



BULLETIN

No.: 4 / 2005 - APRIL 2005

HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW

“Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic should be not only a coordinator, but also a consultant and an assistant to its members.”



**An interview with
Jiri Cunek, Mayor of Vsetin
and the new Chairman
of the Healthy Cities of
the Czech Republic (HCCZ)
since March 31, 2005.**

1. How do you see the future of the association and the Healthy Cities Project in the Czech Republic?

I would like HCCZ to become a professional organisation that helps its members obtain financial funds for increasing the quality of life and the sustainable development of the member cities and regions. To this end, I will work to expand our services to the cities, primarily in the area of subsidies. We have a short period of time until 2013, during which we will be able to obtain money from EU funds. Nobody knows whether there will be any such opportunity after that date. And without any doubt, the best way to use the money is to invest in the health of citizens of our cities and municipalities. HCCZ should be not only a coordinator, but also a consultant and an assistant to its members.

2. The City of Vsetin has been a member of HCCZ since 2001. What do you think of your cooperation with the association so far?

The councillors of Vsetin approved our accession to HCCZ in September 2001. In 2002, we approved the Healthy Cities Declaration and became a regular member of HCCZ. HCCZ experts have helped us develop partnerships with the non-profit sector and build civil society. We have learnt to work

more systematically and we came to understand what working with the public was about. We realized there was more to it than the city hall just posting a notice somewhere, but that it really takes multiple public discussions, round tables and meetings with citizens. HCCZ has taught us to put together the city health development plan, we have drawn inspiration from other partner cities, and Vsetin has also received quite a few grants and subsidies, such as for the Healthy Cities Project or CZK 350 thousand for the strategic planning project last year. On the other hand, Vsetin has greatly contributed to the HCCZ Methodology. I am convinced that both Vsetin and HCCZ have benefited from our membership in HCCZ.

3. What does the Healthy Cities Project bring to a city, region or municipality?

- Exchange of information;
- Assistance in obtaining finances;
- Improved qualifications of the staff;
- Improved functioning of public administration; and
- Higher quality of the environment and the life of citizens.

NEWS

General Meeting Changed the Healthy Cities

This year's first regular General Meeting of HCCZ took place in Koprivnice on March 31. The session was attended by more than thirty representatives of twenty-three HCCZ member municipalities. The General Meeting elected new members of the association's supreme bodies – HCCZ Council and the Audit Committee – and the new HCCZ Chairman for a two-year term of office (2005-2007).

On March 31, Jiri Cunek, Mayor of Vsetin, became new HCCZ Chairman; Marie Cerna, Deputy Chair of Vysocina Region, and Ladislav Ambrozek, Deputy Mayor of Hodonin, were elected the First and the Second Deputy Chair, respectively. In his speech, the new Chairman talked about the new opportunities offered by EU funds that need to be used in the upcoming period. According to Jiri Cunek, HCCZ associates active cities that mutually share best practice and inspiration. The new HCCZ Council includes representatives of two cities that had



not been in the Council before – Koprivnice and Litomerice. The other Council members are from Brno, Kromeriz, Prostějov, and Trebic. Unlike the past term, the present HCCZ Council has nine members. HCCZ Council is the managing body of the association, deciding about conceptual and strategic issues and discussing projects for HCCZ members. However, the election of supreme body members was not the only important issue on the agenda of the spring General Meeting. The General Meeting also adopted a resolution to amend the current HCCZ Articles of Association. The participants were introduced to



proposed internal regulations of HCCZ, and received copies of the Annual Report and the report about HCCZ economic results for last year. Representatives of new member cities of Kurim and Litomyšl gave short speeches about the reasons why their cities joined HCCZ and about the expected benefits. In the end of the session, HCCZ National Coordinator Petr Svec informed the participants about the state of HCCZ and the plan of HCCZ activities for 2005. The autumn General Meeting of HCCZ is scheduled to take place in Letovice on November 30.

HCCZ Organised a Seminar at the Ministry for Local Development

This year's second meeting of representatives from Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions under the auspices of Czech Government Ministers took place at the Ministry for Local Development on April 21. The meeting was hosted by the newly appointed Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek, who was Minister for Local Development at the time. At the centre of focus was the involvement of the public in regions and large cities with respect to obtaining finances from EU funds. The meeting was attended by 40 representatives from HCCZ

member municipalities as well as city halls of other Czech and Moravian cities, including officials from six Regional Authorities.

Participants from all over the Czech Republic were welcomed by Jiri Cunek, HCCZ Chairman and Mayor of Vsetin, and Petr Svec, Healthy City Project National Coordinator. The morning session started with the presentation of Petr Svec on current activities of HCCZ with respect to the preparation of projects by HCCZ members that would be eligible for EU funding between 2007 and 2013. Petr Svec described the related services HCCZ offers to its members, including methodological assistance, and emphasized the importance of collaboration with member regions – Vysocina and the Zlin Region – on the Joint Regional Operational Plan 3.3 (JROP 3.3). Owing to mutual cooperation, Healthy Cities and Healthy Regions are in a better position to raise funds necessary for the implementation of the individual plans the cities and regions have. JROP was often mentioned in the other presentations, too; Vera Jourova, Deputy Minister for Local Development, said she considered this European grant programme to be the most practical financial tool for the cities and municipalities in the Czech Republic. The cooperation of the Ministry for Local Development with the regions is quite extensive, with the projects and deliverables varying depending on the region. According to Vera Jourova, 430 individual projects were presented during the third call for projects; the regions will call for more projects in early June and October depending on how much money they will have at the time. The Ministry for Local Development is currently negotiating in Brussels the future terms and conditions of projects from the Czech Republic, hoping, among other things, to reduce the co-financing required for operational programmes. Another representative of the Ministry for Local Development, Radka Soukupova of the JROP and JPD Managing Body Department, explained the principles of JROP in terms of creating well-functioning partnerships at the level of regions, cities and municipalities. Martin Cerny of the Vysocina Regional Authority followed up with a presentation on partner projects between the region and organisations active in the region, and described in greater detail the Partnership for Vysocina project (<http://www.partnerstvi-vysocina.cz>). In the afternoon session, Petr Holy of the Regional Development Department reported about concrete activities in the Vysocina Region that are related to the involvement of NGOs and the planning of NGO Development Strategy in the region. Cooperation with NGOs and other Healthy City partners (e.g. schools, health care facilities, and others) was also presented with respect to the city-wide campaigns of Healthy Cities. Ivana Draholova, HCP coordinator from Brno, talked about the beginning and history of Brno Health Days. Last year, Brno Health Days celebrated their 10th anniversary, and the campaign was very



successful. Svatopluk Mika, Head of City Council Environmental Department, reported about the European Mobility Week in the South Bohemian city of Ceske Budejovice. The seminar was concluded by Councillor Vladimira Silhankova of the Healthy City of Hradec Kralove, who reported about Hradec Kralove's experience in the preparation of the city's Strategic Plan with active participation of the public. The seminar was another in the series of meetings that HCCZ has been organising under the auspices of Czech Ministers; the next meeting is scheduled to take place at the Ministry of Transport in September. The topic will be Safe Traffic in the City.

HCCZ: Experts and HCCZ Representatives Discussed Safety at Schools

On April 6, over eighty delegates came to Kromeriz to take part in the first national Safe School conference, organised at the local Secondary Medical School. The meeting of experts had been initiated by the working group of the Safe Community Kromeriz project to address the highly topical issue of accidents and the general safety at schools and school facilities. Organisational arrangements had been taken care of by the Secondary Medical School together with the Kromeriz office of the Zlin Health Institute and the city hall of Kromeriz as a member of HCCZ. As accident prevention is one of the Healthy Cities' priorities, their representatives were among the participants in the conference.

"Kromeriz hosted the conference since it is the only city in Central and Eastern Europe that is a member of the worldwide Safe Communities network, the Safe School being one of the new projects of the network under the umbrella of the World Health Organisation," said Marie Pokorna, HCP coordinator from Kromeriz, and added that the participants included representatives of the Accident Prevention Centre in Prague – Motol and the State Health Institute in Prague. "Safe School is not only about accidents. The issue of safety at schools is



The accompanying programme included simulation treatment of various wounds, demonstrated by students of the Secondary Medical School in Kromeriz.

much wider, involving problems such as child aggressiveness and chicane," explained Olga Sehnalova, Deputy Mayor of Kromeriz and HCP politician. According to her, the high number of participants indicates that people are becoming increasingly

interested in safety at schools. Jarmila Cihalova, manager of the Safe Community Kromeriz project, was pleased with both the number of attendants and the course of the meeting: "I was pleasantly surprised by the interest teachers have shown in the issue. The conference was also attended by health care specialists who create safety at schools and accident prevention programmes for children." Kromeriz has officially joined the Safe Community project in 2001. Having successfully met all criteria required by the World Health Organisation, the city became the 78th regular member of the worldwide Safe Communities network two years later. The partners of the city in the implementation of Safe Community and the Healthy Cities Project include the Zachar Basic School, the first to test the Safe School project in the Czech Republic.

HCCZ/Koprivnice: MCAP on Maternity Centres

The General Meeting of HCCZ in Koprivnice was preceded by an MCAP session, this time on Maternity Centres. The morning session, held at the local Kangaroo Maternity Centre (KMC), was attended by about twenty representatives of cities, maternity centres and children and youth homes from all over the Czech Republic.



Opening speeches were delivered by Jiri Novak, Deputy Mayor of Koprivnice and HCP politician, Radka Chalupkova, local HCP coordinator, and Miroslav Andrt for HCCZ. The participants were shown round the whole centre, which does not operate as an independent non-profit organisation, as is customary elsewhere, but as a facility run by the local Children and Youth Home (CYH). Participants discussed the various programmes KMC offers to parents on a maternity leave and their children, but also the technical issues involved in the operation of the centre. This part of the meeting was hosted by KMC Director Marcela Nedjalkova and CYH staff member Jarmila Vrtelkova. However, KMC is not used solely by mothers with little children. The building serves for a variety of activities: English courses; amateur dancing; stress prevention lessons for women organised by the Balsamina Centre; and exercises for pregnant women organised by the civic association Do You Have Time? As CYH Director Eva Mullerova said, KMC also co-organizes summer camps for children and their parents. The final discussion provided an insight into the KMC activities and the organisational arrangements related to its operation under the umbrella of CYH with the support of the city. Radka Chalupkova

informed the participants about the grant programme of the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; in 2004, the Ministry has started subsidizing non-profit organisations dealing with functional family support. The subsidies will eventually total CZK 50 million. During April and May this year, the Ministry will be considering a second round of the subsidy proceedings to allocate the remaining finances. Information updates will be available at the Ministry's website.



IN BRIEF

- **HCCZ:** The time of campaigns has come. A few days ago, citizens of Healthy Cities and their city hall officials celebrated the Earth Day (April 22). You can read about this campaign in a special issue of HCCZ Bulletin. On May 28, HCCZ members will participate in another worldwide campaign – the No Tobacco Day. A total of twenty cities joined the campaign last year. For the sixth successive year, the spring and summer campaign “harvest” will culminate in Days without Accidents (June 1–8). The participating Healthy Cities will engage in activities and projects such as “Going Biking? – Don’t Forget Your Helmet!”, “Safe Journey to School” or “EUCHIRES – European Child Restraint System”, a brand new nationwide campaign to promote the use of car seats for children.
- **Litomerice:** The city organised an educational campaign for pupils from the first to third grades of Litomerice’s basic schools, entitled “Safe Street”. The aim is for the children to become aware of safety issues not only in road traffic, but in general – how they should behave to be safe at school, at home and during free-time activities.
- **Kromeriz:** The city hall has placed wooden boxes with amenity trees and annual plants throughout the historic centre of Kromeriz. As the conservation department was against the planting of trees and ornamental shrubs in the centre, the councillors opted for this alternative to make the city greener.

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