



## HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### INTERVIEW



An interview with Petr Reznicek, Deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of Chrudim and Healthy Cities Project (HCP) and local Agenda 21 politician

### HCCZ Is a Good Platform for Discussion and Sharing of Information

**As in many other areas, Chrudim is one of the most active Healthy Cities in terms of programs and events for senior citizens. Why have you decided to support this – often neglected – group of citizens?**

The very fact that this group is neglected is a reason in itself, but the main idea driving our efforts is that being old does not mean being useless and unable to do anything. Present-day elderly people have done a lot of good work for each community in the past and the various programmes keep them "in action." By helping eliminate their scepticism and feelings of uselessness, these programmes encourage people to age actively and use all the opportunities this period of life offers.

**Which form of support by the city do you think is the most important?**

I think we owe the wide offer of activity programmes to the good work of the Social Services and Assistance Centre, which is excellently equipped in terms of material and technical facilities and space. Naturally, systematic work and financial backing of all activities are vital. Last but not least, there are a number of NGOs in the city, which offer a variety of activities for senior citizens.

**What are your expectations of the current MCAP session on active ageing as part of HCCZ's new year-round plan of "Topics of the Month"?**

Above all, exchange of information among the participants. This is a good platform for discussing the best practice from various cities throughout the country. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

**What innovations for senior citizens are you planning in the near future?**

Chrudim desperately needs an old people's home, a project we have

pursued for the past six years. The key is to obtain a state subsidy, which we hope to do soon. This year, we have also prepared a literary contest for senior citizens from royal dowry towns, inviting nine Czech towns – Dvur Kralove nad Labem, Hradec Kralove, Chrudim, Jaromer, Melnik, Novy Bydov, Policka, Trutnov, and Vysoke Myto – to participate in a contest entitled "Royal Dowry Treasures."

### TOPIC OF THE MONTH: ACTIVE AGEING

In the first issue of HCCZ Bulletin this year, you will find the **Topic of the Month** as part of the new structure determining not only the content of the Bulletin, but also other activities of Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions. In January, the central topic of the Bulletin is **Active Ageing**.

It is not a coincidence that we have chosen this topic. In 2000, there were about 600 million people over sixty years of age on our planet; the United Nations Organization estimates this number will have grown more than threefold to two billion by 2050. The rapid ageing of the world population is a great challenge for developing as well as developed countries. In the Czech Republic, citizens over 65 years of age represented 14% of population in 2004; by 2050, the number of Czechs who are 85 and older is expected to grow to approximately half a million. You can see a similar trend in all European countries. In response to this trend, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** launched **Active Ageing** as one of its core programmes. WHO has defined active ageing as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age." The target of the programme by 2025 is for people over 65 years of age to be able to fully realize their health potential and take an active part in the life of the society. The following pages illustrate how these issues are tackled by Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions and elsewhere.



*Every period of life has its charm*

## TOPIC OF THE MONTH HOME AND ABROAD

### A Typical 21st Century Elderly Person is Changing – Home as well as Abroad

**Growing in importance, active ageing has lately become the central topic of many international documents as well as national policies and concepts. Respect, dialogue among generations, an active approach to life and the maintaining of its high quality as one ages – these are attributes that no citizen over 50 years of age will be expected to do without in the near future.**

Four years ago, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in Europe has launched the **Active Ageing** project to promote principles of healthy and active ageing and their implementation in individual countries, regions, cities and municipalities. WHO has published a policy framework intended to inform discussion and the formulation of action plans that promote healthy and active ageing (*Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*, to be downloaded from <http://www.who.dk/ageing>); the document summarizes the current situation, presenting healthy ageing as a political topic and recommending specific procedures for representatives of governments and private as well as non-profit sectors.

The growing interest in the position of older generations in the society is reflected in the fact that WHO considers active ageing **one of the key topics** of Phase IV of the Healthy Cities Project; it has recently established a **WHO working group for healthy ageing**.

The **Healthy City of Brno** is the only Czech representative in this working group. First and foremost, the group wants to change the current stereotypes and prejudice in relation to older people. As the first step, it has undertaken to prepare a **Senior Citizen Profile** mapping the living conditions of older generations in cities and municipalities, which will serve as a starting point for planning future steps and formulating specific targets and activities in this area.

The social policy of the **European Union** strongly accentuates issues related to ageing of population. Old people are vulnerable to social exclusion, which is a problem the EU has actively tackled for a number of years. Elimination of social exclusion and full involvement of senior citizens in the society are a priority of the **European Sustainable Development Strategy**.

In the Czech Republic, issues involving senior citizens and ageing are within the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA); however, healthy ageing issues are also dealt with by the Ministry of Health. Following up on the international documents, MoLSA has prepared the **National Programme of Preparation for Ageing between 2003 and 2007**. This strategic document is intended to support a change in the social climate and help change the attitude and approach to older generation at all levels in pursuit of the ultimate goal – to build a **“society for all generations.”** The most topical issue at the moment is transformation of residential care of the elderly, which does not correspond to the current needs of this group of citizens.

Some issues relating to the position of elderly people in society are also addressed by a MoLSA document entitled the **National Family Policy Plan**. Concerning old age, the document emphasizes the need for strong family ties and an active involvement of elders in the family life.

The principles of healthy and active ageing are championed by a number of organizations providing health and social services

to senior citizens, such as the civic associations **Zivot 90** (Life 90) (details are available at <http://www.zivot90.cz>) or **Cesta domu** (The Way Home) (details are available at <http://cestadomu.cz>). A joint project of the Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and Walmark entitled **Society Friendly to All Generations** is an excellent example of cooperation between a non-profit organisation and a corporate sponsor. The project is divided into three stages, with each focusing on one generation to eventually produce overall positive effects for all three – seniors, adults and adolescents. It is the dialog among generations and an open approach of one generation to another that can significantly improve the quality of life for old people – and not only for them. One of the tangible outcomes of the project is a publication entitled *Old People and I – Old? Me?*, which is to help overcome these traditional prejudices about old age and living with old people.

### HCCZ Is a Founding Member of WHO Czech Republic Working Group for Healthy Ageing

Within a relatively short time, all Czech cities, municipalities and regions will be faced with population ageing. Apart from its own activities, HCCZ participates in national as well as international projects and programmes addressing the problem. HCCZ also initiated the establishing of a **WHO working group** on healthy ageing and has its representative in the group. The working group first met in the middle of January this year at the WHO Local Office Prague. Regular **MCAPs** are another example of successful HCCZ activities. You will find more information about the latest MCAP session on active ageing below.

### January MCAP Session Was Devoted to the Experienced and Wise

**Regular events organised by the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions include MCAP sessions, information meetings enabling HCCZ members to exchange practical information and share examples of best practice. This year's first MCAP took place in the Healthy City of Chrudim on January 26; it was devoted to active ageing, that is, to our senior fellow citizens.**



Nearly thirty participants from Healthy Cities and elsewhere attended this year's first MCAP session in Chrudim to exchange information and draw upon the experience of others.



In addition to interesting presentations of activities for senior citizens, such as by the **Social Services and Assistance Centre in Chrudim** (SSAC) or the **Social Services Centre of the Healthy City of Litomysl**, the participants had an opportunity to visit the premises of SSAC and see examples of individual programmes. Most of them were interested in activity programs, designed to improve the overall physical as well as mental condition of old people. In the afternoon, the participants could see – and taste – unusual fruit and vegetable products handmade by one of the old ladies, Ms Svadlenkova, as part of the project entitled **"Delicious Life."** The seminar was concluded by a lively discussion over the topic, with the participants voicing their appreciation of being able to share information and experience with the others. Detailed information about the MCAP session is provided below.

## The Host of January MCAP Session Had a Lot to Show

Since 1993, the Healthy City of Chrudim has operated the **Social Services and Assistance Centre (SSAC)** to provide a wide spectrum of services to local elderly people. The facility has an apartment section and a permanent service section and is designed to provide readily available and flexible care to old and disabled people, enabling them to live a dignified and independent life in a home-like environment.

SSAC has been successful in pursuing the latest trend in social services, i.e. the abandoning of traditional inpatient treatment, owing to the helpfulness of the Healthy City of Chrudim's officials and the excellent cooperation with the city as the founder of SSAC.



*One of the most popular activity programmes for senior citizens offered by the Social Services and Assistance Centre in Chrudim is exercising with overballs.*

In addition to health care and social assistance, SSAC provides consultations. It is worth mentioning that all of the facilities can be reached by public transport and that SSAC even provides its own specialized vehicles to transport handicapped clients. At the moment, the Centre has 800 clients, and approximately 350 senior citizens come every week to attend activity programmes.

## Chrudim's Elderly Have Their Own Olympic Games

In September last year, SSAC organized the third **Senior Sports Games** to promote healthy ageing as part of Health for All in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. SSAC clients have been exercising regularly since

1993; since 1997, SSAC has offered exercises to all senior citizens of Chrudim. These activities are designed to alter the lifestyle of the elderly with respect to health in the long run; the aim of the games is to improve the mobility of the seniors, establish cooperation with other cities and give the elderly an opportunity to meet and get to know one another. Last year's games were opened by SSAC Director Ivana Bohata and Deputy Mayor of Chrudim and HCP and LA21 politician Petr Reznicek. Having started with a general warm-up, the programme of the games offered ample opportunities to compete in many untraditional disciplines. The event was supported by a grant from the Pardubice Region.

## BEST PRACTICE

Many Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions in the Czech Republic organise activities and events that provide senior citizens with an opportunity to live an active life. Two of the most frequently encountered forms are educational programmes for senior citizens (Universities of Third Age) and seminars organised as part of **Delicious Life**, a project of the National Institute of Public Health. A number of events for the elderly are organised every year as part of HCCZ's nationwide Health Days campaign or the Global Embrace Walk.

## Meetings at Libraries

Similar to other Czech cities, the Healthy City of Vsetin has a large group of senior citizens. Aspiring to become a community centre for the widest circle of people, **Masaryk Public Library in Vsetin** pays great attention to elderly people for whom the library is a favourite meeting place. Apart from regular events, the library organises the annual **Senior Day** in the autumn, offering a comprehensive summary of cultural and social services for this age group, as well as a number of cultural events. The **Kromeriz Regional Library** also offers high-quality services to senior citizens. In addition to regular events such as those for old people's homes (e.g. the **Music Academy**), the library has been offering studies at the **Academy of**



*An important factor for the involvement of older people in social life is their ability to communicate. Kromeriz and other Healthy Cities have been teaching their senior citizens basic PC skills and working with the Internet.*

**Third Age** for the past thirteen years. Once a month, older people come to practice IT and communication skills, to discuss various issues with experts, local politicians and MPs, and even to write prose or poetry. The Healthy City of Kromeriz and the University of Tomas Bata in Zlin plan to open a University of Third Age in the 2006/07 school year. In recognition of its extensive activities, the Kromeriz Regional Library was voted the **Library of the Year** in 2005. Special events for senior citizens are also organised by the **Jiri Mahen Library in Brno**. Every March, which is the Month of the Internet, they run courses for older people to learn searching through the electronic catalogue and use the facilities of this modern library.

## Senior Clubs

Many activities are organised by **Senior Clubs** run by the cities. In the **Healthy City of Litomerice**, the Senior Club organises lectures as part of the **Academy of Third Age**, screening of films, meetings of singers and regular exercises. In addition to the Senior Club, the Healthy City of **Litomysl** has an active **Parkinson Club** for people suffering from Parkinson's disease. The first students have finished their studies at the University of Third Age this year; this form of education has become very popular among senior citizens of this small town. The municipal senior club in **Letovice** invites all senior citizens to meet regularly for education, cultural and social events. Most of the cities pay the rent and overheads for the clubs; in addition to audio and video facilities, the clubs are often equipped with computers. For instance, the Centre for Family and Social Care in **Brno** opened the **Senior C@fé Club** to provide the elderly with better access to information, education and communication. Last year, they also built a barrier-free Internet training room; throughout the year, there are courses of PC skills and working with other technologies, such as the digital camera or scanner. The elderly can then practice their new skills in the Centre's recently opened **Internet club-room for seniors**. The **Healthy City of Prostějov**



*A city policewoman demonstrating the right way of securing the door by a safety chain as part of the Safe Home project in the Healthy City of Prostějov.*

also teaches its senior citizens to work with the computer, surf the Internet and send electronic mail. Encouraged by the success of the five free computer skills courses for the elderly last year, the city hall plans to run the courses again this year. Together with the Ministry of Interior, the city has also implemented the **Safe Home** project; it has arranged for installation of over 170 safety chains to secure the doors in flats and houses occupied by elderly people.

## Physical Activity as a Cure

Physical and mental activity is a natural part of life while idleness and passivity lead to illness and disorders of both body and mind. As lack of physical activity is one of the negative aspects of modern lifestyle, Healthy Cities have been working to improve this situation. Spearheading these activities in the **Healthy City of Letovice** are the Municipal Senior Citizens Club, the New Association of



*Regular physical work outdoors is one of the ways to age actively.*



Handicapped Citizens and the Association of the Disabled. In the spring, they will do a series of **excursions** to various places throughout the Czech Republic; every year, the New Association of Handicapped Citizens organizes two one-week stays at health resorts in Orlicke Hory, Krkonose or Beskydy Mountains. The city hall supports these stays from the Healthy City grant programme. **Litomerice** also supports local NGOs by co-financing excursions for senior citizens. The Healthy City of Brno organises annual **Global Embrace Walk**; preceding the walk, there is an accompanying programme to provide the participants with useful tips on how to make their lifestyle healthier and how to keep fit in old age. Brno walks have inspired other Czech Healthy Cities; Chrudim or Karvina are now among those who organise their own walks. To encourage its citizens over 60 years of age to be physically active, the Healthy City of **Kurim** offers a 50% discount in its swimming pool until the end of February.

Successful programmes and projects in the above and other areas are being gradually contributed to the Best Practice Database (<http://www.nszm.cz/dataplan> - only in Czech). Shortly, the database will include the pilot **Family Centre** project of the Healthy City of Hodonin and the very popular **Weeks for Mental Health** in the Healthy City of Usti nad Labem.



## RESOURCES AND PROJECTS

### European Funds Are Still Available for “Soft Projects”



Unfortunately, senior citizens are not among the target groups eligible to EU funds. Nevertheless, it is possible to obtain funding for these projects if they address issues such as social exclusion or disability. Most of the finances come from the European Social Fund – the Joint Regional Operational Plan (Measure 3.2) and the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (Measure 2.1).

Some local institutions also provide financial support, among them the Ministry of Health (e.g. the Healthy Ageing subsidy programme or the health-promoting projects) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (e.g. for community planning of social services). HCCZ organises **7 regional seminars** to provide practical information on the drafting of projects and obtaining of EU subsidies (see the Calendar or <http://www.nszm.cz/seminare> - only in Czech) for “soft” projects (social area, support of minorities, education, social inclusion, etc.) financed under JROP 3.2 and 3.3. Unfortunately, potential applicants from the Czech Republic (similar to other EU countries) have not yet come up with enough high-quality projects eligible to financing from these funds. This means that the offer of financing currently exceeds the demand, which may be a great opportunity for those who intend to prepare their own project and apply for subsidies.

### Healthy City of Usti nad Labem Representing Czech Republic in International Project

**On January 19 and 20, foreign experts met at the Czech National Institute of Public Health as part of the Healthy Ageing project. Financed by the European Commission, the project is being implemented by the Swedish National Institute of Public Health between 2004 and 2007; in addition to Sweden, nine other European countries participate in the project, among them England, The Netherlands and Austria.**



Healthy Ageing promotes a healthy and active approach to life as people grow older, specifically in the group of citizens over 50 years of age. Based on the collected data, examples of best practice and various policies and measures, the project should produce and develop recommendations and comprehensive strategies in the area of senior citizens' health. *“We hope to make people interested in*

*this project and to facilitate practical implementation of its outcomes in the future,”* says the project manager Karin Berensson. The project also aims to create favourable conditions for active cooperation across Europe. The main areas of interest include injury prevention, access to health care, physical activity, and violence in various forms – physical, mental or economic. A project entitled **Add a Few More Years to Your Life and Be Lively in Old Age – Healthy Ageing**, which is implemented by the Institute of Public Health in Usti nad Labem, was selected to represent the Czech Republic. The final report on the project will be published in autumn this year; early next year, the outcomes will be presented to Czech experts. Details are available at <http://www.healthyageing.nu>.

## IN BRIEF

### Calendar of Events – February 2006

**February 6** – Moderni obec (Modern Municipality magazine) will include **as special enclosure a CD-ROM** with practical information on local Agenda 21, Best Practice Database, quality of public administration and many other topics.

**February 7** – From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Prague Diplomat Hotel will host a conference on **Subsidy Management**, dealing with the drawing upon EU funds. Details are available at <http://www.konference.ihned.cz> (only in Czech).

**February 8** – **The first of the seven regional seminars** on how to draw upon EU funds will take place in Usti nad Labem. Details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz/seminare> (only in Czech).

**February 9** – A meeting of politicians and press spokesmen of Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions, i.e. the first **HCCZ Methodological Seminar** in 2006, will take place in Velke Mezirici. Details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz/ms> (only in Czech).

**February 16** – Verejna sprava (Public Administration magazine) will publish an **eight-page supplement on HCCZ** with information on a joint project of HCCZ and the Ministry of Environment entitled “Local Agenda 21 Criteria Testing – Pilot Projects in the Czech Republic.”

**February 20** – The National Institute of Public Health in Prague will host a meeting for the newcomers to the Healthy Cities Project (and not just for them) to consult and discuss the future **development of the Healthy Cities Project**. Details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz> (only in Czech).

**February 23** – Another **MCAP** session will take place in **Litomerice**, focusing on the Topic of the Month – Free Time of Children and Youth. Details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz/sekce> (only in Czech).

**February 28** – A **specialized seminar** will be held at the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training**, focusing on free-time activities and financial support from EU funds.

**January 31 to February 28** – The Minister of Agriculture will be taking part in round table meetings organized under his auspices by the Ministry of Agriculture on the topic of **Countryside and EU Funds between 2007 and 2013 (LEADER, EAFRD)**. The first meeting took place at the Regional Centre in Olomouc from 1 p.m. on January 31; the other meetings will follow during February. Details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz/leader> (only in Czech).

## City Reflections

### Zlin:

The **Healthy City of Zlin** has been a great success at Regiontour 2006, the tourist industry fair held between January 12 and 15 in Brno. Nominated twice for the Grand Prix, Zlin won with Viaggio di 7 giorni da Zlin a Praga, its incentive product for Italian tourists. This programme offers two types of week-long stays in Zlin and its surroundings, with an emphasis on culture, significant religious buildings and balneology.

### Letovice, Boskovice, Kurim:

In January, these three Healthy Cities and their respective districts ran **"pilot projects to build partnerships in the South Moravian Region."** The events prepared by HCCZ have been designed to prepare any potential recipients for the drawing upon EU funds starting in 2007. They encourage the regions to prepare innovative projects related to the development of the location. Inspired by the experience of the Vysocina Region, HCCZ is now preparing a project accumulator as part of HCCP Dataplan (details are available at <http://www.nszm.cz/srop/jmk> - only in Czech).

### Prague – Libus:

On January 18, the working group to prepare the City Health Development Plan for **Prague's Libus borough** met for the third time. Libus is **the first Healthy Borough** of the capital Prague. With the methodological guidance of HCCZ Director Petr Svec, the working group has already outlined the plan, which is currently being transferred to HCCZ Dataplan to be ready for public discussion.

### Vsetin:

HCCZ Dataplan will have another use. Balanced ScoreCard and benchmarking are methods for an effective and modern management of cities and municipalities. For the first time ever, HCCZ Dataplan will be used together with these new methods in Vsetin.

### 30 Days for NGOs:

Please note that there has been a change in the time of the campaign. By decision of ICN as the main coordinator, this nationwide campaign has been moved from February to October (details are available at <http://www.neziskovsky.cz/h/Ar.asp?ARI=102886&CAI=2284> - only in Czech). Given the short notice, some of the Healthy Cities activities will take place on the originally planned dates.

## OUR NEXT TOPIC

The topic of the month for February will be Free Time of Children and Youth.

## CONTACTS



Healthy Cities CR, Srobarova 48, 100 42 Prague 10, Czech Republic  
T: +420 602 500 639 | E: [info@nszm.cz](mailto:info@nszm.cz) | W: [www.nszm.cz](http://www.nszm.cz)

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



This issue was supported by the European Social Fund and the Czech Ministry of Environment