



HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW



An interview with Petr Hermann,
Deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of
Litomerice and Healthy Cities Project
(HCP) and Local Agenda 21 politician

Working with Children Councillors Is Most Delightful

This year's second MCAP session took place in the Healthy City of Litomerice. Why have you chosen this topic?

It was a pleasure for Litomerice to once again host an MCAP session. We consider this topic crucial; we all know only too well that today's world is full of negative influence on children and youth. We strive to offer a variety of free-time programmes for everybody to choose their favourite. At the MCAP session, Litomerice was represented by several organisations that lead the way in the city in this regard.

There is an active Board of Children Representatives in Litomerice. Can you tell us more about how they have been working with their adult counterparts, that is, the city board of representatives?

Litomerice's Board of Children Representatives was established in 2002. Over the years, it has become a real partner for the city hall officials. We meet with the children councillors regularly to discuss various topics – the environment, free time activities, pathogenic influences, life at schools, and others. Their perspective of the problems is inspiring and eye-opening in many regards. And there is more than just discussions. Children councillors have organised a number of events for schools and the general public, for instance A City Friendly Dog Owner, Recycling with EU or Roundtable with Teachers. Those who took part in Litomerice MCAP session will know precisely what I am talking about.

Is there any connection between the reputable Rychory Centre of Environmental Education and Ethics (SEVER) and the city's support of renewable sources?

SEVER has an influential position in Litomerice, particularly in the area of education, so the connection is obvious. Raising people's

awareness and informing them about renewable sources of energy is just as important as the actual use of such sources. SEVER is vital in this regard. With such a background, we are convinced that young people will be more inclined to use this modern source of energy compared to the older generation.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: FREE TIME OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Modern technologies offer numerous ways of spending one's free time. Many pupils or students spend hours or even days at the computer. To get young people involved in activities that are both fun and fulfilling is not easy, though, particularly if such activities aspire to build the children's feelings of solidarity and patriotism and develop their knowledge of the community in which they live. Children or student parliaments are an example of activities that successfully combine all of the above aspects. Every year, a wide range of programmes, events and activities offering less formal ways of spending free time for young people are presented at the Bambiriad festival. Since the way children and youth spend their free time is a crucial factor for their successful socialisation, that is, for their integration in the society, the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions have devoted a lot of their attention and efforts to this area.

This issue of HCCZ Bulletin includes details about specific activities of HCCZ members as well as other national and international institutions related to this topic. In addition, there will be information about financial resources and the latest MCAP session. The calendar of events will take you through an outline of events scheduled for March.



This was the Indian summer in Strasin in the Sumava Mountains – even Indians would love it!

TOPIC OF THE MONTH HOME AND ABROAD

SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES HOME AND ABROAD

Free time of children and youth is dealt with by many international documents, national strategies and school programmes. Free time activities play an important part in preventing sociopathological phenomena that jeopardize today's young generation, be it drug addiction, chicane, physical and mental violence or criminality. The level of primary prevention of such phenomena shows how the respective municipality, city or country values the young people living in it.

In 2003, the Czech Republic adopted the **Concept of Governmental Policy regarding Children and Youth through 2007**. Following up on the idea of the White Paper on Youth, the document promotes participation of children and youth in the life of the society. For instance, the concept plans to introduce a system of **licensed non-governmental non-profit organisations** working with children and youth to give more credit to these organisations and to boost interest in the services they provide. A key objective is to provide greater support to projects focusing on working with young people who are not members of any youth organisation.

Still largely underestimated, prevention is the subject of the **Strategy for Prevention of Sociopathological Phenomena in Children and Youth within the Competence of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training between 2005 and 2008**. According to the document, one of the major problems in the Czech Republic is the low legal awareness of children as well as teachers.



Children MPs met with Ladislav Ambrozek, Deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of Hodonin, to discuss ways of making their journey to school safer.

This is why the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training (MEYPT) and the Czech Council of Children and Youth (CCCY) organised the **Being There** contest last year; following up on the EU Council Resolution, awards went to projects supporting active involvement of the youth in public life.

Participation is another educational project to support development of civil society. Implemented by the National Children and Youth Parliament, the DUHA civic association and the National Institute of Children and Youth, the project is designed to train

personnel of children and youth free-time centres. Similarly, the **Continued Development of Children and Youth Free-Time Centres** programme by AISIS association focuses on the developing of the latest European trends in education and free-time activities. In addition to children and youth NGOs and the Youth Information Centre, MEYPT also supports the National Children and Youth Parliament and its activities, such as the Children Congress, discussion roundtables or sessions of the European Youth Parliament, which is the national commission of the European Youth Parliament International.

The forming of a working group to implement the **European Youth Pact** (see below) at the beginning of 2006 marked another milestone in the emancipation of young generation; members of the group include MEYPT representatives as well as leading NGOs in this area, such as the Foundation for Development of Civil Society or the CCCY. For the first time ever, this groundbreaking document brings young politicians to the highest European level (details are available at <http://www.msmt.cz> – only in Czech). We would also like to remind you that April 15 is the deadline for submitting nominations for **Haven**, a CCCY award for substantial support of extracurricular activities and a major contribution to their development. The award can go to any volunteers or professional members of public administration bodies and local as well as regional governments. The purpose is to highlight the best practice from municipal politics and to reward specific people working in this sphere (whether elected or appointed) who may set an example for others (details are available at <http://www.crdm.cz/pristav> - only in Czech).

Last spring, the EU Council adopted the European Youth Pact, focusing on four priority areas: employment; integration and social development; education, professional training and mobility; and balance between one's professional and personal/family life. To succeed, the project requires involvement of all stakeholders – national, regional and local youth organisations as well as the European Youth Forum, regional and local bodies and social partners. The **Youth** programme, implemented locally by the **Czech National Youth Agency**, promotes cooperation in developing youth policies across Europe. The programme supports life-long education and development of skills and qualifications necessary for people to be active citizens, striving to achieve and maintain balance between individual development and collective activities in all areas of social life.

In general, young generation is at the centre of focus, as evidenced by the number of contests and events organised by European institutions and organisations every year on a variety of topics – from arts all the way to the environment. This year, young people can take part in the international **Green Week** contest on biodiversity (details are available at http://greenweek2006.eun.org/www/en/pub/greenweek_2006/home.htm). The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has invited entries for the first **Safe Start – European Young Film Maker of the Year** video competition. The competition is part of the European Week 2006 and is dedicated to young people to ensure a safe and healthy start to their working lives (details are available at <http://ew2006.osha.eu.int>). For more information on children and youth please visit the European youth portal at <http://europa.eu.int/youth>.

HCCZ Relies upon Partnerships

Self-governing municipal units – regions, cities and municipalities – will be playing an increasingly important role in relation to children and youth issues. Mutual cooperation and efficient use of the limited resources will be a key factor determining the success of various concepts, strategies and projects. HCCZ and its members therefore rely on strong partnerships with both governmental and

non-profit organisations active in this area. To promote mutual communication and exchange of information, HCCZ has been organising seminars such as the one that took place at MEYPT on February 28 (you will find details in the March issue of HCCZ Bulletin). The aim of the meeting was to share examples of best practice, procedures and experience from the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions on the topic of **Free-Time Activities of Children and Youth**. HCCZ encouraged its members to take part in the international **European Youth Week** campaign, organised by the Duha movement; the campaign includes local and regional roundtables for the youth to meet with personalities from cities and municipalities. HCCZ activities also include nationwide campaigns co-organised with a number of expert partners, such as the Traffic Research Centre, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Health, or the Ministry of Environment.

February MCAP on Free Time of Children and Youth in Litomerice

In February, another informative meeting of Healthy Cities representatives took place in Litomerice. The hosting Healthy City proudly presented the activities of several organisations working with young generation, among them the Children's Parliament and the Rychory Centre of Environmental Education and Ethics (SEVER).

The group of over 40 participants was welcomed by Petr Hermann, Deputy Mayor of Litomerice. One of the most interesting presentations was delivered by Tomas Zika, Head of Litomerice's Board of Children Representatives. Zika reported about the activities of the Board, its cooperation with city officials as well as mutual cooperation among students and pupils. As Zika is also the Head of the Regional Parliament for the Usti Region, many of the questions concerned cooperation among cities and their representatives. The other presentations included activities of the Rozmaryn House of Children and Youth, SEVER or the Youth Information Centre. Some of the participants then visited the Youth Information Centre and the school club to see how these organisations work and to enjoy delicious refreshment prepared for them by the local school cafeteria.



About forty participants came to the presentation of free-time activities for the young generation to the Healthy City of Litomerice.

The Healthy City of Litomerice Brings Up a New Generation of Self-Confident and Environmentally Responsible Citizens

Since 2002, children in Litomerice can take an active part in improving the life of their community through the **Board of Children Representatives (BoCR)**. BoCR currently has 18 members – elected representatives of school senates and parliaments. Its core activities include regular meetings regarding various issues



It can be very useful to put democracy in the hands of young people. The picture captures a "student hearing" with Jan Tesar, Mayor of the Healthy City of Prostejov.

or the organising of events for the public; for instance, *Recycle with EU* gave insight into the life of EU member states through a waste recycling campaign. BoCR monitors and regularly analyses its activities. One of the highlights of last school year was the electing of the Head of Litomerice's BoCR the Head of the **Regional Children and Youth Parliament of the Usti Region**.

The Rychory Centre of Environmental Education and Ethics (**SEVER**) is a non-profit organisation teaching young people to **live sustainably**. Founded in Litomerice in 1994, it now has branch offices in Horni Marsov (East Krkonose Mountains) and Hradec Kralove. SEVER focuses on specific projects and learning through experience, which includes first-hand experience with a particular environment, active work and learning by example. The projects are designed for pupils and students (such as *School of Sustainable Living*, a German and Czech environmental school project, or *School without Waste*), teachers and other pedagogues (fellowships, consultations, thesis tutoring) as well as for the general public on the local, regional and national level (details are available at <http://www.sever.ecn.cz> – only in Czech).

The Rozmaryn Children and Youth House offers a variety of hobby and educational activities; it also participates in the Children's Day without Injuries, an event organised by the Healthy City of Litomerice. Litomerice's **Healthy School Lingua Universal** teaches children about a healthy lifestyle and organises free-time activities such as bicycle trips or courses of aesthetic education. Litomerice also has a **Youth Information Centre**; in addition to providing information and related services, it includes a club activities centre offering lectures, discussions, film screenings and exhibitions.

BEST PRACTICE

In the increasingly individualistic 21st century society, we have come to appreciate any initiative to get people involved in public life – particularly if it concerns young generation. Modern man needs to be tolerant, open to cooperation and prepared to respect a different opinion, such attitude preventing ubiquitous xenophobia and racial hatred. This is why educational, sporting, cultural and entertainment events and activities for young people that develop and cultivate these qualities are an important part of life in Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions.

Democracy in the Hands of Young People?

Long gone is the time when young people met only in clubrooms or houses of children and youth. Today, they can employ virtually any means of modern democracy to exercise their rights guaranteed by international treaties and conventions (such as the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms or the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Boards of children representatives and student parliaments are one of the forms of active participation in the life of their city.

The Healthy City of **Prostejov** first came up with the idea for a board of children representatives to support civic education of the youth back in 1999. The Healthy Cities of **Ceske Budejovice** and **Vsetin** were among the first cities to establish boards of children representatives and student parliaments. Since 2004, the Children's Parliament in **Chrudim** has been a partner organisation of the city; it participates in most of the community campaigns, such as the Health Days or the Car Free Day. In the Healthy City of **Trebitz**, activities of the Student Parliament have been incorporated in the City Health Development Plan, which confirms the respect and trust of the city officials and the general public taking part in the drafting of the community plan. Early in 2005, Trebitz hosted the **first national congress of Children's and Student Parliaments**. Their successful project entitled Safe Journey to School was acknowledged by the Traffic Research Centre in Brno.

Deputy Mayor Zuzana Domesova became the patron of the Children's Parliament in the Healthy City of **Hodonin**. This parliament was established in November 2005 to let young people contribute to the resolution of various problems in their own, original way. Apart from co-organising events for children and youth, the Parliament's primary concern at the moment is the Safe Journey to School project. Established in 2005 and currently having 18 members, the Children's Parliament in the Healthy City of **Zlín** wants to enable children and youth to participate in the social and political life and to inform about human rights, particularly the rights of children. The **Children and Youth Parliament in Velke Mezirici** was also founded in 2005. The other Healthy Cities having children's parliaments include **Boskovice, Koprivnice** or **Orlova**.

You will find more information regarding the above in the Topic of the Month Home and Abroad section.

A Festival of Fun and Inspiration for the Entire Family – That is Bambiriad

It has become a tradition for the Healthy Cities to take part in **Bambiriad**, the nationwide festival of free-time activities for children organised by the Czech Council of Children and Youth

(CCCY). Last year's **Bambiriads** in **Chrudim, Prostejov, Brno, Uherske Hradiste, Trebitz, Ceske Budejovice, Karvina** and **Zlín** were again a tremendous source of inspiration for spending one's free-time. Events like this are popular in Healthy Cities.

CCCY Chairman Pavel Trantina told us about the plans for this year's **Bambiriad**: "This will be the festival's eighth year; **Bambiriad** will be taking place in 26 cities throughout the Czech Republic. Apart from presenting activities of children and youth organisations in individual cities, we want to recognise the efforts of mayors and other representatives of local governments and administration in supporting



Not every town has its own adrenalin sports area. The picture shows a new bikepark recently opened in the Healthy City of Litomyšl.

children and youth groups by awarding them the Haven prize (for details please see Topic of the Month Home and Abroad)." This year, **Bambiriad** will take place between May 25 and 28. Through entertaining games, contests and sports competitions, **Bambiriad** will present various organisations and associations, from large ones such as Junak – Czech Scout Association, the Association of Czech, Moravian and Silesian Firemen, Pioneer or the Youth Tourist Groups Association to those with fewer members. In **Prostejov**, last year's **Bambiriad** was the second in a row, taking place at the Velodrome. The Prevention Information Centre of the City Police prepared a Rescuer Multicontest for children and parents, with local firemen, policemen, emergency rescue service and the Secondary Medical School taking part. During the two days, over **800 people** took part in the festival; similar events are planned for this year. Last year, Na strelnici Park in **Chrudim** hosted a variety of events, including a performance of the Superstar contest finalist Julian Zahorovsky, an air-balloon show and radio amateur activities. The Altus civic association in cooperation with the Czech Radio Pardubice gave the visitors an opportunity to practice being an anchorman of the twenty-hour stage show. Under the auspices of **Chrudim** councillors Marie Malkova and Miloslav Macela, **Bambiriad** wants to inspire children to find a regular hobby for themselves and to present NGO activities to politicians and the general public.

Children Present Their Hobbies

Koprivnice organises regular shows entitled **The Stairs** to give children an opportunity to present their skills in any field they choose. "We want to promote free-time activities and give the youth an opportunity to show what they can do and compare their skills with other clubs or individuals," says the Koprivnice coordinator David Monsport. Several times a year, Koprivnice organises the **Debate League**, a discussion contest for children. The library in the Healthy City of **Steti** provides local children with space to exhibit their work

and organises art, knowledge and literary contests. The Healthy City of **Strasin** organises an entertainment afternoon at school entitled **There Is More to School Than Just Lessons**, which includes a children theatre performance, poem reciting and an exhibition of children artwork. The Healthy City of **Orlova** organises the **Orlova Superstar 2006** contest for young singers or the winter contest for the best structure made of snow. The Healthy City of **Podebrady** has a stage show featuring basic school pupils entitled **Let the World Rejoice**; in **Svetla nad Sazavou**, pupils compete for the best **Safe Journey to School** artwork.

Cultural and Sporting Events for Young People

Cultural events are a favourite activity for children. For the past eight years, the Healthy City of **Litomysl** has organised the regular **Toulovec Holiday Fridays** at the Toulovec Square, with a marathon of fairy tales, lotteries and folk bands concerts. The traditional **Vsetin krpec** festival ("krpec" being a special shoe worn with folk costumes) includes a special section for children. The Healthy Borough **Prague – Libus** makes it easier for its citizens to find about free-time activities by publishing information on cultural, sporting and other events in the supplement of the local newsletter. The Healthy Cities naturally support sporting activities for children and youth. Vsetin, for instance, has a children hockey team. **Steti** has the **Steti School League**, organising matches and sports contests for children of all ages; last year, the city also opened a new skatepark and an inline skating course.

Education and Social Impact of Working with Children

Prevention of drug abuse and smoking is an important part of activities for children and youth organised in Healthy Cities. **Podebrady** has been organising discussions about drugs; in **Pelhrimov**, children take part in entertaining contests co-organised by the local police to learn about compliance with law; they are then encouraged to share the information with their friends. **Trebic** has the volunteer civic association **Stred**, which has worked to integrate disabled children in the society through its Five Ps programme;



Encouraging children to have a positive approach to nature and to respect it is just as important as teaching them to stand up for themselves and defend their rights and freedoms. The Fairy-Tale Wood is an informative event for children as well as their parents organised by the Healthy City of Koprivnice.

Stred also operates the **Open Club** offering consultations and social services to young people. The Healthy City of **Svetla nad Sazavou** also has a low-threshold centre for children and youth, targeting young people without a defined lifestyle who tend to have conflicts with law and the generally accepted standards of conduct or who find themselves in a troublesome life situation.

RESOURCES AND PROJECTS

Financing Is Provided by Ministries, EU and Private Companies

There are numerous financing options for activities of children and youth; in addition to traditional donors, such as the ministries and the EU, substantial funding can be obtained from foundations and commercial organisations. Naturally, the most massive support comes from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training (MEYPT), including its **Programmes of State Aid for NGOs Working with Children and Youth between 2004 and 2006** (details are available at <http://www.msmt.cz/Files/HTM/Programy2004az2006webz.htm> - only in Czech). The **European Union** supports free-time activities through the aforementioned YOUTH programme (<http://www.youth.cz> - only in Czech) or as part of Measure 3 of the European Social Fund (education-related activities are administered by MEYPT). Since 2002, Nokia and the Foundation for Development of Civil Society together with their local partners have been implementing the international **Make a Connection**



programme; young people between 16 and 24 years of age can apply for a grant of CZK 50 thousand for their own local community projects (details are available at <http://www.makeaconnection.cz>). The **Eurotel Foundation** also offers support for various projects, most recently to fight chicane (details are available at <http://www.nadace-eurotel.cz/jnp/cz/home/index.html>). Virtually every city or municipality has its own grant programmes; larger amounts of money are provided by individual regions, particularly for sporting, free-time and educational activities.

The Healthy City of Prostejov Has a European Youth Information Centre

The Czech National Agency opened a **Youth Information Centre in Prostejov in June last year as the regional agency of the European Union's YOUTH grant programme for Olomouc Region.**

Located on the premises of the Cyril and Method Grammar School, the **Youth Information Centre in the Healthy City of Prostejov** provides all sorts of information, particularly on topics such as organisation, ecology, youth in the EU, work, health, free time, social phenomena, education, a citizen and the state, social groups and travelling. It is the Olomouc regional agency of **YOUTH, a European**

programme designed to integrate young people in the society and help them acquire knowledge, skills and qualification. The programme encourages cooperation in developing youth policies in Europe based on non-formal education.

IN BRIEF

City Reflections

HCCZ

HCCZ has achieved another international success by making it to the worldwide UN award finals. The results will be announced on June 23 (Public Administration Day).

HCCZ

The series of regional seminars on Drawing upon EU Funds, co-organised by HCCZ and the Ministry for Local Development, will be getting into its second half. The seminars in Usti nad Labem, Zlin and Jihlava were attended by 130 city, municipality and regional officials, NGO representatives and entrepreneurs. The seminar in Jihlava alone was attended by 60 people. The remaining four seminars will take place in the first half of March in Hradec Kralove (March 2), Ostrava (March 6), Pilsen (March 8) and Prague (March 13).

Karvina

Jaroslava Feberova, Head Nurse of the only day nursery in Karvina, won the national Nurse of the Year award for 2005. Eleven years ago, Ms Feberova launched a project entitled **Healthy Child – Healthy Nursery** to help develop the children's personality and instil in them a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle that will last throughout their lives.

Boskovice, Kurim, Letovice, Hodonin

The first three aforementioned cities hosted meetings as part of the **Pilot Projects to Build Partnerships in South Moravian Region**. Organised by HCCZ, the events are intended to prepare any potential recipients for the drawing upon EU funds starting in 2007. To date, 150 innovative projects have been collected in

these regions, which are now being contributed to project accumulators by means of HCCZ Dataplan. The same procedure will be applied in the Hodonin region.

South Moravia, Vysocina

The Arnika association has invited three-person teams of secondary school and university students, apprentices or NGO staff members between 16 and 24 years of age to enter the **Future without Poisons** competition. Their task will be to map the condition of the environment in Jihlava, Vyskov and the Healthy Cities of Trebic, Uherske Hradiste and Valasske Mezirici. Details are available at <http://bezjedu.arnika.org>.

Calendar of Events

March 2 – Hradec Kralove will host the fourth regional seminar, entitled Drawing upon EU Funds. This seminar will be followed by seminars in Ostrava (March 6), Pilsen (March 8) and the final one to conclude the whole series in Prague (March 13).

March 7 – The March MCAP session will take place in the Healthy City of Boskovice, dealing with activities related to barrier-free access. The event is co-organised by the Association of Historical Settlements in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

March 15 to 17 – This year's HCCZ Spring School will take place in the Healthy City of Mlada Boleslav. The key topics will include media presentation of the Healthy Cities Project and presentation and communication skills.

March 30 – HCCZ Spring General Meeting will take place in Trebic. The meeting will include accompanying events to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Healthy Cities Project in Trebic.

OUR NEXT TOPIC

The topic of the month for March will be Barrier-Free Access

CONTACTS



Healthy Cities CR, Srobárova 48, 100 42 Prague 10, Czech Republic

T: +420 602 500 639 | E: info@nszm.cz | W: 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.)



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