



NEWS

HCCZ: General Meeting in Hodonín

The autumn General Meeting of HCCZ was held on 24th November in the Healthy City of Hodonín. A total of 23 representatives of Healthy Cities, Towns and Regions attended the meeting.

The people present were representatives of some newly accepted members: Příbrami, Rožnova pod Radhoštěm and Zlín Region, who made brief contributions.



The meeting was preceded by the morning Healthy City section, which Hodonín organised on the topic, "Experience of Co-operation with Roma Associations in Hodonín and the Surrounding Area". At the start of the General Meeting the participants were informed, by employees of the HCCZ Office, of selected HCCZ activities in 2004. The presentation of the association's status and activities was followed by a discussion of development options for HCCZ. The General Meeting continued with a presentation on the financial management of HCCZ in 2004 and the approval of the budget for next year. Following a proposal by the HCCZ Council, the meeting elected a new HCCZ chairwoman – Dr. Barbora Javorová, a corporation member and councillor in Brno.



How Do Czech Cities, Towns and Regions Plan to Develop?

This was the topic of the 11th international Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (HCCZ) conference, held on 3rd November under the patronage of Minister of Foreign Affairs JUDr. Cyril Svoboda and Minister of the Environment RNDr. Libor Ambrozek at the Czech Foreign Ministry.

The 125 delegates included representatives of ministries (Environment, Health), the World Health Organisation Liaison Office, Regional Public Health Stations, non-profit organisations, companies and obviously cities, regions and towns. The event was supported by the Czech State Environmental Fund.



Immediately after the introductory address by Dr. Jiří Hlaváček of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the chairwoman of the HCCZ Dr. Olga Sehnalová, the first item on the afternoon agenda was a presentation of the international UN "Capacity 2015" project and the "UNDP Supporting Sustainable Growth" development project. The WHO Office director in Prague, Dr. Alena Šteflová, presented community projects run by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the Czech Republic, which afforded new opportunities to implement the international WHO "Health 21" programme by getting regions involved – e.g. the "Health Promoting School Project", "Healthy Workplace", "Regions for Health", etc. projects. There was a talk on the activities of the Slovak Network of Healthy Cities and its members (a total of 16 towns, e.g. Košice, Trnava, Bratislava, etc.) by a representative of the Association of Healthy Cities of Slovakia, Ingrid Huňavá. There followed a presentation of the current results of the Healthy City project and Local Agenda 21 (MA 21) by Petr Švec, HCCZ's National Coordinator. For the first time in HCCZ history, it awarded a prize to the "City with the greatest contribution to the development of HCCZ methodology".

The award was accepted from the association's chairwoman by the mayor of Vsetín and politician for the Healthy City project Jiří Čunek. The reasons the award was granted to Vsetín were explained by Petr Švec, "Vsetín linked community planning to strategic town management so that it is transparent for all town inhabitants and measurable. This procedure is not usual in the Czech Republic and Vsetín is a pioneer in this respect." The conference continued with an afternoon block, which was attended by the honoured guests Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Cyril Svoboda and Minister of the Environment Dr. Libor Ambrozek.



The programme included a presentation of a two-year HCCZ project aimed at ascertaining to what extent current strategic planning processes in the Czech Republic are in accordance with the principles of MA21. The HCCZ is implementing the "Local Agenda 21" project for social and economic municipality development with support from the State Environmental Fund CR in 2003-2004. Strategic planning was obviously the link for all the other contributions. You can download presentations from the conference at: <http://www.nszm.cz>

Vsetín: Suggest an economy measure and get part of the money saved

At the start of November, Vsetín town hall announced a completely new programme, which should lead to cost savings in the town budget.

To put it simply, a town hall employee who comes up with an idea for a measure which saves the town money on standard jobs (e.g. running its office, cleaning the town, administering its assets, repair and maintenance of town property, etc.) gets a financial reward, in addition to his gross salary. The amount of the reward is determined based on the amount of proved savings achieved in one year. Suggestions related to, e.g. reducing bureaucracy, simplifying activities, etc. can also be made by employees of allowance organisations and companies established by the town. "We want to create an environment which motivates people to look for savings in the town's budget and simplifies activities, as well as creating pressure on the relevant bodies and legislators to declare a similar programme and simplify the laws.

Such steps can save a lot of money not only for the authorities, but also for citizens themselves, explained town mayor Jiří Čunek. Vsetín town hall intends to use the money it saves mostly to reduce unemployment and help business in the town.

Třeboň: Social Services Aren't Planned "On a Green Table"

Třeboň has started a process of community planning for social services. It is working with organisations which provide social services and the general public. The aim is to create a community plan for social services, i.e. a "live" document, which takes citizens' actual needs into account. The planning was supported by a grant from the South-Bohemian Region in July.



What stage is the project at? Community planning of social services has been discussed at three social commission meetings, at which the commission members gradually acquainted themselves with the project and then established a working party comprising representatives of the town and social service providers and users. The working party is being helped by an expert partner – a team from the South Bohemian University in České Budějovice (Health and Social Faculty), which arranges data gathering and analysis. The community plan for social services in Třeboň should focus on the following target groups: the physically or mentally handicapped, pensioners, children and young people, the unemployed, persons in a temporary social crisis and, as a part of preventing crime, persons addicted to drugs and other substances. The first half of December will see data gathering on the ground, during which approximately 500 citizens should be questioned. Questionnaire research into the general public's attitudes was supported by the publication of a poll in the local newspaper *Třeboňský svět* and its distribution to all mailboxes. The poll ends on 7th January 2005. Community planning has already started in other Healthy Cities – for example in Třebíč, Vsetín, Karviná, etc.

Chrudim: Pupils "Throw Chairs Away" during Lessons, Now They Sit on Overballs

More than 35 percent of Czech school-age children show signs of incorrect posture. To prevent and deal with this problem in pre-school children and pupils in the first year of primary school we devised the "Learning to Sit and Exercise Healthily" project, which will run from this April under the Healthy City banner in six primary and seven nursery schools, in a special school and in an Institute for Mentally Handicapped Young People in Chrudim.



Over two thousand children from Chrudim are exercising with overballs in schools to teach them correct posture. "At nursery schools they have exercises during the day, at primary schools exercises are for first years – partly it is between teaching, for example the children sit on the balls, it supports their backbone and so on, partly it is part of PE," said Šárka Trunečková, coordinator for the Healthy City Chrudim project. Chrudim town hall received a grant from Pardubice Region for the purchase of the overballs, so the 14 organisations could buy the balls for CZK 30 (instead of CZK 120). As a part of an assessment of the project's efficiency, the regional public health station in Pardubice regularly measures children's movement apparatus. In the future it expects to carry out musculature screening aimed at early detection of incorrect posture for at least one year, with an assessment of the level of children's movement activity during a day and week using a questionnaire.

Schools are working with parents, who have received an exercise programme specifically designed for their children and have the option of continuing the teacher's work at home. "The children really like the exercises and so do the teachers! It's an interesting and pleasant way for both of them to spend time. The exercises are also a big help coping with hyperactive children, experience shows that the balls calm these children down," concluded Šárka Trunečková.

Příbram: City Now In HCCZ, But Suffers from Environmental Problems

In November Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic expanded to include Příbram. "The town hall expects that it will succeed in increasing its citizens' interest in their own health," said deputy mayor MUDr. Ivan Šedivý.

A decision on specific projects is still to be made. "They could, however, focus on schools and on a healthy lifestyle," indicated the deputy mayor. In his opinion, the Healthy City project is primarily to identify risk factors in the town which could negatively affect citizen's lives. According to MUDr. Šedivý, Příbram is suffering from old environmental problems, caused not only by the steelworks, but also by uranium mining. According to the deputy mayor, it is therefore necessary to tell people how to avoid health risks. "It's very much about education. I think that Příbram is in an ideal position to get involved in projects like Healthy School and Healthy Lifestyle," he added, saying that the town should also pay attention to preventing drug addiction.

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(The illustration photographs used come from the archives of Healthy Cities, Towns and Regions of the Czech Republic.)