



„Making attractive urban spaces - more quality for the urban environment,,



# Newsletter n.2

April/May 2010

### CONTENT:

• Editorial	2
• WP3 "Guideline for making space – Joint Strategy" Executive summary	2
• WP4 Presentation of the pilot projects	5
• Thematic seminar in Milan	11
• Upcoming activities and events	12



## UrbSpace

Urban spaces – enhancing the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment



## Dear readers,

we are proud to invite you to read the UrbSpace project's second e-newsletter that is aiming to present the development of the UrbSpace project, its principal outcomes and results. The newsletter was created thanks to the tremendous effort of all project partners.

The end of April 2010 was significant for the project as the date of the Mid-term Project Evaluation. In this occasion, we are happy to underline, that the principal objective of the project "UrbSpace - Urban spaces – enhancing the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment" that is represented by the promotion of the sustainable urban development has been successfully introduced. This statement can be proved by the principal preliminary outputs available, especially by the "Guideline for making space – Joint Strategy" and the successful start of pilot projects by all relevant partners.

We wish you good reading!

Zuzana Hudekova  
Project manager, REC Slovakia



## WP3 "Guideline for making space – Joint Strategy"

The development of Joint Strategy was realized through analytical work, collection of information on open spaces planning policies and practices, clustering the common problems within the partner countries and in a wider European context and benchmarking and the definition of criteria for public spaces with allowance to aspects of environmental, security, gender, accessibility design quality and public participation. This guideline is based on the Working Papers 3.2.1 to 3.2.6 of the UrbSpace project prepared by Regional Environmental Center (Slovakia), Nadace Partnerství (Czech Republic) and Nadácia Ekopolis (Slovakia), LAMORO (Italy), RiSSC (Italy), FH Erfurt (Germany) and TU Wien (Austria). The author of the paper is Prof. Richard Stiles from the Institute for Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, University of Technology, Vienna, the responsible project partner.

### Executive Summary:

National and international environmental policy, above all the European Landscape Convention, increasingly recognises the critical importance of attractive urban and peri-urban spaces for attracting jobs and investment, as well as improving the quality of life for Europe's citizens, most of whom live in an increasingly urban world. The Landscape Convention is already in force and being implemented in some 30 European countries.



This document provides guidance on the planning and design of good urban spaces, as an indispensable contribution towards meeting the Convention's aims of raising the awareness of and enhancing the urban landscape. It deals with both the process of creating good urban spaces as well as the criteria by which they can be defined and recognised. Urban open space includes not just parks and gardens, urban squares and housing

open spaces, but encompasses the whole continuous matrix of un-built land within towns and cities. It forms the settings for all buildings and structures as well as linking inner urban areas with the surrounding landscape.

As part of a planned strategic network of open space running through the whole urban area, well designed urban spaces can contribute to ameliorating the impacts of the urban heat island effect through the cooling effects of vegetation; they can help regulate the water balance and reduce loads on the drainage system by allowing for the infiltration of more rainwater; they can moderate the impacts of noise and pollution and provide habitats for native plants and animals.

At least as important as these environmental and ecological effects, which also help to provide urban residents with a first-hand experience of nature and natural processes, are the many other ways in which urban open spaces benefit people directly. As well as making available physical spaces and facilities for people of all ages and interests to spend their leisure time, to play and engage in both formal and informal sporting activities, they act as an important forum for contact and communication, thereby helping to cement the fabric of society and promote social cohesion by furthering mutual understanding between the increasingly diverse groups which go to make up today's urban society. Green and open spaces are also being increasingly recognised as ha-



ving a measurable positive impact on the health, both physical and mental, and well-being of urban residents.

Last but not least, are the less tangible, but by no means less important, benefits which urban open spaces can have in influencing the way in which we perceive and identify with their environment. Apart from helping to structure the urban fabric and making it easier to read and therefore easier to navigate, urban spaces are vital in creating a sense of identity within our towns and cities, and acting as important carriers of meanings and values at a wide range of scales.

Before any, let alone all, of these urban space functions can be fulfilled, one essential precondition must be met: the necessary un-built urban land must be available in the first place. While most towns and cities have inherited an historical legacy of

parks and open spaces, where the value of these has not been fully recognised and they have not been properly protected, these spaces are frequently under threat, both from development pressures and the growing demands to accommodate the increasing requirements of motor traffic. The protection of the existing urban open space resource and the provision of new open spaces to respond to the demands created by new development must be a vital part of any strategic approach to urban space.

Of course not all urban spaces are in a position to fulfil all these functions, however, none of them can be assumed to happen automatically. To be successful and to live up to their full and varied potentials, all urban open spaces need to be properly planned and designed. Similarly it is not automatic that the needs of all stakeholders will be met in all open

spaces – that is why there is a need to take these into account in a structured manner, and to involve them actively in the planning process. Users of all ages will have different needs and aspirations regarding open space, and so the requirements of all demographic groups, from pre-school children to pensioners will of course need to be catered for.

Experience has shown that there is also a need to pay particular attention to planning and design aspects affecting the interests of certain user groups which have tended to be neglected in the past. Gender sensitive design aims to take a systematic approach to ensuring that the needs of women and men are given equal consideration, but also tries to take into account the expectations of other minority groups in the design process. 'Design for All' focuses on the special requirements of people with disabilities, and it aims to





see that they are able to access and use urban open spaces. This involves ensuring that all barriers to the equal use of urban spaces are removed or avoided, including invisible or psychological ones.

The third special aspect, which is also highly relevant for both the above two groups as well as to other users in general, involves focussing specially on the safety and security aspects in the process of the planning and design of urban open spaces. Design to minimise, not just the potential for crime, but also to maximise the sense of safety and security for all users of open spaces is a key issue here. It is important not to forget that gender sensitive design, 'Design for All' and giving special consideration to the safety and security aspects in the creation of urban open spaces in fact benefits all users, and therefore society as a whole, and not just the groups concerned.

Good urban spaces can and should, therefore, perform a multitude of important functions for as wide a range of the community as possible, and this guidance document outlines both these functions as well as the requirements of the main user groups in detail. To ensure that all these factors are sufficiently taken into account in the planning and design process for the creation of a new urban space or the re-design of an existing one, it is essential that proper attention is given to structuring the planning the design process and to involving all the necessary groups.



The participation of the public is a key part of this, as all stakeholders who will be affected by a planning and design project should also have the opportunity to become actors in the planning and design process. Four main stages of the planning and design process are identified and outlined in detail. These are preparation; design; implementation and finally maintenance and monitoring. It is important that local people and other users, as well as other stakeholders, should be involved in the process from the beginning of the first stage.

Last but by no means least, the final challenge to be met in creating good urban open spaces lies in putting together all the requirements of ecology and the environment, the needs of the varied user



groups and the demands of a well structured and participatory planning process in order to create well organised and structured urban spaces. Most importantly, these must not be just anonymous 'spaces' but living 'places' with their own particular identity; they must not be just functional areas, but carriers of meaning and reflective of the values of all groups of users. To achieve this, professional design competence is essential, and suitably qualified specialists in the planning and design of urban landscapes and open spaces should be part of the team from the start.

*The complete document is available though the web page: on the link [http://www.urbanspaces.eu/files/JOINT\\_STRATEGY\\_makingSpace.pdf](http://www.urbanspaces.eu/files/JOINT_STRATEGY_makingSpace.pdf)*



## WP4 - Presentation of the pilot projects

### Practical common testing in implementation of the Joint Strategy in various urban areas through pilot projects

The pilot projects are serving the practical testing of the principal statements formulated in the document "Guideline for making space - Joint Strategy". The evaluation of success factors and bottlenecks gained during the pilot projects implementation will serve as a base for further tools development and knowledge management.

The design concepts based on the Joint Strategy will be ready in July 2010. The investment activities – realization phase and terrain works will start afterwards in selected pilot projects (marked in blue colour) and will be accomplished in May 2011.

The following pilot projects are described more detailed on the following pages:

#### Slovakia:

Sídlisko II Prešov urban space, PINK PARK in Banská Bystrica, Artistic Garden, Bátovce, Pajštúnsky rínek Borinka, Stage under pears, Hrušov, Park – place for everyone, Volkovce

#### Czech republic:

Nový Lískovec forest park, Public space Pisnicka in Prague, "Magic garden" in Jeseník nad Odrou, "A place for all" in Charvaty, Revitalization of Evangelical Church park in Nové město na Moravě, "Garden full of activities and life" in Vlašim

#### Poland

Brzeg Dolny – Park documentation

#### Hungary:

Harangod park stand design in Nagykallo

#### Germany:

Accessibility plan for Erfurt

#### Italy:

"5 Municipalities Park" in Milan, Design plan for the Municipalities of Mondovì and city of Nizza Monferrato

### „Sídlisko II Prešov urban space“ (pilot project realized by REC Slovakia)

The open space area „Sídlisko II Prešov urban space“ is located on the new housing district built in the late 60th. This space is a typical example of a neglected area without relevant functions. The social structure of inhabitants has changed.

The pilot project serves as an example in several aspects. In the planning phase REC Slovakia will use and test actual know-how of public participation at planning of public spaces. REC Slovakia started with broader context in time and place - with involvement of local people

REC Slovakia analysed the potential of the place as well as connectivity and relations with its surrounding. The participatory planning phase started with the opinion poll through the questionnaires, competition of children drawings about the future design of the open space (see the picture below and on the page 6) and the practical participatory planning meeting with local inhabitants, that has been organized in April 2010. Step by step implementation will be done with active involvement of community members to raise their relationship to the place and to each other.

The project is realized in close cooperation with the City office of Prešov, department of chief Architect. TU Vienna Students are also involved in the project through the design works.



Photo: The pilot project area in Prešov

For more information about the pilot project, you can visit the blog: [www.presovskepriestory.blogspot.com](http://www.presovskepriestory.blogspot.com) ( in Slovak)





## Ekopolis Foundation is realizing 5 pilot projects in Slovakia

The pilot projects were chosen in open competition (Public Spaces Program 2010) in December 2009. The preliminary research about public space has been realized along with the planning meetings in each of all 5 pilot projects until April 2010. From the UrbSpace project the planning phase has been realized. The investment phase, the concrete terrain works and the realization of the designs will be funded through other donors.

- **Banská Bystrica (Central Slovakia): PINK PARK**

Aim of the project is renovation of the public space between blocks of flats to create the place for neighborhood's meetings and playground area.

- **Bátovce, a village (Central Slovakia): Artistic Garden**

The aim is reconstruction of an unused place near a courthouse into a living space for different cultural and public events, which will serve as a pleasant meeting place.



Photo: The pilot project area in Bátovce

- **Hrušov, a village (Eastern Slovakia): Stage under pears**

A place in the middle of the village near the community distillery will change into a space with zones for various public groups and different cultural, sport and public events.



Photo: The pilot project area in Hrušov

- **Borinka, a village (Western Slovakia): Pajštúnsky rínek**

The goal of the local community in Borinka village is the reconstruction of the place in the centre of the village into a space for different target groups, with playground, benches and greenery.



Photo: The planning meeting with local inhabitants in Borinka

- **Volkovce, a village (Western Slovakia): Park – place for everyone**

A green place in the village center will be renovated, because there are a lot of problems with safety and possibility to use it. After reconstruction, there will grow new components, greenery and paths for different usage.



Photo: The pilot project area in Volkovce



## 5 pilot projects in Czech republic realized by Foundation Partnership

Practical common testing of the Joint Strategy in various urban areas through the 5 pilot projects in Czech republic is realized by the Foundation Partnership. The pilot projects were chosen in open competition (Public Spaces Program 2010). Until the end of April the following planning methods in all pilot projects have been used:

- planning meetings, brainstorming, selection of priorities, working with „blind map,, working in working groups etc.

Elaboration of the final design after implementation of remarks is expected until June 2010. The investment phase, the concrete terrain works and the realization of the designs will be funded through other donors.

### • Public space Pisnicka, Prague 12

The pilot project area is placed between an old villa-building and newer blocks of flats with maternity centre, kindergarden, etc in the neighborhood.

The project area is an axis of the neighborhood, a public green space between Elementary school, Gymnasium and supermarket.



Photo: The pilot project area in Prague

### • Magic garden, Jeseník nad Odrou

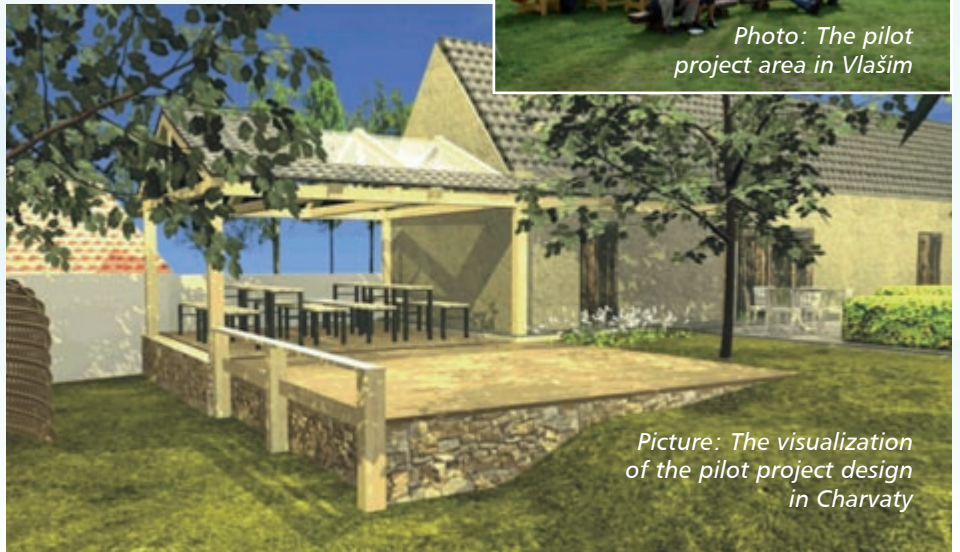
The project is focused on an elementary school garden involving local partners. Garden with an ecological, educational and recreational usage for children and citizens will be created. The elementary school is located in the city centre, neighboring with the parish church „Assumption of the Virgin“.



Photo: The pilot project area in Banovce

### • A place for all, Charvaty

The aim of the project is to create a new meeting place and to improve the city environment and its surrounding. The rectory and its garden are situated in a village centre, near to the church, elementary school and kinder garden. In rectory and the garden are practised cultural, social, hobby and other events for the residents. Garden is open for public but in a poor condition.



Picture: The visualization of the pilot project design in Charvaty

### • Revitalization of Evangelical Church park

The location of pilot project site is near to the second main historic city centre of Nové město na Moravě. The main success factors seem to be an active church group, but the constraints are that the places is partly closed to public.



Photo: The pilot project area in Nové město na Moravě

### • Garden full of activities and life, Vlašim

Location of the pilot project site within town: one of the main square neighborhoods

Main success factors:

- Big variety of civic groups/ associations
- Strong NGOs partners
- Strong partnership with representatives of the town



Photo: The pilot project area in Vlašim

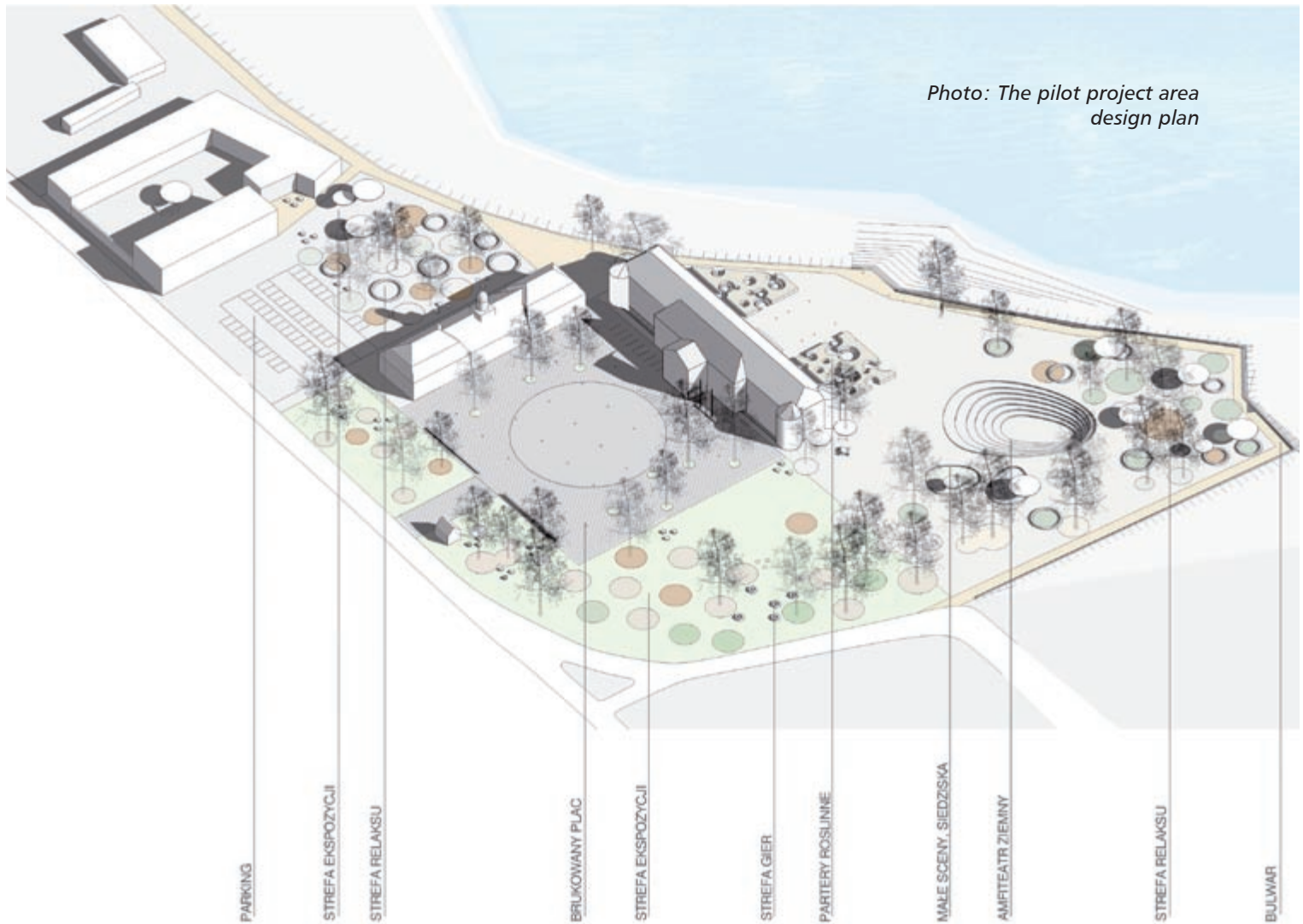


Photo: The pilot project area design plan

**STREFA I - WIDOK LOTU PTAKA**  
ZESPÓŁ PALACOWO-PARKOWY W BRZEGU DOLNYM – REWALORYZACJA W RAMACH PROGRAMU **URBSPACE**

UrbSpace  

## Brzeg Dolny – Park documentation (realized by Municipality of Brzeg Dolny, Poland)

As a part of its pilot projects, Municipality of Brzeg Dolny has started with the help of external experts to prepare the first stage of the project: a conception of the town's park with public participation. Considering the fact that the park itself is an area of architectural and historical interest, designers needed to obtain a number of authorizations for

the proposed activities from respective agencies, in particular the heritage conservation authority.

Due to the size of the park (74 hectares) proposed conception divides the town's park into 4 zones: the palace zone, the so called "swan zone", north zone and natural park. Each of these zones has its own character. The palace zone has been maintained in the historical conception however a very interesting element is being proposed – a ground amphitheatre. The Swan zone has also been maintained in historical zone – this zone consists mostly of ponds and alleys, but it is proposed to "revive" this section of the

park by building a natural playground and a cafeteria. The north zone, which is mostly used as a communication route between 3 different inhabitant areas of Brzeg Dolny, will become a place for sport, recreation and family relaxation. The natural park zone will remain the most natural zone of them all - its forest character and its function as a shelter for animals will be preserved.

Thanks to the proposed ideas, modernization of pedestrian routes, artificial lighting etc, the park could become a place for safe meetings, walks, and everyone no matter of age will find something interesting here.



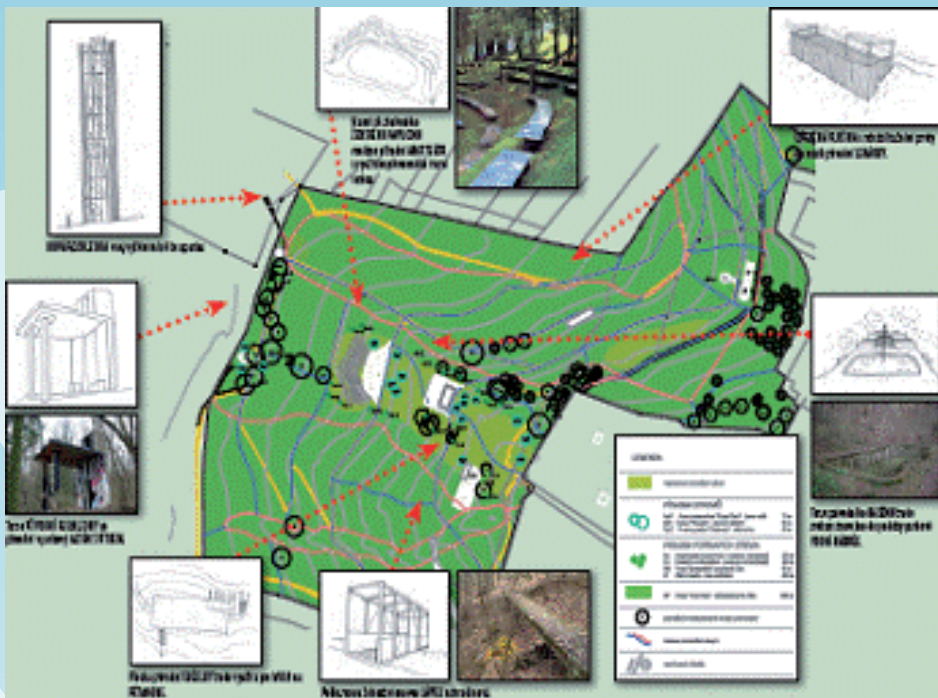


Photo: The pilot project area in Nagykallo

## Harangod park stand design in Nagykallo (realized by Municipality of Nagykallo, Hungary)

For years, the fields of Nagykallo Harangod were beloved recreation space of local inhabitants. Especially TĚKA Folk Art Camp has grand popularity among the people of Nagykallo, which is organised in Harangod every year. It is a popular space for leisure activities and entertainment in range of inhabitants living nearby but also from farther settlements.

The aim of the pilot project „Harangod Park Stand” is to establish and improve an infrastructure that drives economy development and at the same time protecting the environmental and natural values. In particular, this aim should have a positive impact on population living in healthy environment, nature protection and wild nature and it should create conditions for the long-term sustainability of biological diversity.

The area selected for the pilot activity is situated in a windy valley in a green belt of Nagykallo, so-called Harango, and it has been chosen for a construction of an “interactive” stage. The outdoor stage will be made of natural materials and built up in Hungarian folk style. The stage surrounded by four hills, built up in a traditional way symbolises national and folk customs and is representing Hungarian folk architecture. The „Valley Stage” will be compiled of pre-fabricated parts, so it can be assembled in various forms according to event purposes.

For more information - Panorama of Harangod: <http://www.sspanorama.com/hd/tour/t05/t05.html>

## Novy Liskovec forest park (realized by the Brno Novy Liskovec Stature city, Czech republic)

The revitalization of a former forest park is an attempt to establish a new leisure and daily recreation facility in the city district for the local community as well as for inhabitants of the whole city area. The forest park site is situated in attractive landscape setting surrounded by several residential districts with a population of 50.000 and a newly developed large university campus nearby.

Before the World War II the forest park used to serve recreation and was linked to a former nursing home. After several decades without maintenance, all the facilities and greenery became totally neglected and the forest park got abandoned.

It is expected that the paths network, green features and installation of equipment for both walking and fitness together with outlook tower renovation will create attractive green leisure area for Novy Liskovec, other adjacent city districts and whole Brno area.

Photo: The pilot project area after the first part of the greenery renewal in Brno and the comprehensible design plan



Due to the Study of forestpark, analyses of greenery and hydrogeology, documentation for area management - planing inquiry the general greenery renewal and intensive maintenance started already on the end of 2009 (see photo below).

## Accessibility Plan for the City of Erfurt (implemented by Fachhochschule Erfurt)

Fachhochschule Erfurt is developing an accessibility plan for the inner city of Erfurt, this means for the centric parts within the urban area including various points of interest. Special focus is laid on the needs of people with mobility problems or other impairments in order to enable everybody moving freely and enjoying Erfurt. Regarding the development of a barrier free urban environment, Fachhochschule Erfurt involves various stakeholders representing different interests and points of view: Relevant official institutions of the local partner City of Erfurt, "AG Barrierefreies Erfurt" (Working team of people with disabilities, communal representatives etc. to discuss and improve design for all), the official representative of the City of Erfurt for the needs of people with disabilities and also the local public transport company EVAG. To improve the accessibility of the inner city for all users regardless their individual capabilities the following planning steps are realized:

- 1). Analysis of design for all of the inner city related to different user needs
- 2a). Development of the accessibility plan including footpaths, public transportation, parkings, green public spaces and points of touristic interest
- 2b). Development of an action plan with priorities and operating schedule
- 2c). Development of accompanying measures for user information (internet based, signposting in the city centre)
- 3). Continuous consultation and participation at "AG Barrierefreies Erfurt"

The participatory approach can be identified as main success factor of the planning phase so far, since thereby constant input and hints to important aspects and problems of accessibility in the city are revealed by the affected stakeholders who are the "real experts".



Photo: Accessibility Plan for the City of Erfurt



Photos: The pilot project area in North-West Milan area and the first planting with volunteers in the area

## "5 Municipalities Park" (realized by Legambiente)

North-West Milan area, that is comprehensive of the city of Milan, the municipalities of Pero, Rho, Cornaredo and Settimo, is characterized by a heavy infrastructural presence, which has been growing and growing in the last few years. Next to the "tangenziale Ovest", to highway A4 Milan-Turin, the traffic structures for the new fair-ground Rho-Pero and High Speed railway have been settled down. Now all the zone is going to be affected by EXPO 2015 structures. In this territory, so marked by the heavy infrastructural action, there are still some significant pieces of land, both agricultural and naturalistic. It's essential to protect them because they are the last defence against the soil sealing.

The goal of the project is to extend these natural areas to the suburban space, to improve a better enjoyment, through empowering activities and building a network of volunteers that can take care of them. According to the proposed Joint strategy the elaboration of the actions plan has started from the involvement of local communities and associations in em-



powering actions and cultural activities, to grow up the civil culture and to get the citizens to understand the importance of a right use of open spaces.

Local committees and associations have been involved in the participation process with several meetings, from October 2009 to September 2010. They are also asked to organize some activities and events in order to involve population and they are charged with the future fruition management for this area. One hectares reforestation event in November 2009 thanks to volunteers; planted species were chosen in order to preserve and sustain local environmental heritage.

After this participation phase in autumn 2010 are starting others practical activities for the valorisation of fruition aspect and for a better enjoyment of this open space.



## Design plan for the Municipalities of Alba and city of Nizza Monferrato (realized by LAMORO)

The local development agency Langhe Monferrato Roero involved in its pilot action the cities of Alba and Nizza Monferrato. Both of them are located in the lower Piemonte Region in two different provinces.

According to the timeschedule of the project LAMORO has already contacted both cities and in the Alba already started the pilot project.



The city of Alba decided to regenerate an area which is located in the city center and which is used by all the population. Nowadays the area has some problems of usability due to the fact that a lot of services and security aspects aren't taken into consideration. The idea is to renovate the area under a gender point of view giving a great importance to accessibility and security aspects as well.

So far a public event has been organized in order to ask to the local users which are the main priorities and requirements. A participatory process is a must in this case and local authorities take care of local needs.

The area will be under analysis of a feasibility study till the end of July. In September 2010 a public event will be organized to present the project idea to the local citizens and to the regional authorities in order to grant a prosecution to this study.

The same will be done in the city of Nizza Monferrato (Asti province).

*A local newsletter is going to be published as well to give a high visibility to the UrbSpace project and opportunity.*



## 1st UrbSpace Thematic seminar



The first Thematic Seminar held on April 21st 2010 in Acquario civico in Milan. The principal focus of the thematic seminar was laying on the results of project Urbspace presentation, especially the "Guideline of making space – Joint Strategy" to the key stakeholders and decision makers public local institutions, experts, urban planners, architects, politicians - all persons concerned with urban space planning.

The seminar also offered the chance to collect information useful for the project purposes and discuss important issues concerning open spaces management. The thematic seminar was attended by 56 of participants.



*Photo from the Thematic seminar*

The agenda:

- Welcome speech by Damiano Di Simine - Legambiente Lombardia
- Urbspace project: goals and activities Zuzana Hudekova – REC Slovakia
- Urbspace Joint Strategy: a tool for a sustainable open spaces planning
- Richard Stiles – University of Wien
- Multi-functionality of open spaces Paolo Pileri – Politecnico di Milano
- Bosco in citt : an experience of participated land management Silvio Anderloni – Italia Nostra
- Debate on Thinking and living urban open spaces

## Upcoming activities and events

According to the work plan of UrbSpace project, for the next period, the following principal actions and events are scheduled:

- 1 **TU Vienna students design works presentation** – 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2010 at 14.00 at TU Vienna
- 2 **The accomplishment of the planning phase of the pilot actions - 9 concepts (July 2010):**
  - Sidlisko II Presov urban space
  - Accessibility plan for Erfurt
  - Novy Liskovec forest park
  - Urban Tree Path design plan in Sopoty
  - Brzeg Dolny – Park documentation
  - Harangod park stand design in Nagykallo
  - Design document for open public area in Sezana
  - “5 Municipalities Park”
- 3 **The next Steering committee meeting in Sopot on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010.** The meeting will focus on the pilot projects implementation and the new tools preparation (e-learning, Action Plan/Methodology).



Foto: UrbSpace project partners visiting the pilot project area in North-West of Milan during the 3rd steering Comitee meeting