



HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW



An interview with deputy Mayor of the Healthy City of Vsetín and politician of the Healthy City Project (HCP) and local Agenda 21, Dr. Lubomír Gajdušek

The principles of sustainable consumption and production support the quality of life

The Healthy City of Vsetín is known for its support of various standards aimed at reduction of negative impacts on the living environment. Which ones of these are the most significant in your opinion?

For a long time, Vsetín has been turning to implementation of procedures and methods that as such improve the quality of city hall work and their organisation and also prevent negative impacts of their activity on the living environment. Quality methods, such as ISO 14000, Balance ScoreCard or Benchmarking, are vital for improvement in the quality of life. They also help to fulfil the targets of the Plan of Health and Quality of Life that reflect the wishes and opinions of Vsetín's public. For their successful implementation the City owes in particular to the secretary of municipal office, Mr. Milan Půček and also to the openness of the city management towards new innovations.

The city sets an example to its own inhabitants, for instance by utilising the local water resources. Do the citizens perceive this initiative as something positive?

The fact that nowadays we can drink water from local resources with no fear and need not buy expensive packed water, is the result of Vsetín's activity in the process of obtaining EU resources. The quality of water has been greatly contributed to in particular by the large regional project "Clean River Bečva" that is focused on purification of sewage waters and their connecting to sewage treatment plants. The city also has significant influence on the company that processes and distributes the water, which enables us to maintain its high quality and certain independence in case of e.g. contamination of other resources. In the course of various questionnaire examinations we have also asked inhabitants for their opinions of the quality of water in the city. The results were very positive.

Do you prepare any novelties in the area of so called "sustainable consumption and production" in Vsetín?

We will certainly continue in monitoring of set standards, criteria and indicators etc. In this sense we would like to continue in utilising external subsidies, be these of domestic or foreign origin. Within the framework of Norwegian Funds there is offered a possibility to obtain finances for the project of "Way to Sustainable Development of Vsetín Region". Basically, this is another significant step that we would like to realise in the nearest future and support thus the sustainability not only of our city, but also of the whole region.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: "SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION"

Consumption and production ensure gratification of basic human needs and have profound influence on the quality of life, not only of the current generation but also of the generations to come. This is why we need to implement such measures that ensure that these processes are efficient and respect the principles of sustainable development. Among these measures belongs for instance the minimisation of natural resources consumption, considerate handling with wastes and exclusion of toxic substances or reduction of emissions within the whole framework of production or service cycle. Their implementation also represents an

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Topic: Sustainable consumption and production

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PŘÍSTUP RADNICE K ŽIVOTNÍMU PROSTŘEDÍ
SOUBOR PŘÍKLADŮ ZE VSETÍNĀ

opportunity for raising of competitiveness of enterprises as well as self-governments and opens the market with products compliant with demanding criteria of health, quality and protection of the environment. Within the framework of sustainable consumption and production there occurs improvement in production control, innovations and conscious orientation of enterprise consumption, public administration and the public towards environmental friendliness. This naturally also entails social aspects with emphasis on inhabitants' health and responsible behaviour of employers towards their employees.

Since the cities, municipalities and regions purchase services and products worth billions of Crowns per year, they can significantly influence not only their own approach towards these issues, but may also set an example to their inhabitants. The April HCCZ Bulletin issue therefore brings a number of actual information and particular examples of how to apply the principles of sustainable consumption and production on the level of self-governments and enterprises, based precisely on the ongoing project of Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

One of the largest projects, so far focused on the change in behaviour both on the part of consumers and producers, is the project of Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production. Through this project the workers and the private and public sector can familiarise with practical forms of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) as well as with methods of how to actively influence these from their own part, with a view to achieve so called double gain.

An important part of the project is also represented by creating five new information centres for sustainable consumption and production, namely in the regions of Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, Central Bohemia, Olomouc and Vysočina, professional training of their workers, also processing of pilot projects to SCP in selected enterprises and municipalities and collection and presentation of best practice examples related to this issue. The whole project is co-financed by the European Social Fund and CZ national budget. *"It is fundamentally based on the Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Czech Republic that has been approved by the Governmental Council for Sustainable Development and prepared by its work group. Some other projects focused e.g. on sustainable transportation or development of enterprise competitiveness are a part of this framework,"* added Mr. Jiří Vavřínek of Czech Environmental Information Agency (CENIA) that is the bearer of this project.

Financially Advantageous Ecology

Within the framework of the project and in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry there was a seminar called **Financially Advantageous Ecology** held in Prague at the beginning of April this year. The seminar was organised by the National Network of Healthy Cities along with bearer of the project, the Czech Environmental Information Agency CENIA and other partners: **SITA CZ** a.s., **Enviros** s.r.o. and **Central Bohemian University Institute** s.r.o. The seminar objective was in particular to clarify the anchorage of the sustainable consumption and production issue on the national level, introduce practical examples and experience on the level of self-governments and provide to its participants a guideline or rather an inspiration of how to manage enterprise or city efficiently and at the same time environment-friendly (more information and presentations of the seminar can be found at www.nszm.cz/mpo). In the course of May and June there are going to be another seminars dedicated to this issue in individual target

regions. More information about the seminars prepared can be found at <http://www.cenia.cz/usv>.



The first of series of seminars called "Financially Advantageous Ecology" took place on the ground of the Department of Industry and Trade on 3.4.2007.

How to manage an enterprise or city efficiently and at the same time be environment friendly?

The aim of the Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production Project that was already launched in September last year, is therefore to guide companies, public administration and individuals to purchasing and production of products that are more friendly to the living environment. *"However, we will go at it not only using educational programmes and education in the regional newly established information centres, but also directly – by pilot projects of input assessment in enterprises and municipalities,"* says Mr. Vavřínek and adds that *"exactly the municipalities, cities or regions should be the first pioneers of the project and should motivate enterprises to join the Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production"*.

Particular tools of SCP are elaborated by Mr. Vladimír Dobeš of Enviros company: *"Projects focused on sustainable consumption and production basically endeavour to minimise drawing of resources and waste production so that these costs do not unnecessarily burden our wallet or living environment."*

The importance of involving self-governments, i.e. cities and municipalities and regions, is vital. Through their decisions they may significantly influence the material and energetic flows in their region. By means of regional planning they have influence upon e.g. transportation demands, presence of greenery in municipality, etc. *"People in cities, municipalities and regions however often do not believe there are still things to improve! Waste sorting however is not all we can do and there are always fields where we can save in this manner, pleasantly,"* notifies Mr. Dobeš.

The Savings Plan in cities, municipalities and regions is real and saves money

Just like in many other cases, the new project uses experience initially verified on the level of enterprises that are consequently moved into the public administration. The Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production tries to utilise the know-how of input assessment, based on test projects focused in this way in large enterprises. *"We have clearly proven that this plan of savings is real and that it would certainly work also in smaller enterprises and municipalities,"* claims Dobeš, and adds to be convinced that in addition to the input assessment (identification of areas where improvement can be sought) and proposal of particular steps, the company or other agency that designs improvements for an

Udržitelná spotřeba a výroba

Projekt Partnerství pro udržitelnou spotřebu a výrobu

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enterprise or municipality, should also somehow guarantee the success of the whole process. "I am convinced that basically every enterprise or every organisation should have such analysis done sooner or later. As a representative of organisation that carries out such assessments and designs, we are willing to take the risk that this would not work. It has not happened yet, though." adds Dobeš

The interest in the project is great

Out of cities, municipalities and regions it was the city of Kladno that actively participated in the project for sustainable consumption and production, other municipalities and enterprises show interest too. "Currently we are concentrating on realisation of projects in progress, naturally, we are also interested in their spreading to other regions. We still seek new options that might be interesting for the municipalities – e.g. so called "greening" of offices or events organised by the city," concludes Mr. Vavřínek.

More information about the project and possibilities of joining can be found at <http://www.cenia.cz/usv>.

HCCZ PARTNERS

SCO opens important space for partnership between the public and private sector

Besides own partners within the **Partnership for SCP Project** who have been participating in individual phases of its realisation, the Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions collaborate in this field in particular with the **Ministry of Interior**. Acknowledgement of the local Agenda 21 Programme (LA21) as a full-fledged method of quality in public administration has been a major success of this collaboration. Selected Healthy Cities also initially implement the programme of environmental management and audit **EMAS in collaboration with Department of the Environment**.

New partnerships have been recently created in particular in connection to publication of the so called Common Topic for the year 2008, which is

Database BEST PRACTICE

Examples of best practice to the issue of sustainable consumption and production can be found in the **BestPractice Database**
<http://www.dobrapraxe.cz/usv>.



going to be the Sustainable Energetics – Resources and Savings (more at <http://www.nszm.cz/tema>). Private companies that may help the cities, municipalities and regions in the process of implementation of new technologies or participate in their financing, should rank among important partners.

RESOURCES

Cities, municipalities and regions may also utilise European resources for financing of activities related to sustainable consumption and production. For the new programming period it is for instance possible to use the **Living Environment Operation Programme** (Priority axes Sustainable Drawing of Energy Resources and Improvements in Handling with Wastes and Elimination of Old Environmental Burdens) or **Integrated Operation Programme** (Priority axis National Support of Regional Development). Possibilities are also offered by **regional operation programmes** within the framework of axis Municipal Recovery and Development. Support from the **State Living Environment Fund** can be obtained in particular for environment-friendly methods of heating and education for utilisation of renewable energy resources.

More information can be found at <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz> or <http://www.sfzp.cz>.



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Interesting information about the best practice of Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions in the field of sustainable consumption and production can be also found in last year's issue of April HCCZ Bulletin at the address <http://www.nszm.cz/bulletin>.

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(All website references are generally in Czech language)



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