
OFFSHORE CRUISING AS A FORM OF RECREATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Olga Natalia **NOVAK**¹, Maciej **BROŻYNA**^{1,2}, Wojciech **CZARNY**²

1. *Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland*

2. *Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland*

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- offshore cruising,
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- tourism,
- recreation,
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- people with disabilities.

Abstract:

Sea sailing of people with disabilities shows type of physical activity as a viable form of tourism and recreation. It distributed sport as a philosophy and life passion, regardless of disability and health. British Isles are an excellent example for an implication of such solutions in Polish reality.

Shares marine initiated each year attract more and more followers, also those who on board are disabled crew.

Publication presents parallel image underinvestment, lack of infrastructure and system solutions to the situation of people with disabilities in terms of practicing active sailing.

The article includes also an idea of integrating psychosocial, thereby giving equal opportunities and equal rights for people with disabilities. It distributed integrate such society groups in everyday life gives a chance for self-realization.

INTRODUCTION

Offshore cruising is a form of recreation and lifestyle. Anyone fascinated by sailing may have their own definition. For some, it's just a sport, for others it is a philosophy and passion for life. Real sailors share a common system of values. Maritime education has its "own character/nature", in the words of Mariusz Zaruski, a pioneer of Polish sailing and maritime education. The nature of the sport has been shown in Jacek Czajewski's excerpt from his book: "Sailing teaches courage and consideration, resistance to hardship, rapid decision making, manage human resources, camaraderie, teamwork skills, resourcefulness, self-reliance, integrity, responsibility and discipline. Sailing has an inseparable relationship with nature which aids in maintaining a good physical condition and furthermore, is a great source of mental relaxation. Sailors are full of the joy of life, good health. They are productive workers, great organizers and dedicated community people."¹

Sailing contributes to the shaping of character traits among young and adult individuals when, in front of and behind the horizon, is the "big water", especially humbling to nature and himself. The knowledge gained from moments lived at sea reinforces that one should have faith in others while believing that every human being, young and old and even the ill are able to change much for the better in the world around us.

AIMS

The purpose of this article is to present offshore cruising as a form of recreation for people with disabilities assessed by ocean and offshore skippers, the participants-helpers

¹ J. Czajewski., *Morskie Opowieści*, Wielki Błękit, Warsaw 2009, page 22

and people with disabilities. We presented the respondents' opinions on potential barriers to the practice of cruising for people with disabilities. The study aims to present the respondents' opinions on the impact of the maritime education on the character of the individual and the existing barriers. The results also show unfriendly factors influencing the practice of this form of physical activity. Restrictions in this area show the way of eliminating adversities toward this kind of recreation being practiced by people with disabilities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to carry out the survey we used a questionnaire in the research.

The research material constituted ocean and offshore skippers, participant helpers and people with disabilities in the number of 88 individuals of both sexes. We presented the opinions of respondents on potential barriers to the practice of cruising for people with disabilities.

HYPOTHESIS

We present the following research hypothesis: Offshore cruising is a possible form of recreation for people with disabilities under certain rules of safety maintaining good sea practice, with experienced captain and crew on board, supported by disciplined attention to the equipment and the boat.

Conducted surveys were to accept or reject it.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to justify it, the following research questions were used:

- Is offshore cruising a possible form of recreation for disabled people?
- Is offshore cruising a safe form of recreation for people with disabilities?
- What factors contribute to improve the safety of people with disabilities at sea?
- What features does the sea shape in a man-sailor regardless of his/her level of physical fitness ?

THE RESULTS

Poland - Recent data on disability in Poland date back to 2011, when the National Census was conducted. It was found that in Poland there were 2530.4 thousand of disabled women in total, which compared to the census in 2002 recorded a decrease of 12.4%. Disabled men in 2011, constituted a smaller group - 2167.1 thousand of people. Their numbers decreased as compared to 2002 by 15.6%. Similarly, the number of disabled people legally in 2011 amounted to 3 131.9 thousand and decreased as compared to 2002 by almost 30%. A larger decrease in the number of people with disabilities was legally recorded among people living in the countryside (over 40%), in cities, the decrease was over 20%.²

The history of sport for people with disabilities in Poland dates back to the interwar period. There were mainly competitions of deaf and visually impaired people. After the war, thanks to prof. Wiktor Dega, the founder of the Polish school of rehabilitation, it has been a number of innovative projects that contributed to the organizational structures of the sport for people with disabilities.

In 1952 the Association of Sports START was founded, a national organization, operating for people with disabilities employed in the Cooperatives. The Polish Association of Disabled Sailors has been operating for the last 12 years in Poland, and since then, people with disabilities can go yachting in a formalized way. In 1996, sailing for the first time

² National Census of Population and Housing 2011. The report on the results of Central Statistical Office (GUS)

became a discipline for the Paralympics. There were Polish sailors among the crews. In 2000, in Sydney, sailing was a full-fledged medal sport. In 2004, the first Polish team qualified for the performance at the Paralympic Games. Unfortunately, there were huge organizational and financial barriers, which caused getting the 13th place. The history of Polish sailing began in Athens Paralympic, where Warsaw sailors from the START Disabled Sports Club in Warsaw took part. In 2007, through the initiative of the START, disabled sailors from Warsaw had the opportunity to participate in one of the most beautiful sailing events - The Tall Ships' Races.

For the first time in the European history of the Tall Ships races Polish team consisting partly of disabled sailors took part then. The START Club members and guests invited by the club, sailed aboard the schooner 'Warsaw Nike'. Five of the crew had reduced mobility or hearing.

Another spectacular marine project, which in 2006 involved sailors with disabilities, is the "See the Sea" – an initiative of the blind sea shanties musician - Romuald Roczen. The project combines the following elements: rehabilitation of the blind or visually impaired people by having to struggle with the difficulties previously unknown, disseminating information about the blind in the society and presenting their true potential. The project also makes cognitive training for healthy people taking part in it, gives the possibility of living a marine adventure. According to the author's (Romuald Roczen) data, over 150 people with disabilities have taken part in the project since 2006, some have sailed several times. The sail boat was equipped with a voice system for the blind helmsmen informing them about the course and deflection of the rudder and lifelines (wire ropes stretched from the bow to the stern, which in adverse weather conditions, allow sailors working on deck to be secured by pinning their safety harnesses to them). In addition, the navigational equipment of the vessel was marked with a grid map of longitude - readable for the blind. Those were raised lines on a map helping to determine the right position. Prior to the cruise, each blind participant received a description of the boat, including the names of sails and equipment in Braille. In addition to these facilities, nothing further was installed. All cruises of the "See the Sea" project were skippered by captain Janusz Zbierajewski.³

A strong motivation to practice nautical tourism is to understand the needs of the use of this form of movement for raising the efficiency, which is vital to obtain independence. Shaping simple skills that facilitate daily life, finding friends, and the opportunity to impress others with their own skills are the basic assumptions underlying sailing, including people with disabilities. Sailing can be an inspiration to explore own solutions to mitigate the effects of disability. Passion is the way to find the strength to overcome obstacles, relaxation and healing, healing the soul, to fight fear, learning to be a part, and cooperate in a group. In addition to recreation, for those who need the adrenaline rush and have an incentive to improve their efficiency, a sports area is also an important factor. Disabled sailors participate in Poland and in the world actively in the Paralympics finding a prominent place on the podium.

United Kingdom - In the UK there are over 10,800 000 disabled people, of whom 6.9 million are in the production age. They represent about 18% of the total labor force of the United Kingdom. Although this is a huge number and at least 1 in 4 British people have a close contact with the problem of disability. There are still prevalent social prejudices and misperceptions about people with disabilities. At the same time in the UK there are many charities whose purpose is to attempt to change, among other things, the state of public awareness and build opportunities for people with hyperactivity dysfunction, blind and partially sighted. One of such organizations is "The Jubilee Sailing Trust", a charity

³ Presented data comes from Polish Sports Association START and the data received in surveys

founded in 1978 on the initiative of Christopher Rudd, a teacher and a sailor who wanted to help his students with disabilities to experience similar sea adventures that were within their able-bodied peers. Together with Dr. Tony Hicklin, rheumatologist and rehabilitation specialist co-developed an idea of sailing the sea on board a full-tall ship. The first attempts with people with disabilities took place on board the ships "Marques", "Royalist" and "Soren Larsen".

It turned out however that despite the successes, the adaptations of "normal" functioning of ships were insufficient for the needs of people with disabilities. There became an apparent need for a unit specially built for people with disabilities. *The question arises precisely; why are tall ships intended to serve people with disabilities?* Volunteers of "The Jubilee Sailing Trust concluded that there are two main reasons. Firstly, sailing on a sailing vessel is not a common thing nowadays, so all crew members are in a similar situation - faced with something entirely new. Another reason, very close to the mission "The Jubilee Sailing Trust" is the fact that the work of the crew on board a tall ship is definitely a team approach that allows to extract the hidden resources from people's human life energy, the crew is supporting the team. It's a chance to meet other similar people, and all new friendships are far deeper and more lasting, because they are captured on the sea often in situations of extreme and demanding moments.

Work on the construction of the tall ship 'Lord Nelson', began in 1984 in Wievehoe in the county of Essex, and ended up in a shipyard named Cole on the Isle of Wight in 1986. Not without reason was the name Lord Nelson - Hero of the Crown chosen, who despite losing an arm and leg commanded an English fleet during the war. On the 17th October 1986 the ship set off on his first sea voyage. Lord Nelson is a barque ship, with a length of 54.7 meters with a bowsprit and includes 1024 square meters of sail. It can travel at speeds up to 10 knots (18km / h). This is one of two vessels in its class worldwide that has been built for disabled sailors. Furthermore, the vessel has been designed with many facilities and equipment to enable people with disabilities to be part of the active crew. From his first trip to the present, on board Lord Nelson there have been more than 24,000 people, of which 10,000 were physically disabled and almost 5000 utilising wheelchairs.

In June 1996, the keel was laid for the next tall ship - barque, called "Tenacious". The ceremony was attended by the Prince of York. This re-launched a huge social initiative; donations started pouring in from the wealthy, very often from the respected people in the UK. Youth massively participated as volunteers during the holidays at the construction site. In February 2000, the ship was launched on the water. It has 65 meters with the bowsprit, 1,217 square feet of sail and a top speed up to 11 knots. This tall ship has obviously a set of accessories for the disabled like its predecessor. On the sailing ship Tenacious, from its early days to the present, there have been more than 12,000 people, of whom 3,000 were physically disabled and a thousand of these bound to wheelchairs.

It has been said that "The Jubilee Sailing Trust", "Lord Nelson" and "Tenacious" are the only tall ships in the world, specially designed for disabled people that give such people a chance to sail on an equal footing with that of non-disabled people. They fully fulfilled the mission of the foundation. "The Jubilee Sailing Trust" reflects the prosperity of society, but also the mentality and attitudes of the British public. It is a country with a long maritime tradition. Dealing with the sea is a part of everyday life for most inhabitants of the islands. Clearly however, even apart from the issue of exploitation vessels, the image of their building included a wider public commitment too in the problem of everyday life for people with disabilities and their needs. Past practice shows that the idea was a very accurate initiative. Tall ship Lord Nelson visited Gdynia on the occasion of The Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Races in 2003, as well as in 2007 in Szczecin. This raised up great interest, not only was

it because of the noble line of the structure, but also the intended purpose - cruising with disabled sailing crew.

When comparing both British sailing activities to the Polish, people with disabilities instantly expose the disproportionate number of people covered by the measure. 13,000 disabled people on the two British vessels and 85 people on the "Zawisza Czarny" in Poland. To this number, we can add a dozen people sailing over the last years in the START and yet unspecified number of disabled people who had the opportunity to sail on board of a tall ship "Kapitan Głowacki" with people with disabilities. It should also be noted that Polish tall ships are not exactly adapted to sail with only disabled crews. They are rather worth doing activities and efforts only marginally trying to help those people with dysfunctions at sea. There is no strongly institutionalized, systematic approach to meet the needs of disabled sailors and perhaps more generally, the need for a decent, full-fledged rehabilitation of such people in Poland. We see a number of individual initiatives, mostly emerging from the heart of the interested parties, but there is no national coordination of such activities in the field of sailing. Perhaps this is also a difference in the "social mentality" of the British and the Poles. Still, we lack faith in the capacity of civil society and the power of collective action, not in the field of high politics, but mostly in everyday matters.

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL INTEGRATION

Psychosocial integration of people with disabilities, although formed in Poland in the harsh realities of social life created by the totalitarian system, was an expression of the evolution of views on the relation of society to the problems of life and rehabilitation people with disabilities. It was and still is a sign of the humanitarian acceptance of their place and the role of an entity in the society.⁴

Integration of people with disabilities in the society is understood as involving such people into a normal, everyday life, through various forms of education and preparation for employment and active participation in social life.⁵ One of the conditions for this integration is to ensure that all members have equal opportunities and equal rights, necessary for achieving important goals in life. The basis of making it happen, regardless

of their mental or physical disability, should be the possibility of independent living, learning and leisure as needed.

Offshore cruising for all people with disabilities is a form of social rehabilitation. It provides an active leisure, recreation, physical and mental development. It is conducive to establishing new contacts and to create relationships. Also it teaches responsibility, solidarity and cooperation in a team. Through its attractiveness, it draws and stimulates the further gaining knowledge and skills. People with disabilities have already been practicing sailing for many years in Poland, meeting all the training criteria. This type of qualified tourism can be classified as an extreme sport, depending on the aquatic basin or the form of sailing. For people with disabilities, especially with reduced mobility, multi-day yacht and tall ship cruises seem to be particularly relevant. These types of boats reduce multiple necessity of exiting onto the land, for lodging and hygienic purposes. Yet, it does not limit contacts with people in harbors and other boats' crews. To talk about sailing for people with dysfunctions to be real and safe, it requires adaptations on the boat, special sleeping areas, port wharfs and well-trained staff instructors. This carries large financial expenditures, however for sure, all rehabilitation outweigh are the most important advantages. But it is to be kept in mind of the barriers and the obstacles that limit the integration process.

⁴ Dykcik W., Poznań 1996.

⁵ Kościelak R., Warsaw 1996.

Often these are architectural barriers, urban planning, transport, communication, legal, financial, psychological, social or informational ones. Usually, the source of the difficulty is today shrinking and demanding job market, large financial restrictions and often marginalization or social exclusion of people with disabilities. Cruising is one of the exclusive sports (transportation, charter boat, the crew), existing transport barriers and financial resources so without social support, it seems impossible to have such a physical activity practice for people with disabilities. Thus, such social initiatives addressed to this group of the population are so valuable.

SAFETY AT SEA

Maritime safety or safety at sea, is a relatively new concept, so far associated only with the movement of the ship - navigation safety (safety of navigation). Currently, maritime security (maritime safety) is defined more widely and includes: nautical and technical aspects, especially the safety of life at sea (safety of life at sea SOLAS) shore-based personnel associated with the exploitation of marine equipment; psychological aspects of security, such as the ability to manage humans in crisis situations; ecological security (safer shipping and cleaner oceans); instruments for ensuring the observance of the principles of international maritime law, such as the coastal state intervention and harbor control.

Maritime Safety Act of 9 November 2000 regulates matters of maritime safety of the construction of the vessel, its standard installations and equipment qualifications and the crew of the vessel, the safety of shipping and rescue actions at sea. The Act does not contain any technical safety requirements. At least seven acts (not to mention the acts of a lower order) are related to the practice of sailing. The definition of a yacht in any of these acts cannot be found though. The last act defining the motor and a sailing yacht was Council of Ministers regulation dated on the 12.09.1997r. on sailing (Journal of Laws No. 112, item. 729), which in § 2 stated:

- sailing yacht is a sailing vessel designed for sport, tourism, recreation or training; and it (that sailing yacht) can be equipped with an auxiliary mechanical propulsion,
- motor yacht is a power-driven vessel designed for sports and recreation. For motor yacht shall also be considered a watercraft, pneumatic boat and a hovercraft,
- yacht is a vessel being use for a pleasure or a representation purpose.⁶

In the past few years the sailing situation has changed significantly in Poland. A significant liberalization has been introduced, and thus increased its popularity. A number of changes of the legal and organizational, creating real conditions for the free development in sailing has also been implemented. Regulation on the Safety of offshore sport vessels has been issued by the Minister of Navigation Services, The regulation was based on the maritime codex. This law specifies the types of shipping, the necessary equipment of yachts in signaling means and rescue, and radio communication devices. The Regulation authorizes the marine offices to determine the number of configurations crews and their respective qualifications. Classification boards, based on the same act, determine technical supervision and specific technical requirements of the security, as well as issue appropriate documents confirming compliance with these requirements by yachts and their equipment. Adherence to safety rules while yachting is the basis of the health and life of the members of the crew. Captain and quite often the owner of a yacht as well, are responsible for the safety. However, the responsibility lies in the hands of everyone, regardless of the function aboard.

Lack of sailing skills, disregard for rules, overconfidence, the routine, the desire to show off, lack of imagination, the inability to assess the situation and lack of caution

⁶ Source: Journal. U. No 109, item. 1156 (u.b.m.) and the Acts. Laws No. 112 poz.729

and alcohol at sea are considered to be the most common causes of damage and accidents.⁷ Yachting at night is particularly dangerous since maneuvers are usually difficult because of the lack of visibility. The crew is exposed to falling overboard or falling into open bins. For this reason, each yacht is equipped with a set of safety and rescue aids. A harness or lifeline should be used regardless of weather conditions while working on the mast and on the deck at night, in the day when the sea state exceeds Force 4. During the sea voyage each member of the crew should have a lifejacket that allows staying on the surface of the water. A lifebuoy, similarly the harness should be in a bright orange color, and around its circumference there are rope handles. The lifebuoy normally has an inscription giving the name of the individual vessel and the home port. The lifebuoy cannot be, in any way installed permanently as this might hamper its immediate use. On each side of the boat, there should be one lifebuoy, one of which must be fitted with a buoyant line 30 m long. The other one should be attached to a Floating light flashing automatically in case of emergency situation. The rescue measures are also a raft, necessary in case of a major accident or loss of the yacht, which allows shipwrecked crew to survive. The problem of saving lives at sea is included in national regulations and international conventions.

In addition to these legal acts, a maritime rescue system, called MERSAR applies here. The system was developed in 1970 and recommended for prevalence in 1980 by the International Maritime Organization. Its purpose is to save the lives of the crew and passengers of ships and aircraft at sea. The MERSAR system establishes cooperation of navy, commercial vessels, aircraft, helicopters and rescue stations onshore, in the field of research, directing actions and all the procedures concerning survivors. Referring to the study on the analysis of Polish marine yacht accidents by Adam Wozniak⁸, some basic causes of threats to health and life of crew members can be extracted. They are associated with:

1 aquatic basin: accidents have occurred as a result of the lack of knowledge of pilotage, lack of current, updated navigational maps and low level of ability to maneuver the yacht and unfamiliarity with navigation,

2 sailing season: at the end of the navigational season the vessel condition is usually well below safety standards and the prospect the proximal end of the season - is not conducive to the profitability of repair. Other factors are: insufficient facilities for receiving forecasts and predicting the weather, lack of stormy clothing, insufficient lighting upon the deck, inexperienced crew navigating in difficult weather-conditions,

3 the crews, their level of qualifications, structure and number: a lack of proper gradation of certificates for skippering yachts, poor sailing practice, too young skippers, long breaks

in practice at sea, the lack of control over certificate holders,

4 emergency rescue services: too little experience and poor organization, lack of specialized training to adapt to rapidly following changes in the development of yachting.

Safety at sea is an extremely important aspect of sailing. In the case of people with disabilities aboard even more significant. In addition to legal aspects, it is important to be responsible and competent in organizing active tourism. It is essential to have necessary equipment and devices for improving the safety of the crew. As usual, good sense and respect for safety regulations should be an overriding motto of each of the crew on the yacht.

⁷ The data from the questionnaires captains, participants-helpers and people with disabilities

⁸ Woźniak A., Gdańsk 1994.

THE FORECAST OF MARKET DEVELOPMENTS IN POLISH SAILING FOR THE YEARS 2007 – 2015

World Tourism Organization predicts that by 2020 the world will be travelled by about 1.5 milliard tourists. Europe will be the main area to feel this increase of tourism development. Polish forecast are very successful. In 2005, the sector produced 5.5% of GDP (PKB), providing employment for about 50 thousand people. These data are similar to the characteristic assessment of the European Union, where tourism can achieve 5.5% GDP (PKB) and give 6% of the total number of jobs.⁹

The development of the Polish tourist market has a positive effect on the sailing market. Both Pomerania Province and Masuria are very dynamically developing and competing areas. To help achieve this various factors, including the liberalization of the Polish sailing regulations, and improving infrastructure to encourage the use of the local offer. The undoubted influence on the development of such services are also promotional activities and increased visibility of local waters and ports among foreign tourists. Polish sailing market is characterized by gradually increasing number of purchases of new boats and replacing the previously used with larger vessels. A significant feature is the increase in the expectations of tourists to the range and standard of services in this market, increasing the purchasing power of potential owners and the availability of boats. Polish sailing market, without a doubt, is growing by improving the quality of life of community. Sailing and yacht ownership becomes a determinant of high status and a symbol of the professional or personal success. There is a phenomenon observed by administrators sailing facilities in Poland. It is a progressive increase in the number and modernization of yachts. The users often change their vessels into those which are more advanced, which makes harbors have too little capacity. Undoubtedly Polish sailing market requires large financial investments to meet the demands and expectations towards this type of service.

Poland is the leading producer of sailing and motor yachts in Europe. The market is growing at about 30% per year, a turnover of about 200 million dollars a year. About 90% of yachts built in Poland are exported.¹⁰ The largest importers are France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Norway and Russia. Polish yachts cost is lower by about 20% of the vessel built in the West. According to the Central Statistical Office in 2006 there were about 900 operators engaged in the manufacture and repair of yachts registered in Poland. Employment in shipyards is approximately 2,500 employees in areas of high unemployment. In the period from 1998 to 2006 the largest increase in employment in the industry, by about 250% was recorded. A big difficulty for the ship building industry is routes for transporting yachts. Pavement condition is so weak that the cost of safe carriage of the boats seems to be too costly and cumbersome. If this problem is not eliminated, most likely the majority of manufacturers of yachts will move production to areas more favorable, for example, around the Mediterranean basin and the Adriatic Sea. In view of this situation and good prospects for development in yacht sailing industry it seems to be extremely important to create conditions for development of sailing in Poland. From the strategy document from the Development of Polish Maritime Economy for 2007-2015, it is clear that marine tourism will become by 2020 the most profitable area in the entire travel industry. The strategy sets out a number of barriers to the development of the Polish sailing: the lack of an attractive network of marinas being equipped according to European standards and allowing for daily sailing from one port to another, as well as to ensure full safety of navigation and protection in all weather conditions, high fees for parking in the marinas; the lack of regulation in certification modeled on the provisions of other European countries,

⁹ The data comes from www.travelplanet.pl, [April 20, 2011, at. 11:00]

¹⁰ Central Statistical Office, 2007

which restricts access to the sea, the lack of universal and affordable insurance system for sailing and marine tourism, lack of active popularization of marine tourism in the media and therefore, a very low level of ensuring the safety of tourists in ports and coastal towns.

In summary, the sailing market is all the time developing rapidly and it seems to be conducive by various factors. The above assumptions require decent sized financial resources and their implementation is spread over time, however, all is gaining the new dimension.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A careful analysis of the received study material confirms existing research problems. Firstly, offshore cruising is a possible form of tourism and recreation for disabled people. 79.55% of respondents positively rated the possibility of sailing with people with disabilities, including 38% who have had experience in sailing with people with disabilities. So far, there have been some cruises on tall ships like *Henryk Rutkowski*, *Pogoria* and *Zawisza Czarny*, with the deaf, blind, paralyzed people or after the amputation, too. The leading example in Europe is the United Kingdom with its flagship *Lord Nelson*, which features a range of facilities and equipment to enable people with disabilities join an active role and be a crew member. There can be found such things like elevators between decks for people with reduced movement, vibrating pillows for hearing for impaired people in the event of alarms, steering wheel "joystick" for people with reduced mobility of arms, wide passage on deck and between decks and low installed devices (can be operated by people on wheelchairs), indicators installed in the deck for blind people, which helps to orientate and facilitate the movement of the deck unseeing, saying steering compass for blind skippers, attachment points/areas for wheelchairs mobility aids during storms, specially adapted for the disabled toilets and showers, mobile cranes and vertically movable tables in the mess. Both the ship's equipment and professional crew in which is a "steward medical" qualified nurse helping at any time. The crew is supported by a professional captain and his "effective" crew "" with physically fit volunteers: two boatswain helpers and an assistant cook. So far, *Lord Nelson* hosted on its board more than 24 000 people, of which 10 000 were physically disabled and nearly 5 000 were moving on a wheelchair. These impressive numbers should be moved on Polish waters to fulfill the third function of sailing serving social inclusion for all people and those with disabilities as well. Thereby giving both parties a chance to overcome human weaknesses and limitations. And although the process is determined by the level of physical and mental health, the duty of society is taking valuable initiatives for this group of the population. In support of this position Romuald Roczeń's quoted words of music created by a blind sailor that "the practice of sailing for people with disabilities is absolutely possible, but requires a healthy approach. I am opposed to "carriage" people with disabilities. I know that it is possible to set the case to be able to taste the sport as a whole, so decent."¹¹

Secondly, there are lots of opportunities to sail by people with disabilities. The studies confirm this assumption, 86.36% of all survey respondents indicated that this type of physical activity for people with disabilities is a safe sport. However, respondents refer to specialized technical solutions for yachts and trained captains and the supervising crew. With the rapidly growing sailing market, on the salt water basins there are many white sails, proving the thesis that the increased interest in this form of physical activity among people with disabilities. Popularization of this sport in the media during sailing events attracts every year more and more supporters of active and passive sea yachting whose motives are curiosity about the world and people, the desire to implement his childhood dreams of traveling, willingness to learn new skills, the need for movement, inspired by literature, making competitive sports

¹¹ A fragment of a questionnaire addressed to the participants of sea voyages.

and family traditions. And for people with disabilities it seems to be also important to be prepared and ready to come into contact and interaction with other people. And although there are a number of barriers and impediments that limit the integration of this social group, the marginalization or social exclusion of people with disabilities is much more expensive in the effects than undertaking social initiatives.¹²

Thirdly, there are specific factors that impact on increasing safety of disabled people at sea. The respondents listed the following:

- crew discipline (53.40%)
- an appropriate design of the boat (53.40%)
- obedience (48.86%)
- equipment for life-saving, communication and navigation (44.77%)
- sailing skills and experience (28.40%)
- intensive training before the cruise (21.59%)
- resistance to seasickness (13.63%)

Fourthly: nautical sailing shapes in a person, regardless of ability, many valuable qualities and skills. According to 88 respondents a marine education shapes:

- teamwork and crew discipline (27.38%)
- dutifulness (20.66%)
- accuracy (14.32%)
- comradeship (27%)
- perseverance in undertaken duties on a yacht (10.12%)
- patience (3.96%)
- resourcefulness (1.07%)

The survey results confirm the established thesis that sailing the sea is a viable form of recreation for disabled people in accordance with certain safety rules, supported by a high degree of discipline and an ability to work in a team. There are no barriers that would prevent the practice of sailing for people with disabilities. It seems that only a lack of willingness to make marine projects and unassuming financial resources for their safety equipment may affect a small percentage of disabled sailors in the crew.

All of the surveyed respondents love the sea and space, which give them a sense of freedom and allow at least for a short time to forget about the existing restrictions.

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- 2 www.travelplanet.pl, [April 20, 2011, h. 11:00]
- 3 Polish Sports Association in Warsaw START