



BULLETIN

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INTERVIEW

“Our citizens’ interest in the Healthy City Forum was a pleasant surprise.”

An interview with Dr. Eva Peskova, Deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of Mlada Boleslav and HCP politician

1. A Healthy City Forum, which is a public discussion about the City Health Development Plan, took place in your city last December. It is reported to have stirred up substantial public interest.

Yes, it is true. Over two hundred people showed up, which came as a pleasant surprise, given that a lot of foreigners, who do not have close ties to the city, have moved to Mlada Boleslav recently in pursuit of work, and long-term residents have not been really active up to now. The majority of those who came were women. Many of the proposals and comments dealt with the quality of life of senior citizens and families with children. It turned out that both older people and young families would welcome more free time activities. Following up on the Forum, the city hall has organised a series of sight-seeing tours for senior citizens around Mlada Boleslav. The first tour took place on January 10. Starting in February, senior citizens can take free painting lessons once in a fortnight.

2. Mlada Boleslav acceded to the Healthy Cities network in 2003. How has the city changed owing to the project?

I think we have done quite a lot. We have started working with non-profit organisations. We participated in all campaigns organised by HCCZ. With Tree of Life, a civic association, as our partner, we launched a major project to utilise an unused civil defence bunker. Located just underneath one of the city’s kindergartens, the bunker will turn into a swimming pool hosting swimming courses for babies and kids from four other kindergartens and a nearby housing estate. The project has been finalised and the city has allocated money for its implementation. Last year, we turned the local commercial forest called Sahara into a suburban recreation park. The project was co-funded by the Central Bohemian Region and included the installation of new benches and litter bins as well as a new open-air gym. The Fitness Trail with labyrinths made of natural materials invites both children and adults to get some exercise. The Healthy City has also taken steps to revitalise the Stepanka forest park.

NEWS

HCCZ: Membership on the Rise

The number of HCCZ members has been increasing in a geometrical ratio. The association presently has 52 members with regional influence on 1,105 cities and municipalities, i.e. 2.3 million inhabitants (22% of Czech population).



Until recently, most of HCCZ members were Moravian cities; the situation changed after six Czech cities joined the association last year: Pribram, Ricany, Borovany, Kostelec nad Orlici, Slany, and Telc. They were followed by yet another newcomer – Roznov pod Radhostem. The number of member regions has also grown to include the Zlin Region, nicknamed by journalists “The Region of Healthy Cities” for the high number of HCCZ member cities. Last year, the Vysocina Region changed its membership status from member/observer to regular member. Microregions near Healthy Cities continued to join HCCZ last year, among them the Central Vsetin Region and Valasskomezircsko – Kelecko Union of Municipalities. The city of Uherske Hradiste has joined HCCZ in January this year; accession is being negotiated with Usti nad Labem, Kurim, Strasin and others.

Hodonin, Chrudim, Vsetin: Most People Are Satisfied with Life in Their City

This was the outcome of opinion polls organised by the city halls in Vsetin, Hodonin and Chrudim last autumn during the implementation of European common indicators.

The first question of the two-page questionnaire was: “How satisfied are you with the life in your city?” Most respondents answered “Quite satisfied” or “Very satisfied” (88% in Vsetin, 84% in Hodonin, and 90% in Chrudim). People also commented on the quality of housing, basic public services (health care, social services, education), job opportunities, or offer of free time activities. The precise number of participants in the survey depended on each city’s population, but there were nearly one thousand respondents in all three of them. Apart from the citizens’ satisfaction, the survey mapped their mobility to help estimate

how much the mobility in the city burdens the environment. The aim of both surveys was to determine two European common indicators – Citizen satisfaction with local community and Local mobility and passenger transportation. Czech Healthy Cities can compare the results among themselves as well as internationally, as the indicators have been implemented by about 150 cities throughout Europe last year (e.g. Turku, Maribor, Modena, or Barcelona). “The monitoring of objective indicators is a crucial decision-making tool and is necessary for obtaining money from governmental or European funds,” said Jiri Cunek, Mayor of Vsetin and HCP politician. The Europe-wide project has been implemented under the auspices of the European Commission; in Czech Healthy Cities, it was a part of a HCCZ project supported by the Ministry of Environment. When implementing it, the city halls collaborated with the Institute for Environmental Policy (UEP), one of HCCZ’s expert partners.



Chrudim: High school students helping complete the questionnaire.

Trebič: Senior Citizens Enjoy Mailing and Surfing the Internet

The civic association Pernula, a partner of the Healthy City, has undertaken to introduce senior citizens to the world of computers and the Internet. Those who participated in last year’s “Learning and Education of Senior Citizens” project feel comfortable now searching for information on the web or sending their children or grandchildren an e-mail. The project was supported from the Healthy City of Trebič’s grant program.

To begin with, Pernula provided a computer room at its premises in Dukovanska Street, where the seniors meet once a week. “One of the ladies has a son in America, so she is happy she can communicate with him via e-mail,” says Dana Kratochvilova, Director of Pernula. “We also invite professional speakers to give lectures, and provide consultations.” The oldest

participant in the course at the moment is 77 years old. For the most part, the project is funded from the Healthy City’s grant program; sponsors have provided older computers. “Naturally, older people are not as fast learning computer skills, but it is admirable that they try,” says Dana Kratochvilova.

Koprivnice: Healthy City to Launch 2nd Phase of Housing Estate Regeneration

In terms of environment, the Sever housing estate is the most problematic quarter of Koprivnice. The city hall is about to launch Phase 2 of Sever’s regeneration. For three days near the end of last year, it exhibited projects outlining the future of another six high-riser locations.



Koprivnice embarked upon changing the housing estate as part of the HCP and Agenda 21. During Phase 1 in the second half of 2004, they built thirty-seven new parking stalls, reconstructed the access roads to garages and to the service yard of the

local basic school, installed 20 litter bins and new benches. “Phase 1 also includes new trees, but they will not be planted until the growing season this year,” explained HCP coordinator Radka Chalupkova. She believes the exhibition and the follow-up information meeting have provided a useful feedback regarding the citizens’ views of the project. “About thirty people saw the exhibition; only a few came to the meeting, but that was probably because the time was not all that convenient,” she explained. Despite that, quite a few interesting opinions and suggestions came up, with the participants addressing their questions not only to the city representatives, but also to the authors of the proposals.

IN BRIEF:

- **Vsetin:** In December, all schools and allowance organisations received environmental certificates.
- **Kromeriz:** The city published its City Health Development Plan in a practical pocket folder format.

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(The photographs were provided by the archives of HCCZ member cities, municipalities and regions.)