

## Press Release

100 days left until the Cybathlon

# Humans and robots set to take their marks

Zurich, 1 July 2016

At the Cybathlon, 74 athletes from 25 countries will be showing how robotic technology helps them in their daily lives. In 100 days, the starting gun will be fired on the world's first trial of bionic strength. The Swiss public broadcaster Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF) will incorporate the Cybathlon into a day of themed programming and broadcast the unique competition live.

The competition's 59 teams, comprised of 74 athletes from all over the world, have been training intensely for months, working with participating scientists and companies to fine-tune their technology and carry out the last few adjustments. The technology and its users will need to be in perfect harmony by the time the competition kicks off on 8 October 2016 at the Swiss Arena in Kloten (Zurich). Only then will it be possible to effortlessly open cans with a robotic hand, hop from stone to stone on prosthetic legs, or move swiftly over uneven surfaces in a wheelchair. Thanks to the latest technology, it's even possible to use a virtual avatar to overcome obstacles using only the power of thought.

### **Teams from renowned universities**

In contrast to the Paralympics, the Cybathlon is not focussed on exceptional athletic performance, but on building the closest possible connections between everyday robotic assistance devices and the people who use them. The technology has been developed at some of the world's leading technical universities, such as Imperial College, TU Delft, and Cybathlon organiser ETH Zurich, alongside a number of leading commercial prosthetics manufacturers. There are seven teams from Switzerland alone.

### **An accessible future thanks to technology**

As well as organising an exciting international competition, ETH Zurich has two other goals in mind with the Cybathlon. "The Cybathlon preparations have really opened our eyes to the needs of people with physical disabilities," explains Robert Riener, Professor for Sensory-Motor Systems at ETH Zurich

and founder of the event. “Too many of us know too little about the everyday problems that people with disabilities face in our society – that’s something we want to change,” he concludes. At the same time, ETH wants to encourage researchers and developers to work on new technologies that truly help their users in everyday life. To that end, a symposium featuring leading scientists will take place in the run-up to the Cybathlon on 6 October 2016. The competition is also intended to be more than a one-time event: future Cybathlons will focus on other topics; for example, how technology can provide support for older people. The perspective of people with physical and sensory disabilities will always remain the central concern.

### **Strong international interest**

This unusual competition is already garnering significant interest, not just among athletes and researchers, but also in the international media. As the host broadcaster of Cybathlon, SRF will feature a day of themed programming to accompany the event and report live from the arena.

[www.cybathlon.com](http://www.cybathlon.com) →

### **Further Information**

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### **Booking places – media accreditation**

Space for media representatives is limited, so we advise you to register and apply for accreditation as soon as possible. Media representatives can now gain accreditation at <http://bit.ly/CybaMedia>. Please let us know if you need video images for your coverage. An overview of the currently registered teams is attached. We would also be happy to arrange interviews for you.