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Five disabled athletes to attempt swim across Aegean

Five athletes with a disability and two swimmers/coaches on Saturday will attempt to swim across the Aegean, as they will disembark from Cape Sounion, in the extreme southeastern portion of Attica prefecture, in an effort to reach the Cyclades island of Milos in five days. Intermediate stops will be the other Cyclades islands of Kythnos, Serifos, Sifnos and Kimolos.

The audacious project is has been dubbed "Aegeathlon", from the Greek word "athlos", which means an extraordinary achievement. The initiative supported by the [Athens 2004](#) Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The crossing comes exactly one year before the Paralympic Games of 2004 (Sept. 17–28, 2004) are hosted in Athens. The aim of the project is to better inform and inspire the public about Paralympic athletes' potential and their achievements. It also aims to promote the Aegean islands' unsurpassed beauty and culture.

The distance between Cape Sounion – long associated with the ancient temple of Poseidon -- and Milos is 145 km (78 nautical miles). However, depending on weather and sea conditions during the relay, athletes may swim 160 to 170 km (85 – 92 nautical miles).

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Athletes are expected to set off early in the morning and swim continuously, one after the other, until they reach their next destination, and without the use of artificial limbs or swimming aids, such as flippers. Experienced escorts will be nearby on boats, while a medical team will also monitor the athletes during the relay.

Participating Athletes include Constantinos Fykas (Paralympic gold medallist in Sydney 2000), Marianna Bratsalia, Giannis Chatzibeis, Sakis Kostaris and Nikos Paterakis. George Mathas, the first Greek to officially cross the English Channel, and Petros Tsiallas, a champion long-distance swimming, will join them.

"Aegeathlon" is sponsored by the Yacht Club of Greece (NOE), GM Yachting and Adidas.

A press conference will be held at the premises of the Yacht Club in Microlimano, Piraeus, on Thursday at 12:30pm.

For more information, call Antonios Rellas at (+30) 6977.20.22.16 or send a fax to (+30) 210.68.28.755.

A relevant website is at www.aegeathlon.com, email to info@aegeathlon.com

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