

Dear visitor,

I would like to kindly inform you that the international conference BETTER CITIES FOR BETTER LIFE, Prague 2014 was successfully held on 12th – 13th May.

31 cities from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe took part in the conference. 42 countries were represented through their cities, diplomatic bodies, and representatives from local leading companies at the conference. Furthermore, 4 Czech Ministries attended the conference - the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – European Commission, Associations of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic, Association of Towns and Municipalities of Chile, Czech Technical University in Prague, Technical University in Brno, Charles University in Prague, Czech Agricultural University in Prague, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and important international organisations, i.e. International Telecommunication Union, The world business organisation, Thomson Reuters, and Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile.

To this day, we have collected 82 contributions to Blue-Green Book, Roadmap of successful local solutions for reducing noise, air and water pollution, and waste management. These examples will save financial resources of the less successful mayors and will accelerate considerably the process of enhancing the quality of the environment.

The organisers often had to deal with unfeasible complications during the two-year-long preparation of the conference. The toughest moment came in September 2013. At that time we were informed by the management of the City of Prague that the money for the conference we agreed on and that I myself ensured would not be granted to the conference and that Prague will not take part in the preparations. It was the peak of the political competition between two parts of the TOPO9 party before the parliamentary elections and they decided to continue in local political issues instead of taking the extraordinary opportunity to present Prague as a progressive city supporting the quality of life of the local citizens. Therefore, we deeply appreciate the action of the Mayor of Prague 1 Oldřich Lomecký that decided to attend the conference and to become the representative of the City of Prague. He saved the image of Prague. This was one of the reasons for postponing the conference from 28th – 29th November 2013. But even then, we had to face many challenges. We did not get any financial support from the state funds during the 2 years. We had to finance the conference from our own savings and we got some support from private sponsors from time to time. Glory to them! Unfortunately, we realised we were not able to keep our promise to provide 1 flight ticket to each city delegation after the last important sponsor did not stand to his promise. In spite of the fact that we guaranteed we would reimburse their flight tickets till the end of this year, 45 cities decided to not attend the conference in the end, which was a great pity. However, I believe we succeeded in holding a municipal conference that has not ever been held before.

Therefore, we are very pleased that the conference with the initial budget over \$1million took place and – despite the austerity measures – had a positive international feedback.

We are now working intensively on publishing a document summarizing the preparations, the conference itself and its outcomes so that we can start organising the follow-up event. The conference next year will take place in one of the following candidate cities: Asunción (Paraguay), Islamabad (Pakistan), Delhi (India), Bagdad (Iraq), Muscat (Oman) or Prague (Czech Republic). The negotiations concerning the venue of BETTER CITIES FOR BETTER LIFE in May 2015 should be finished by the end of summer holidays to enable the start of the 11 months long preparations.

5 contributions to Blue-Green Book, Roadmap of successful local solutions were drawn and they were awarded the price entitled Blue-Green Star. (An expert jury from the next year on will choose the winners.) The winner cities were Asunción – Paraguay, Baghdad – Iraq, Casablanca – Morocco, Islamabad – Pakistan a Jerusalem – Israel.

We will publish the final report about the conference as soon as it is completed. It should happen so during July 2014.

For the year 2015, we have established a participation of at least 200 city delegations as a benchmark. This will represent up to 1 billion inhabitants of our planet. Our "Club BCBL" consists of over 450 mayors from all over the world and others keep joining. There is also a big interest in technological companies, so that mayors know whom to address should they decide for an important investment in their city.

If you have anything you want to tell us, please write us or call us on:

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*Yours sincerely,
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President of the conference*

