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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN UKRAINE: SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION TENDENCIES

Democratic development in Ukraine brought the discussion about the real situation of persons with disabilities in Ukraine up to date. The research is aimed at singling out problems and tendencies faced by persons with disabilities in Ukrainian society. Ukrainian legal and regulatory framework that regulates life and activities of persons with disabilities was analyzed. The definition was developed for the notion the 'media image of persons with disabilities' that is formed in accordance with the thematic structure of the materials dedicated to these people. Two-stage social research 'society-persons with disabilities-society' was conducted.

In the first stage it was found out that in most cases persons without disabilities treat persons with disabilities as the social and economic burden taken care of exclusively by their relatives and friends. The second stage of the research proved that persons with disabilities in Ukraine are willing to be employed on equal terms with persons without disabilities, because they deem themselves able to take their rightful place in the society. It has been established that the integration of people with disabilities must be significantly supported by society, which is called to create all the necessary conditions to facilitate the life of this vulnerable segment of the population. However, at the moment we can testify that society tends not to pay due attention to people with disabilities. Not a significant number of authorized persons take the necessary measures to solve social problems to make life easier for people with disabilities. However, there is an understanding that something is being done for people with disabilities, but not in full. Therefore, we believe that complete democratic transition of the country requires creating all the necessary conditions in order to facilitate life for the most vulnerable persons in the society.

Key words: persons with disabilities, media image, social media integration.

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ЛЮДИ З ІНВАЛІДНІСТЮ В УКРАЇНІ: ТЕНДЕНЦІ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ В СОЦІАЛЬНІ МЕДІА

Демократичний розвиток в Україні актуалізував дискусію про реальне становище людей з інвалідністю в Україні. Дослідження покликане виокремити проблеми та тенденції, з якими стикаються люди з інвалідністю в українському суспільстві. Проаналізовано нормативно-правову базу України, яка регулює життя та діяльність осіб з інвалідністю. Розроблено визначення понять «медіа-імідж людей з інвалідністю», що формується відповідно до тематичної структури матеріалів, які присвячені цим людям. Проведено двоетапне соціальне дослідження «суспільство-інваліди-суспільство». На першому етапі з'ясувалося, що в більшості випадків особи без інвалідності ставляться до людей з інвалідністю як до соціального та економічного «тягаря», якими опікуються виключно їхні родичі та друзі. Другий етап дослідження довів, що люди з інвалідністю в Україні бажають працевлаштовуватися на рівних умовах з особами без інвалідності, оскільки вважають себе спроможними зайняти гідне місце в суспільстві. Встановлено, що інтеграція людей з інвалідністю має суттєво підтримуватися суспільством, яке покликане створити всі необхідні умови для полегшення життя цієї вразливої верстви населення. Проте на даний момент ми можемо свідчити, що суспільство має тенденцію не приділяти належної уваги людям з інвалідністю. Незначна кількість уповноважених осіб вживають необхідних заходів для вирішення соціальних проблем, щоб полегшити життя людей з інвалідністю. Однак присутнє розуміння того, що щось робиться для людей з інвалідністю, але не в повному обсязі. Тому ми вважаємо, що повний демократичний перехід країни потребує створення всіх необхідних умов для того, щоб полегшити життя найбільш незахищеним верствам суспільства.

Ключові слова: особи з інвалідністю, медіа-імідж, інтеграція в соціальні мережі.

Introduction. Modern society actively promotes integration of persons with disabilities, helps them fulfill their potential. In Ukraine these issues have not found their complete solution yet. In this context it is essential that persons with disabilities should be supported, and all the conditions for their comfortable life should be provided. However, Ukrainian society still shows somewhat biased attitude to this group of population. As a result, it has a negative impact on persons with disabilities, undermines their self-esteem. On one hand, the society tries to ignore persons with disabilities, does not pay attention to them, on the other hand, there are those, who do their best in order to help them. In this situation Ukrainian society has to develop a joint strategy in order to make the social integration for

persons with disabilities easier. Thus, the mass media shall promote this process, as they have an enormous share in shaping public opinion, and imprinting certain images into people's consciousness. These are the mass media that direct the society to adopting important decisions about challenges encountered by persons with disabilities in Ukraine. Therefore, it may be concluded that the image of persons with disabilities has not been completely developed in Ukrainian society yet, while attitude to these people is still governed by stereotypes. We consider this problem to be a topical research issue that shall be solved with the help of the mass media.

The **main purpose** of the article is to study the attitude of Ukrainian society to people with disabilities, in particular, to compare with

the international experience presented in the media space of Ukraine.

In order to reach the aim of the research the following **tasks** shall be solved:

1. To analyze the Law of Ukraine about establishment of current rights and categories of persons with disabilities.

2. To define the notion and determine the usage of the term ‘media image’ of persons with disabilities in Ukrainian mass media.

3. Analyze the social security of people with disabilities in the international context and compare with the situation in Ukraine.

4. To conduct a social research dedicated to the topic ‘society-persons with disabilities-society’ and by the means of questionnaires to find out:

4.1. Attitude of persons without disabilities to persons with disabilities in Ukrainian society.

4.2. Attitude of persons with disabilities to themselves in the context of Ukrainian society.

Analysis of the legal and regulatory framework of Ukraine and its reflection in literature.

The main document that regulates life and activities of persons with disabilities is the Law of Ukraine ‘On Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine’ dated from 1991. The main types of body impairments recognized by the medical-social expertise according to the Law of Ukraine are illustrated in Figure 1:

Therefore, depending on the severity of the impairment, persons with disabilities become

group I, II, or III disability. Group I disability is subdivided into subgroups A and B according to the degree of the loss of health and persons’ need for constant assistance, support, or care.

The state services portal provides the categories of persons with disabilities with the following impairments:

1) physical impairments, such as musculoskeletal conditions;

2) intellectual disability and mental disorders;

3) hearing impairment (deaf and hard of hearing);

4) visual impairment (blind and visually impaired);

5) impairment of organs and their functioning, so that persons are disabled due to their medical condition (diabetes mellitus, bronchial asthma, cancer-related diseases, etc) (Persons with disabilities, 2021).

People are either born with these impairments, or develop them during their lifetime due to diseases, occupational injuries, military-activity-related injuries, war injuries, the Chernobyl accident, etc. High disability rates show how healthy Ukrainians are, reflect the level of the economic development of the country, and financial wellbeing of the citizens. Lately, Ukraine has been trying to transfer from the medical model of disability to the social model of disability, to change drastically the approach to the place and role of persons with disabilities in Ukrainian society. It goes without

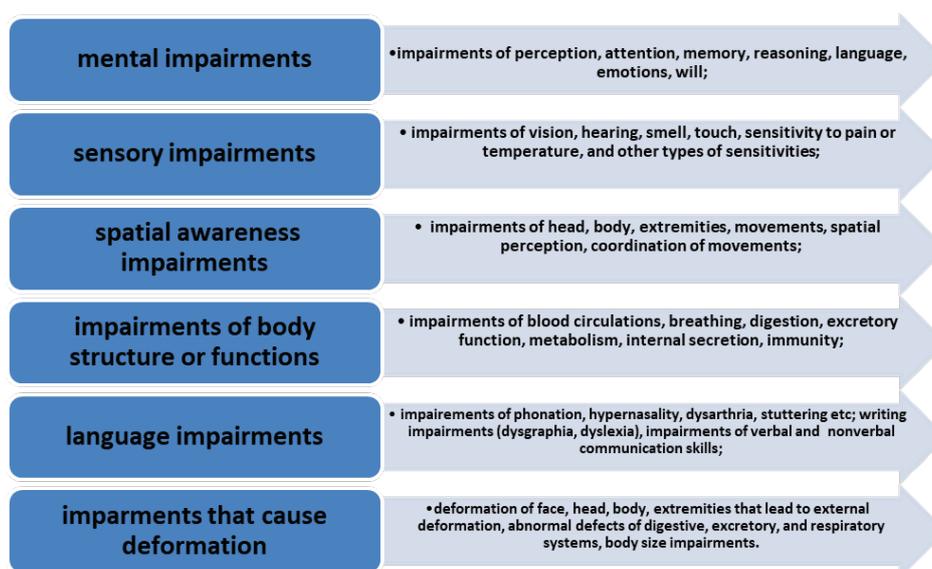


Fig. 1. Types of physical and mental impairments due to which Ukrainians may be deemed persons with disabilities (On approval, 2011)

saying that inadequate nutrition makes a huge impact on the population health; healthy lifestyle tendency is not that popular among Ukrainians yet. Moreover, there is a connection between socio-economic issues typical of our society and an increasing disability rate.

Recently, according to the main disease classes that result in group I disability, circulatory system diseases have been the leading cause of group I disability: 12.5 per 10,000 people. Number two cause is cancer-related diseases – 9.4 per 10,000 people, number three cause is musculoskeletal diseases – 7.9 per 10,000 people (Characteristics of the service, 2017). Chronic course of the majority of cardiovascular diseases has resulted in the highest rate of primary confirmation of disability, within working-age population as well, according to O. Lysunets (Lysunets, 2014). First of all, this is due to low socioeconomic status of population. Among other factors that contribute to the development of cardiovascular diseases are social isolation and low social support, stress in family life and at the workplace, depression, anxiety, hostility, and anger (Prevention of cardiovascular diseases, 2016). H. Slabkyi claims that this disease is caused by some medical (healthcare accessibility and quality) and social factors (irresponsible attitude to one's health), which come into effect on the basis of climatic peculiarities of the place of residence (Meier et al., 2019). Moreover, the connection between certain nutrition risk factors and cardiovascular diseases was investigated by the scientists, who researched cardiovascular diseases mortality rate from 1990 to 2016, Figure 2.

As we can see, in Ukraine mortality rate, and as a result, disability rate due to cardiovascular diseases are the highest. Thus, more than 1.5 thousands of people are annually registered as persons with disability due to cardiovascular diseases, more than 1000 of working-age citizens among them. Moreover, it equals 68% of the total mortality rate, no well-developed country has such a high rate; these figures are way lower in Europe and the USA. In comparison, around 47.7% of the deaths in the USA are caused by cardiovascular diseases (For persons with disabilities, 2022).

Therefore, after researching legislative aspects of the topic and its reflection in literature, the following statements were brought up: the Law of Ukraine states that if exercised the provisions could improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities; due to the fact that legislative acts are not complied with to their full extent, persons with disabilities have not been able to receive proper attitude and material assistance from Ukrainian society; Ukraine, that has recently become a part of the European Union, still treats persons with disabilities from the point of view of the Soviet mentality, ignores them and considers them to be an invalid and challenged part of Ukrainian society.

Social welfare of persons with disabilities in different countries in comparison with Ukraine. Taking into account negative tendency for mortality rate among persons with disabilities in Ukraine to increase, the government is obliged to ensure implementation of programs aimed at prevention of different diseases, namely cardiovascular, cancer-related, etc.



Fig. 2. Mortality per 100,000 people in different countries (Meier et al., 2019)

V.N. Kovalenko, Vice-President of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, Academician of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, Full Professor, Director of the State Institution 'National Scientific Center 'Academician M.D. Strazhesko Institute

of Cardiology' of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine' gives the following statistical data regarding the mortality rate due to cardiovascular diseases in Ukraine in comparison with some European countries (Snegirev, 2016):



Such situation may be explained by several reasons. Very few campaigns dedicated to healthy lifestyle and chronic and infectious disease prevention and prophylaxis took place in Ukraine in recent years. However, it should be noted that the situation is gradually improving; within the framework of the governmental program 'Accessible medication' persons suffering from cardiovascular diseases are able to obtain reimbursed medications, meaning that the cost of them are fully or partially covered by the state. The program is aimed at disability and mortality prevention (Draft Regional Program, 2018).

According to the Vice Director of the Amosov National Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery, Anatolii Rudenko, the number of surgeries that can prevent disability or deaths due to heart diseases is insufficient. In Ukraine a lot of people suffering from cardiovascular diseases need surgery. There are about 35-40 thousand newly registered cases of acute heart diseases requiring surgeries. However, only about 18 thousand surgeries are done

(25% of them are done in the Amosov Institute). 150 thousand people are awaiting their surgeries (Rudenko, 2019). However, it is also due to the fact that people do not have enough financial resources for that. He also claims that the number of pacemakers implanted in Ukraine is not high enough. For instance, in Germany they implant 15 times more pacemakers than in Ukraine (Rudenko, 2019).

In total, because of preventative programs the number of deaths caused by stroke decreased by two times in Germany, and by four times in Japan (Dudnik, 2015). Such results were achieved because people who are over the age of 40 years old and belong to high risk groups had an opportunity to undergo free screenings and get appropriate medical advice. Medical professionals and volunteers visit people of a senior age on a regular basis, and remind them about medical examinations and taking prescribed medication on time per phone. There are healthy eating schools in the country (Dudnik, 2015).

In well-developed countries the main principle of fighting against cardiovascular diseases lies in making an impact on the health determinants. The key elements are continuous screening, preventative measures, patient care (through reasonable distribution of healthcare) (Dudnik, 2015). Effective measures against cardiovascular diseases are taken in Finland, Lithuania, Ireland. Multiple preventative measures and programs arranged in these countries result in decreased rates of primary diseases and disabilities (Dudnik, 2015). In Ukraine the program aimed at cardiovascular disease prevention is still being developed.

In Ukraine cancer-related diseases are number-two reason for group 1 disability. Around 200,000 cases of cancer are registered in Ukraine annually. The amount of people diagnosed with cancer equals around 1 million. According to N. Druzhbliak, cancer causes 15% of deaths and 25% of disabilities (Druzhblyak, 2018). That may also be explained by the lack of material resources, untimely diagnosis, health assessment of poor quality, unfavorable environmental factors, bad habits, etc. Beside that, another major factor is the economic development of the country; for instance, 70% of all cancer-related deaths take place in African, Asian, Central, and South American countries, while cancer mortality is two times lower in Sweden, Finland and Denmark in comparison with Ukraine (Polumysna, 2020a).

Early diagnostics is the main reason for that. In our country cancer is usually diagnosed at the last stage. Oncologist Stanislav Ustinov says that there are special organizations, state institutions, associations, and institutes that are in charge of public health in such countries as the USA or Great Britain. Medical screening programs are organized by the government; in Great Britain nation-wide programs operating under the National Health Service reduce the mortality rate with the help of medical screenings. In the USA cancer treatment expenditures at each stage of the disease are calculated and included into medical insurance; cancer screening is obligatory there; and a great deal of attention is dedicated to social advertising. Billboards and flyers remind people about the danger of cancer-related diseases and the importance of regular medical examinations (Meier et al., 2019). The Private Oncology Center Director, A. Spizhenko informs that certain programs are oriented at healthy eating, culture, doing sports, even reducing stress. Besides that, there are also

special program aimed at early diagnostics of cancer. In most countries this norm is obligatory and it is paid for by the state, insurance company, or special-purpose programs organized by the government. Moreover, cancer patient treatment is underfinanced. For instance, the Cabinet of Ministers provided only 709 million UAH for that purpose, though it required 2,500,000,000 UAH. As for Ukraine, very few information and screening programs are organized by the means of separate centers or institutes (Meier et al., 2019).

Musculoskeletal system diseases are number-three reason for disability. Motor impairments are most often caused by cerebral palsy that is one of the leading reasons for disability in children. This disorder is widespread not only in Ukraine, but also in other countries: in Europe 2-3 children per 1 thousand newborns, in Ukraine – 2.56 per 1 thousand newborns. This number has been stable for the last 40 years (Martyniuk et al., 2013). Factors that contribute to the development of this disease are not fully understood yet; it may depend on the birth process or individual features of the parents and postnatal period.

All people have the right to live a normal life, to education and to accessibility to different institutions. If these rights are not ensured, people suffer from discrimination. The Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that: ‘Discrimination on the basis of disability’ means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation’ (Department of Economic, 2022).

A Ukrainian lawyer, Taras Shcherbliuk has studied how accessible are enterprises, institutions, and organizations for mobility impaired persons and concluded that discrimination on the basis of disability is not uncommon; one of its forms is violation of the laws of Ukraine on non-discrimination and the principle of accessibility for persons with disabilities provided for by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It should also be noted that discrimination on the basis of disability includes violation of norms, such as placing curbs at the pedestrian crossing, absence

of special equipment for persons with disabilities in public transport, too narrow doorways and passages in elevators that make it impossible for persons with disabilities to move (Goncharuk, 2016).

Within the course of the research the comparative analysis of measures taken for the sake of persons with disabilities in Ukraine and other countries was conducted. The results are included in the Table 1:

Table 1

Comparative monitoring of infrastructure services regarding persons with disabilities in Ukraine, and the USA and European countries

Public transport accessibility	
<i>Situation in Ukraine</i>	<i>Situation in the USA and European countries</i>
A small number of vehicles are adjusted for persons with disabilities.	All vehicles are adjusted for persons with disabilities. (Belgium)
Information accessibility	
Pedestrian crossings are not adjusted for visually impaired persons; stops are not announced on loudspeaker in public transport; public transport stops are not equipped with external microphones. Tactile paving is systematically used on sidewalks (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernihiv). Traffic lights with sound signals are not numerous. ATMs are not adjusted for persons with visual impairments.	Pedestrian crossings are adjusted for persons with disabilities, traffic lights have sound signals. There are remote controls for persons with visual impairments (coordination of movement in the underground, at traffic lights, or bus stops). Tactile paving is used on all sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. In Europe ATMs are equipped with a special earphone, so that visually impaired persons are able to hear about their actions. In the universities classroom nameplates are available in Braille, there are Braille printers for persons with visual impairments and sign language interpreters. (The Czech Republic)
Architectural accessibility	
Recently constructed stairs in the Taras Shevchenko Park are not adjusted for persons with disabilities. In Kyiv there are 11 metro stations equipped with 52 access ramps. Streets and public buildings are not adjusted for persons with disabilities.	In the USA and Europe needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account so that everything serves for their free movement; there are low thresholds, special equipments, comfortable ramps, lifts, and access ramps. Ski chairlifts adjusted for persons with disabilities in Narva, Estonia, and Robson Square in Vancouver, Canada may serve as good examples of Universal design. (The USA and Europe)
Employment	
Bohdan Kravchuk, the first Ukrainian graduate with Down Syndrome, was hired as a museum guide in the Museum of the History of Education of the Volyn Region. At the moment five persons with Down Syndrome are employed in Ukraine having an opportunity to socialize at work. Dutch Bakery offers internship to children with Down Syndrome.	In Europe from 2 to 13% of adults with Down Syndrome are employed at the open market. Students with Down Syndrome spend 50% of time with persons they are going to work with in the future. In the USA a number of positions are open for persons with Down Syndrome, for instance, hairdressers, bakers. In Europe children with Down Syndrome go to secondary schools, while adults with Down Syndrome are employed and start their own families. (European countries)
Education	
Primary stage of inclusion. Severe lack of access ramps and lifts to the second floor in schools. Severe lack of access ramps and specially equipped restrooms in universities. Partially biased attitude. 'Ukraina' University is fully equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities, as well as Teaching and Learning Center in Lviv.	Benefits: adjusted mode of study and examination procedures. Classrooms are fitted with necessary equipment, such as devices for listening to audiobooks, computer programs for converting text to speech. Universities are equipped with access ramps, lift platforms, specially adjusted restrooms, tactile signage, and sound signals. However, special tables for students using wheelchairs are not found in all universities.
Culture, literature	
'Visually Impaired Persons Rehabilitation Fund' printed 10 books by different authors in Braille for each one of 30 central, city and district libraries in Lviv region. Cartoons, films, and documentaries for persons with visual impairments are produced. American romantic drama <i>The Notebook</i> and Ukrainian drama <i>The Guide</i> were adjusted for persons with visual impairments.	Australian company Blitab produced E-books for persons with visual impairments. In Germany labels and price tags on goods are available in Braille. In Europe around 100 films for persons with visual impairments are produced annually, in China – 10-15 films. In Sweden, Norway and Germany around 1,500 books are published in Braille and 6,500 audiobooks are released.

As we can see, mortality and disability rates in Ukraine are among the highest ones in comparison with other European countries. Such situation may be explained by the absence of preventative programs aimed at early diagnostics. That is why it is essential that a number of programs of different character should be implemented, for example, medical screenings, examinations, which would give people an opportunity to obtain the treatment they need in time, healthy eating classes, etc. Such measures should be taken on a governmental level on a systematic basis. Doctors should be in charge of monitoring the development of the situation in different spheres and regions, noticing positive and negative changes caused by the undergone screenings and received treatment. It should be noted that a refuse to perform these actions is to be regarded as the discrimination of the Ukrainian nation, since many diseases may be prevented and many lives may be spared. Unfortunately, Ukraine is still at that stage when both the society and the government are only learning to pay relevant attention to the needs of persons with disabilities, while in Europe they have been working in that direction for decades already.

Therefore, nowadays Ukraine has the highest mortality and disability rate among the European countries. A comparative analysis of social welfare and improvement of living conditions of persons with disabilities proves that not all of the provisions regarding protection of the vulnerable segments of the population, namely persons with disabilities, that are stated in the Ukrainian legislation find their implementation in real life.

Content of the notion ‘media image’ of persons with disabilities

Nowadays, the mass media actively transmit ideas and thoughts and have a great impact on the vital decisions adopted by the society, planting images into public consciousness. This idea is supported by a French scientist Gustave Le Bon, who claimed that crowd is capable of thinking only by the means of images, it perceives only images. These are not the facts that impact people’s imagination, but the way they are distributed and presented to the crowd (Invalidity, 2022). The Ozhegov Dictionary of the Russian Language gives several meanings of the notion ‘image’: 1. In philosophy: a result and an ideal form of the reflection of material objects and phenomena in human consciousness; 2. Look, depiction (create something in one’s

own image, make resemblance); 3. Vivid, visual picture of someone; 4. In art: generalized artistic reflection of reality shaped in the form of a specific individual phenomenon; 5. In the work of fiction: type, character; 6. Order, direction of something, way of life (Livin, 2017). An image that is created in people’s imagination becomes independent at once and cannot be controlled by anybody. Thus, when a person looks at any object or recalls any other person or phenomenon, they associate them according to their beliefs with the help of images. However, the notion ‘image’ has several meanings that are interconnected. According to V. Shepel, image may be perceived as a certain synthetic representation that is formed in human consciousness towards specific person, organization, or any other social object, contains a lot of emotionally loaded information about the perceived object, and requires certain social behavior (Shvadchak, 2020). As a matter of fact, the essence of the very process of developing the image of something or someone is to create certain judgment of this person or phenomenon in the form of conscious or unconscious thoughts about this image. That is aimed at drawing public attention to certain objects (People with disabilities, 2017).

At present, there are several definitions of the notion ‘media image’. For instance, according to Rusakova O., ‘media image is a structural visual-emotional component of the virtual reality, which is a media model of the objective reality recorded on data carriers and public consciousness’; two basic elements are singled out in its structure: fragments of reality, and consciousness of the author as a reflection of the objective reality and subjective reality (Zanuda, 2018). According to Bohdan O., this is ‘a special image of the reality that is provided to mass audience by the media industry’ (Speaking without barriers, 2022). Halinska T. claims that media image should be considered in its narrow and broad meaning. In its narrow meaning ‘media image’ stands for fragments of reality described in the texts written by professional journalists exclusively that reflect their mindset, values, political preferences, and psychological traits; in its broad meaning ‘media image’ is the image of reality that is constructed in all texts created in the media space (by professional journalists, bloggers, internet-users, etc.) (Benefits and guarantees, n. d.).

Development of the media image of persons with disabilities depends first of all on the thematic

structure of the materials about these people. Publications dedicated to social security and insecurity are among the most frequent ones. This section includes the following thematic levels: materials about approval of legislative proposals and adoption of decision aimed at protection of persons with special needs; employment; social adaptation and discrimination; healthcare. Other thematic sections are: raising children with special needs, sports achievements. The research has proved that in general materials about sports achievements of Ukrainian paralympians appear during the Paralympic Games. For instance, in the online publication 'Ukrainska Pravda' ('Українська правда') there were no such publications in 2015, there were 29 of them in 2016, though (the most of them were written during September-October, when the Paralympic Games took place in Rio de Janeiro), and 2 in 2017. Moreover, the abovementioned articles are dedicated to the achievements and victories of Ukrainian paralympians, but they do not tell about all the hardships and challenges the sportsmen face during preparation for the Paralympics.

Education issues are also raised in the following articles: 'Basis – friendship', '10-year experience of the school with no limitations', 'External Independent Evaluation programs to be adjusted for visually impaired students', 'Free computer programming courses for teenagers with disabilities to be opened in Kyiv', 'National Reforms Council supported the concept of the New Ukrainian School and inclusive education'; as well as cultural issues – 'DON'T want to be loved for disability', 'How the artist with atrophy sold 1000 works'.

Articles from the foreign periodicals may occasionally be found, for example The Guardian 'Lego unveils first ever minifigure in wheelchair', The Independent 'Argentine woman becomes first nursery teacher with Down's syndrome', as well as those telling about situations that happened to persons with disabilities from different countries – 'Dog named Teddy from the Northern Ireland saves a boy with Down's syndrome', 'Couple adopts and raises 88 children with disabilities within 40 years', 'Girl with prosthesis travels across the whole Europe and turns it into a recreational project'. This is a positive tendency, because in such a way readers are able to read about persons with disabilities from foreign countries. Such articles put an emphasis on the equality of rights

of persons with disabilities and their active integration into society, tolerant approach to them. That is made in the context of a projection on Ukrainian reality. Having focused the attention on the materials published by journalists in a range of Ukrainian mass media, it was found out that, lately, persons with disabilities have been either beyond measure positioned as heroes, or showed as incapable/dependent/disabled persons, who only expect help from others.

According to Z. Hadzhuk, positing these persons as victims deepens the stereotype about helplessness, vulnerability, and incapability of persons with disabilities. 'Even though the material does not refer to these persons as to the 'burden', it tells about how difficult it is for families and relatives to live with such persons; that undermines the image of persons with disabilities in the public perception. Moreover, the mass media do not often portrait persons with disabilities as equal, to say nothing of ordinary members of society. It is always emphasized that these persons require things not needed by persons without disabilities. To some extent, that may complicate integration of persons with disabilities into society (Holub, 2016), claims O. Holub.

Regardless of the amendments made into Ukrainian legislation, media continue to use inappropriate notions to refer to persons with disabilities, such as 'invalid', 'disabled person', 'with special needs'. Several headlines may serve as an example: 'Invalid father and two seriously ill daughters: multiple-children family from Rivne is asking for help' (Disabled father, 2018). In this case the author tries to evoke sympathy to this person, uses inappropriate notion, tells about fundraising in an improper way, and manipulates the reader. The headline 'How woman with cerebral palsy works with children with Down's syndrome and autism' (Markovskaya, 2016) refers to this woman and children she works with from the perspective of her disability, attention is focused on the medical issue.

Vyrtosy I. says that it is necessary to be careful with the usage of the image of a hero: 'Glorification and positioning oneself as a hero is dangerous due to the fact that afterwards persons with disabilities may be expected to achieve a level that is actually impossible for them. Moreover, heroic achievement may be perceived as something that compensates for disability. There is nothing extraordinary

about a person with disabilities entering the university, because that is a realization of their right to education. However, if a person with hearing impairment learns foreign languages, it should be noted, as it requires efforts' (Vyrtsky, 2015). The following article may be regarded as an example: 'Fighting with disability: famous Armed Forces of Ukraine Colonel dies in car crash' (Polumysna, 2020b). The material tells about a person, who was devoted to his military service and performed his duties. At the end of the article it is stated that he was able and wanted to serve, his disability did not prevent him from that. The journalist tells about this person from the point of view of his disability, glorifies him.

Therefore, a number of articles have appeared lately containing a well-considered and proper wording and focusing not on the disability, but on the achievements and problems of these persons. These articles reflect a respectful approach to persons with disabilities as active society members, who think for themselves and control their own life. For instance, 'Respect for diversity: what it means to be couple with disabilities', 'Winners in the center of Ukraine', 'Mother in wheelchair, or How women with disabilities give birth in Ukraine', 'Unlimited in Rio. What is behind the victories of our paralympians', a set of articles 'The Price of the Medal. Story of Paralympic Champions in Rio', etc.

However, the mass media materials almost do not cover educational and cultural achievements of persons with disabilities in Ukraine. Moreover, articles dedicated to their leisure activities and hobbies are very scarce. In the context of the above mentioned, it could be concluded that the mass media in Ukraine do not provide any information about persons with disabilities having higher education, Candidate of Sciences Degree, or speaking foreign languages. It results in a certain information gap for people, who would like to get to know more about possibilities and ways for full development of persons with disabilities.

Results of the social research 'society-person with disability-society'

In order to determine the objective and subjective factors that have an impact on the process of integration of persons with disabilities into Ukrainian society, a double-purpose social research was conducted. The territorial units chosen for the research were the largest cities located in

the historical regions of Ukraine, such as: Western Ukraine – Lviv, Central Ukraine – Dnipro, Eastern Ukraine – Siverodonetsk, Southern Ukraine – Odessa, Northern Ukraine – Kyiv.

The main tasks of the research are the following ones:

1. To find out the attitude of persons without disabilities to persons with disabilities, and their social and public situation.

2. To find out the attitude of persons with disabilities to the society and government.

3. To compare the attitude of persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities to themselves and their situation in Ukraine.

The research was carried out with the help of questionnaires. Respondents were average persons aged from 18 to 65 years old. Total number of persons chosen in all regions of Ukraine equals 194 persons, among them 36 persons were from Kyiv; 32 persons from Dnipro; 41 persons from Lviv; 47 persons from Odessa; 38 persons from Siverodonetsk. A reference survey of persons with disabilities was also conducted in order to find out their attitude to those around them. Persons with disabilities were from the same cities where survey of persons without disabilities took place. That has not been a surprise that most persons with disabilities are not willing to provide information about themselves despite the fact that questionnaires were anonymous. However, thankfully to those, who agreed, we are able to consider the processed data to be representative, due to the fact that among the respondents there was 1 person with disabilities for every 5 persons without disabilities.

The outcomes of the research may be used as a general reflection of the situation (interaction) 'society-person with disability' in the territory of Ukraine. We have inherited from Soviet times not enough tolerant, biased and even indifferent attitude to people with disabilities. We can trace this to the example of V. Fefelov's book 'There are no disabled people in the USSR', in which the author, having a disability, described the situation of people with disabilities in the Soviet Union and showed the attitude of the Soviet government, which was projected on society, to people with a disability. There are enough phrases: 'Being unable to put a disabled person in a bicycle stroller, the state is ashamed of its appearance and tries to remove it from the eyes! And this is logical: in a society that considers itself ideal, everything should be neat:

its clothes, shop windows, facade. How is it that – along the impeccable system of buglers and Kumachev stands, a twisted, ugly creature suddenly crawls or rolls on a makeshift rattling plaque with rollers? Who allowed? Take away! Take away! Remove!’ (Kipiani, 2011). No one asked these people if they wanted and could work, no one was interested in their feelings. Therefore, our survey provides an opportunity to trace whether attitudes toward people with disabilities have changed since Soviet times, and to learn about their personal opinions in general.

Elena Fudorova in the article ‘The role of the media in shaping public opinion about people with disabilities: expert assessments’ (Fudorova, 2012) has already tried to analyze society’s attitude towards people with disabilities. She conducted an in-depth expert review of the concept of success in life, found out what a person with a disability needs to feel successful and needed by society. And in order to better understand the image of a person with a disability, it is necessary to find out not only the attitude of society towards people with disabilities, but also the people with disabilities themselves. As practical implementation of the principles of democracy has proved, these are the relations between persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities that serve as an indicator of the social integration and a significant factor of tolerance the society shows towards its vulnerable members. Within the course of the research the following statistical data were collected; the data sources were persons without disabilities (Table 2).

The survey gave an opportunity to make sure that the statements, mentioned at the beginning of the article, are correct, such as: most Ukrainians are willing to support persons with disabilities, however, unfortunately, not all of them know, how to do that in a proper way and not to offend or insult persons with disabilities. They either feel sympathy to persons with disabilities, and hurt their feelings without even understanding that (that may be seen in the set of works *The Unlimited in Rio*, which tell us about the Paralympians, who ask others to treat them as equal), or do not pay attention to them at all, ignoring their needs. It should also be noted that the society is gradually turning away from the stereotypical perception of persons with disabilities as the economic burden; people have come to an understanding that persons with disabilities may be employed, even though they are not able to occupy certain positions. Ukrainians realize that they do not pay enough attention to persons with disabilities forcing them to feel unwanted in the society. Moreover, the government is obliged to ensure practical implementation of the laws aimed at supporting persons with disabilities, and to provide certain liability for their unfulfillment, yet even persons without disabilities tend not to trust the government.

In order to try to partially understand their mental state, persons with disabilities were given questionnaires. Most of the referents were of middle or senior age, because persons under 35 years old refused to take part in the survey, saying that they do not want to express their feelings publicly. Data collected due to those, who agreed to be interviewed, are illustrated in the Table 3.

Table 2

Analysis of attitude of persons without disabilities to persons with disabilities

What is your attitude to persons with disabilities?			
Disgust	Sympathy	Willingness to help	Indifference
2,2%	17,7%	62,6%	17,5%
Are persons with disabilities able to hold the same positions as persons without disabilities?			
Yes, they are	No, they are not	Yes, they are, but not all of them	Cannot answer
14,4%	4,7%	79%	1,9%
In your opinion, do governmental programs meet the needs of persons with disabilities in Ukraine?			
Yes, they do	Partially	No, they do not	I do not know
8,8%	74,2%	11,7%	5,3%
In your opinion, does the society pay enough attention to the needs of persons with disabilities?			
Yes, it does	Partially	No, it does not	I do not know
3,8%	13,8%	68,9%	13,5%
Are you personally ready to support persons with disabilities financially or emotionally?			
Yes, I am	Partially	No, I am not	I do not know
78,8%	9,9%	7,1%	4,2%

Table 3

Attitude of persons with disabilities to themselves and society

In your opinion, do people around you treat you properly and meet your needs?			
Their attitude is negative	They feel sympathy	They help	They are indifferent
18,4%	44,3%	31,4%	5,9%
Are you, as a person with disabilities, able to occupy the same positions as persons without disabilities?			
Yes, I am	No, I am not	Yes, I can occupy some of them	I do not know
89,7%	1,1%	7,7%	1,5%
In your opinion, do governmental programs meet the needs of persons with disabilities in Ukraine?			
Yes, they do	Partially	No, they do not	I do not know
1,8%	14,2%	83,7%	0,3%
In your opinion, does society pay enough attention to the needs of persons with disabilities?			
Yes, it does	Partially	No, it does not	I do not know
1,9%	23,4%	71,9%	2,8%
Do you feel like a burden for your family?			
Yes, I do	Partially	No, I do not	I do not know
86,6%	6,9%	4,3%	2,2%
Do you feel like a burden for the society?			
Yes, I do	Partially	No, I do not	I do not know
0,4%	1,2%	92,8%	5,6%

Persons with disabilities are very sensitive when it comes to any assistance they receive, and quite often perceive it as a result of pity for them from persons without disabilities, they are not comfortable with it. They are self-confident and prove that they are able to perform any work. Quite a small percentage say that they can occupy only certain positions. Persons with disabilities understand that society neither pays them enough attention, nor meets all their needs; they feel like a burden for their families, because these are family members that are mostly engaged in taking care of them, so that families, and not society face most challenges. Persons with disabilities believe they can be productive members of society; however, they are not given a chance to realize their full potential due to stereotypical and biased attitude towards them.

Persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities have the same attitudes and approaches to certain issues, however, sometimes they differ. Linear and circular diagrams demonstrate their dynamics. In order to observe it, we have analyzed each diagram representing surroundings and attitude towards persons with disabilities, their opportunity to be employed and perform their working duties, how well the government meets their needs, to what extent the society pays attention to the problems and challenges that persons with disability encounter, whether persons with disabilities feel like a burden for their families, the results are illustrated in Figure 3.

As the results prove, our society is not able to arrive at a consensus about ethic issues that is to treat persons

with disabilities in a proper way in order not to insult or offend them. Persons without disabilities try to help persons with disabilities; however the latter perceive their actions as pity for them. Besides, it has turned out that there are certain extremes in attitude towards these persons, as persons without disabilities may be completely indifferent to the problems of persons with disabilities, till some accident happens to them. It seems to persons with disabilities that their appearance and condition may push others away, or that they are treated with a negative attitude, or even disgust. Nevertheless, that is a big exaggeration and does not coincide with beliefs of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the researchers have been interested, whether persons with disabilities believe that they are able to be employed in Ukraine. The results obtained after the comparison of the answers provided by persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities are illustrated in Figure 4.

It goes without saying that each and every person tries to be like everyone else, and persons with disabilities are not an exception, that is why they may somewhat overestimate their capabilities for performing working duties. Employment gives persons with disabilities a possibility to realize their potential; however, that still remains one of the most pressing issues in our country: some people up to this time have a stereotypic perception of persons with disabilities as of those who are not able to take care of themselves without assistance,

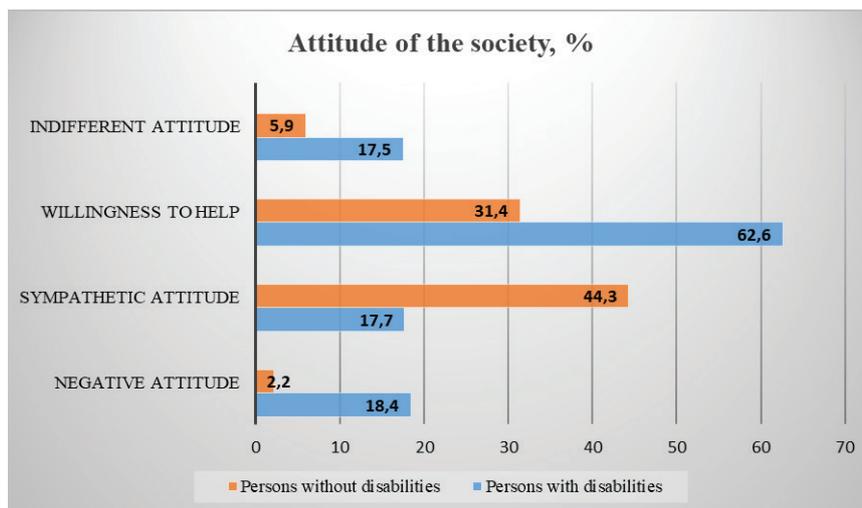


Fig. 3. Comparison of the results of the research Persons with disabilities VS Persons without disabilities

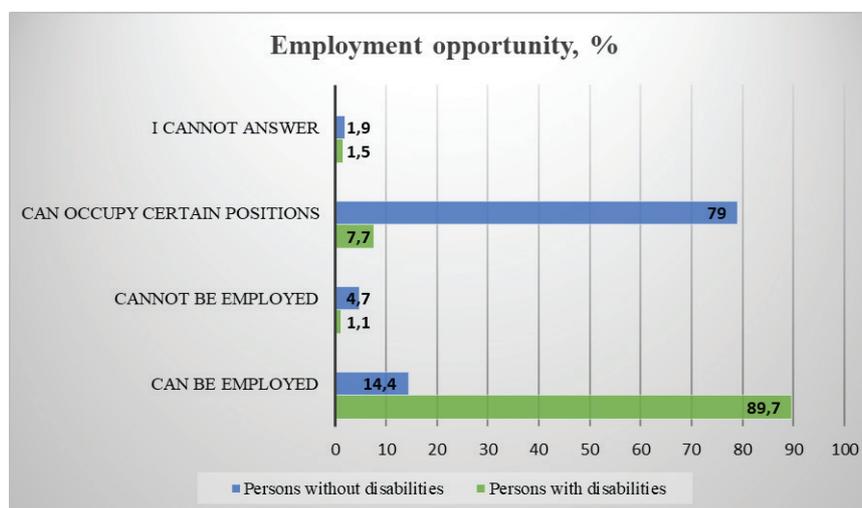


Fig. 4. Comparative analysis of the results of the answers provided by persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities regarding employment opportunities of the latter

and are the economic burden for their families. It is essential to provide persons with disabilities with a position that will neither undermine their health, nor overload them, therefore, persons with disabilities are able to occupy some positions and perform their working duties.

Having compared the answers in the questionnaires given by persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities regarding their social welfare on the governmental and state level, the following data were collected and illustrated in Figure 5.

The survey has proved that most citizens are familiar neither with the legal and regulatory framework, nor with their rights, nor with the rights of persons with disabilities. Unless it is

their personal concern, they are not aware of what the government does/does not do for persons with disabilities. They are convinced that the government is obliged to do something, and therefore provides assistance to persons with disabilities. However, the questionnaire answers of persons with disabilities show that a lot of them are not satisfied with the actions that the government takes.

Moreover, as a result of the influence the Soviet Union had on Ukrainian society some people think of persons with disabilities as of the economic burden on the state and family level. The answers persons with disabilities provided when asked whether they feel like a burden for the state and their families are illustrated in Figure 6.

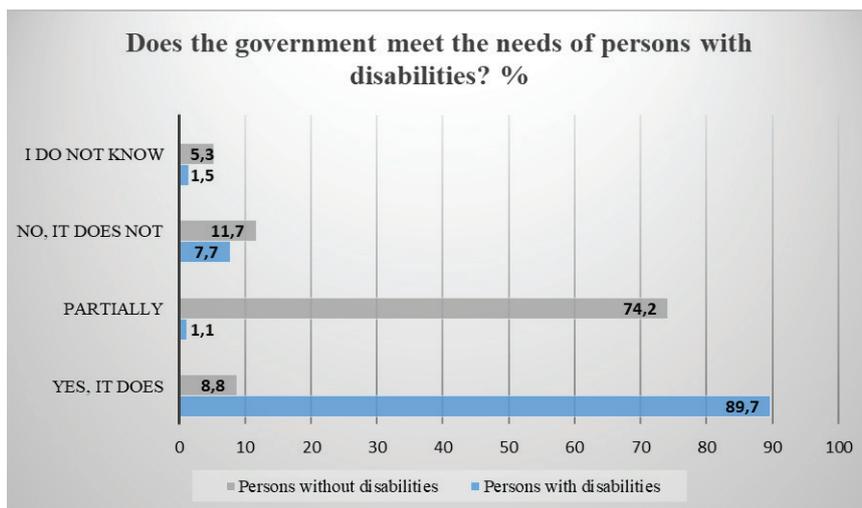


Fig. 5. Comparative analysis of the answers regarding social welfare provided to persons with disabilities by the government

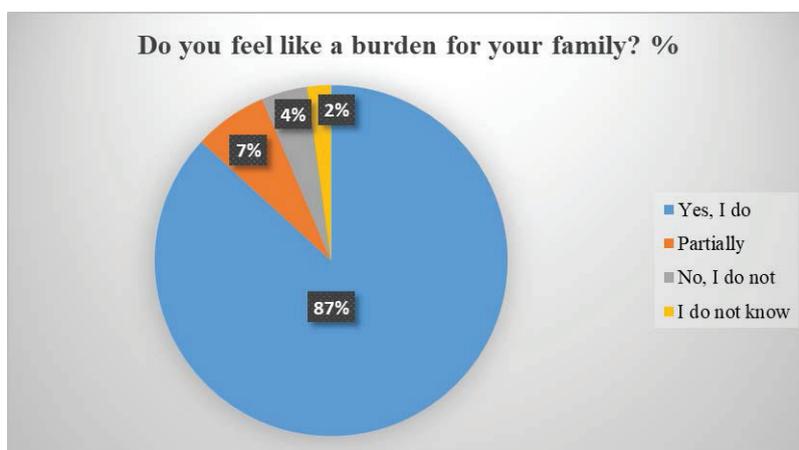


Fig. 6. Do persons with disabilities in Ukraine feel like a ‘burden’ for the society and their families

In spite of the inactivity of our society, a number of Ukrainians are ready to take care of persons with disabilities. That proves that individually Ukrainians are willing and able to help, however, there is no systematic approach to taking direct measures aimed at solving these problems on the governmental level. At the moment these are families and relatives of persons with disabilities, who are mainly responsible for dealing with these problems, while all the hardships and challenges fall on their shoulders; that is why person with disabilities fell like a burden for their families.

Moreover, a certain attitude towards persons with disabilities prevails in the society, and it is mainly stereotypic. Chief Editor of the web-site ‘Human Rights Center’, journalist, human rights activist, coauthor of the manual ‘Nothing For Us

Without Us. Guidelines on Inclusive Decision-making for Media’ Iryna Vyrtsosu singled out several stereotypes regarding persons with disabilities that are prevalent in the society. According to Iryna Vyrtsosu (Vyrtsosu, 2015), the approach of the society may be classified and presented in the way that is illustrated in Figure 7:

In our opinion, the main task of professional journalists is to challenge these stereotypes and to avoid them, because the image of persons with disabilities is developed and transmitted to the society through the media. It plays an important role, whether journalists use proper language while telling about the problems of persons with disabilities, perceive and present these persons not from the perspective of their disability, but as individuals.



Fig. 7. Attitude of Ukrainian society to persons with disabilities according to the mass media (Vyrtsky, 2015)

Discussion. Attitude to persons with disabilities in Ukraine is ambivalent and controversial. We believe that Ukraine is not too poor to adjust all buildings with wheelchair ramps; however, a systematic course of actions aimed at solving this problem has not been adopted yet. There are a number of problems like that; for instance, some cities have purchased a few busses adjusted for transportation of persons with disabilities, but due to human factor some transport workers refuse to provide transportation services for these persons. It does not require too much money to equip traffic lights with sound signals; nevertheless, there are only few of them in Ukrainian cities. It proves that the government is not interested in implementing the laws adopted by the powers that be in order to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities. From the theoretical point of view, Ukrainian legislation is quite regulated and touches upon a lot of issues regarding creating proper conditions for this group of population; though from the practical point of view, we encounter rather different reality, for instance, difficulties in transportation, architectural inaccessibility, lack of specialists trained to provide assistance with treatment and rehabilitation, violation of rights and freedoms, for example, during elections, because polling stations are not adjusted for the needs of persons with disabilities, etc. In spite of the fact that Ukraine has set a course for the European integration, we are not able to say that something has drastically changed in the attitude towards these persons, except for making amendments to some laws that, unfortunately, are

not always enacted. This situation is contradictory: the government does not focus that much attention on the problems of persons with disabilities, the society believes that the government is supposed to take care of persons with disabilities; as a result, the positive development comes either from families of persons with disabilities, or from public organizations.

Conclusions.

1. Legal and regulatory framework of Ukraine includes general norms and requirements for providing comfortable conditions for persons with disabilities in the society. Dividing persons with disabilities into groups according to the degree of their disability the government supports them financially and stimulates the latter to apply the Law on Inclusive Education adopted in 2018.

2. Nevertheless, it was found out that the Law of Ukraine, the Article 'On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities' in particular, is not exercised to its full extent. The main reasons for non-compliance with the law are the following ones: influence of the Soviet Union that finds its expression in a negative attitude to persons incapable of working, general disinterest of the society in meeting needs of persons with disabilities, biased attitude to those, who need constant assistance and support, but cannot give anything back.

3. The results of the comparison of social conditions for people with disabilities with the countries of Europe and the United States showed that Ukraine is the first in the number of deaths among

this category of the population. Locally, Ukrainians are trying to comply with the law and take into account the needs of people with disabilities in construction, transportation, information, education and others. However, this tendency has no progressive development, and it is still far from becoming widespread. To date, the authorities have joined forces with the central governing bodies to develop a comprehensive system for the rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities into society, drawing on the leading countries and activities of their organizations. Although at the moment there are positive changes in the integration of people with disabilities into society.

4. The research proved that the 'media image' of persons with disabilities in Ukrainian mass media ranges from ignorant to heroic. Ignorance takes place when the society does not pay attention to this population group; only extremely heroic deeds of persons with disabilities force journalists to write about their achievements.

5. According to the analysis of the social survey results, one thing that both persons without

disabilities and persons with disabilities have in common is considering the latter to be a burden for the government, the society, and their families. However, persons with disabilities are ready to work and to be employed, but the society is not ready to provide positions for them and allow them to become a part of the society.

Taking into account the abovementioned, we would like to say that the integration of persons with disabilities shall be strongly supported by the society that is supposed to create all the necessary conditions in order to facilitate life of this vulnerable group of population. Nevertheless, at the moment we can witness that the society tends not to pay enough attention to persons with disabilities, very few persons take actions to solve their problems. They both understand that something is being done, not to the full extent, though, while some persons without disabilities are unaware of these problems due to the fact that they either do not notice, or do not want to notice persons with disabilities.

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