



**INVITATION – PARTICIPANTS
to the 51st United Nations Inter-Agency Games
in Crete, Greece
from 6 to 10 May 2026**

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. ARRIVAL	4
3. ACCOMMODATION	4
3.1 Accommodation package	5
Official IAG Resort Package (4 Nights)	5
3.3 Golf Package	6
3.4 No-Hotel Package	7
4. OPENING CEREMONY – HERAKLION OLD HARBOUR	7
5. SPORTS	8
5.1 Teams and Athletes	8
5.2 Disciplines	8
5.3 Venues	9
5.4 Eligibility to participate	9
5.5 Medical certificates	9
6. CLOSING CEREMONY - A MEDITERRANEAN CULTURAL EXPERIENCE	10
7. HOW TO REGISTER	10
7.1 Entry visas (VERY IMPORTANT)	11
7.2 Deadlines for Registration and Cancellation	11
7.3 Official ID	11
8. UN CODE OF CONDUCT	11
9. FOR ANY OTHER QUESTIONS	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are delighted to invite you to the UN Inter-Agency Games 2026 and to present a participation concept that we are genuinely excited to share with you!

The 51st edition of the Games comes to you as a fresh and carefully curated experience, one that brings together the familiar hallmarks of the IAG, namely sporting excellence, friendly competition, and unparalleled inter-agency networking, all while placing even greater emphasis on rest, reconnection, and simplicity.

Our aim this year is clear: to offer a setting in which participants can momentarily step away from the pressures of daily professional life, focus on their competitions, and enjoy meaningful time with colleagues and friends.

For many across the UN common system, this has been a particularly challenging year. We are facing unprecedented reform processes, significant budgetary constraints, and workforce implications that affect colleagues across duty stations and functions. These changes come with uncertainty and, for many, a genuine sense of loss. At the same time, our colleagues continue to work harder and longer than ever before, often in environments that are becoming increasingly complex and dangerous, especially for those serving on the front lines.

Against this backdrop, we reflected deeply on the role of the Inter-Agency Games. For 58 years, throughout the many years, the IAG has served as a refuge: a space to pause, to reconnect, and to compete in the sports we are passionate about, surrounded by peers who share the unique realities of international civil service. For this reason, we decided to move forward with the Games in 2026 with renewed purpose, designing an experience that prioritizes safety, community, and a sense of collective respite, even if only for a few days.

In developing this package, we have considered both your expectations regarding sport and community and the financial realities many colleagues are facing. Our aim has been to realistically estimate total costs — including travel, accommodation, competition, meals, and social activities — and consolidate them into a single, transparent, all-inclusive offer. The result is a premium resort-based package with one clear price for participation in the Games, providing strong value for money, particularly for colleagues sharing accommodation or travelling with family.

We believe this approach strikes the right balance between quality, affordability, and cohesion. We very much look forward to welcoming you to an edition of the Games designed to help you disconnect, reconnect with one another, and focus on what has always defined the IAG spirit.

We cannot wait to see you soon!

OUR DESTINATION - CRETE, GREECE

The UN Inter-Agency Games 2026 will take place on the island of Crete, a destination that effortlessly combines natural beauty, cultural depth, and a long-standing tradition of sporting elegance. The Games will be hosted in and around the historic city of Heraklion, with key activities and accommodation centred in the coastal region of Hersonissos.

The event will be held under the auspices of the Regional Governor of Crete, Stavros Arnaoutakis, whose patronage reflects both the strong local institutional support for the Games, and the importance Crete places on international sport, cultural exchange, and community engagement.

Heraklion, the island's vibrant capital, stands at the crossroads of ancient and modern Greece. Known as the gateway to the Minoan civilisation, it offers a unique blend of archaeological heritage, contemporary urban life, and a proud sporting culture. The wider region has long invested in high-quality sports infrastructure and regularly hosts international competitions, training camps, and elite athletes drawn by its climate and facilities.

Just east of the city, the Hersonissos region provides an ideal counterbalance: open landscapes, Mediterranean coastlines, and a relaxed rhythm that invites recovery and connection. It is here that participants will be able to unwind between competitions, enjoy the natural surroundings, and spend meaningful time with colleagues and family. From calm seaside promenades to world-class hospitality, the area offers an environment that supports both high-performance sport and genuine rest.

Crete itself is an island of remarkable diversity. Mountain ranges meet crystal-clear seas, ancient stadiums and palaestras echo alongside modern sporting venues, and a deep-rooted athletic tradition traces back to the earliest Olympic ideals. This sense of history, combined with contemporary elegance and warmth, makes Crete a fitting host for the Inter-Agency Games—a place where competition, camaraderie, and cultural richness come together naturally.

We are confident that this setting will not only elevate the sporting experience but also provide a backdrop worthy of the IAG's enduring spirit: excellence, resilience, and unity.



THE PARTICIPATION PACKAGE – WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM JOINING THE 51ST IAG

2. ARRIVAL

The main arrival airport for the **UN Inter-Agency Games 2026** is **Heraklion International Airport**, a well-connected and popular destination served by both budget and national carriers across Europe and beyond.

To support participants in securing competitive travel options, we have negotiated **special airfares for IAG participants** with the following airlines:

- **Lufthansa Group**
(including Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, SWISS, and affiliated carriers)
- **Turkish Airlines**

Further details on how to access these fares will be made available through the IAG website and your organizational focal points.

Transfers to the Event Hotel

Shuttle buses will be provided on **official arrival day (Wednesday 06 May 2026) and departure day (Sunday 10 May 2026)**, operating directly between Heraklion Airport and the event hotel, **Lyttos Beach**. This service is exclusively available to participants booking the official IAG packages and is designed to ensure a smooth and coordinated arrival experience.

Alternative Transport Options

- **Taxi and ride-hailing services (including Uber)** are readily available at the airport, with typical fares to the hotel area of approximately **EUR 30**.
- **Car hire** is widely available at Heraklion Airport and generally offers good value. Dedicated **IAG participant discounts** are currently being finalized, and discount codes will be published on the website shortly.

Participants are also encouraged to explore **compound discounts** through flight bookings, price-comparison platforms, loyalty programmes, credit card benefits, or bundled travel offers, which may further reduce overall travel costs.

Heraklion Airport offers a straightforward and efficient gateway to Crete, allowing participants to arrive with ease and begin their Games experience without unnecessary complexity.

3. ACCOMMODATION

All participation packages include a generous welcome package with goodies and information. As mentioned, they will also include transportation to and from Heraklion Airport, to and from Lyttos Beach resort, all official events, and to and from sports venues.

All requests for extra nights and any adjustments to the offered accommodation package can be discussed and booked directly with the organizing committee partner: O-Sport.

The Lyttos Beach Resort is partnered with our local organizers and are used to hosting athletes and their needs. Extra staff will be on hand to ensure a welcome stay. The resort features a vast sports complex, training and physio facilities, special dietary programmes, and much, much more!

Participants have four (4) options. The costs are itemized in *Annex I - Pricing*.

3.1 Accommodation package

Official IAG Resort Package (4 Nights)

For the **UN Inter-Agency Games 2026**, participants are offered a **four-night ultra-all-inclusive accommodation package** at the official event hotel, **Lyttos Beach**, a five-star beachfront resort on the northern coast of Crete.

Lyttos Beach has been carefully selected for its ability to combine **elite-level sports infrastructure**, generous space, and high hospitality standards within a single, cohesive setting. It allows participants to compete, recover, socialise, and relax without the need to leave the resort—an essential element of the IAG experience.

What *Ultra-All-Inclusive* Means

The IAG package at Lyttos Beach follows an **ultra-all-inclusive concept**, designed to remove day-to-day costs and logistical friction entirely. In practical terms, this means that **one single price** covers:

- **Accommodation for four nights** in the selected room category
- **All meals**, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the stay
- **Unlimited beverages**, including soft drinks, juices, coffee and tea, beer, wine, and selected spirits, available throughout the day and evening
- **Snacks and refreshments** between meals at designated outlets
- **Full access to resort facilities**, including pools, beach areas, fitness and sports infrastructure
- **Entertainment and leisure activities** organised by the resort
- **Taxes and service charges**, with no hidden or surprise costs

The intention is simple: participants should be able to **focus entirely on sport, recovery, and time with colleagues**, without needing to calculate daily expenses or manage incidental payments.

Please note that the ultra-all-inclusive package **applies only** within the hotel premises and does not extend to outside venues or external locations.

Resort Facilities and Services

Participants staying at Lyttos Beach will enjoy free access to an extensive range of facilities, including:

- **Multiple outdoor swimming pools**, including Olympic-size and leisure pools, as well as children's pools and a waterpark.
- **Direct access to a long sandy beach**, fully equipped with sunbeds and umbrellas, beach volleyball and a bar.
- **Exceptional sports facilities**, including tennis courts, football pitches, beach volleyball courts, a modern fitness centre, and dedicated training and physio areas.

- **A comprehensive wellness and spa centre**, featuring indoor pools, sauna, steam room, massage services, and relaxation spaces.
- **A wide variety of dining options**, from international buffet restaurants to themed and à-la-carte concepts, accommodating diverse dietary preferences (6 restaurants in total)
- **Bars and social lounges** across the resort, providing refreshments from morning through late evening
- **Family-oriented services**, including kids' clubs, playgrounds, water attractions, and organised activities
- **24-hour reception, medical assistance, concierge services, and security**
- **Complimentary Wi-Fi** throughout the resort

3.2 Extended Stays

In addition to the standard four-night package, extra nights can be booked at the same highly competitive IAG rate, a rate not available through public booking platforms or online travel agencies. This allows participants to extend their stay before or after the Games while maintaining the same level of comfort, services, and value offered under the official package.

We are also able to facilitate tailored accommodation solutions for accompanying family members, including those who may not be participating directly in the Games. Whether travelling with partners, children, or extended family, custom room configurations and stay options can be arranged to suit individual needs.

All extended stays and family-specific arrangements can be requested through our official IAG travel and hospitality partners, who will support participants in identifying the most appropriate solutions within the resort.

This flexibility is intended to ensure that the Games remain accessible, family-friendly, and easy to combine with personal time, while preserving the cohesive IAG community experience.

3.3 Golf Package

The golf competition of the UN Inter-Agency Games 2026 will be held at the Crete Golf Club, the island's premier 18-hole championship course and a recognised benchmark for golfing excellence in Greece.

Located in gently rolling countryside near Heraklion, Crete Golf Club features a par-71, international-standard course designed to challenge experienced players while remaining enjoyable and accessible for amateur competition. The course combines wide fairways, strategically positioned bunkers, natural ravines, and open vistas, rewarding thoughtful course management and precision rather than sheer power. Its layout and condition make it particularly well suited for tournament play.

The club offers a modern clubhouse with full locker-room facilities, practice areas including driving and putting ranges, and a restaurant and terrace overlooking the course. With a strong track record of hosting international events, the club provides a professional and well-organised environment that aligns closely with the standards and spirit of the Inter-Agency Games.

In addition, Crete Golf Club features a limited number of on-site hotel rooms, offering golfers the option of staying directly at the course. These rooms are available in very limited numbers and can be booked exclusively through the IAG organisers, subject to availability. This option may be particularly

attractive for participants wishing to combine early tee times with maximum convenience and a focused golfing experience.

As with previous editions of the Games, the golf tournament will blend competitive integrity with collegial atmosphere, allowing participants to enjoy high-quality sport in an elegant and relaxed setting that reflects the best of golfing on Crete.

Participation in the golf competition at the UN Inter-Agency Games 2026 is reserved exclusively for players competing at amateur level. In accordance with established IAG rules and to ensure fair and balanced competition, all golfers are required to hold a valid amateur status and an official WHS (World Handicap System) handicap, issued and confirmed by a recognised golf club.

This documentation must be formally verified before the start of the event. There are no exceptions to this requirement, and participants who are unable to complete the verification process within the prescribed timeframe will unfortunately not be eligible to take part in the golf competition.

These conditions are essential to safeguard the sporting integrity of the tournament and to ensure that all participants compete on equal and transparent terms.

3.4 No-Hotel Package

To avail yourself of apartment options, private accommodation, or any other arrangements that you find for yourself, you will be able to book a no-hotel option, just like in previous years.

Please note that shuttle services to/from the sport venues are included in this package exclusively for athletes and operate only between Lyttos Beach and the venues. There are various accommodation options nearby and as mentioned, car Hire is widely available and affordable.

4. OPENING CEREMONY – HERAKLION OLD HARBOUR

The Opening Ceremony of the **UN Inter-Agency Games 2026** will be held in the Old Harbour of **Heraklion**, one of the city's most iconic and historically significant locations. The harbour is framed by the imposing **Koules Fortress** and the historic buildings of the Port Authority, creating a powerful maritime setting shaped by centuries of trade, defence, and international exchange.

Constructed during the Venetian era, the fortress and harbour complex once safeguarded the island's most important gateway to the Mediterranean. Today, they form a striking architectural ensemble that speaks to Crete's long-standing connection with navigation, diplomacy, and global interaction—an especially fitting backdrop for a UN gathering.

The evening will feature a **networking reception** with food and drinks, offering participants the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and meet new peers in an informal and welcoming atmosphere. Against the illuminated stone walls of the Venetian harbour and the calm of the old port, the Opening Ceremony will serve as both a social highlight and a symbolic moment to **celebrate the United Nations and its mission** in a place where history, resilience, and international engagement converge.

The ceremony itself will start around 1900h.

Attention Team Captains: The Captain's Meeting will be held at 1700h at Lyttos Beach! You will receive more info soon, provided you register as a Team Captain.

5. SPORTS

As is tradition, competitions will be held from Thursday to Saturday, 7-9 May 2026.

5.1 Teams and Athletes

Participants are invited to form teams but individuals wishing to participate will also be accommodated. There are no restrictions on the number of teams per discipline submitted for participation by any organization. However, the host reserves the right to limit team numbers if hosting limitations arise.

In accordance with the [General Rules](#) of the Games, the creation of mixed teams shall be limited to facilitating the participation of individual participants and shall not lead to the deliberate creation of a strong team. Players who have been registered by their organization in excess of the maximum number of players per team, will be grouped to form an additional team representing their own organization or representing their duty station if not sufficient players to form a team from their respective organization

We highly encourage organizations to form complete teams.

5.2 Disciplines

This year we invite organizations to form teams, or send athletes to compete in the following disciplines (required team numbers included):

Disciplines held at the [Lyttos Beach Sports Center](#) which serves as the central venue/main hotel for the event:

Discipline	Teams, Participants
Beach volleyball	Composed exclusively of 2 players Either men, women, or mixed couple
Badminton	Minimum 3 men and 1 woman or 2 men and 2 women Maximum of 5 men and 3 women
Padel Tennis	Teams of 2
Table Tennis Women	Minimum 2 Maximum 3
Table Tennis Men	Minimum 3 Maximum 5
Swimming Women	Minimum 4 Maximum 5
Swimming Men	Minimum 4 Maximum 5
Pickleball	-
Chess	Minimum 5 Maximum 6
Tennis	10 per team (5 men and 5 women)
Football women	Minimum 7 Maximum 12
Pétanque	3 per triplet plus maximum 2 réserves

Discipline held at the [Crete Golf Club](#):

Discipline	Team, Participants
Golf	Minimum 4 Maximum 6

Disciplines held at other location (Venue will be posted on the website once finalized):

Discipline	Team, Participants
Athletics Men	Minimum 4 Maximum 6 (10k along Cretan coastline)
Athletics Women	Minimum 4 Maximum 6 (10k along Cretan coastline)
Basketball	Maximum 12 players Females are encouraged to participate
Pool Billiards	Teams of 2 Discipline still to be confirmed, based on interest
Cricket	Minimum of 6
Darts	Minimum 6 Maximum 8
Football Men	Minimum 7 Maximum 12
Volleyball Women	10 players per team
Volleyball Men	10 players per team

5.3 Venues

The competitions are the true reason we embark on this journey every year. That is why we have not compromised on the quality of the any of the facilities of any discipline. All competitions will be held at the highest amateur level, and the most appropriate facility available at the host location.

- ★ Bus shuttles will be available to/from all locations from/to Lyttos Beach Hotel.
- ★ The majority of events will be held at the [Lyttos Beach Sports Center](#).
- ★ Golf will be held at the [Crete Golf Club](#).
- ★ The full list of venues will be posted on the website once finalized.

5.4 Eligibility to participate

In accordance with [General Rule 14](#):

"Any person of a participating organization or agency who has served under contract, including supernumeraries (consultants and other contractors that are verified by your respective HR department), for at least three months or who holds a contract of at least three months duration and, in either case, holds a contract effective at least one month before the IAG open and during their entire duration, is eligible for selection as a member of a team. Any person who has retired from any participating organization or agency is also eligible to participate in the UNIAG."

Participating organizations/agencies must normally be listed on the United Nations System document www.unsystem.org or if not listed therein then have the approval of the Secretariat to participate. Such approval shall depend on any such organization having joint missions with the UN (see General Rule 6).

If you are unsure whether you or your organization is eligible, please direct your inquiries to
secretariat@interagencygames.org

5.5 Medical certificates

Although medical certificates are not mandatory in Greece it is recommended that, for their own safety, participants consult with their general practitioner before engaging in any sporting activity. Please be mindful that competitions are held at the amateur level and span multiple days.

Participants and supporters are responsible for their own medical insurance. The host organizations will not be held liable.

6. CLOSING CEREMONY - A MEDITERRANEAN CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

The Closing Ceremony of the UN Inter-Agency Games 2026 will be hosted on Saturday evening at the Mikis Theodorakis Convention Centre, a venue that lends itself perfectly to a celebration of Mediterranean culture, hospitality, and lifestyle.

More than a formal conclusion, the evening is conceived as a cultural experience. The programme will open with the official awards ceremony, honouring sporting achievement, teamwork, and fair play. This will be followed by a gala dinner inspired by Mediterranean cuisine, showcasing local flavours, seasonal ingredients, and the relaxed elegance for which Crete is renowned. The night will then continue with an after-party, inviting participants to celebrate together in a warm, convivial atmosphere.

Participants staying at Lyttos Beach will be transported to and from the venue by organised shuttle buses, ensuring a smooth, safe, and coordinated transfer experience and allowing everyone to fully enjoy the evening without logistical concerns.

Named after Mikis Theodorakis—composer, humanist, and global cultural figure—the Convention Centre stands as a symbol of artistic expression and shared heritage. Its contemporary design, generous spaces, and refined ambiance provide an ideal setting to experience the essence of Crete: good food, open hospitality, conversation, music, and unhurried enjoyment of the moment.

7. HOW TO REGISTER

As in previous years, participants will be able to access the pre-registration website. For those who registered last year, their access remains active and unchanged. Please note that it is not possible to register more than one person using the same email address.

During the registration process, participants must upload a passport-style photo for the IAG-ID Card. This is a security requirement of the host country, and the photo will be displayed on the participant's badge for identification purposes.

Pre-registration **does not** guarantee participation in UN IAG 2026.

To be fully registered, each participant must:

- Pre-register individually (one unique email per participant)
- Have their focal point approve their registration
- Make the required payment to the focal point
- Receive confirmation from the focal point that all steps are complete

Only the **final confirmation from the focal point** guarantees participation in UN IAG 2026.

Please ensure you correctly identify your focal point. Without a designated focal point, registration cannot be completed.

[**IAG PRE-REGISTER LINK**](#)

Please make sure to provide accurate information, especially on arrival and departure as we need this information to coordinate transportation.

Your focal point will tell you more.

7.1 Entry visas (VERY IMPORTANT)

Kindly ensure that you have the necessary visas for Greece (and any countries you might need to travel through) and that they apply as early as possible to ensure that the visa is available on time. We would recommend immediate action to ensure visa availability. Invitation letters can be provided to facilitate visa requests. Full details of all travellers will be required, therefore please send us a copy of your passport.

Colleagues with a valid UNLP may use this to travel to the Games. Central guidance on this provision can be shared upon request. Participation to the Games does not qualify as a reason to request a UNLP.

There will be no reimbursement for no-show due to visa-related problems.

To request a personalized visa letter invitation, please visit the registration website. Please ensure that you have completed your online registration and that it has been validated by your Focal Point before requesting a visa letter. Only duly registered and approved participants may avail themselves of this service.

For inquiries use:

iag2026@interagencygames.org

7.2 Deadlines for Registration and Cancellation

Full reimbursement of the IAG package cost will only be possible for cancellations **up to Friday, 10 April 2026**. We reserve the right to assess refunds for cancellations after that date on a case-by-case basis. As in the past, we will do our utmost to work with suppliers to ensure flexibility.

Our global registration deadline is also set around mid-March. However, the exact dates for payment, registration and cancellation will be set by your organization's focal point.

7.3 Official ID

We would like to remind you to have official picture identification with you in case we need to verify your identity before or during a competition.

8. UN CODE OF CONDUCT

The organizations of the United Nations system are committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment. UN system events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any UN system event.

<https://www.un.org/en/content/codeofconduct/>

Please be assured that the UNIAG Control Committee will take any report of misconduct seriously and deal with the incident in line with established UN principles and procedures. By registering, you agree to abide by the UN code of conduct.

Please be aware that our primary goal is to deliver an enjoyable experience to everyone, so let's not forget that this event is first and foremost a moment of conviviality between colleagues and a unique occasion to get together for 4 days every year.

All of you are represented by one of your focal points on the Games' governing body, the "Control Commission" (CC). If you have any issue or grievance, please raise it directly with your focal point, who will bring it to the CC.

9. FOR ANY OTHER QUESTIONS

If you have specific questions should contact Mohamad Mardini or Steven Eales
Project Leads, IAG Organizing Committee under:

iag2026@interagencygames.org

Please also regularly check our website:

www.interagencygames.org

and follow us on

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNInterAgencyGames>

And

Instagram: @uninteragencygames

On behalf of the team

Samar Haidar

Chair, IAG Organizing Committee 2026