



# Findings of research on Public Spaces (August 2009)



Trust for Civil Society  
in Central and Eastern Europe

Turning Great Ideas into Great Public Spaces  
(Oct. 1 - 2, 2009 – Krakow)

## **The Environmental Partnership for Sustainable Development is ...**

**consortium of six foundations in**

- **Bulgaria** - Fondaciya EkoObshtnost
- **Czech Republic** – Nadace Partnerstvi
- **Hungary** – Ökotárs Alapítvány
- **Poland** – Fundacja Partnerstwo dla Srodowiska
- **Romania** – Fundatia pentru Parteneriat
- **Slovakia** – Nadácia Ekopolis

***„Promoting environmentally, socially and economically sustainable communities by empowering civic initiatives in the region.“***



# Why Public Spaces agenda in EPSD?

**75 % of the population of the Central Europe region lives in urban areas**

- **the spread of urbanisation** removes previously clear boundaries between settlement and surrounding landscape, putting great pressure on the natural landscape setting
- in many urban areas, **the historic core is surrounded** by physically separated new suburbs, which are nevertheless functionally linked to the urban centre, leading to growth in road traffic resulting in the loss of biodiversity and fragmentation of the natural environment

**URBAN SPACES PLAY A VITAL ROLE**



# EPSD

## Public Spaces Agenda

### Members of EPSD provide:

- **grants programs:**

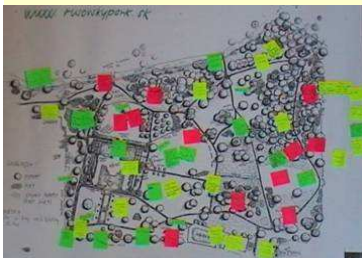
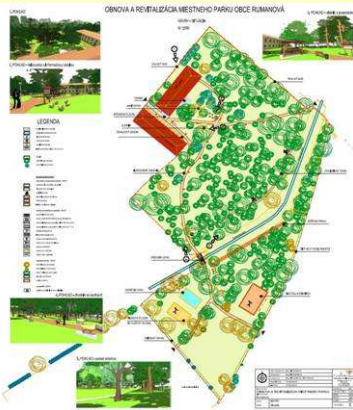
- Public Spaces Program – Czech Republic (Tree of Life, last year of 5P for Prague), Slovakia (Tree of the Year, Claiming the PS, PrieStory)
- Greenways Program – all members
- Green Belt Program – Slovakia, Hungaria
- Green Spaces Program – Romania

- **one example of other programs related to PS** in Slovakia and Czech Republic - **UrbSpace:** enhancing the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment (11/2008 – 10/2011)





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# Claiming the Public Spaces

**Goal of the project - to promote good practice of public participation and local partnerships building in the sustainable urban development and in the design and reconstruction of public spaces.**

## **Activities:**

- **Part 1. – park Lanice in city Zvolen**
- **Part 2. – Dissemination of practices and methodics**



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# Claiming the Public Spaces

## Main objectives



- The first key objective of the project is to demonstrate the sense and applicability of the public participation and partnership building on urban development projects on the concrete example of a large public area – park Lanice in the city of Zvolen (“It can work” showcase).
- The second key objective is to develop a comprehensive information set focused on positive as well as negative approaches in urban development and to present the relevance of public involvement in urban development matters.

# Research and analysis

- Analysis – in each country we have looked at legislation frameworks, approaches of competent institutions and practice in reality in public spaces creation
- Ekopolis Foundation (SK) and Partnership Foundation (CZ) evaluated sample of supported public spaces projects
- Outputs from evaluation become an input for the criteria of effective public participation





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# Examples of realized projects



Žilina (2005): Public library  
(befor and after)





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# Examples of realized projects

Rajec (2007): garden near church (befor and after)





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# Examples of realized projects

Pohorelá (2008) – new square in centre of village (befor and after)





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# Outputs from research

## Negative aspects (problémy):

- Just general definitions and proclamations about public spaces in legislation
- No competent authorities for inspection have been determined and no sanctions exist
- Concurrence of semi-public spaces to public spaces by quality, security, services
- Degradation of PS by urban sprawl and by a wrong urban development
- Great impact of car traffic to PS (as well as parking)
- very small or almost no open spaces in new districts and near new structures in towns
- Missing standards and methodology for systematic solution of PS, creating high-quality PS and for the minimum size of PS per inhabitant, etc.
- Absence of proper maintenance
- There is still lot of vandalism and crime at PS
- Too much of regulations for its utilization (activities) or technologies (esp. playgrounds)



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# Outputs from research

## Positive aspects:

- **Priority of public spaces is increasing** because of interest of public and institutions (NGOs, universities, research institutions)
- Planning of PS **with participatory process** is known and used (foreign techniques for involving the public have been used in the Czech republic for 10 years)
- At smaller town and villages **the traditions** of communal life and shared responsibility for creating open public places **continues**
- Use of **national and European grant programs** and non-governmental organizations is influencing PS importance
- Uprising of new programs and initiatives (international, national, NGOs funds) supporting the **PS renewal** (of greenery, public transport, activities etc.)
  - active local initiatives and citizens
  - local funds for projects implementation in „enlightened communities“
  - interest of a certain number of town-planners and architects in the topic (initiated maybe by strengthening protests of inhabitants against densification of towns and vanishing of open spaces).



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# Outputs from research

## Propossed solutions

- Increasing of cultural, traditional and sports activities at PS also in towns
- Increasing of regeneration unused areas (brownfields or unkept areas) as new PS
- Increasing the using funding from national and international funds (unfortunately the world crisis has a negative impact on sponsors)
- Presentation of examples, comparisons and long term contributions at economic and social levels
- Education of the public and specialists, introduction of the subject at schools and organization of specialized seminars and workshops
- During the planning process, it is important to follow recommendations from a sufficient analysis. Analyses should be done systematically and on a continual basis
- Inclusion of the PS topic to strategic (spatial planning) documents of the municipalities





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## Outputs from research

### **Successfully projects have this common criteria :**

- renewed public space naturally attractive, variable and open for public
- local active community existed before project and was prepared for the project activities
- there is a group of people which prepared the project (not individual),
- there was a local authority in the group or a local authority supported the project
- local group realized the project – through voluntary work
- the grantists were identified with the methodology of participative community planning
- the owner of public space agreed with the project and took over the maintenance of the space

## Outputs from research

### Longterm sustenability is increased when:

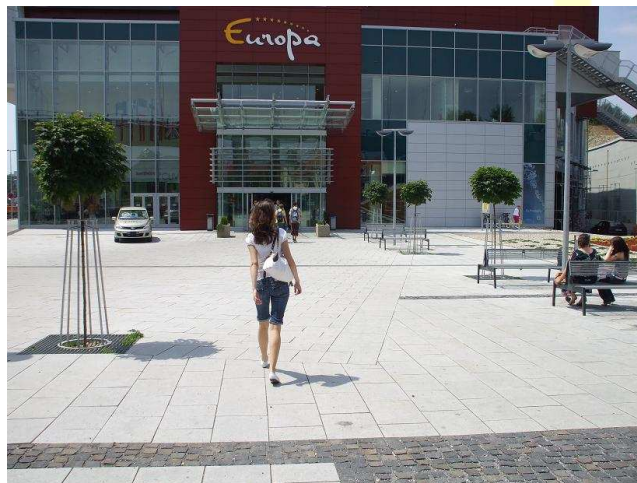
- there was a high social order on the renovation
- there were organized different sport, culturel and other activities
- good cooperation with the municipality office in smaller villages
- bigger and variable group which cooperate on the project
- public space is used by diffrent groups



## Outputs from research

### Threats of the project:

- local community does not need the reconstruction of public space, the space is isolated etc.
- the project is not supported with the owner of the area (changes in the utilization of the space during the project, disagreement with the project)
- the methodology of the public involvement is accepted by the architect just formal (architect should believe to this methodology)



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