

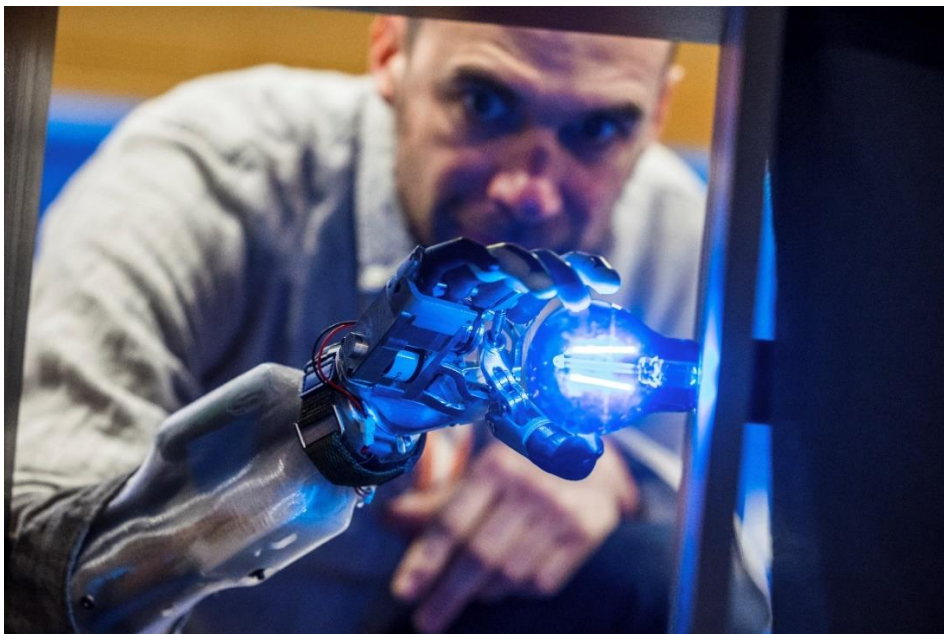
# Press release

Cybathlon 2024

## For a world without barriers

Zurich, 26 August 2024

From 25 to 27 October, the third Cybathlon will take place in the Swiss Arena in Kloten, Switzerland. This is the world's largest competition in which people with disabilities master everyday tasks with the help of newly developed assistive technologies. For this Cybathlon, the six existing disciplines were further developed, and two new ones added: a race with intelligent vision assistive technologies and one with assistant robots.



The Cybathlon promises to spark innovation. (Photograph: ETH Zurich / Alessandro della Bella)

### In brief

- For the third time, ETH Zurich is organising the Cybathlon, which aims to significantly advance assistive technologies for people with disabilities.
- Pilots solve everyday tasks in eight disciplines. For the first time, competitions will be held with visual assistants and assistance robots.
- In 2024, the Cybathlon will once again take place in the Kloten stadium, as well as in eight other locations around the world.

Climbing stairs, cleaning your teeth, setting the table: all these activities can be challenging for people with certain physical disabilities. It's precisely these tasks that are part of the Cybathlon competitions,

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which put assistive technologies to the test. Such technologies help people with disabilities to become even more independent, thus promoting their inclusion in society. With the Cybathlon, ETH Zurich connects researchers with those affected (“pilots”) so that they can find solutions together. “Inclusion is all about helping to break down barriers so that we can create equal opportunities for everyone. The Cybathlon motivates researchers worldwide to work in a more user-oriented way,” says ETH Zurich Professor Robert Riener, initiator of the event.

The idea behind the Cybathlon is to accelerate innovation and development of assistive technologies through international competition. Some 80 teams from 26 nations compete for medals in eight different disciplines, with teams drawn from both industry and universities. Eleven Swiss teams are taking part, and ETH Zurich is particularly well represented: two teams from the university will be competing with their prosthetic legs in the “LEG” discipline, while three other teams will be competing in races with visual assistance technology, a robot assistant, and an exoskeleton.

### Two new disciplines included this year

People with a severe impairment or a complete loss of vision lack the most basic information from their environment. A new Cybathlon discipline has now been created for these people and their needs: in “VIS”, the Vision Assistance Race, new technologies such as an intelligent cane for the blind help to pass on important information about the surroundings to their pilots. For example, pilots should be able to find a vacant seat on public transport, locate the right product on a shelf or even distinguish between colours.

In the second new discipline, the Assistance Robot Race, robots assist people with limited motor skills to solve tasks. The pilots work together with the robot to, say, grip various objects under time pressure or to avoid obstacles. As Riener says: “Assistant robots show promising potential to support people who have very little or no control over their arms and legs. That’s why we felt it was important to create a separate discipline.” In both disciplines, the first criterion is whether a task has been completed correctly; the second, how quickly.

### Competitions in Switzerland and worldwide

To make the Cybathlon itself as inclusive as possible, the event will take place simultaneously at nine locations, known as hubs, around the world. The teams may also build matching courses locally and thus avoid asking pilots to make a strenuous journey. Team “BeAGain” in South Korea, for example, is organising its own Cybathlon and holding the races at the same time as the Cybathlon in the stadium in Kloten, just outside of Zurich in Switzerland. Spectators can watch the competitions live on site with a valid ticket. Audio descriptions in English and German are available for people with visual impairments. For people with hearing impairments, the competitions will be interpreted into International Sign and German Sign languages. The entire event will also be livestreamed on [www.cybathlon.com](http://www.cybathlon.com).

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## Cybathlon 2024 for the media

Cybathlon 2024 media accreditation is open! Media professionals should register as early as possible [here](#). [Many poignant images](#) and [videos](#) from the preliminary competitions are available for download. Information on the individual [teams](#), [disciplines](#) and the [programme](#) are online. You can also follow the Cybathlon on social media and actively participate in the discussion with the hashtag #CYBATHLON2024.