



NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY:  
COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

# ReNewTown

## Newsletter



Dear Reader, we are very pleased to release the fifth issue of the ReNewTown project Newsletter. The present issue introduces key facts about the project and its current implementation. ReNewTown constitutes a platform for discussion on urban regeneration problems reaching beyond the project's own case studies research. It focuses on the most interesting urban regeneration examples in countries involved in the work of the project: Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany.

## The fifth issue contains the following articles:

### SURVEY ON LARGE HOUSING ESTATES

We present the first outcomes of the survey conducted by the ReNewTown consortium. The survey concerned large housing estates built between 1945-1989. Research areas were located in five countries and ten cities in Central Europe. The main objective of this study was gaining knowledge regarding life quality of inhabitants and main problem areas of the selected places. In this issue we focus on the Ursynów district, the largest prefabricated housing estate complex in Warszawa.

### PILOT ACTION OF THE RENEWTOWN PROJECT

Revitalization of public space in Velenje is researched on the example of housing constructed in the 1970s. An important feature of the project is to involve residents in its implementation, through public consultations, as well as in the form of volunteers work performed by members of the local youth center - an ad hoc team of volunteers for manual work. We seek to develop a model of shaping public spaces in housing estates in such a way, that they perform various functions suitable for different age groups of inhabitants.

### SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR REVITALISATION OF PREFABRICATED HOUSES ESTATES

We present the Czech government's revitalization program concerning the redevelopment of large, prefabricated housing estates. The program is very popular among municipalities. At present its beneficiaries include 19 cities of Usti Region, as well as other areas.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF USTI REGION

We present the profile and role within the ReNewTown project of the Regional Development Agency of Usti Region. This institution had been created to support and co-ordinate the economic and social development of the Usti Region.

### THE RENEWTOWN DATABASES

We present three ReNewTown databases: on good practices, initiatives and experts in the field of regeneration of urban areas built during the socialist period.

## SURVEY ON LARGE HOUSING ESTATES

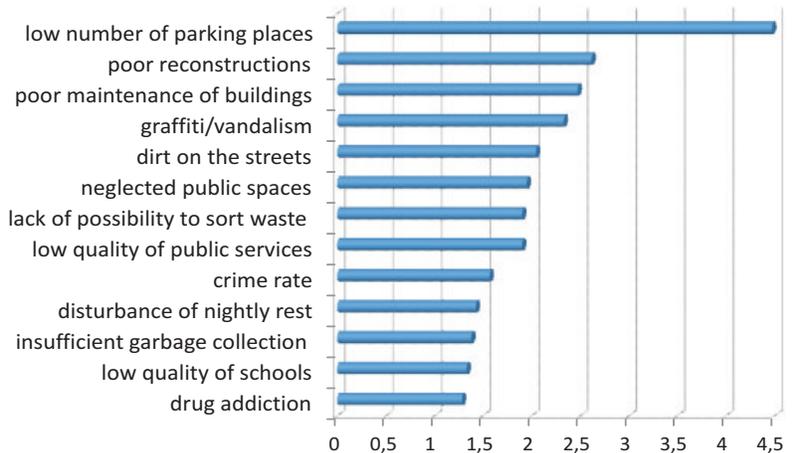
In the winter of 2011 a ReNewTown consortium conducted a survey in five countries (ten cities) in Central Europe. The selected researched areas were - at least in part - built between 1945-1989, mainly by using prefabricated technology. The main objective of this study was to gain knowledge on life quality of inhabitants and the main problems of these areas. The study was conducted in selected residential areas of Warszawa (PL), Kraków (PL), Karlsruhe (DE), Cottbus (DE), Usti and Labem (CZ), Milano (CZ), Rimavska Sobota (SK), Hnúšťa (SK), Velenje (SI), Nova Gorica (SI).



Subway stop, Ursynów Imielin

Most of the research areas were characterized by low attractiveness against the city as a whole and a variety of social problems. However, not all urban areas built in the socialist period proved to be predominately problem areas. An example of an urban area intensively developed in the 1970s and 1980s of the twentieth century, characterized by a high social prestige is Ursynów, a district in the south of Warsaw. Ursynów is characterized by the largest pre-1989 area in Warsaw taken up by prefabricated housing estates and is often called "Warsaw's largest bedroom". According to the results of the ReNewTown survey, the district has received a positive opinion. All the respondents of the questionnaires have highly appreciated the quality of life in Ursynów. As much as four fifths of the sample have considered the

district to be more attractive in this respect than Warsaw as a whole. None of the respondents' have planned to move out of the district, driven by motives connected with the improvement of housing conditions. The most important problem in the opinion of the inhabitants was an insufficient number of space for car parking (parking lots, garages etc.). This problem stems from a mismatch of the spatial structure of housing estates - designed under the assumption of a much lower rate of motorization - to present circumstances. Another problem identified in Ursynów was a poor cultural offer for elderly inhabitants, whose overall share has currently been growing at a fast pace. The high prestige of Ursynów is due, inter alia, to a high accessibility of the district achieved mainly by the construction of the METRO, which links the district with the city center. This investment also contributed to the development of a wide range of services in the district.



0 - not applicable, 1 - not serious at all, 2 – serious to a lower extent, 3 - serious to a medium extent, 4 - serious to a higher extent, 5 - very serious

The results of the survey in Warsaw, Ursynów

# RENOVATION OF PUBLIC SPACES IN VELENJE

The pilot action of the ReNewTown project

Together for  
Velenje

Attractive neighborhoods

Revitalization of public space in Velenje is carried out on the example of a housing estate constructed in the 1970s. It includes the construction of a children's playground, sidewalks and sport infrastructure for adults. An important feature of the project is to involve residents in its implementation, through public consultations, as well as in the form of volunteers' work performed by members of the local youth center - an ad hoc team of volunteers for manual work. This group of young volunteers has been named the "WORKING CLASS HEROES" as a reference to a song by John Lennon.

The survey conducted among inhabitants revealed that 71 percent of the respondents are willing to voluntarily assist in the implementation of the pilot action. Velenje has a rich heritage of voluntarism. The help of volunteers in the implementation of the pilot action will continue and promote this tradition and also present it again to Slovenia and Europe as an example of good practice.



A volunteer working on one of the revitalization projects of public space in Velenje



Area of the pilot action, public space in a housing estate in Velenje

The City of Velenje is situated in the north-east of Slovenia. Intensive urbanisation of Velenje due to coal-mining had began in the 1950s., the city being the youngest such settlement in former Yugoslavia. New dwellings for about 20.000 inhabitants were built at that time. It was a challenge for the town planners, as they had to design an entirely new town. The idea was to build 'a city in a park', as miners, working long hours below ground, deal with the need for light and green, open spaces within their living environment.



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# SUPPORT OF REVITALISATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

It is quite an interesting approach to the revitalization of prefabricated buildings and public spaces of housing estates in the Czech Republic. One third of the total population lives in prefabricated houses, mostly in the densely built-up parts of the city.

The municipalities are offered a “Support program for revitalization of prefabricated houses estates”. The aim of the program is to transform public spaces into multifunctional units and improve the living environment (the program excludes the condition of houses ). Regeneration projects need to deal comprehensively with all the problems in the settlement. The condition to implement such a project is to take into account conditions for social and cultural development and to promote neighborliness and leisure activities and job creation. In the project preparation phase, the municipalities conduct a research of the resident's opinions either through the public consultation or by inquiry.



City of Osek – Total costs: 2.5 Mil. CZK, green adjustment

The financial contribution is designed for the district of the city with houses built via prefabrication technology with min. 150 flats in total. The municipality can obtain a grant on condition of having approved the urban plan. Financial support usually reaches 70 % of budgeted costs. In 2011 the Ministry for Regional Development received the requests for more than 284 Mil. CZK. This program is very popular among municipalities and it will support 19 cities of the Usti Region to improve their living conditions in the future.



City of Žatec – Total costs: project with the total costs of 11 Mil. CZK includes the development of new infrastructure, parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, public lighting, as well as the planting of trees

# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF USTI REGION PLC – CZECH REPUBLIC



Regional Development Agency of Usti Region is an organisation for support and co-ordination of economic and social development of this territory. It is designed on the same basis as development agencies successfully operating in EU member states. The goals, structure and a range of activities of the Agency are tailored to the regional conditions and environment. RDA UR is also an experienced partner on the field of international projects management.

The Agency was established as a Public Limited Corporation by organisations from the region's public and business sector in 1994. After establishment of the Ústí Region (2001) the ownership structure of the Agency was adapted to a participation of the Region (majority shareholder at present time), municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Agriculture, Trade Unions and a university.

The Agency is the host organisation of the regional Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), which is a part of the European Commission's international network of EEN's and is a member of the European Association of Regional Agencies (EURADA) and the Czech Association of Regional Development Agencies (CARA).

During the implementation of ReNewTown project the RDA UR co-operates with partners at the regional research and its methodology, on elaborating reports and organizing conferences, workshops and study visits. The contribution includes a Czech experience with the socialist heritage use.

## CORE PROJECT TEAM



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## THE RENEWTOWN DATABASES

One of the key results of the ReNewTown project is the development of databases containing good practices, initiatives and experts in the field of regeneration urban areas built during the socialist period. The databases are still in elaboration and new cases will be added soon, nevertheless they already contain a lot of valuable information. It is also possible to suggest a good practice, which you consider as valuable to include in the database. In that case please contact: [decmagda@gmail.com](mailto:decmagda@gmail.com)

**Good  
practices**

**DATABASE**

**Initiatives**

**DATABASE**

**Experts**

**DATABASE**

### Project summary

RenewTown project 'New post-socialist city: Competitive and Attractive' is funded under Central Europe Programme and runs from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014.

ReNewTown partnership consists of eight public institutions from Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. It will result in four pilot actions implemented in Nowa Huta in Krakow, Jizni Mesto in Prague, Velenje and Hnusta. The lead partner is Polish Academy of Sciences, Stanisław Leszczycki Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization

Total budget: EUR 1.514.061,60

ERDF co-financing: EUR 1.271.020,36

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