



BULLETIN

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HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW

How Can a City benefit from Membership in HCCZ?



An interview with Tomas Jelinek, Deputy Mayor of Usti nad Labem and HCP Politician.



Usti nad Labem has recently become a new member of the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (HCCZ). What were its reasons for joining the association?

The main reason was the commitment of Usti nad Labem to fulfilling the principles and targets of the fundamental EU and UN documents as part of the city's strategic development, particularly in the area of health promotion and the quality of life and in the integration of the environmental, social and economic areas.

What are your expectations of the membership?

We expect the city to further develop the partnership between the city hall and the general public, as the Healthy Cities Project is a community project making room for promoting citizen participation and activity and boosting the city's prosperity. Being a Healthy City that is actively involved in such a prestigious project under the umbrella of an international authority should boost Usti's image with its citizens and visitors, as well as with its expert partners.

Have you considered the expanding of HCCZ membership to the whole region, which – similar to Vysocina and the Zlin Region – would then become a Healthy Region?

If other municipalities within the Usti Region, or the region as a whole, joined the HCP, it would certainly be a step forward

for the quality of strategic development, for information and services, for the obtaining of finances from EU funds as well as widespread cooperation and transfer of experience facilitated by HCCZ Methodology. This could have highly positive effects in the Usti Region, such as reduction of unemployment, increased level of education, improved health of citizens, and others. It is up to the local administration of the Usti Region to decide whether the region should join HCCZ or not.

Usti nad Labem has recently joined the European Mobility Week (EMW) campaign. What has the city done as part of its first EMW campaign?

The campaign included the "Young Cyclist" contest for pre-school children. The contest took place at the children traffic playground, with teams of children from 19 kindergartens taking part. Prizes for winners were sponsored from Usti's HCP budget. We presented all these activities, as well as the accession of our city to HCCZ, during our study trip to Great Britain. We visited Britain as part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and a project entitled "New Experience in Integrating Groups of Citizens Threatened by Social Exclusion."

NEWS

In this issue of HCCZ Bulletin, you will find information about international activities related to HCP and HCCZ. A number of international meetings and events took place in the Czech Republic during October, dealing with local Agenda 21, health promotion, safety, environmental protection, and other topics. At the same time, representatives of our HCCZ Office, member municipalities and our expert partners participated in a number of events abroad during the month. We have, therefore, included information on activities abroad and international cooperation in this issue; we believe that these "world" topics will find their "local" audience.

Turkey Hosted a Meeting of HCP National Coordinators

National coordinators of the Healthy Cities Project met in Bursa, Turkey, between September 22 and 24. The conference was also attended by a number of official guests,

including mayors, regional commissioners and Ministers of Health of the member states. Above all, the participants discussed the strategy of expanding the Healthy Cities network to include new countries in the European region as well as the options for the future direction of the project.

The three-day conference of **national networks of Healthy Cities from all over Europe** focused on identification of new ways of working together to achieve the objectives and values that the international WHO Healthy Cities Project builds on. The conference reiterated the vital importance of close cooperation among European networks and the sharing of experience in the form of best practice. Health-promoting strategic planning and zoning, health impact assessment (HIA) and active ageing remain the key topics at the European level. Healthy Cities have



paid increased attention to finding suitable and effective ways of promoting their activities through media in order to inspire others. Discussions at the conference also confirmed that the WHO Healthy Cities Project in Europe is no longer limited to the health sector, under the umbrella of which it had been developing for a number of years. The issues addressed by the national networks and the individual Healthy Cities require closer **cross-sector cooperation** and involvement of other



The conference in Bursa – Agis Tsouros (WHO) and Richard Brattli (Norway)

institutions and organizations in related areas (including social, environmental, entrepreneurial, and others). Healthy Cities thus become the key bearers of sustainable development principles, transferring them to practice at the local, regional and, indirectly, the national level. The Czech representatives taking part in the conference were Miroslav Andrt of the HCCZ Office and Ivana Draholova, the HCP coordinator from Brno, the only Czech member of the WHO European Network of Healthy Cities.

Representatives of Many European Countries Met for Local Agenda 21 Round Table

Representatives from a number of countries met in Zurich, Switzerland, to discuss the present and the future of local Agenda 21 (LA21). The participants shared problems encountered by many countries that actively implement LA21, as well as the successes and achievements in introducing sustainable development at the local, regional and national level. We are pleased that HCCZ has contributed to the success of LA21 process in the Czech Republic.

On September 29 and 30, Zurich city hall hosted the first **LA21 Round Table** under the auspices of **ICLEI** (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). The meeting was attended by 14 representatives of LA21 from 10 countries – Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark,



Sweden, Estonia, and the Czech Republic. During the Round Table, national LA21 representatives (mainly from the ministries of environment and sustainable development) discussed the current situation in the implementation of the LA21 programme, such as the very term LA21 and the need for **clearly defined criteria** to measure the results of the process. In particular, participants from countries that have been implementing LA21 since early 1990's (such as Sweden and the Netherlands)



ICLEI Round Table

felt there was a need for motivation and new impulses in the fulfilment of LA21 principles to move the process forward. Countries that joined the programme later on, including the Czech Republic, have seen a promising increase in the number of municipalities, cities and regions interested in LA21 as well as greater openness of the central institutions towards the programme. The Czech Republic, represented by Marie Petrova of the Ministry of Environment, presented a national report on the state of LA21 in the country. *“Above all, the participants were*

interested in the implementation of LA21 and the practical results – which, however, will not be available until the next meeting,” says Marie Petrova. She also reported about the ongoing **LA21 Criteria Testing** project, which sparked a lively discussion about the need for clear criteria to assess LA21 progress. The meeting revealed that there are a number of shared problems and that it is imperative to go on consistently implementing and promoting LA21 in municipalities, cities and regions for it to become an effective daily tool used by municipalities for their sustainable development. “*The situation in the Czech Republic has been improving in this respect, owing a great deal to the systematic work of the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic that cover approximately 80% of LA21s in the country,*” adds Marie Petrova.

The next LA21 Round Table will take place in Vienna, Austria, on April 20 and 21, 2006.

2nd Sustainable Development Forum Attracted over One Hundred Participants from the Czech Republic

The evaluation report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) both praised and criticized the Czech Republic with respect to the environment. The report contained 53 specific recommendations to the Czech Republic concerning the environment. We are proud to say that this important document mentioned HCCZ as one of the organizations actively involved in education, raising of awareness and building partnerships in the area of environment.

The second **Sustainable Development Forum (SDF)**, held in Prague on October 11, was initiated by the Government Council for Sustainable Development (GCSD) and its Chairman, Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Martin Jahn. The main reason for convening this meeting of experts, representatives of state and public administration and non-governmental non-profit organisations was to present the second OECD evaluation report on the policy, state and developments in the environment of the Czech Republic. The meeting was attended by Kiyo Akasaka, Deputy Secretary General of OECD. The report has appreciated the good work done and the considerable improvements achieved in the Czech Republic compared to the last report in 1998. At the same time, it pointed out specific areas in which the Czech Republic still lags behind and which require greater attention. According to OECD, the most serious problem is the high environmental impact of economic production, the energy consumption in the Czech economy being 80% higher than the average figures in the original fifteen member states. OECD has recommended an environmental tax reform and, in general, closer cooperation among individual sectors in practical implementation of principles of sustainable development. According to Libor Ambrozek, Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, the key message of the report is the emphasis on not seeing environmental issues isolated and out of context. SDF participants were also introduced to the situation report concerning the **Sustainable Development Strategy of the Czech Republic** and the Strategy of Economic Growth of the Czech Republic. The anchor man of the event was HCCZ Director and Chairman of GCSD Committee for Communication Petr Svec, who also presented

the 2006 plan for organising round tables in Czech regions regarding sustainable development and the updating of the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Czech Republic.

Vsetin Citizens Joining Campaign alongside Bono Vox and Claudia Schiffer

By attaching their signatures, over 500 citizens of the Healthy City of Vsetin actively joined a campaign to alert politicians to the continuing bad situation in third-world countries and appeal to them to live up to their commitment to fighting poverty.

The Healthy City of Vsetin has officially joined the informational and educational campaign entitled **Czech Republic against Poverty**. The nationwide campaign is a part of the worldwide Global Call to Actions against Poverty (GCAP), which is aiming to alleviate the consequences of poverty in third-world countries through adoption of measures such as cancellation of debts with rich countries and international financial institutions, upholding of women's rights in poor countries or emphasizing the social responsibility of international corporations in terms of human rights, environmental protection and local development. The campaign is highly legitimate, as prove the horrifying statistics on the number of children dying needlessly in the poorest parts of the planet; it has been supported by dozens of international celebrities such as Nelson Mandela, Bono Vox, or Claudia Schiffer. Events raising awareness of the problem have been taking place in many countries throughout the world; there were information stands in several large cities in the Czech Republic as well, including Prague, Brno, or Pilsen. Over 500 citizens of Vsetin supported the Czech Republic against Poverty campaign as part of the Walachia Shining culture festival by writing their names on a white sheet of linen in front of the Vsetin city hall on September 10. Apart from ordinary people who are not indifferent to the plight of the poor in third-world countries, the campaign primarily targeted Czech politicians as those having the means to help improve the dismal situation. Representatives of Vsetin's local government actively joined the campaign, expressing their commitment to eradicating worldwide poverty.



An information stand for the Czech Republic against Poverty campaign in Vsetin

HCCZ Actively Participated in This Year's INVEX

For the first time, the Healthy Cities introduced their activities at the international trade fair of information and communication technologies INVEX 2005. In addition to presentations at the Healthy Cities stand, DataPlan was introduced during the accompanying events to highlight the role of the latest information technologies in municipalities.

The G2 pavilion, devoted to municipalities and an exhibition entitled "Days of Regions, Cities and Municipalities – Electronic Support in the Development of the Region", also housed the stand of HCCZ, which was a partner of the event at the same time. In addition to printed materials, visitors could watch a video presentation of HCCZ and its multiple activities. During a full-day conference, HCCZ Director Petr Svec presented **DataPlan**, a new **information tool** for the



HCCZ stand in G2 pavilion at Invex 2005

strategic management of municipalities. DataPlan met with a keen interest of representatives of cities, municipalities and regions; they particularly appreciated it as a way to make the management and planning at the municipal level easier and more transparent. They shared the view that the current arrangement of various concepts, plans, strategies and other documents was rather confusing, making it highly problematic to efficiently link them to the cities' budgets. During the three days, over 60 people visited the stand to discuss the Healthy Cities Project and the benefits of membership in HCCZ. Many others came to collect information materials and watch the video presentation.

Representatives of WHO Community Programmes Met for the First Time at the Ministry of Health

The seminar was open to anyone interested in the topic of health promotion in the public as well as the private spheres. For the first time ever, this landmark meeting brought together representatives of all WHO community programmes – Healthy Cities, Health-Promoting School, Health-Promoting Hospital and Healthy Enterprise. Owing

to this, participants were able to take a comprehensive look at health and a healthy lifestyle and to present a variety of practical examples.

On October 4, the Ministry of Health hosted a HCCZ seminar on "WHO Health-Promoting Community Programmes." The variety of presentations by individual speakers gave the 35 representatives of cities, municipalities and regions



A practical aid in fighting smoking

a number of different perspectives on the given issue. The speakers agreed that mutual support and cooperation among institutions and organizations together with straightforward communication with the public were the keys to improved health of Czech citizens. Czech National Health Officer and Deputy Minister of Health Michael Vit highly appreciated the contribution of community programmes. Representatives of the Healthy Cities of Chrudim and Kromeriz reported about their respective projects "Health-Promoting Kindergarten of Dr. Malik in Chrudim" and "Safe Community Kromeriz". Other speakers reported about WHO activities that are not that well-known, about various options for cooperation of Health-Promoting Schools with cities, municipalities and regions, or about methods used and measures adopted by a Healthy Enterprise, using a concrete example of Skoda auto, a.s. Commenting on the seminar, the participants said that it was very useful in terms of sharing experience, contacts and best practice among individual municipalities and other institutions, both public and private.

IN BRIEF

- **Letovice:** On November 30, Letovice will be hosting a HCCZ General Meeting. In the morning, there will also be an MCAP session on the use of **renewable sources of energy**. Anyone interested in the topic is invited to participate.
- **Vysocina Region:** Vysocina Region and its **Partnership for Vysocina** project, in which HCCZ actively participates, placed second in **Good Advice Is beyond Price**, a competition organized by the National Education Fund. The winners were announced on October 3 during an international conference entitled "Can We Find Jobs in Europe" for people involved in the development of human resources in regions. With the Vysocina region as the main author, the goal of Partnership for Vysocina is

to contribute to and develop a dialog among partners in the region.

■ **HCCZ:** Similar to the past eleven years, the nationwide **Health Days** campaign took place between October 4 and 17. This year, a record-breaking **24 cities** joined the campaign. As part of the autumn campaign, Healthy Cities supported the traditional international activities, such as the Terry Fox Run or the March of All Generations. The campaign had some very concrete outcomes; owing to the Health Days and the Healthy Cities Project, Chrudim was able to purchase a spirometer for the local children's allergology ambulance to examine children and youth with pulmonary problems and allergy and to diagnose asthma.

We will report on the Health Days in our **special November issue of HCCZ Bulletin**.

■ **HCCZ:** In late September, Healthy Cities announced the winners of the "**City in Bloom – Street in Bloom– The Most Beautiful Balcony**" competition. The goal of the competition is to emphasize the role of green spaces and the environment in the lives of city people and to recognize the efforts of individuals who strive to improve the image of their city. The following Healthy Cities entered the competition this year: Boskovice; Hodonin; Kromeriz; Kurim; Orlova; Prostějov; Valasske Mezirici; and Vsetin. The pan-European form of this competition is the Entente Florale project. This year, the Czech city of **Litomysl** won a Silver award and is now entitled to be called a "European City in Bloom."

■ **HCCZ:** Between November 14 and 16, HCCZ will be organizing another in the series of its educational events for HCP coordinators and politicians – **HCCZ Autumn School**. The three-day agenda will include presentations and workshops focusing on lecturing and presentational skills, health promotion and information technologies in public administration. HCCZ will also present preliminary results of its media analysis, including recommendations regarding media promotion of Healthy Cities' activities. All politicians and coordinators from HCCZ member municipalities are invited to participate.

■ **HCCZ:** As part of the project entitled **Local Agenda 21 Criteria Testing – Pilot Projects in the Czech republic**, three regional methodology seminars on LA21 Criteria, procedures involved in their mapping and methods of LA21 Database maintenance took place during October. The seminars were attended by over 60 participants.

■ **HCCZ:** The World Health Organization, the Czech Ministry of Health and HCCZ co-organized a seminar and a working meeting on the highly topical issue of children accident prevention, particularly traffic-related. The event took place in Velke Mezirici on October 24, followed up by a meeting at the Senate of the Czech Republic on October 26. Among others, participants in the meetings were introduced to the **National Strategy of Children Accident Prevention** and were briefed about the latest in ongoing community projects such as "Armadillo", "Going Biking? – Don't Forget Your Helmet!" or "Safe Community."

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