

CITI-SENSE offers to consider an additional angle to the discussion. By developing an alternative pollution information system based on sensor technologies, it may be possible to complement the existing official information and put it in perspective of personalized information. The approach, commonly applied across Europe, has generated a considerable local public and media interest. During the Kick-off meeting in October 2012, the Project Consortium spent one day in Ostrava.

We have been accompanied by a camera team of a national TV station and could give interviews and a press conference in this context, where we explained the potential of the project, and our preliminary plans to realize it. After the project presentation in the City Hall in Ostrava, the local authorities located new static measurement facilities in the area and made mobile measurement results of air pollution from various parts of Ostrava available to public. Our next steps will address local opinion-makers and engage them by providing information about the details and objectives of CITI-SENSE in Ostrava. The local NGOs have already shown interest in collaborating with us. We expect the hardest part to be the involvement of major industrial stakeholders and local political representation, but hope to be able to engage them in a dialogue, and thus ensure a win-win situation, for the project, and for the region.

Upcoming events related to CITI-SENSE

29/30 January 2013
**Citizens' Observatories
Coordination Workshop**
Brussels, Belgium

19/20 March 2013
**Air sensors 2013: Data quality &
applications**
Research Triangle Park, USA

15/16 April 2013
**GEO European Projects
Workshop 2013**
Barcelona, Spain

19-23 August 2013
**Environment and Health –
Bridging South, North, East and
West. Conference of ISEE, ISES
and ISIAQ**
Basel, Switzerland

CITI-SENSE

Development of sensor-based
Citizens' Observatory Community for
improving quality of life in cities



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CITI-SENSE: meeting opportunities and challenges in shaping own living environment

Alena Bartonova, Project Co-ordinator



On 1st October 2012, a consortium of 30 academic, research and industrial organisations from Europe and around the world has embarked on a four-year journey to challenge perceptions of the role people have in actively shaping their living environment. Their motivation was simple: modern technologies enable us to generate and use environmental data in ways previously unimagined. How can we best take advantage of these opportunities? Challenges that need to be met lie in several research domains: sensor development, information technologies, environmental data based products and services, and societal relevance of the collected information and of the final products and last but not least empowering citizens to make best possible use of the obtained information.

Many sensors have been developed for ambient air pollution in recent years, and their performance is rapidly improving. Sensors are increasingly used to provide also other environmental information with direct relevance to specific user groups. Data such as individual position or activity level are being collected for individual information. The application of mobile sensors and technologies plays an important role in this context. Data acquired using new technologies, e.g., through crowd sourcing techniques, are combined with other environmental information: challenges are related to making these data useful in combination with data from other environmental observing systems, and to translating them to useful information. Finally, challenges are related to identifying the users of this information, their aims and the information they need to achieve them. What constitutes added value for the users? Can new information empower them to shape their living environment?

CITI-SENSE will construct use cases for three types of issues: urban air quality and urban exposure to environmental stressors, quality of urban public spaces, and quality of school environment. A Citizens' Observatory will be created to serve as an access point to integrated information services. Targeting inhabitants in nine European urban areas, we will match a technological and a social approach and provide scientific information and innovative use of novel and already existing products, aiming to improve urban life quality.

High pollution areas: friends or foes?

Ivan Gabal, GAC, Alena Bartonova, NILU

One of the three CITI-SENSE Case Studies will focus on environmental exposure and health associated with air quality. It will be implemented in 9 different places in Europe, aiming to develop effective ways to empower citizens to effectively participate in environmental stewardship. The locations address different issues. Ostrava/Silesia (CZ), one of Europe's industrial areas, provides a model example of serious obstacles to empowerment that can arise when economic, social and environmental issues are weighed against each other.



The Silesian region is characterized amongst others by the largest share of heavy industry in the Czech Republic, high and long-term unemployment rate, high number of crime-exposed districts, and decline in population by migration. Citizens there face a severe dilemma: The increase of public attention to air pollution leaves a bad image of the region and industry. This leads to a decrease in investment and population stability which again may culminate in a steady increase in unemployment. Pushing industry into clean technologies declines also the competitiveness towards industry on the Polish side of Silesia.

The public is divided between the desire of having clean air and on the other side having a steady income by working in the nearby industry. The current economic crisis reduces the public interest in air pollution control significantly. Thus, the debate between public, industry and authorities overplays risks and suffers by absence of positive solution proposals. Achieving a dialogue across the different stakeholder communities is essential to finding solutions, but difficult in such situation. The perspective of EU Structural Funds assistance and long term modernisation perspective clearly outweighs short-term economic stress.