



HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW



An interview with councillor of the Healthy Region of Vysočina, Mr. Jaroslav Hulák

Communication is not only about information technologies

Information technologies play an increasingly important part in the development of self-administrations. What contribution do you expect from implementation of innovations such as video-broadcasts from the regional council meetings?

The pilot project of the European Committee eParticipate not only enables the Vysočina Region to realise video-broadcasts from councillors' meetings but also to capitalise on experience from Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Denmark or for instance from Slovakia, where this technology has been already used for a number of years. For this reason, the future form of communication between the region and its citizens should not be only "one-way" in a form of transmitting broadcasts but "two-way" – i.e. with a possibility to respond over the internet to the proceedings currently in progress. Another interesting feature of the selected technology is the fact that the cameras are not operated physically. The objective of communication equipment always focuses on the speaker who had been given word in the system. Everything is controlled by one "click" of the presiding person – in this case by the president of Vysočina Region. We are the first region that has been utilising this unique technology for its work. In addition to transmitting and archiving records from regional representatives' meetings, the project also includes a modernisation of voting system of regional representatives and its integration in the direct internet transmissions. This feature will be realised at the end of year 2008.

Not only in the Vysočina Region have the Healthy Cities been widely utilising the internet and other information technologies for communication and presentation of their activities. Are you going to support your self-administrations in this way, so that their operation becomes as transparent and open as the one of Region?

The openness of offices is not only a question of information technologies but also one of direct communication with people and possibility of how to for instance monitor the fulfilment of agreed objectives and priorities. Regional representatives approved the Programme Health 21 for Vysočina Region at their last meeting and agreed that evaluation of efficiency of individual activities and that of financial support from the part of region will be ensured by monitoring and evaluation

of indicators proposed to each priority. Another information tool "Data Storage", developed by the region since 2004 can be also used for this evaluation. The tool collects important public administration data and provides them for further use after processing. This information is for instance very widely utilizable for strategic management of the regional office. All municipalities and cities can also capitalise on the support from Vysočina Fund – e.g. from programme of Metropolitan Network, intended for support of public administration bodies' communication infrastructure. Details about other grant programmes of Vysočina Fund are available on the regional website.

A traditional final question concerns the future outlook. What interesting projects are you preparing and what surprises can we expect?

For the next year we have prepared a project of extension of public optical network Rowanet II. Regional Council approved a project programme to realise the international project ERNIES that focuses on utilisation of electronic reservation systems in regional medical environment. In collaboration with Italian, Polish and Austrian partners we would like to improve the comfort of medical facilities' patients. The system should also monitor the number of free beds in hospitals for the purposes of regional emergency service (mass disaster etc.). We have been working on the solution of Data Storages for regional hospitals. Involvement of IT in medical processes has brought the need of safe and practical backup of daily created units and soon even tens of GB of data. This technology is being verified by regional capital Jihlava Hospital and regional office.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: "INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY"

HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
Topic: Information Technologies

Life without information and communication technologies is almost inconceivable for the majority of citizens today. The Internet, local computer networks and development of mobile communication also facilitate the development of quality public administration. Websites of municipal and regional offices have become commonplace and ensure simpler and quicker transfer of information to citizens. Various form systems are being used for communication with offices besides the classic electronic mail. Not only important documents and forms in various formats, but also audio and video recordings for direct playback can be posted on the internet. Real-time video-broadcasts from important meetings or other events are also possible. Connection of mobile communication with transfer of data over the internet has become increasingly popular. Information and communication technologies enable contact with offices to people threatened by social exclusion. The Internet is available in libraries, wireless network is available in many places, cities and municipalities support the spreading of broadband internet connection in their area. Information technologies are also used in transportation, in the area of emergency situations or in the field of personal and property protection. Metropolitan networks, reservation systems or video-broadcasts show the main direction currently taken by the communication between public administration and citizens.

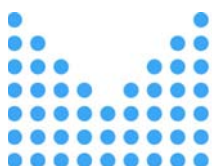
The March issue of HCCZ Bulletin focuses on examples of successful information technologies utilisation in Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions and within the framework of public administration as such.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES FACILITATE THE INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Gradual transfer of administrative tasks into the virtual space of internet occurs in connection with global development of information and communication technologies. As a result of these changes in public administration, citizens have a possibility to capitalise on various simplifications and acceleration of common administrative tasks, but can also intervene in events within cities, municipalities and regions. Informatization also offers more effective work of offices and develops strategic municipal management.

Sharing of best practices and inspiration on the national and international levels

Provision of state and public administration services to citizens over the internet, known as **eGovernment**, not only brings higher quality and speed of administrative processes, but also greater transparency to the political decision-making. This process results in strengthening of democratic elements and feedback from offices to citizens, usually identified as **eParticipation**. EGovernment services can be used by both the citizens in the process of submitting on-line requests as well as by entrepreneurs, who can handle their employees'



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insurance, taxes, company registration or public contracts over the internet. The most interesting services and applications are annually announced within the project **EGovernment The Best**. In-depth information about the most interesting projects in the field of application of electronics in public administration for the period 2006-7 can be obtained on the website <http://www.egovernment.cz/best>. The European-level project of **European eGovernment Awards** has similar significance. The purpose of these awards is to select successful public administration projects in Europe and present them as best practice examples. The project can be joined by **all public and state administration bodies** that provide services over the internet. The prizes are awarded in several areas: More information at http://ec.europa.eu/ceskarepublika/news/070522_cs.htm.



This prize is won by the winners of European eGovernment Awards Competition.

An interesting inspiration in the area of information technologies employed in public administration is also offered by the **Ministry of Interior Prize for Innovation in Public Administration**. Find out more information at <http://www.mvcr.cz/kvalita>.

Popularization of Internet in public administration is also supported by competitions for best municipal websites

The magazine *Veřejná správa* (Public Administration) annually announces a competition for best websites of municipalities and voluntary associations of cities in several categories. The results of **competition Revelation of the Year 2007** were announced on October 24th 2007 at the INVEX expo in Brno. The 10th anniversary year of **Golden Crest 2008** competition for best municipal website and electronic services also takes place this year. The competition takes place under personal auspices of the deputy minister of interior Mr. Zdeněk Zajíček, personal patronage over the best electronic service has been taken over by the president of Supreme Audit Office, Mr. František Dohnal. The competition is held in collaboration with Czech at Sign association, Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic, Portal of City and Municipality Online and IPAS conference. The competition is a part of initiatives within the framework March – the Month of Internet.

DATA PLAN

Information system HCCZ DataPlan since March with new functions

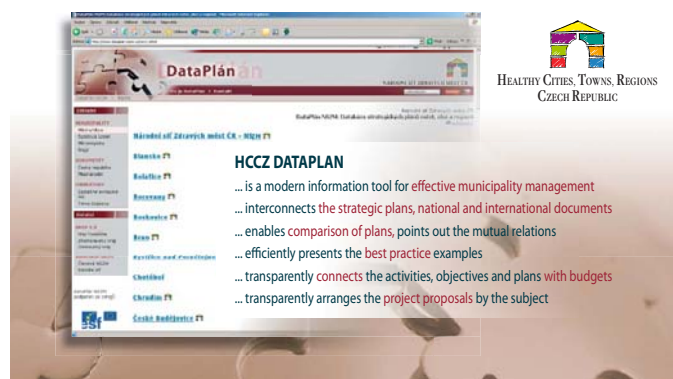
The information system for strategic planning **HCCZ DataPlan** has been also extended in connection to March Topic of the Month called **Information Technologies in Public Administration**. The new functions in the terminal (internal editing DataPlan

environment, accessible via login and password) include data administration and updating as well as the possibility to **input partial strategic levels of developing documents** of cities, municipalities and regions **directly** (areas, targets, groups of activities).

This new function has been used for instance by the Healthy City of **Hodonín** that employed it for creating the **Action Plan** of city development strategy. Hodonín also extended the prepared project storage and linked individual projects to Action Plan measures – all this very simply, clearly and accessibly both for individual office departments as well as for partner subjects of the city and for the public. **DataPlan** has been also employed for administration and updating of **project designs in the Healthy City of Kopřivnice**. The ability to compare priority objectives of strategic documents with project subjects is an unquestionable advantage. This functionality enables to display clearly, whether there are any project designs being practically prepared to approved targets, for which financial resources can be obtained.

One of new DataPlan functionalities is also the interlinking of strategic documents directly with approved **municipal budgets**, specifically to the level of individual departments and workers. For instance the Healthy Cities of **Moravská Třebová, Strakonice, Pelhřimov** or **Vsetín** utilise DataPlan this way. Unlike other systems for work with budgets, DataPlan provides a layout which is clear also to laymen.

Detailed information on work with the system are brought to you by **HCCZ methodical sheets** which are continuously updated at <http://www.nszm.cz/dtp>.



BEST PRACTICE

The public has more information available on events in their city, municipality or region

Owing to technologies such as internet, mobile phone or cable TV, people not only in Healthy Cities, Municipalities and Regions learn all important information in time and also can deal with their administrative matters remotely. Quick communication between citizens and local administration is advantageous to both sides and contributes to improvement of local life quality.



Training of work on computer is an important part of information technology development, especially in case of older generations. An example from training in Kroměříž.

The Internet enables fast and efficient form of communication also for disadvantaged citizens, those threatened by social exclusion such as the handicapped, seniors or women on maternity leave. The area of library in the Healthy City of **Prostějov** hosted a campaign **March – the Month of Internet (MMI)** with a subject **“Internet – an Advantage for the Disadvantaged”**. In the library there were also seminars on efficient utilisation of Municipal Library website and on web design for libraries in small municipalities. The **Healthy City of Desná** realised a project of wireless broadband connection within its area and the municipal, daily updated website offers the



WHY utilise DataPlan?

- For monitoring and evaluation of relationships between targets of approved strategies and concepts.
- For clear information on activities and their responsibilities within the office framework and for their efficient administration.
- For efficient and clear work with city budget.
- For efficient work with projects and for monitoring of their connection to strategic targets and subsidy titles and programmes.
- For transparent city, municipal and region management towards the public, information is accessible always and everywhere.
- For efficient and cheap solution – DataPlan utilises an internet browser, therefore, no installation or expensive application is required. The service is free of charge for HCCZ members.
- You can find out more on the following pages from particular statements of representatives of those cities that have already been utilising DataPlan.

WHO is DataPlan intended for?

- For city management and leading workers as an internal tool for strategic organisation management.
- For HCP and LA21 coordinators as a tool of efficient administration of community Plan of Health and Quality of Life, its updating and administration of realisers.
- For the widest public and media as a transparent environment that brings information on expenditure of public finances and fulfilment of defined development priorities of a city/municipality/region.

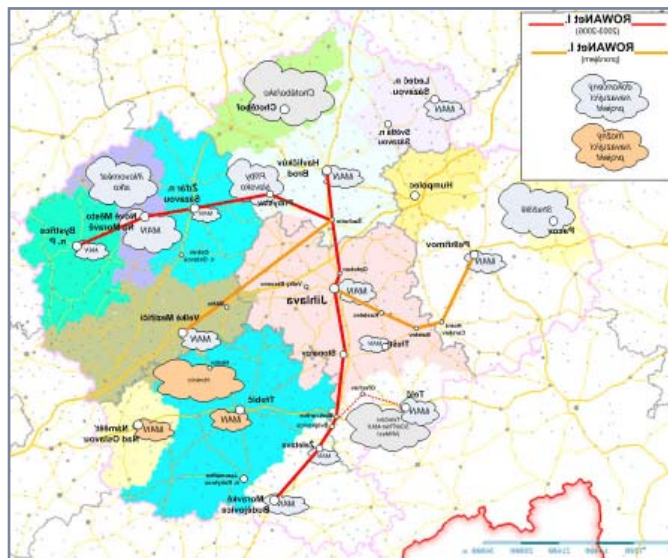
citizens information for dealing with regular life situations, in addition to this, there is also an interactive map of mobile operators' signal reception in a location of particular object according to specific address searched for. An **information system utilising SMS** has been in operation in Desná since 2003. The citizens registered on the website have the opportunity to receive news from the city on important measures in case of crises such as floods, information about disposal of hazardous and large waste, information on sports events and on events inside the municipal council and municipal board of representatives. People can also vote using SMS within various opinion polls and competitions. The town hall of the Healthy City of **Kroměříž** communicates with public, among others, using e-mails. People can have their e-mail address registered and then receive information about events in the city and at the office, for instance overviews of all cultural and social events, information on planned power cuts, minutes of municipal council and board of representatives' meetings as well as press releases and other interesting information and news.

Metropolitan networks and transportation information systems have been also developing, video broadcasts from representatives' meetings are one of novelties



Data networks can serve various purposes. Municipal police officers of the Healthy City of Velké Meziříčí have been using it for instance for improving the safety of public areas and transportation.

Inhabitants of the Healthy City of **Kroměříž** have been also using electronic reservation for dealing with matters related to identity cards and passports. Reservation over the internet ensures that citizens can come to an agreed counter at an agreed time without having to spend time in a queue. The service is a part of Kroměříž's Interactive Metropolitan Reservation and Information System (KIMRIS), realised by municipal office within the framework of second part of project called Development of Information and Communication Technologies in Kroměříž. The Metropolitan Network of the Healthy City of **Velké Meziříčí** has been fully functional as soon as since 2004. After the construction of basic structure, the optical route was extended to all buildings of the city and region in 2005. Basic schools were optically connected to the Metropolitan



The scheme of Vysočina's backbone data network.

Network last year and connection of municipal organisations to the **RowaNet** backbone network is going to follow this year. This year on 12th February, the Healthy Region of **Vysočina** launched the first direct video-coverage of regional board of representatives' meeting. After the release of sound recordings this is another step on the way to openness of regional office towards citizens. Another advantage is posed by the fact that the installed equipment is of mobile character, which enables future realisation of similar activities not only within the framework of regional office, but also for instance in other cities and municipalities of Vysočina Region that show interest in provision of such services to their inhabitants. Starting since March, live coverage of municipal representatives' meetings is also available to inhabitants of the Healthy City of **Brno**. Brno is also at the cutting edge of IT utilisation in transportation. Traffic Information Centre for collection of important traffic information was established in 2007. The Centre releases information about actual main municipal roads' traffic density on the internet. Utilisation of other methods of how to warn drivers about dangers such as SMS or information signboards over the roads, are being prepared. Information technologies are also utilised in Brno for municipal public transportation, e.g. in a form of automatic communication with the blind or in a system of advanced PT vehicle preference at the crossroads, which is unique in the CR.

Electronic services for citizens and officers in Chomutov

The classic electronic services in Chomutov among others include e.g. the possibility **to make an SMS reservation** to workplaces of land vehicle registry, passports or **newly to the Czech Point workplace**. A very much appreciated service of return information about preparation of documents or completion of administrative proceedings is less often to be seen in other cities. Payment of administrative duties using payment terminals also has a long tradition, in fact, Chomutov was the first to implement this service in the Czech Republic. "Using your mobile in Chomutov you are also able to find out how many of your points for traffic offences have been deducted or you can get data from your registration card, which was required by



driving schools. Payment of duties using an SMS itself, without having to visit the office, is basically about to be launched", as Theodor Sojka, City of Chomutov secretary describes other useful services. Another not quite ordinary service, intended both for citizens and public servants, is the electronic retrieval of citizens' stimuli. Using a selected keyword, anyone can search for any stimulus that arose from city inhabitants. These stimuli are evaluated by the city representatives in connection to so called Citizen's Chart, joined by the office as one of very few CZ municipal offices. Another innovation enables the citizens' access to municipal Geographic Information System from home via our website or from information kiosks at the office. This enables look up of passportisation of houses owned by the city, passportisation of public greenery, traffic signs in the city area, public lighting, regional plan, gas connections, water and sewer connections, telephone extensions, land boundaries and property relations in the city area and other layers, related mostly to planning and analytic data for creation of planning scheme of municipalities within the administrative district of Chomutov.

A number of electronic services are intended also directly for officers. Various information systems that make the work of office employees more efficient and also save time of clients, i.e. of citizens, are currently being employed. These for instance include the **digitisation of construction administration archive**, which makes especially the communication with business clientele (designers and others) more efficient, also special software that connects officers online for so called coordinate statement. *"By this we practically fulfil one of plans of ministry of interior, i.e. that in a given matter the documents circulate, not the citizen. So the currently processed digitally signed documents circulate instead of citizen and officer"*, T. Sojka describes the main advantages. *"In addition to this the office can provide e.g. project drawings from building control department in a digital form, possibly print the old project documentation on a "plotter", e.g. for the need of reconstruction of current building. This is a very above standard service and I know no other city offering this"*, adds the secretary.

Probably the biggest innovation prepared at the Chomutov's municipal office is the function of system integrator, who would ensure everything concerning information services at the office and in the final phase, these changes should culminate in a creation of integral metropolitan network. *"Under optimum conditions, the office would reduce the functioning of today's informatics department to the advantage of clients and its dynamics in routine operation would be maintained by purchase of required services and especially of know-how in a mode of so called outsourcing"*, T. Sojka concludes the view into the near future of information technologies.

Spreading of information technologies in their respective areas is significantly supported by the regions – the Healthy Region of Vysočina may serve as typical example

Complete coverage of a region with quality infrastructure is the basic criterion of successful development of electronic services in the Healthy Region of Vysočina, where common coordination of projects and technologies with cities, municipalities, private and academic sectors has been also taking place. The **Vysočina Fund**, founded in 2002, provides 8.5 million Crowns for development of information technologies every year. These resources are used for realisation of metropolitan networks, providing cities and municipalities with information and communication technologies, public internet is also supported.

The most remarkable project, co-financed by European resources SROP and from state budget, is the project of **regional backbone network RowaNet**. Optical backbone network ensures connection of 9 cities and another 40 municipalities and 70 organisations within the region. In addition to broadband internet the network can be also used for camera systems or sharing of information within the system GIS. More information about backbone system can be found on website <http://www.rowanet.cz>. You can also find more in the opening interview.

Database BEST PRACTICE

Examples of best practice from other areas can be found in Database BestPractice – <http://www.good-practice.eu>.

LIST OF EVENTS

The first Permanent Section of Healthy Cities took place at the Ministry of Transport

Practical examples of economic transportation solutions and possibilities of financing of transportation projects in cities, municipalities and regions were the main subject of national-level meeting within the framework of Permanent Section of Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic, organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport. The seminar also offered an opportunity to more than fifty participants to familiarise with actual sample projects and programmes, currently prepared in the area of transportation by cities and specialised institutions of the Czech Republic.

The Permanent Section was the very first official event of this year within the framework of so called Common Topic **Sustainable and Safe Transport** announced by the Government Council for Sustainable Development in 2007. In its morning part the Section introduced activities of Healthy Cities, municipalities and Regions along with demonstration examples. The Healthy City of **Ústí nad Labem** presented a unique transportation project Archimedes, financed by resources of European Committee within the Civitas Plus Programme. Thanks to this programme e.g. a new integrated transportation plan will be created to contribute to reduction of negative impacts of transportation and at the same time to improve the quality of public transportation. Ústí n. L. as a member of international consortium will learn from advanced cities such as Danish Aalborg or British Brighton. Systematic solutions of transportation in their areas were also presented by representatives of the Healthy City of **Vsetín** and **České Budějovice**.

The **Ministry of Transportation** (MT) presented possibilities of financial support for e.g. non-motorised transportation or buses fuelled by natural gas that save both the environment and health. A significant amount can be also obtained by cities e.g. for reduction of energy consumption in transportation or for measures that lead to reduction of traffic jams. Innovations in the area of traffic safety have been introduced by BESIP department that yet again this year prepares a number of education activities for support of traffic safety. The successful campaign "Let's Talk" is going to continue as well as road show "The Action", where real accident participants relate their stories.

Within the programme framework, the respective activities were presented by representatives of **Centre of Traffic Research**,

Environment Centre of Charles University or those of **Partnership Foundation**, whose subsidy titles „On the Green Light“ or special traffic programme that can be also utilised by cities and municipalities.

The Permanent Section of the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic should become a regular platform for meetings of scientific institutions, non-profit organisations and representatives of self-administrations. The meetings should lead to sharing information,

experience and mostly should search for common course of action in further efficient promotion and enforcement of economical and safe transportation in our cities and municipalities.

The programme, photo-documentation and presentations can be found at http://www.nszm.cz/sekce_doprava.

All website references are generally in Czech language.



The financing possibilities offered by the Ministry of Transport to cities, municipalities and regions as well as other subjects were presented by Jindřich Fajka of transportation policy and environmental department of the MoT.

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

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