



BULLETIN

INTERVIEW

“The accession of the Czech Republic to the EU will certainly influence implementation of the Healthy Cities Project. It already has...”

An interview with Alena Steflöva, MD, Head of WHO Liaison Office in the Czech Republic

How does WHO perceive the developments in the Healthy Cities Project in the Czech Republic?

WHO does not evaluate and compare the individual countries. Nevertheless, informal discussions in WHO forums suggest that WHO is well aware of the number of supporters the project has won in the Czech Republic. I believe that HCCZ could now serve as a model for similar organisations in some European countries. Head of the WHO Office in Slovakia and I want to promote mutual cooperation and exchange of information within the Healthy Cities Project. For instance, our Slovak colleagues plan to take part in some of the events organised by the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic.

Will the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU influence the Healthy Cities Project?

It most certainly will. For that matter, I think it already has. The new regional structure of the Czech Republic, for instance, was prompted by an EU requirement. Transfer of responsibility to communal politicians is also one of the EU strategies. This change in itself offers a possibility to obtain financing from the structural funds. The fact that regions have started joining HCCZ, or are interested in its activities, indicates that regional politicians will be looking for suitable models to incorporate activities promoting health, sustainable development and quality of life into the regional plans. The structural funds are certainly quite motivating.

The Healthy Cities Project has recently entered a new phase. What are the expectations?

Naturally, this project, too, has to react to the new circumstances of the 21st century. Aging of the population and maintaining the quality of life for the growing group of senior citizens, the influence of migration, creation of healthy and safe conditions for the young generation – these are the main issues that the upcoming Phase IV of the Healthy Cities Project must address.

NEWS

Kromeriz, Litomerice: Campaign to Protect Children against Accidents

Last year's survey initiated by Litomerice as a HCCZ member revealed that children riding bicycles do not wear protective helmets. Litomerice was inspired by the "Going biking? - Don't Forget Your Helmet!" campaign organised last year by the Safe Community of Kromeriz to increase the safety of children in traffic, and invited the organisers to run the campaign in Litomerice as well. The police, the General Health Insurance Company, the town hall and others will participate in the project, with Kromeriz providing the methodology and promotion materials. "We would like to organise a drawing contest for schools, the winners of which would receive discount vouchers to buy a bicycle helmet. In Kromeriz, the city officials make random visits to various places such as the city outdoor swimming pool, and if they see a youngster on a bicycle wearing a helmet, they give him or her a brand new bike," explains Lenka Prochazkova, HCP coordinator. "We hope that this campaign will help protect children in Litomerice against serious injuries as it did in Kromeriz," summed up Dr. Sedlak of the children's ward of the Kromeriz hospital, one of the campaign's organisers.

Chrudim: Jupiter Will Help Victims of Battering

The Healthy City of Chrudim and the J.J. Pestalozzi Centre are preparing the Jupiter project to help victims of domestic violence.

According to a recent survey, dozens of battered women have sought help in the Chrudim region; the real numbers of people in distress are, however, much higher. "Battering is usually well hidden within a family. In the Chrudim region, there are about twenty women who admit they are a victim of battering and want to do something about it. But there are many more who just need to talk about their problems," said Radka Pochobradská, Criminal Activity Prevention Manager of the Chrudim city hall. Pavel Tvrdík, Director of J. J. Pestalozzi Centre, noted that children and, in rare cases, men can be victims of battering as well. In the second quarter of the year, all of them should be able to find help in the present Chrudim Children Crisis Centre. "We plan to extend the helpline and start providing these people with comprehensive consultation services, including legal, psychological and therapeutic help, if

necessary, and offer a protected accommodation facility to those who may decide to solve the situation radically and need a temporary secret home," said Tvrdík. Jupiter also promotes prevention. According to Ms Pochobradská, the problem often is that people just do not know how their partner should be treating them. Chrudim will need about CZK 1.5 million this year to buy at least one protected flat, pay the specialists and cover the other costs. The city has asked for a subsidy from the Ministry of Interior's criminal activities prevention programme, but most of the funds will have to be raised from other sources. "We hope to obtain some of the money from sponsors and from the European Union," summed up Pochobradská. As part of the Project Incubator, HCCZ's financial advisor Jan Brožek has already recommended a suitable EU subsidy programme to Chrudim. The project should also be co-funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Skotnice: They Are Building a Playground for All Generations

Some time ago, the Skotnice town hall came with an idea to use a vacant area in the premises of the football stadium. What should it be? A dance floor? A playground? Or something else? The town officials asked the citizens to choose the best alternative. And the citizens did.

Children were the first ones to comment on the project. Besides things they had wished for some time (play slide, climbing walls, sand box, garden house), they came up with a number of ideas, from a natural gym all the way to a herbal garden for grandmas. Then adults started coming in with their ideas. "The citizens were very active. All interest and age groups became involved in the project, which is great because everyone will be able to find a place for themselves when the facility is built," notes Mayor Anna Muzná. The project is expected to cost approximately CZK 1.5 million. In the first half of 2003, Skotnice received CZK 200,000 from Foundation VIA Prague. The rest of the money should come from the municipal budget, the region, sponsors and a public fund raising campaign. "The project will include a play area for both pre-school and older children, a rest zone for mothers with prams and senior citizens as well as a herbal and flower garden. There will be a sports playground, natural gym and a place for organising cultural events and family celebrations," explained the Mayor. "We will be very busy – both with the construction and the fund raising," she sighed, but praised the Skotnice people for their enthusiasm and determination to see the demanding project through.

Moravská Třebová: 'Recyman' Will Teach Children to Recycle

Moravská Třebová decided to teach citizens of all age groups to recycle communal waste. The

HCP office, the city's Technical Services and Maintenance Unit (TSMU) and the Environmental Department joined forces to accomplish the task.

TSMU is responsible for collecting waste and sorted paper and plastic materials in the city. "There are enough recycling containers around the city," says HCP coordinator Veronika Capalová. The problem is with the sorting of the waste. "People repeatedly put garbage instead of recycled waste in the containers," explains Gabriela Horčíková, TSMU executive. Together with Pavel Baca, Head of Environmental Department, they prepared a project to start educating the youngest generation. "Recyman and His Flowers" is a programme teaching kids the basics of recycling and environmental education. "We will start with kindergartens and the first grades of primary schools," says Capalová. About 130 children in six pre-school classes will be playing a game to solve various problems related to waste recycling. The tutor will guide them to find out that the only way not to get overwhelmed by garbage is to recycle. Primary school pupils will learn about recycling through Grayland and Greenisle, two islands with two different lifestyles. "One lives in an environmentally friendly way, the other sacrificed green areas to industry. Attempting to resolve the critical waste situation, children will be competing for points (stickers with pictures of flowers), which will be awarded to them if they deposit biowaste and recycled waste in the recycling yard. The most successful of them will win a bicycle," says Capalová. The whole schools will take part in a series of lectures, after which they will receive a set of recycling bins. Adults, too, can learn from the ecoproject. Stickers on containers will tell them how well they recycle: blossoms will mean they are good at it; thistles will be signalling recycling problems.

Gate Open to Cities

In March, Central Walachia Microregion and Telc, the second largest city of the Jihlava District, joined HCCZ. The first campaign organised by Telc as a Healthy City was "Healthy Teeth" to prevent carries in pre-school children and primary school pupils. The active newcomer will also carry on with its previous projects. "In February, we launched the Peer Programme to positively influence views and attitudes of young people without any direct authoritative actions on the part of adults," explained Deputy Mayor Hana Müllerová.

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