



NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY:
COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

ReNewTown

Newsletter



Dear reader, we are very pleased to release the sixth issue of the ReNewTown project newsletter. The current 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 study research. It focuses on the most interesting urban regeneration examples in the countries involved in the project: Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany.

This issue contains the following articles:

THE ReNewTown GOOD PRACTICES DATABASES

The basic idea of the ReNewTown project is to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of related current and past initiatives from the last 20 years and, based on this, to develop knowledge and tools to support the revitalization of post-socialist urban areas in the cities of Central Europe. In this issue we present the database of good practices which is one of the key results of the ReNewTown project.

THE ReNewTown PILOT PROJECT IN PRAGUE

We explore possibilities of developing a program to support small business and professional activation of residents in urban areas with a socialist burden by creation of a Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN SLOVAKIA

We present a retirement home in Bratislava that is located in a building which originally served as a nursery. It demonstrates how a public building with a socialist burden, in finding a new use, may be used in a modern way.

HOW TO COPE WITH URBAN REGENERATION IN GERMANY

We present two different approaches to the problem of revitalization and share some conclusions based on two case studies from Germany.

AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE GEMER REGION

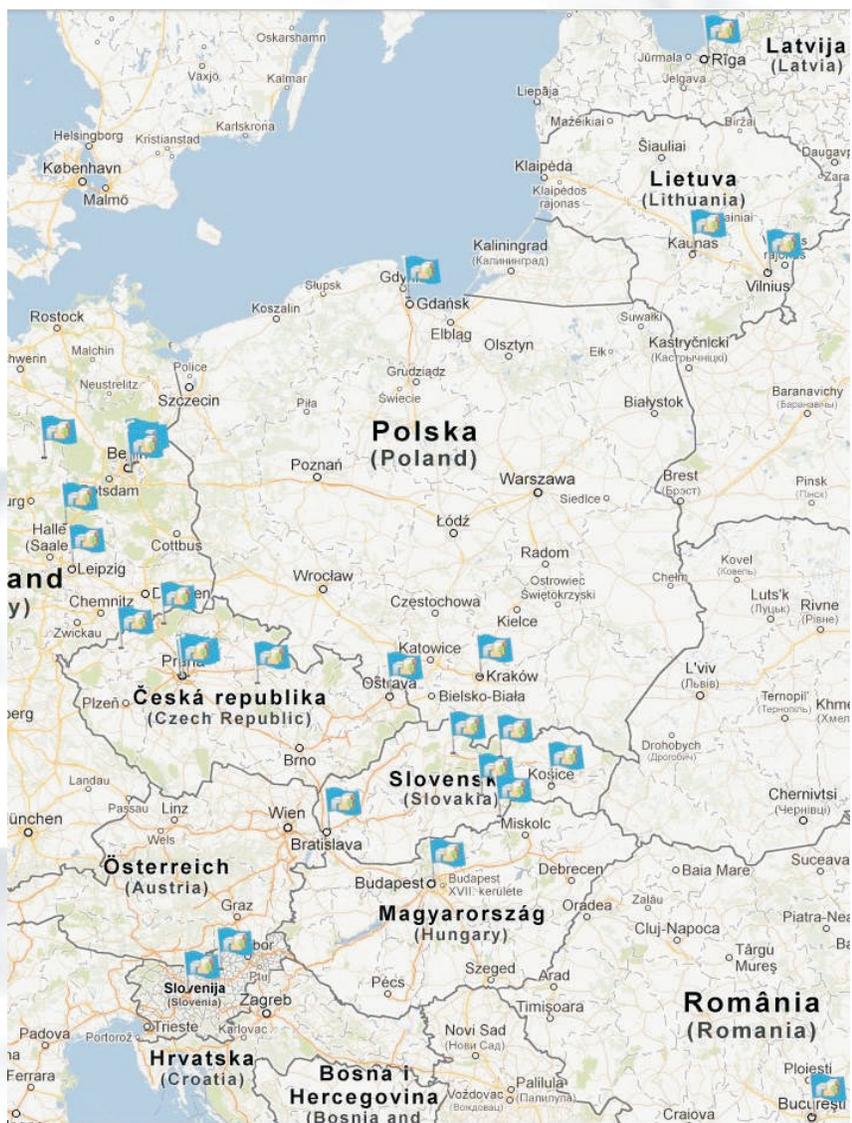
This institution is one of eight ReNewTown project partners. It has been created to support and coordinate the economic and social development of the Gemer region. The agency collaborates with the public administration as well as the private and third sectors and is responsible for the consultancy and running of domestic and foreign grants focused on regional development and quality-of-life improvements.

THE ReNewTown GOOD PRACTICES DATABASES

The basic idea of the ReNewTown project is to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of related current and past initiatives from the last 20 years and, based on this, to develop knowledge and tools to support the revitalization of post-socialist urban areas in the cities of Central Europe. One of the key results of the project (in line with the basic idea) is the development of three databases: good practices, initiatives, and experts in the field of regeneration of urban areas built during a socialist period. In this issue we present basic information on the database of good practices, including: adopted typology and geographical location.

The database includes 59 projects from 13 European countries aiming at improving the quality of life of urban areas built during a socialist period. The database contains a large variety of projects using both “soft” and “hard” tools aimed at improving different aspects of urban functions. An important criterion in selection of good practices was the simultaneous regeneration of many aspects of urban space (holistic approach). The adopted typology distinguishes the following activities:

- Improved provision of local cultural and social events.
- Improved conditions and quality of public space between blocks of flats.
- Improved support for development of small business operators in the area of blocks of flats.
- Improved attractiveness of architecture of socialist buildings.
- Improved involvement of the local community in events organized in its quarter.
- Identified new functions for structures from the era of socialism (in 1945 - 1989).



Locations of good practices included in database



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CENTRE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN PRAGUE

The ReNewTown pilot project

CREATIVE
ENTERPRISE
CENTRE

Prague 11 for SMEs

The main objective of the pilot project is to develop a model program to support small business and professional activation of residents in urban areas with a socialist burden. Within the framework of the project a creation of a "Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises" is planned.

The centre will be created by the District Office at Prague 11 (Jizni Mesto district), which is characterized by the highest population density in the capital of the Czech Republic (more than 8,000 people per square kilometer). This district grew rapidly in the 70's and 80's and was built with prefabricated technology on a large undeveloped area in the southern part of the city.

The centre will support existing and new entrepreneurs by providing thorough information and consultation services. Novice entrepreneurs may expect the most support and will receive comprehensive information and advice on how to establish and operate a small enterprise. An important activity of the centre will be the fostering of cooperative relations between businesses already operating in the area as well as providing promotional support to aid in market visibility.

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praha 11



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ARCHA RETIREMENT HOME IN BRATISLAVA

An example of good practice in Slovakia

After 1989, changes to the architecture in Slovakia occurred and Slovak architecture was opened to world trends. Current architecture in Slovakia is not only comprised of newly constructed buildings, projects, designs or exhibitions, but also of renovated and revitalized buildings constructed in the communist era, such as the former kindergarten buildings, unused after the regime change as a result of demographic changes in the population. Another example is a building at Rozvodná 25 in Bratislava, which originally served as a nursery. After changes made in 1990 the building was adjusted to the needs of seniors.



In 2004, reconstruction commenced and was completed in 2007, when the building had been extended. An important part of the complex is the garden. Another important part of the day care centre is the relaxation centre situated between the original and newly built objects. The home offers three different forms of social services that provide smooth transition into the institution. The day care centre also offers 24-hour service for Bratislava citizens. It is mostly inhabited by seniors suffering from Alzheimer disease.



The complex is a suitable environment for seniors and for various organized events. It is also a place of social learning, information exchange and social inclusion. Its objective is to provide a sense of safety and comfort. The project is important for the local community and family members. Currently, the number of inhabitants older than 65 years is increasing and 15-20% of them need personal assistance.

IDENTIFIED TOOLS ON HOW TO COPE WITH URBAN REGENERATION

Germany

Hard Tool: Demolition

In 2001, the German parliament set up the “Stadtumbau Ost” funding program to subsidize demolition that reduces housing stock and housing density and to stop the ongoing indebtedness of the housing associations who owned most of the buildings that fell vacant. Our studies show that:

- Not all cities participating in the “Stadtumbau Ost” funding program carried out citizens’ participation and involvement (e.g., Weißwasser or Plauen). Usually, municipalities and municipal housing associations acted as key stakeholders.
- Demolition is a tremendous disruption in people's lives.
- Demolition is not enough. In Neu-Schmellwitz for instance, other incentives were given to the citizens in order to motivate them to stay (e.g., cheap rent, provision of a public transport system, provision of social assistance and a contact point).
- It is questionable if demolition activities can prevent outward migration.



Photo by Annegret Haase

The MiKa Tenant Initiative: An Alternative Way to Deal with Urban Regeneration

The MiKa tenant initiative provides an example on how to deal with abandoned housing areas in an alternative way. In the course of the self-organised community project MiKa, four former military housing barracks were transformed into housing apartments for more than 180 inhabitants.

The MiKa community-based regeneration project showed that:

- A bottom-up project can work if the citizens' motivation is utilized.
- Participation and common decision-making can successfully come to life if a management structure where everyone is allowed to participate is developed.
- An urban regeneration project can be carried out at a low-cost level if compromises are agreed upon by the involved stakeholders.



For more information please refer to krassimira.paskaleva@kit.edu (The Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis in Karlsruhe)

AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE GEMER REGION



The Agency for Development of the Gemer Region is an institution that connects people, different sectors and information. Its goal and role is to move the regional development in a positive direction and raise public awareness about the region. It also aims at implementing projects and acquiring grants for infrastructure and tourism development and improving the quality of life in the region. The agency is a member of an integrated network of regional development agencies cooperating throughout Slovakia.

The agency is responsible for consultancy and project and program activities using domestic and foreign grants. The agency participates in the region's development and collaborates with public administration, the private and third sectors as well as all regional partners.

The agency focuses on the following areas:

- Organizing workshops and providing consultancy to mayors, schools and others with the goal of the region's sustainability.
- Implementing programs for economic and social development.
- Implementing projects for public administration and the private and third sectors.
- Managing municipalities and school projects.
- Promoting the Agency within and beyond the region.
- Building relationships on regional, national and multinational levels.
- Implementing the agency's own projects of education and workshops.
- Organizing study visits and presenting the agency's work in the region.

More information on: www.rozvojpgemera.sk



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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 of urban areas built during a socialist period. Databases data can be searched by country, priority objectives (type) or by key words. It is also possible to view list of all good practices. It is also possible to suggest a good practice that you consider as valuable to be included in the database. To suggest a good practice, please contact: decmagda@gmail.com.



DATABASE

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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

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