



NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY:
COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

ReNewTown

Newsletter



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Dear reader, we are very pleased to release the ninth 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:

NEW CENTRE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN PRAGUE 11 DISTRICT

The recently completed ReNewTown pilot investment aims at providing valuable information for local business community and promoting their activities.

GOOD PRACTICE IN REVITALIZATION OF INNER COURTYARDS IN PRAGUE 11 DISTRICT

Inner courtyards and other public premises represent one of the examples where revitalization initiatives are urgently needed. Prague 11 Municipal District (ReNewTown project partner), one of the fifty seven quarters of the capital, with nearly 80.000 inhabitants has decided to carry out initiatives to change their appearance.

REALLY NOTHING CAN BE DONE WITH MODERNIST DESIGNS?

Pastel colours, shapes like in a kaleidoscope and details hidden under a thick layer of insulation – these are the frequent mistakes of the today's modernisation of blocks of flats dating back to the socialist period. The new designs of the TUMW show that renovation does not have to be expensive and there is no need for a serious reconstruction of buildings to significantly improve their appearance.

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES SEMINAR ON RENEWTOWN HANDBOOK OF MODELS

Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, a leading partner of the ReNewTown project, presented one of the main results of the ReNewTown project - a Handbook of Models at the 8th National Scientific Conference XXI Century Cities in Prószków near Opole (Poland).

ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE RENEWTOWN PROJECT CLOSING CONFERENCE

The Closing Conference of the ReNewTown project will take place at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics in Slovenia on February 10-14, 2014

THE RENEWTOWN DATABASES AND PROJECT IN BRIEF

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



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NEW CENTRE FOR SMES IN PRAGUE 11

Under the ReNewTown Pilot Project, Prague 11 Municipal District has launched a new Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises. This contact point, located in the Municipal District premises, aims at providing valuable information for local business community and promoting their activities. The Centre has been run by specially trained personnel who offer counselling for new entrepreneurs concerning all administrative steps that fresh-starters have to go through, as well as some practical advice. They are also offering non-residential premises where new business can be started.

Furthermore, it supports businessmen operating within the district by means of an online business catalogue, where entrepreneurs can register free of charge. This is to ensure promotion of local businessmen within the community, as well as help local people finding a service or business in question. Businessmen can also ask for contacts to specialists in the field, should they have any problems or questions to be addressed.



Moreover, they can also make use of other services, such as internet access or Czech Point. The centre is opened three times a week; Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. It can be found on the address: Opatovská 964/18, Praha 4 149 41, within the Financial Office building. With the service provided and its location in the very heart of the Municipal District, it will hopefully meet the goal of promoting local entrepreneurs and facilitating their contacts with the community.



REVITALIZATION OF INNER COURTYARDS IN PRAGUE 11



Inner courtyard before revitalization

Situated on the south from the centre of Prague city centre, Prague 11, one of the fifty seven quarters of the capital, has nearly 80.000 inhabitants. The majority of them have been living in high-rise blocks of flats, built in the 1970s and 1980s. Obviously, these housings estates have become obsolete and in recent years have been subject to renovation and revitalization to enhance their residents' living conditions from environmental, economical as well as aesthetic points of view.

Inner courtyards and other public premises represent one of the examples where revitalization initiatives are urgently needed. Prague 11 Municipal District has decided to carry out initiatives to change their appearance. Revitalization of these areas, featuring a lot of concrete items, obsolete playgrounds and other facilities that are no longer in use, has been carried out under so-called community approach. In other words, it is the residents who decide, through their representatives and based on their needs, about the future look of the premises.





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The Municipal District organized a meeting with representatives from housing and owners associations who identified the needs and expressed the desired outcome of the revitalization process. Based on that, studies and project documentation were drafted and, prior to their implementation, they were submitted for residents' comments. Residents opted for a renovated area for recreation with more green area, newly planted trees and flower beds replacing obsolete tarmac and concrete items, as well as for new playgrounds and sport facilities for children.

This approach ensures that residents are not only happy with the outcome of revitalization but also feel involved in decision-making about the area they live in. Moreover, the contact between the Municipal District and local people, once established, has been maintained to provide feedback, possibilities for further cooperation, as well as example of good practice for projects of similar nature.





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REALLY NOTHING CAN BE DONE WITH MODERNIST DESIGNS?

Almost two thirds of over 300 million people in Central and Eastern Europe live in urban settlements which were planned and established during the socialist era, either in their entirety or in part (in the form of fast-growing districts). Only a small minority managed to survive the transition from planned to market economy without much disturbance and have been prospering to this day. The majority has been struggling with numerous economic and social problems.



One of the most common problem of this type of urban areas in European cities is unattractive and monotonous architecture. Generally low aesthetic value of the buildings is often decreased further due to cheap and thoughtless thermal modernization. Blocks of flats are covered with an intrusive and random motley of accidental colours. Pastel colours, shapes like in a kaleidoscope and details hidden under a thick layer of insulation – these are the frequent mistakes of the today's modernisation of blocks of flats dating back to the socialist period.



visualisation, www.tumw.pl



visualisation, www.tumw.pl



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Gray and unattractive buildings from the socialist period look as good as modern housing development?



In Poland - because of the significant housing gap - the demolition of unsightly socialist buildings is not acceptable. It should also be noted that the city cannot afford an extensive and long-lasting revitalisation of these facilities. Therefore, care must be taken to ensure that the aesthetic level of renovation of façades funded by housing cooperatives is higher than to date. Since there is no possibility of replacing old buildings with new, better-looking ones, we should do something to prevent them from marring the city.

The Society for Beautifying the City of Wrocław (TUMW) is developing a list of best practices in modernisation, which is expected to be an inspiration to all those responsible for the level of aesthetics of the renovated blocks of flats. The designs show that renovation does not have to be expensive and there is no need for a serious reconstruction of buildings to significantly improve their appearance. There is no need to be ashamed of buildings constructed in the socialist period, as many of them have interesting architecture, which simply needs to be highlighted.

All visualisations come from the TUMW website
www.tumw.pl



visualisation, www.tumw.pl





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EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES SEMINAR ON RENEWTOWN HANDBOOK OF MODELS AS A PART OF NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE IN POLAND



Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, a leading partner of the ReNewTown project, represented by Professor Grzegorz Węclawowicz and Magdalena Wątorska-Dec, presented one of the main results of the project - Handbook of Models "Post-Socialist City: A Role Model for Urban Revitalisation in the 21st Century" at the 8th National Scientific Conference 21st Century Cities in Prószków near Opole. It was a prelude to the thematic session "Transforming post-socialist cities in the national revitalisation programs and in the ReNewTown project".

During the session the presentation of ArtZona in Nowa Huta (ReNewTown pilot investment) as a model for the revitalization of the Nowa Huta district in Krakow, through cultural activities and environmental education, became an important point of reference for the exchange of experience concerning the revitalisation of urban area of the 21st century. The conference also included a poster session, in which the participants were presented three pilot investments of the ReNewTown project: ArtZona in Nowa Huta, the renovation of public space in Velenje and the Museum of Socialist Curiosities in Hnúšťa. These investments are at the same time 3 out of the 12 actions described in detail in the Handbook of Models.



The conference was organized by the Institute of Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Department of Economics, Opole University, on May 19-21, 2013. It was attended by urban planners, geographers, spatial planners, economists, sociologists, representatives of cities, cultural centres, independent consultants and students of the scientific and academic centres in Poland. The presentation of the Handbook of Models during the plenary and theme session at the 21st Century Cities national scientific conference in Prószków near Opole is one of the six Exchange of Experience Seminars, which are implemented as part of the ReNewTown project.



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ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE RENEWTOWN PROJECT CLOSING CONFERENCE

The Closing Conference of the ReNewTown project will take place at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics in Slovenia on February 10-14, 2014. The formal Call for Papers will be distributed per e-mail. The conference will focus on the wide range of topics related to the revitalization of urban settlements which were planned and established during the socialist era.

The conference's primary focus is on the following problems:

- What to do with the post-socialist city?
- How to reduce the disparities and improve the quality of post-socialist urban environment?
- What type of revitalization project and initiatives proved to be successful and under what conditions?

Slovenia is known for its beauty and diversity – from the magnificent Julian Alps, delightful hilly wine areas, karst natural monuments of UNESCO heritage, and leisurely Panonian flats, to the striking Adriatic coast. Its charming capital Ljubljana is situated in the very heart of the country, not further than 150 kilometers away from all the above mentioned areas.

We cordially invite you not only to contribute to the highly rewarding scientific and professional exchange during the conference, but also to find some leisure time and explore what Ljubljana and Slovenia have to offer.

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THE RENEWTOWN 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. The databases of good practices and initiatives include 132 cases from 13 Central European countries and 69 cities.

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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Locations of good practices and initiatives included in RNT databases

