



## HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### INTERVIEW



**An interview with deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of Hodonín and politician of the Healthy City Project (HCP) and Local Agenda 21, Mrs. Zuzana Domesová**

### Regular Meeting and Communication with People is Vital

**The issue of social exclusion is possibly being dealt with by every city, but many of these have their own well-proven approach. What is the approach to this issue by the Healthy City of Hodonín?**

The City of Hodonín financially supports the activities dedicated to people threatened by social exclusion. We make efforts to work conceptually, i.e. to perform specific field research concerning the number of people and types of groups of Hodonín Citizens threatened by the social exclusion. This is what our community plan of social services, intended for Hodonín, is based on. Currently we have been making efforts in extending this plan to those municipalities that belong into our catchment area. However, our plans do not remain mere theory. We work with people, consult their problems and make efforts in solving their problems. For instance we made creation of the Romany Centre or psychological centre Domeček possible, supporting it financially from the municipal budget.

**The project "Barrier-Free Hodonín" is currently being realised in Hodonín and as soon as since its very beginning it has been bringing a number of interesting observations and information. Can you share some of these with our readers?**

Broad public has to be involved in the project, as this is the target group the project should serve. Not only the handicapped citizens, but also mothers with baby-carriages, seniors and also institutions. And negotiate and negotiate again... Involve citizens' associations in the events and regularly meet and communicate with people. This is the basis of a good community planning in all spheres of life and urban development.

**What do you consider, in connection to the issue of social exclusion, the greatest problem from the point of view of an experienced communal politician who has been dealing with this issue in the long run?**

Social exclusion is rather being talked about than being dealt with. The conception as such without resources and good will

on both sides of the barrier cannot help. Everybody must have will and education is needed. For instance, if I consider the issue of national minorities, often threatened by the exclusion from major society, the situation is very complicated. They have their own language and culture, which sometimes further complicates the communication. Therefore, everyone has to be approached individually while bearing in mind that we cannot advantage one against others for ever.

### TOPIC OF THE MONTH: "SOCIAL INCLUSION"

Social exclusion may concern various groups of inhabitants, the groups mentioned most often are the unemployed, seniors, the handicapped, members of national minorities or homeless persons. Social exclusion, however, potentially threatens all those who for instance have no sufficient access to public services, mostly medical and social or to public transportation. Every socially disadvantaged group of inhabitants requires specific approach in the process of inclusion into regular life. At the same time, the coordination of individual activities focused on helping these groups within the process of social services' community planning, has proved practical in the cities and regions of the Czech Republic. One of the priority of the European Union issues is represented by equal opportunities to all groups of inhabitants, which is why measures against occupational discrimination have been gradually implemented in our country. Various conversion trainings,

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## Topic: Social inclusion











especially related to languages and information technologies, should help the excluded and disadvantaged inhabitants in their success on the employment market. Various forms of supported employment that often represents the first step on the way to successful social inclusion for the socially excluded citizens, may be also beneficial. The Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions collaborate with a number of organisations that deal with the issue of social inclusion in the long-term perspective. The gained experience may serve as an inspiration for other successful projects, which is proven by the content of this year's third Bulletin issue.

## SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF INHABITANTS IS BOTH A LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM

**The issue of socially excluded inhabitants and communities is a long-term priority of the European Union and the Czech Republic. The approved European documents and domestic legislation concentrate on the reduction of the number of socially excluded inhabitants and contribute thus to their successful social inclusion. The Union and governmental programmes reinforce the employment strategy and the principle of equal opportunities. Non-profit organisations dedicate themselves to giving practical help to excluded groups of inhabitants not only in the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions.**

The **European Social Chart** was signed as soon as in 1961 in Torino (more at <http://www.cmkos.cz/eit/revido.htm>) and ensures protection of basic citizens' social rights. The right for protection against poverty and social exclusion is included in the Chart by the individual countries' acceptance of coordinated measures for the support of threatened persons in employment, residence, education, culture, social and medical help. The revised form of the Chart was signed in Strasbourg, 1996. The European Council approved the **European Social Programme 2006-2010** in 2006. The Programme defines two priority areas – employment and united society, including the fight against poverty, support of social inclusion and support of diversity and non-discrimination. One of basic elements of the union process of social inclusion are the **National Action Plans of Social Inclusion** (more at <http://www.mpsv.cz/clanek.php?lg=1&id=1098>).

## Non-profit organisations operating in the social inclusion area support one another

Work with socially excluded groups of inhabitants is systematically developed by smaller local non-profit organisations but also by organisations with national field of action, such as the welfare company **Člověk v tísni (Man in Need)** that realises Social Inclusion Programmes in two tens of Czech Republic locations (more at <http://www.clovekvtsni.cz/index2.php?sid=113>). The **Polis Project - support of socially integrating policies and services** - is also a part of these programmes. The Project is intended for people threatened by social exclusion and is realised by means of **in-field social workers**. Since the beginning of this year there is a new social services law in effect and providers of social care gradually adapt to it. The **SKOK Citizen's Association**, the association of departmental conference of non-state non-profit organisations operating in the social and socially-medical area realises the project of **New Way to the New Law** that is

intended to provide consultancy in the area of new law and educate workers of social services providers. As to the April of this year the SKOK Association is going to launch an internet information centre for social services providers at the address <http://www.skok.biz> and on the May 16<sup>th</sup> 2007, in the building of Law Faculty of the ChU it will hold a national conference to the issue of **Social inclusion in Connection to the New Law**.

More information to actual issues can be also found in the new special March SKOK Bulletin "**New Way to the New Law**" (more at <http://www.skok.biz/e-bulletin.php>).

## HCCZ PARTNERS

### Social inclusion connects a whole number of important partners

The prevention of social exclusion and support of social inclusion are integral parts and also preconditions of sustainable development and quality of life. The National Network of Healthy Cities therefore in the long run collaborates with domestic and foreign institutions in this field. The main administrator in this field is naturally the **Ministry of**



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**Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA)**. Collaboration is in progress for instance in the area of maternity centres and social services community planning that MLSA created a methodological guideline to. On the local level the approaches are applied for instance by Agora Central Europe, an exemplary instance of successful application is represented by the citizens' association of Community Work Centre in the Healthy City of Ústí nad Labem. **Ministry of Health** is another significant expert partner, the collaboration for instance concerns the healthy ageing issue (more in January HCCZ Bulletin 2006). In the international field HCCZ collaborates with its traditional partner **World Health Organisation - WHO**. A number of HCCZ members within this collaboration realise the international event Walk of All Generations, taking place mostly as a part a national Health Days Campaign.

One of the main partners from non-profit sphere is the **Information Centre of Non-Profit Organisations - ICN**, in whose project "Stop to Social Exclusion" HCCZ also participates (for more see Resources and Projects).

## SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES MAY SHOW THE CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES HOW TO HELP PEOPLE IN DIFFICULT LIFE SITUATIONS

**Those inhabitants of Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions who get into difficult life situation or those who are members of socially excluded community may use the services of non-profit**



organisations dealing with the issue of social inclusion. In addition to this, they may actively participate in the creation of community Plan of Health and Quality of Life that gives them an opportunity to express their opinion and draw the attention of other inhabitants and municipal authorities to actual issues.



*How to get a job is the basic question for hundreds of thousand of unemployed. A number of advisory centres therefore also train their clients in the skill of "addressing an employer".*

The projects of supported employment and projects centred against discrimination in the employment process significantly contribute to social inclusion of permanently or temporarily excluded groups of inhabitants. The citizens' association IQ Roma Service realises in the Healthy City of **Brno** a year-round information and educational campaign proclaimed by the European Union under the title of **European Year of Equal Opportunities for All – Towards Fair Society**. Basic and high schools also joined the campaign. Their pupils and students take part in a competition for the best screenplay against discrimination, in a part of which 12 strip cartoon stories and 6 DVD movies will be created under the title "The Way I See It" and consequently promoted and distributed.

### Social exclusion threatens the handicapped but also concerns the healthy population in the living phases such as old age or parenthood

In the Healthy City of **Litoměřice** exists a project called **Innovation of Integration Programme for Persons with Medical Handicap in the Diakonia Centre ECCB in Litoměřice**, realised within the framework of Common Regional Operational Programme under financial support by the Ústecký Region and the EU. The main objective of the programme, taking place in the Centre of Daily Services and in the Agency of Supported Employment, is the support and help to people with



*Senior citizens are right another group threatened by the social exclusion. The improvement of their safety may be also contributed to by meetings with municipal policemen, as realised for instance in **Říčany**.*

medical handicap, equalizing their opportunities and integrating them on the labour market. The project is mostly joined by young pupils from practical, auxiliary and other special schools from the Region of Litoměřice, who would otherwise find opportunities very scarce. In the Healthy City of **Říčany**, activities leading to elimination of barriers between the major society and socially excluded inhabitants have been commenced in connection with the currently prepared community plan of social services. In the local **Senior Club**, a part of **Říčany Community Centre**, they have been planning a seminar and educational events in a form of language and computer courses for seniors and physically handicapped. The Centre for Family in the Healthy City of **Hodonín** has been realising the project of **Mothers' Education**, whose objective is to improve through educational activities the qualification of women who are about to terminate their maternity leave and increase thus their chances on the labour market. The citizens' association of Kuřátko Maternity Centre in the Healthy Municipal District of **Prague – Libuš and Písnice** has a similar focus, helping women in suppressing the feeling of isolation and disintegration within their local community through rich variety of free-time activities.

### Threatened children and youth are helped by low-threshold clubs and half-way houses

To attract children and youth who spend their free time in the streets, is the objective of low-threshold club **Futur** in the Healthy City of **Chrudim**. The Club provides consulting services and social services and is intended for target groups of children and youth aged 12 to 26 years. The Healthy City of **Kopřivnice** has been already running its **Comrade Club** for almost ten years. The Club has been created within the framework of activities leading to "humanizing" the Sever housing area in which 90% of all guests are Romany children. The **Crisis Advice Centre PAPERSEK** was opened there in 2001 and assists the clients in dealing with difficult life situations, such as loss of close person, illness or family conflicts. In **Hodonín** they run their own **Half-Way House** for young people, which is dedicated to clients of residential care or protective education who leave these facilities after attaining their majority, young people from dysfunctional or socially disadvantaged families or persons released from execution of sentence.

### For inhabitants of Healthy Cities there is a chance for social inclusion even in the most difficult life situations

Losses of home or return from execution of sentence often result in automatic exclusion from the society for the affected persons. The **White Light I.** citizens' association realises in the Healthy City of **Ústí nad Labem** the **Chance 06** Project that helps with social inclusion of people returning from execution of sentence or of people in conflict with the law. The Programme offers its clients fully concrete and practical services, such as occupational, social and legal consultancy and also supported employment that enables the clients to find and hold a job. There is also an opportunity of short-term employment of clients after their release, provided by contracted employers. The **White Light I.** citizens' association also realises the programme **Re-Start 07** that deals with retraining of young people. In **Litoměřice**, for a change, there successfully functions a **Refuge for Homeless Men**. In addition to temporary accommodation, this facility provides its clients with help in the process of arranging documents or social benefits or helps in finding new employment and another accommodation.

Database  
**BEST PRACTICE**

Examples of best practice from other areas can be found in **Database BestPractice** - <http://www.dobrapraxe.cz>.

## RESOURCES AND PROJECTS

### Social inclusion is an EU priority in the field of subsidy granting

European Funds support activities concentrated on a wide area of social inclusion by a number of subsidy titles. The most important resource is undoubtedly the **European Social Fund (ESF)** that finances for instance the Operational Programme (OP) **Human Resource Development** from the terminating 2004-6 period (e.g. Priority Axis 2 Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities), or new OP for the period of 2007-13 **Human Resources and Employment** (e.g. Priority Axis 2 of Active Employment Policy on the Labour Market or Priority Axis 3 of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities).

**Integrated Operational programme** will be also an important resource of finances (e.g. Priority Axis 2 of Quality Increase and Availability of Public Services – in the area of employment and social inclusion).



The issue of equal opportunities to men and women or employment will be solved by the subsidy title **EQUAL** – one of so called Union Initiatives administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (more information and actual bids at <http://www.equalcr.cz>).

A specific OP for the City of Prague called **Prague Adaptability** is one of three programmes for realisation of support from **ESF** in the field of human resource development in the CR (e.g. Priority Axis 2 Support of Entry onto Labour Market, Priority Axis 3 Modernisation of Initial Education).

Another potential resource supporting various areas of social inclusion is the OP **Education for Competitiveness**, opportunities for financing will be also offered by subsidies within the regional EU policy. Resources for this issue will be provided by the European Commission within its selected programmes, but also from the part of other institutions and foundations.

This section topic in various forms appears almost in every one of offered EU resources. Find out more information at <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz>.

### Stop to social exclusion

**In January this year the Information Centre of Non-Profit Organisations introduced a continuation of the project called “STOP to Social Inclusion”, whose objective is to familiarise the public, non-profit organisations and representatives of municipalities and regions with possibilities of re-including the excluded persons back to regular life. Within the project framework there will be a number of conferences, seminars, workshops and monitoring activities on which the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions will also participate.**

The Czech Republic and often also interested groups themselves still do not have sufficient knowledge about the possibilities of social inclusion of long-term unemployed, physically handicapped or seniors. The project “STOP to Social Exclusion II” intends not only to inform about this issue, but in the course of this year it will also gradually

introduce a whole range of **interesting and original solution options**, whose presentation will serve as an inspiration and guideline to other organisations or municipalities. A partial objective of the project will be to focus on help in application of the new **social services law**, on **drawing of resources from structural funds** in the years 2007-13 and on effective adjustment of the drawing system in particular for social services providers. Emphasis is put on active approach to those social services clients who get a chance to intervene in creation of strategies and plans on the local and national level, as the threatened groups of inhabitants often cannot defend their own interests effectively. The project is realised in common by the consortium associating the **Information Centre of Non-Profit Organisations, SKOK** - Association of Departmental Conference of Non-state Non-profit Organisations Operating in the Social and Socially-Medical Area, **Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic**, Institute for the European Policy **Europeum** and **EAPN** Czech Republic. Find out more information at <http://neziskovky.cz/cz/icn/stop/>.



## SPECIAL COLUMN: RECAP

### The meeting in Seville proved that sustainable development in cities, municipalities and regions is the right direction

**Representatives of self-governments and other state and non-state organisations that aim at enforcement of ideas of quality and long-term sustainable development on the local and regional level, have met on the largest Sustainable Cities & Towns Conference so far in the Spanish City of Seville.**

**In the course of five days, more than 1500 participants from all over the world could listen to tens of lectures and participate in many discussions about the way cities and regions manage to fulfil the principles of Local Agenda 21 and so called Aalborg Chart.**

The only signatory of the Aalborg Chart – chart leading to sustainable development (available for download at [http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/media/charter\\_czech.pdf](http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/media/charter_czech.pdf)) in the CR is the City of **Hlučín** and the Healthy City of **Vsetín**. So called Aalborg Obligations (available for download at [http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/media/aalborg\\_commitments\\_in\\_czech.pdf](http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/media/aalborg_commitments_in_czech.pdf)), for instance already actively fulfilled by the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions, have not as yet been signed by any Czech self-government, unlike e.g. Vienna, Munich, Paris, Rome or Edinburgh and many others.

The approach to this issue at the Conference has been represented for the Czech Republic also by the Ministry of Environment and National Network of Healthy Cities; their representatives also participated in so called **Local Agenda 21 Round Table**. HCCZ presented its approach to the sustainable development and health support in the Section called **“Local Events for Health”**, along with representative of the Healthy City of Helsingborg, Mrs. Elisabeth Bengtsson. In her presentation Mrs. Bengtsson introduced practical application of the Health Impact Assessment method and expressed among others also recognition to the new information tool DataPlan HCCZ.

The top level international meeting has proven that a necessary part of and precondition of real progress on the way to sustainability and quality of life is the obligation to fulfilment of individual particular activities (included for instance in so called Aalborg Obligations) their

monitoring and assessment using **criteria and indicators**. Only this approach may identify whether the cities, municipalities and regions approach to or on the contrary retreat from targets.



*Among others the Seville City Mayor Mr. Alfredo Sánchez Monteseirín, Spanish Minister of Environment Mrs. Narbona Ruiz or Dennis Meadows, honorary member of the so called Roman Club spoke at the general meeting.*

**All website references are generally in Czech language.**

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## CONTACTS

Healty Cities CZ, 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.)

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