



BULLETIN

No.: 9 / 2005 - SEPTEMBER 2005

HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW



**An interview with
Bohuslav Kuda, Vice Mayor
of Letovice and the Healthy
City Project politician.**

The Mobility Week and Car Free Day campaigns are currently in progress. This year Letovice yet again participate actively. What is being prepared within the scope of the campaign?

The town of Letovice has already taken part in this event repeatedly. The interested persons from non-profit organisations, who participate along with town on the preparations of the event, may ask for subsidy in the amount of 1,000 – 3,000 CZK, which shall activate other activities – and the quality of organised events improves with increasing number of partners. This year, Letovice have set themselves a task of addressing all age groups. For instance, the kids in each of three kindergartens will receive two jackets saying “children’s police” for safer walks, the pupils at the basic school and young people from the social welfare institution for the handicapped AGAPE will participate in graphic art competition to the topic of city transportation through their eyes. Sports activities, such as the traditional run through the castle park or cycling day on route around Letovice Dam will take place. These activities are designated to suit all age groups. Car velocity measurement in risk areas as well as didactic involvement of children in traffic is being prepared in cooperation with Police of the CR. Within the framework of the Car Free Day, the square will be closed and Tyršova street, where a number of schools are situated, shall be closed for parking. The practical results of the municipal office (MěÚ) as far as reduction of transport is concerned, can be seen on the road I/43, where new pedestrian crossings with traffic islands have been created for the sake of higher safety in collaboration with Road and Motorway Directorate of the CR.

What current events take place in Letovice as a Healthy City, apart from the aforesaid campaign?

The town of Letovice take part in all six HCCZ campaigns, currently we are already preparing for the Health Day.

Furthermore, considering that Letovice have no Strategic Development Plan prepared, a possibility was offered to us that we participate in HCCZ project, in which, among others, selected workers of the municipal office and other people from town and region shall be trained in how to prepare a development plan. On 13.10., another part of the seminar dealing with sustainable development of town shall take place. We would like to employ the trained team in preparation of realisation of the Letovicko Micro-region Strategic Plan. We are further involved in collaboration of HCCZ with the South Moravia Region; the activities prepared shall concern the preparation of projects for laying claims to EU resources in the new planning period of 2007-2013.

Letovice serves as another typical example of utilization of renewable sources of energy. Can you outline the current situation in this area and possibly other plans for the future?

Currently, the preparation of HCCZ general meeting is under way. The general meeting is to take place on 30.11.2005 in Letovice. We would like to show within the morning program as what new things we have managed to realise in our town. Owing to the financial support from the State Environmental Fund, we were able to place solar collectors for hot water heating on the roof of the Social Services Centre of the Town of Letovice. The solar collectors significantly reduce the town operating costs for this building. Because we are facing the necessity of reconstructing the kindergarten heating, we would like to (in the event that we succeed in obtaining subsidies) employ heat pumps with earth collectors, possibly using the ground water for heating both the building and the service water. Realisation of this type of heating may later be used for the building of the municipal office of Letovice.

NEWS

**The renewable energy resources
are a natural part of Healthy Cities**

The energy from renewable sources, or clean or alternative, is the type of energy that minimally pollutes the environment in the process of its formation. Along with the constantly rising prices of energies there is a danger that some regions shall

again start using the sources harmful to the environment (e.g. brown coal). One of possibilities of how to prevent this process, should be the return to the sparing, so called "renewable" energy resources (RER), employing mostly the powers of elementary elements: water (hydroelectric power plants), air (wind power plants), fire (solar power plants) and earth (geothermal energetics, biogas). Employing RER thus gains on the importance in the economic, ecologic and last but not least social sphere (local employment rate).

In Europe, the city networks have been created in order to discuss and enforce the common approaches in the field of energetic management and realisation of projects leading to more efficient control of energy, e.g. the German Climate Alliance, the French Energie-Cités or the English Zero Carbon Cities (see also below). The HCCZ endeavours to participate in this process, among others for the reason that, e.g. thanks to the experience in the field of centralised heat supplies (CHS), the Czech Republic has many things to offer to the Europe. Nowadays, in Europe there is a noticeable effort to build new CHS systems and to enforce biomass using devices, solar collectors etc. Even though our state is still well behind in this European trend, there are regions that have experience with renewable sources, such as e.g. **Litoměřice, Letovice, Třebíč, Třeboň, Vsetín** or **Orlová** – the HCCZ members, but also others.

Litoměřice

The North Bohemian town of Litoměřice utilizes mostly the solar energy and heat pumps. In 2001, Litoměřice were awarded the Czech Solar Prize for their enforcement of renewable sources of energy. The prize has been granted by the National Section of the European Eurosolar Association.

Obtaining electric energy from solar radiation is, according to the experts, the cleanest and most earth-friendly way of



energy production. In the Czech Republic, there are subsidies for solar systems installations granted to both the private and corporate bodies. The subsidies have been granted by the State Environmental Fund (SEF) since 2003. Another important event organised by the SEF CR has become the didactic programme "**Sun into Schools**", in which the schools from e.g. České Budějovice, Chrudim, Vsetín, Kroměříž or Prostějov have taken part. The aim of this programme is to show the students on real-life examples that the possibility of obtaining energy from renewable sources is not mere technological utopia.

Litoměřice, that counted as long as until the beginning of 90's of the last century among the most polluted towns of the North-Bohemian Region, has switched to the more ecological natural gas. However, the town councillors faced the problem of how to maintain the established trend of environmental improvement

during the period of increase in prices of natural gas. Thanks to the united approach from the part of the local board and active communication of municipal authorities, the citizens came to the conclusion that cheaper conventional fuels would lead back to pollution and gas subsidies to a non-perspective encumbrance of the town. The variant of financial motivation of the town inhabitants has won – in a form of a state subsidy and a municipality contribution, dedicated to RER usage – **a system of solar heating and hot water heating** (TUV). The solar collectors were first installed at public buildings, such as at Na Valech basic school or at the building of children's home, the heat pump in the building of municipal indoor pool. Usage of renewable sources is not, according to the vice-Mayor Petr Hermann, only a stand-alone town activity, but also a part of the City Health Plan that encompasses many spheres of town development. The ecologic city transport or preparation of the regional energetic concept of Litoměřice, which is to determine the overall amount of energy consumed by the town, may serve as another examples.

"This will make the future planning possible, it will also further develop the usage of renewable energy resources. Our daring plan is to cover the overall energy consumption approximately to the extent of one third by means of renewable sources. Apart from solar energy we would also like to employ the electricity from small hydroelectric power plants and geothermal energy", informs us the head of the environmental section, Ing. Pavel Gryndler. The vice-Mayor Petr Hermann also adds that education also plays an important role in this process, too: *"The pupils at our basic schools are encouraged to be considerate of the environment and they have opportunity to familiarise themselves with usage of renewable energy resources in practice"*.

Třebíč

The heating plant system in the Healthy City of Třebíč may serve as an exceptional example. In this case they succeeded in following up with the existing system and managed to extend it gradually to almost the entire town, all this despite the considerable complexity of the system. But what is even more exemplary is the fact that apart from extending the heating system, a biomass – a renewable source of energy is being used for heating. The biomass is currently in a form of forest chips, saw dust and in the future also in a form of purpose-grown energetic farm plants. Moreover, in June this year a co-generating source of a new type has been launched there. The source is based on biomass combustion and on generating energy by means of cutting-edge technologies. This is a unique combination of an existing CH system and new methods of heating not only within the territory of the CR.

Letovice

The South-Moravian Letovice has taken a similar route to that of Litoměřice. *"We have been solving the issue of high energy costs in the process of building the old people's home, which is currently inhabited by sixty citizens. The possibility of using the solar collectors came forward as an alternative of how to relieve the budget",* says the town vice-Mayor Bohuslav Kuda. Bohuslav Kuda also emphasised in this respect that a practical illustration of using this source in Litoměřice helped them to decide as well as obtaining information at various meetings (e.g. The Earth Days) and seminars of the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic. Employing the RSE is currently planned also in other town buildings of Letovice.

Orlová

The Moravia-Silesian Orlová belongs among the towns employing the wasteless heat pump technologies. The Healthy City of Orlová heats the City Hall and health centre by means of a heat pump of the air-water type. The representatives obtained a contribution for its building from the SEF CR.

Vsetín

Vsetín has become the initiator of founding the Municipal Energetic Consulting Centre (MECC) at the Czech Energetic Agency. The town also provides tax-advantaged loans from the Fund of Housing Support designated for building of **ecologic heating** in currently existing houses.

These are only some selected examples of using RER in towns, municipalities and regions of the CR. The most successful of these shall be offered as models for inspiration by means of the internet database of examples of good practices, which currently being prepared by the HCCZ.

The support of sustainable forms of transport is not a utopia.



Utilization of alternative energy sources becomes a current world trend in transport. As well as the higher level of RER consumption in the process of energy production, the utilization of alternative sources in transport leads mostly to reduction of environmental pollution and improvement in health of cities and municipalities. It likewise has important social aspects – e.g. it improves the employment rate and availability of public transport.

The key issue in searching for a sustainable way of life in cities and municipalities is the question of transport. In its current form, the transport burdens the environment by excessive production of emissions, the residues of combustion engines directly threaten the health of inhabitants of (not only) large cities and the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere influences the world climate. Therefore, as a reaction to the current situation there is a rising tendency in enforcement of more ecological means of transport that present a smaller burden to the environment. The notion of sustainable transport in real conditions means most of all the reduction of share of individual passenger transport as opposed to public transport. The search for and support of

alternative technologies in transport are also statements of this approach.

A functioning system of public transport presents a sustainable alternative to the growing number of cars in the streets. A way of how to further increase the positive impact of public transport is the usage of buses driven by ecologic fuels (e.g. compressed natural gas, so called CNG). This path has been chosen e.g. in the Healthy City of Litoměřice, where this is in operation since 2003. The gradual introduction of low-floor vehicles enabling the transport of disabled persons also contributes to the attractiveness of public transport. A typical example is the Healthy City of **Kroměříž**, in which they focused not only on disabled people, but also took into account the situation of persons who cannot travel without assistance from others. These persons will be provided assistance service from the part of the carrier. A similar approach is also being prepared in the Healthy City of Hodonín, where the first low-floor bus capable of communication within the framework of the new passenger information system should appear at the turn of the year 2005/2006.

The quality of life in cities and municipalities can be positively influenced by measures leading to reduction of transport. This tendency is based among others on preference of pedestrians and cyclists against passenger cars in public areas. This will be presented e.g. by building pedestrian zones and cycle tracks or by reduction of speed and access of vehicles into selected parts of municipality. The Healthy City of **České Budějovice** succeeded in reducing the heavy freight in the historic city centre. This project, based on defining a zone of driving ban for trucks over 6t was awarded a prize in 2004 competition "Reduction of Traffic in Cities and Municipalities" (see more on this year's round below).

The public education and practical examples play a significant role on the way to sustainable transport. This task is fulfilled also by the international campaigns, such as the European Mobility Week or the European Car Free Day. These activities have already been supported from the part of the Healthy Cities for several years, the Healthy Cities also participate actively. Various educational events for the public are a part of this campaign, as well as e.g. the possibility to travel by public transport one day for free. 27 members from the part of HCCZ have currently taken part in these events supporting the more sustainable means of transport, which is more than two thirds of all participating cities and municipalities of the CR. More information about these events will be brought to you in September edition of HCCZ Special Bulletin, dedicated right to this year's European Mobility Week and the European Car Free Day.

The traffic safety and the fight against air pollution – the issues that are talked about

In the period when the Pan-European campaigns were in progress, three conferences closely connected to the issue of sustainable transport took place in the Czech Republic. The conferences were focused on the increase in traffic safety, utilization of renewable sources in transport and the climate protection in cities.

The 8th International Conference and Exhibition Transport and Technology for Sustainable Development took place between the 14.-16. September in Karlovy Vary. The conference was dedicated mostly to utilization of renewable sources and



alternative fuels in transport. The speakers also familiarised the participants with currently prepared governmental measures and EU policy in this field, along with newest pieces of knowledge from the field of alternative drives, such as e.g. the electric and hybrid drives or hydrogen fuel cells. The conference was accompanied by an exhibition on modern ecologic technologies.

An international conference titled **Emission Free City** took place in the Senate of the Czech Parliament on 21. September this year, in attendance of a number of experts from Great Britain and the Czech Republic. The conference was organised



by the British Council of the CR. Climate changes and their prevention were the main programme of the conference. Within the afternoon block, the representative of the Healthy Region of Vysočina and deputy commissioner and HCCZ vice-

chairman Ing. Marie Černá, also made appearance with her contribution focused on the role of regions in the fight against climate changes. The Prague conference was a part of the global British Council campaign titled Zero Carbon City, i.e. in Czech exactly the Emission Free City, which sets itself a target of raising the public awareness about climate changes and initiating the social discussion on this subject.

Under the auspices of the **Secretary of State for Transport**, Ing. Milan Šimonovský, a seminar of the National Network of



Healthy Cities called **"Safe City Transport"** took place on the ground of the Ministry of Transport on 13. September. The meeting, open to all interested persons from within and outside the HCCZ ranks was focused on the issue of transport safety in cities. The experts from the field of transport and related fields dealt apart from the issue of traffic safety also with the issue of traffic reduction in city centres and presented examples from the area of injury prevention in traffic. The seminar was attended by 48 participants overall from cities, municipalities and regions, who could listen to contributions from 11 speakers. The seminar won great acclaim.

The contest "About People with People – The Prize for Support of the Local democracy 2005"

The aim of the already fourth year of the national contest "About People with People – The Prize for Support of the Local democracy 2005" is to support activities leading the public to participation in regional development, such as e.g. environmental protection, communication strategies, planning of public areas, regeneration of slab block housing estates etc. in the sense of the **Local Agenda 21** and sustainable development of regions, cities and municipalities. The techniques of public involvement concern not only awareness and collecting citizens' reactions and comments, but mainly intensive involvement of inhabitants in the decision making in a form of consultations or direct democracy. Another reason for organising the contest is sharing the experience among officials and city representatives, concerning the dealing with common problems.

The contest is organised by the Centre for Community Work with a number of other partners (e.g. the weekly paper Veřejná správa (Public Administration) and others).

The organisers will publish the best projects in Veřejná správa magazine and the projects will be awarded at the **"National**

Forum on Public Participation in Decision Making", that will take place at the end of October 2005 in Prague. At this forum, a discussion concerning the community work shall take place, interesting projects from the contest will be introduced, too. The winning projects shall receive services and material prizes from sponsors of the whole campaign. The main prize this year will be a public opinion poll and a consequent forum with citizens, concerning the results. Unlike the previous years, far more larger cities have entered the competition. The projects deal with various subjects, among others the issue of parking, cycling transport, city greenery, reconstruction of a square and other ancient monuments and preparing the city Strategic Plans.

Almost one third of eighteen cities registered consists of HCCZ member-municipalities. The Vysočina Region is represented by Pelhřimov – "Introduction of Community Planning in the Town of Pelhřimov", the Pardubice Region is represented by the Healthy City of Chrudim with their project of "Community Planning within the Framework of the City Health Plan in Chrudim", the Region of Central Bohemia represents Mladá Boleslav – "The Healthy City Forum", the Zlín Region is represented by Vsetín with their project "Citizens as Partners for Decision Making in Public Affairs" and Zlín – "Planning the Concept of Cycling Transport in the Area of the Town of Zlín with Public Participation".

The information on overall results of the contest will be brought to you in the November edition of HCCZ bulletin.

In Healthy Cities the subsidies from EU funds function very well and bring considerable financial means.

In order to realise their project designs, the Healthy Cities may draw subsidies from various external sources. One of the alternatives of how to obtain means for coverage of costs for a part of development activities, represent the European Union funds.

Ensuring the financial assistance from the European funds is not an easy task for the cities, however, the effort put in is definitely

worth it. The basis for success in the process of applying for financial means of the EU funds is a well prepared project design. This is where the preparedness of Healthy Cities in comparison to other subsidy applicants may surface.

The town of Vsetín may serve as a suitable example of a Healthy City that is successful in obtaining the state subsidies in the long-time perspective. Vsetín has recently for instance managed to obtain the subsidies worth overall 170 million crowns, in order to build the **waste disposal and recycling centre** that should solve the waste economy of the whole Vsetín Region. The building of the plant worth 200 million will be commenced in spring next year and it should take approximately one year. For the future the city council also reckons on an expensive facility for municipal refuse sorting. It is anticipated that the overall capacity of the municipal refuse processed in the recycling centre will be approximately 20 thousand tonnes per year. The logistic centre shall cover the processing and recycling of waste from the area inhabited by about 70 thousand people, two out of three waste dumps in the area should be closed within two years. Construction of this centre presents an enormous contribution to the environment of the whole region, moreover, approximately 60 new jobs shall be created in the process.

Owing to the construction of this plant and the realisation of the Clean River Bečva project, which is yet another exceptional project from the point of view of the extent of subsidy obtained as well as the number of subjects involved, the Vsetín micro region ranks among the most successful regions in the whole Europe from the point of view of fulfilment of sustainable development principles. As in this case, a quality project design was yet again a foundation to the subsidy success of the Healthy City of Vsetín.

The HCCZ association provides for its members many services right in the field of obtaining the EU sources, but also other subsidies from individual ministries and regions. Apart from the regular distribution of information related to actual grants available, the HCCZ trains the politicians and coordinators of the Healthy City project in topics related to obtaining of subsidies, project preparing etc. The association offers to its members the opinions to the projects prepared, and at the same time it may also become their national partner. Currently, the HCCZ to a considerable extent collaborate on preparing the Vysočina Healthy Region and its individual cities, municipalities and micro regions for the program-period of 2007-2013.

IN BRIEF

- **Kroměříž:** The Moravian town achieved an international success. It belongs among the three most successful towns that participated in the European Mobility Week campaign in 2004. The vice-Mayor of Kroměříž, Dr. Olga Sehnalová took over the acknowledgement from the hands of the European commissioner for environment, Mr. Stavros Dimas. The ceremony took place on 16.9. at the London City Hall. The ceremonial announcement of prizes was a part of "In Motion" conference that dealt with the issue of transport. It is not a coincidence, that the participants met in London. In Spring this year it will have been two years since Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, introduced charge for access of motor vehicles into the centre of this second largest European metropolis, as a measure for of traffic intensity reduction.
- **Karviná:** Karviná was awarded a prize in the contest "**Reduction of Traffic in Cities and Municipalities**" as the only Healthy City. On Těšnovská turntable in Prague 1, in attendance of the Secretary of State for Transport, Ing. Milan Šimonovský, the author of the Sokolovských Hrdinů Bridge reconstruction project, Ing. Martin Vilč received the award.
- **HCCZ:** After the successful seminar at the Ministry of Transport on 13.9., dedicated to the issue of transport, we prepare another similar event, this time at the Ministry of Health. This seminar will focus on the **Community Health Programs**. The seminar will take place on 4.10, and all those interested are heartily welcome.
- **HCCZ:** The European Mobility Week and Car Free Day campaigns have hardly ended yet, and the national HCCZ campaign **Health Days** is about to be launched. This year's programme is also very rich and the Healthy Cities prepare a number of specialised and entertaining events for all age groups. The news about course of events and results of the whole campaign will be a part of the October Special Bulletin.

CONTACT

Healthy Cities CZ, Srobarova 48, 100 42 Prague 10, Czech Republic
 T: +420 602 500639 | E: paha@nszm.cz | W: www.nszm.cz

Petr Svec, National Coordinator of the Healthy Cities Project
 (The photographs were provided by the archives of HCCZ member cities, municipalities and regions.)