted the same model of institutional recognition. Comparing different systems enables us to identify various ways of linking padel for deaf people with recognised sporting structures.

Why is this relevant to Spain?

As analysed in the previous sections of this study, the current situation of padel for deaf people in Spain presents specific challenges regarding institutional integration. It is not necessary to repeat this analysis here, but it should be borne in mind when analysing the experience.



An international comparison allows us to approach the issue from a different perspective: **it is not merely a matter of identifying existing shortcomings in Spain, but of understanding how other sports systems have structured the relationship between sport for deaf people and the federations responsible for each sport.**



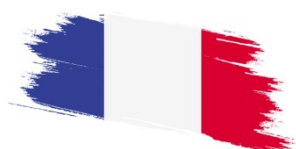
To this end, the study goes on to analyse the models developed in **France, Germany and Belgium** – three countries with different approaches – which enable the identification of elements that could be useful in the Spanish context.

European reference models

The comparative analysis reveals that **there is no single European model for organising sport for deaf people, nor, specifically, for padel**. The countries analysed have developed different structures depending on their respective sports and federation systems.

France, Germany and Belgium are three cases of interest because they demonstrate different ways of structuring the relationship between organisations for sport for deaf people, the federations responsible for the various sports, and the public support and funding systems.

The aim of this analysis is not to determine whether there is a single model that should be replicated in Spain, but rather **to identify elements and experiences that may prove useful in addressing the current situation of padel for deaf people in our country**.



FRANCE

A trend towards integration by sport



The French model is evolving towards the integration of adapted sports within the federations responsible for each sport. In the case of padel, the French Tennis Federation (FFT) is the governing body.



This integration makes it possible to utilise existing resources, facilities, technical structures and organisational mechanisms, thereby reducing the divide between mainstream sport and adapted sport.



Regarding funding, the Agence Nationale du Sport (ANS) channels public resources to federations, clubs and sports projects, including those aimed at inclusion and the development of sport for people with disabilities.



It enables the gradual integration of sports practised by people with disabilities within the federations responsible for each sport, making use of existing structures and facilitating access to public funding.

GERMANY

A specific and well-established structure for sport for deaf people



The Deutscher Gehörlosen-Sportverband (DGSV) is the leading organisation for sport for deaf people in Germany, bringing together activities across various disciplines.



Unlike the French model, Germany maintains a specific structure for sport for deaf people, providing athletes with their own stable institutional framework.



The German system provides for mechanisms of public support for organised sport and for structures linked to sport for people with disabilities. The DGSV's recognition enables it to take part in existing support and funding mechanisms.



This demonstrates that maintaining a specific structure for sport for deaf people can also be a viable approach, provided it is stable, operational and recognised within the national sports system.



BELGIUM

A decentralised model based on cooperation



The Belgian sports system is decentralised along linguistic community lines. Sport for deaf people is organised through regional and community bodies.



The development of padel for deaf people is driven by a combination of initiatives from deaf organisations and the use of existing padel structures.

Funding is decentralised. Bodies such as ADEPS (the French-speaking community) manage support programmes that provide funding for the activities of clubs, associations and other sports organisations.



This model is based on cooperation between different structures and territorial levels, offering flexibility to develop sporting initiatives and access resources without relying on a single national body.

Three models, different solutions

A comparative analysis reveals **three different approaches** to the development of sport for deaf people:

	 FRANCE	 GERMANY	 BELGIUM
 Prevailing model	Gradual integration by sport	Dedicated structure for deaf people	Decentralisation and cooperation
 Organisation of deaf sport	Combination of structures	Dedicated national organisation	Regional structures
 Main strength	Use of existing federation structures	Institutional stability	Organisational flexibility
 Funding	Link to the national support system	Support for organised sport	Regional and community mechanisms
 Relevance for Spain	Integration into sport-specific structures	Restoring a working dedicated channel	Cooperation between different organisations

What can Spain learn?

The models analysed show that **there is no single institutional solution** to ensure the development of sport for deaf people.

France is moving towards greater integration within the federations responsible for each sport. Germany maintains a specific, recognised structure for sport for deaf people. Belgium, for its part, demonstrates the potential of a decentralised system based on cooperation between different organisations.

Despite these differences, the three models share a common element: **the existence of an institutional framework that links athletes' activities to the recognised structures of the sports system.**

KEY IDEA

The comparative analysis suggests that the decisive factor is not so much the choice between an integrated or specialised model, but rather the existence of a **stable, operational and recognised** structure that enables the organisation of sporting activity and facilitates athletes' access to available resources and opportunities.

In the case of Spain, and based on the analysis carried out in the previous sections, **European experience allows us to propose various alternatives** for the future: ranging from **greater integration of padel for deaf people** into the sport's federation structures, to the re-establishment of a fully operational dedicated framework, or the **development of cooperation arrangements** between the organisations involved.

03. Funding opportunities for the development of padel for deaf people

Beyond the difficulties in accessing certain grants and programmes linked to the institutional situation of padel for deaf people in Spain – as analysed in the previous sections – there are various funding instruments that may be of interest for promoting projects linked to its development.

The current sports funding ecosystem offers opportunities at various levels — European, national, regional and local — alongside private mechanisms such as sponsorship and patronage.

The *Guide to Funding, Sponsorship and Patronage Instruments in the Sports Sector*, 2025 Edition, promoted by FAGDE (Spanish Federation of Sports Management Associations) and funded by the CSD, specifically identifies the diversification of funding sources as one of the main challenges facing sports organisations and systematises the various existing alternatives, both public and private.

Funding for the development of padel for deaf people need not depend on a single source of resources. A combination of public funding, European programmes and private collaboration can offer various opportunities to promote sporting, educational and inclusion projects.

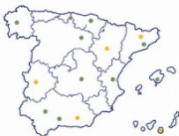
National, regional and local public funding

Public authorities offer various support programmes for the sports sector which may be of interest to projects linked to inclusive sport and the participation of people with disabilities.

At national level, the CSD coordinates various grant schemes aimed at developing sports programmes and initiatives. In addition, there are calls for proposals launched by autonomous communities, provincial councils and local authorities, which may provide funding for organising activities, competitions, training, the purchase of equipment or the development of sports projects.

Eligibility depends on the requirements set out in each call for applications and the nature of the applicant organisation. It is therefore important to analyse not only the funding schemes specifically aimed at sport, but also those relating to disability, social inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunities.

We can distinguish between several levels of funding:

			
NATIONAL	REGIONAL	PROVINCIAL COUNCILS	LOCAL AUTHORITIES
<i>The Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD) coordinates grant schemes for the development of sports programmes and initiatives.</i>	<i>Calls for applications for grants to support activities, competitions, training, the purchase of equipment or the development of sports projects</i>	<i>Programmes to support sport and physical activity at provincial level.</i>	<i>Funding for clubs and associations in the fields of sport, inclusion and participation.</i>

Identifying cross-cutting calls for proposals linked to inclusion and disability can broaden the funding opportunities for padel projects for deaf people beyond strictly sports-related grants.

OPPORTUNITY

Eligibility depends on the requirements set out in each call for proposals and the nature of the applicant organisation. It is therefore important to analyse not only funding streams specifically aimed at sport, but also those relating to disability, social inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunities.

European funding

The international dimension of padel for deaf people also offers opportunities for the development of projects funded by the European Union.



Among the main instruments is **Erasmus+ Sport**, which, during the 2021–2027 period, places particular emphasis on areas such as **social inclusion, cooperation and the development of the European dimension of sport**.

The programme includes various participation instruments, amongst them cooperation partnerships and small-scale partnerships, the latter being specifically designed to facilitate access for grassroots organisations, less experienced bodies and new participants in European programmes.

The existence of organisations and players involved in padel for deaf people across various European countries can facilitate the design of transnational projects aimed at shared objectives.

EUROPEAN OPPORTUNITY



Inclusion and accessibility



Training for coaches



Exchange of best practice



Mobility



Grassroots sport

Participation of women and young people

The European dimension of padel for deaf people can be a strength for the development of cooperation projects that go beyond strictly competitive activities

Sponsorship and patronage

Private funding is a necessary means of supporting the competitive growth of padel for deaf people, but it requires a recognisable organisational framework, transparent rules and verifiable sporting planning.

Sponsorship can help fund activities such as organising competitions, covering players' travel costs or initiatives aimed at raising the profile of the sport.

Meanwhile, patronage and private collaboration schemes may be particularly well-suited to projects relating to training, competition, technical development, accessibility and international outreach.

To secure stable access to public and private funding, it is not enough simply to demonstrate the project's merit. Funding bodies need to see a responsible organisational structure, a competition calendar, rules of participation, sporting objectives, a budget and accountability mechanisms.

For this reason, institutional recognition and transparency are not merely formalities, but practical prerequisites for building trust, presenting sound projects and sustaining the circuit's growth.

KEY IDEA

The combination of sport, inclusion, disability and an international dimension can be a distinguishing factor in attracting sponsors and private partners interested in projects with a social impact.

Private funding should not necessarily be viewed as an alternative to public resources, but rather as a complementary avenue within a diversified funding strategy.

04. Players' and coaches' perceptions: experience and needs by country

To complement the institutional and regulatory analysis, the Study incorporates the perspectives of padel players and coaches from different countries.

Players

The questionnaire aimed at players provides direct insight into their sporting profile, their experience within the EDP Circuit, the main barriers affecting their participation, and their expectations regarding the future development of the sport.

The sample comprises 59 players from 12 European countries, with varying levels of experience and competitive involvement. Although the results must be interpreted in light of the sample's size and geographical distribution, the responses reveal clear and widely shared trends.

In particular, the data show the positive impact of the EDP Circuit on motivation, sporting improvement, international competition and community building. At the same time, they highlight the persistence of financial, communication and institutional barriers that limit the development of padel for deaf people.

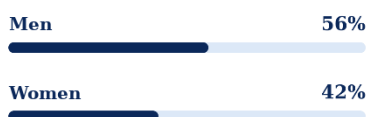
Who responded

59
PLAYERS

12
COUNTRIES

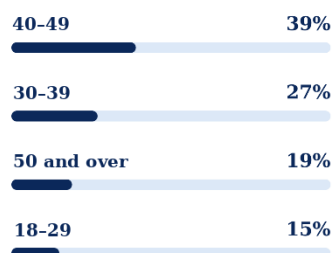
Spain accounts for 23 responses (39%).
The sample includes 11 other European countries,
led by Belgium (8) and Germany (7).

SAMPLE PROFILE



1 person preferred not to say (2%)

AGE



EXPERIENCE AND LEVEL



• 01 | INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

80 per cent of respondents believe that recognition of EDP by the International Padel Federation **would significantly change their situation as athletes**. Such recognition could encourage support from national federations, facilitate access to grants and scholarships, and raise the profile of padel for deaf people.



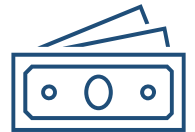
• 02 | INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL FEDERATIONS

54 per cent feel that their national federation does not recognise padel for deaf people or that, even if it does recognise it, it does not develop specific programmes or initiatives. The results highlight the need to move from formal recognition to effective involvement by the federations.



• 03 | FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ACCESSIBLE TRAINING

The creation of a **grant scheme** to cover tournament costs is the most sought-after measure, cited by **59 per cent of players**. There are also calls for the organisation of accessible clinics, the development of adapted materials and the creation of training opportunities for future deaf coaches and referees.



• 04 | COMMUNITY AND EUROPEAN COOPERATION

49 per cent propose strengthening a European community of deaf players, whilst **42 per cent** consider it necessary to present the results of the Study to the FIP and the CSD. These responses point towards a strategy based on four pillars: institutional recognition, financial support, accessible training and European cooperation.



The results show that participation in the EDP Circuit has an impact that extends beyond the competition itself. The responses reflect an improvement in motivation and sporting ability, but also highlight its contribution to community building, internationalisation and the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.

80% believe EDP has been decisive or has helped considerably in developing padel for deaf people.

98% train more or report greater motivation since competing with EDP.

MOST CITED CHANGES



AVERAGE RATING · OUT OF 5



KEY IDEAS

Padel as a space for inclusion

Another particularly relevant finding is the **positive perception** of padel's ability to foster **interaction between deaf and hearing people**.

The responses analysed show a favourable tendency to believe that playing padel can help **improve communication and relations** between the two groups.

These findings reinforce the social dimension of the sport: **padel is seen not only as a competitive arena, but also as a potential setting for social interaction and inclusion**.

Methodological note: The results by country are indicative only due to the small and uneven number of responses. The differences identified should not be interpreted as general characteristics of each national sports system.

Coaches

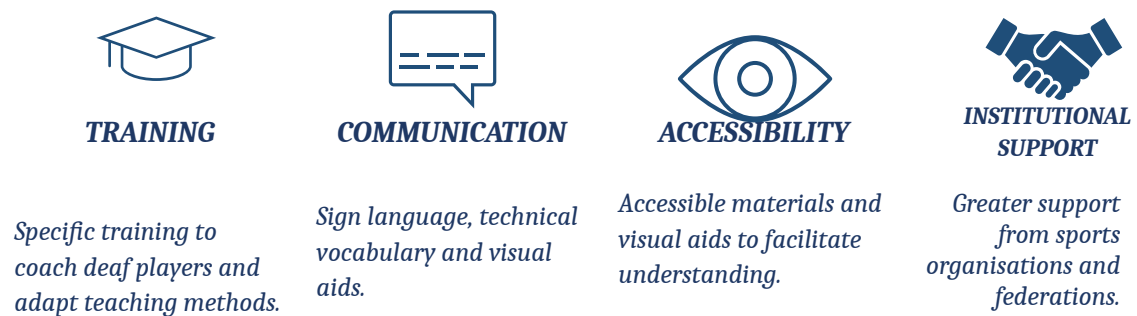
The survey includes responses from coaches in **Spain, Germany, Belgium, Lithuania, France, Ireland, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Italy and Argentina**, providing an international perspective on the current conditions under which the training of deaf players takes place.

The distribution of responses is not uniform across countries, with a higher proportion of coaches based in Spain. For this reason, the results should be interpreted from a **descriptive and exploratory** perspective, aimed at identifying shared trends and needs, rather than as a representative statistical comparison between the different national systems.

Despite the geographical diversity and the varying number of responses received in each country, the responses reveal several common themes: a generally positive assessment of the coaching experience, a strong willingness to continue working with deaf players, and the existence of needs relating primarily to communication, specialist training and institutional support.



The responses focus mainly on:



Coaches' experiences are largely positive

One of the main findings of the survey is the **favourable assessment of the experience of coaching deaf players**.

This perception is evident across countries with different sporting contexts. Among the coaches surveyed, the predominant ratings of the experience are 'good' or 'very good', even in cases where difficulties related to communication or a lack of specific training are identified.

This finding highlights two distinct issues: the existing difficulties do not appear to stem from the sporting experience itself, but rather from a lack of tools and resources to facilitate interaction between coaches and players.

Three needs that transcend borders

Beyond the differences between countries, the joint analysis identifies three recurring areas for improvement:



- **01 | TRAINING**

Coaches are calling for specific tools and training to work with deaf players, particularly in terms of communication and adapting training methods.



- **02 | COMMUNICATION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Communication during training emerges as one of the main challenges. The responses point towards practical solutions such as learning basic sign language, developing specific padel vocabulary and making greater use of visual aids.

• 03 | SUPPORT AND COORDINATION



In various countries, there is a recognised need to strengthen collaboration between deaf and hearing coaches and to secure greater support from sports organisations and federations.

KEY IDEAS

The survey reflects a favourable outlook for the growth of padel for deaf people from the coaches' perspective. There is a willingness to work with these players, and the experience is largely viewed positively.

The main opportunities for improvement centre on providing coaches with **more training, better communication and accessibility tools, and greater institutional support.**

Methodological note: *The results by country are indicative only due to the small and uneven number of responses. The differences identified should not be interpreted as general characteristics of each national sports system.*

05. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The following general conclusions regarding the institutional and federation-level situation of padel for deaf people emerge from the analysis:

01

Consolidation of the sport

Padel for deaf people has established itself as a sporting discipline with players, clubs and competitions in Spain and various European countries, but its development at institutional and federation level has not kept pace with this growth.

02

Governance shortcomings

The analysis highlights shortcomings in sports governance (lack of channels for participation, difficulties in accessing information, limited transparency and a lack of stable funding) which directly impact players' confidence and the development of the sport.

03

Lack of federation functionality

In the Spanish context, the lack of operational capacity within the Spanish Federation of Sports for the Deaf (FEDS) has halted the issuing of specific licences and blocked official representation, creating an institutional vacuum, with no clear allocation of responsibilities, that limits and hinders the development and practice of padel amongst deaf players.

04

Lack of an adequate institutional framework

The dual obstacle posed by the inactive specific structure and the absence of a formal federation structure that recognises padel for the deaf leaves many players practising the sport without sufficient institutional support, affecting their access to funding, official competitions and sporting recognition.

05

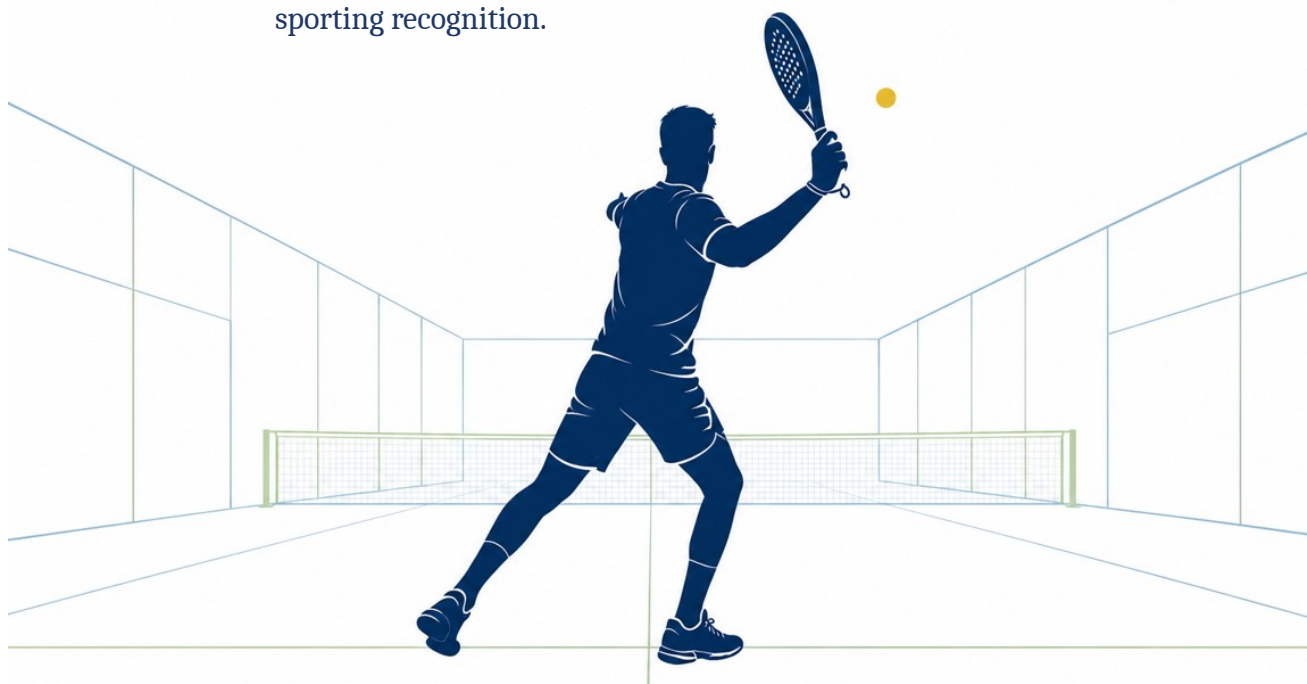
An inadequate model in need of improvement

The information gathered leads to the conclusion that the current model clearly has room for improvement, at federation, association and organisational levels alike, and requires more precise coordination between all federations, with EDP acting as the driving force and unifying body for the new recognition framework.

06

Shared assessment by players and coaches

The questionnaires reveal a largely consistent assessment. Whilst players highlight the positive impact of the EDP Circuit, they also point to a lack of support and insufficient federation recognition; coaches, meanwhile, emphasise the need for more specific training, accessible communication tools and institutional support. This convergence confirms that the difficulties identified are not isolated but structural, and require a coordinated response combining funding, training, accessibility and sporting recognition.



06. NEXT STEPS

Below is a proposed roadmap for padel for deaf people:



1. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE AND JOINT FRAMEWORK

To promote a process of dialogue between the Spanish Padel Federation, any future body that may replace the FEDS, and the EDP, coordinated by the CSD, to define a joint framework for licences, international representation and the organisation of competitions.

- **Specific licences:** who issues them and how they are managed.

- **International representation:** how participation in official competitions is organised.

- **Organisation of competitions:** the role of the EDP as organiser of the European circuit.



2. GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Improving governance through secure and accessible channels to ensure visibility and participation amongst deaf players and federations.

- **Secure channels** for participation and the submission of complaints.

- **Clear information** on the structure.

- **Transparency and accountability.**



3. TRAINING, COMMUNICATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Develop training programmes, accessible materials and adapt refereeing and competition organisation to the needs of deaf people.

- **Training for coaches**

- **Visual materials and basic sign language terminology** specific to padel.

- **Refereeing and organisation** adapted to the deaf community.

4. STABLE FUNDING



Establish a stable funding plan (public and private) that links institutional recognition to sound sports projects, with clear objectives, budgets and evaluation mechanisms.

- **Link** institutional **recognition** to high-quality projects.

- **Diversification of funding sources:** grants, sponsors and partners.

- **Objectives, budgets and evaluation** to ensure sustainability.

5. STRATEGIC COORDINATION AND VISIBILITY



To bring together all existing aspects of the ecosystem and ensure standards of accessibility, funding and visibility that boost the national and international profile of padel for deaf people.

- **Coordination** between the padel federation, the sports organisation for the deaf and EDP.

- A **visibility** and communication **strategy** to promote the growth of the circuit.

- **Entering into or signing collaboration agreements**



The development of padel for deaf people **requires coordinated action** across various areas: **institutional recognition, cooperation between federations and associations, training of technical staff, encouraging female participation, expanding training opportunities and ensuring linguistic accessibility.**



07. Annex

Testimonials on the development of padel for deaf people in Europe

The testimonies gathered from various interviews conducted in International Sign provide a complementary perspective to the analysis carried out in this study. The statements were subsequently transcribed into Spanish and have been translated into English for this edition. The extracts convey the essence of the interviews' content, with minor adjustments made to improve readability.

“First, there needs to be a Padel World Championship involving the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Then we’ll see what happens.”

“For me, padel is a great social meeting point. Players get to know one another, make friends and share experiences.”

Tobias, secretary of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD), Germany. (Interview conducted in June 2026)

“We’ve been thinking about how we could collaborate and have decided that, within the federation, our responsibilities focus on the championships, whilst the DDPV focuses on local, national and other types of competitions.”

Urs, technical manager for padel within the German federation system (Interview conducted in June 2026)

“We work together to enable both organisations to collaborate and grow padel within the small deaf community.”

Stefano, member of the Deutsche Deaf Padel Verband. (Interview conducted in June 2026)

“In the Netherlands, I train with hearing players and on my own, as there aren’t many deaf female players. I’d love to be part of a large group of female players, but for now the standard isn’t quite right for me, so I carry on training with the men’s team.”

Karin, a player from the Netherlands. (Interview conducted in June 2026)

“Padel will grow as a sport for deaf people, and the culture is growing too, as sign language is used at this event, which is important for strong growth in the future.”

Bernhard, President of the Austrian Deaf Sports Federation (Interview conducted in June 2026)

The full interviews can be found on the EDP’s website and YouTube channel:



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- European Deaf Padel Association (EDP) Statutes, Art. 6. Documentation available at: <https://www.europeandeafpadel.com/en/documentation/>
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All of the above links were accessed between May and July 2026.