

Thematic Output:

Policy Action Plan: Łomża

March, 2015

Background

The long term goal of the Diet for a Green Planet project is that each city will adopt a Diet Policy. This project aims at helping to get the process started and for some important steps to be taken in that direction.

The purpose of this Policy Action Plan is to outline (for each receiving city) the steps taken and the steps that remain to be taken in this area. The finalization of this report was planned for January 2015, but since the project was still ongoing then, it made more sense to write this report in March, after the project activities. It is now that we can overview and analyze what has been achieved and what remains.

This document can be seen as a brief summary status when it comes to the policy work being done in this project. It will not attempt to provide a fully detailed account of the policy transfer – for that we have produced on-going reports from bilateral meetings and transnational conferences. It will rather be a “temperature check” at the time of project end.

The situation for the three receiving cities was very different from the start, and the preconditions along the way have also differed substantially. This report will account for the work in Łomża according to the following structure:

- Background
- Steps taken during the project
- Remaining steps

Łomża

Background

Headmasters of educational institutions are responsible for public procurement and for organizing the canteen services. There is an Authorizing officer who is responsible for the menus, and what they should contain. There is no particular department in the city hall which takes care of public canteens, and there were no political steering documents when the project started.

The State Sanitary Inspection (a specialized institution established to execute the tasks of the public health) controls the menus, to ensure that meals are nutritional and healthy, that products are not repeated too often, etcetera.

The political sphere has been interested in the project from the start, but the local elections in November 2014 would come to dampen the activity in the policy making field of the project.



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Steps taken

Even though there was a positive interest from the start among politicians, the local elections that were held in November 2014 somewhat paralyzed the political involvement. The old local government did not want to change anything, and at the end of the project the new government and the new mayor had just started their work.

In spite of these difficult preconditions there have been constant efforts from the project team to involve politicians in the project:

- High level politicians were present during the conference “Healthy Diet in Educational Institutions” at the University PWSiP in Łomża in June 2014.
- There was political presence in the second transnational conference in Mollet del Vallès in September, 2014. And, as stated above, the interest has been there, but the will to act has been limited.
- In a document for development strategies for Łomża it was stated that there is a need to increase entrepreneurship among farmers. The need for a diet policy and some kind of legal contract with local producers has been presented to the Education Department and to the City Council of Łomża.

In addition, the new political leadership – two deputy mayors participated in the final conference in March, 2015 – is very interested and has publicly (during the final conference) expressed the wish to create a diet policy that will be included in the municipal strategy for the period 2014-2020, in accordance with the Diet for a Green Planet concept. This represents a breakthrough and offers a true sense of optimism when it comes to further development.

Other steps taken during the project are:

- Organized contacts between eco-farmers and headmasters of educational institutions have been established and there is a mutual interest of continuing to work according to the Diet for a Green Planet concept.
- Increased networking and cooperation: Łomża city has developed cooperation with other organizations and networks like Podlaskie Centre of Agriculture Advisory, the Slow Food-movement and other Polish URBACT-cities.
- An inquiry has been carried out concerning the preparation of a set of recommendations and plans to formulate a Local Action Plan for the implementation of Diet for a Green Planet.

Remaining steps

The continuation of the policy related work is about getting a diet policy created, approved and implemented in the municipality during 2014-2020. It is recognized that this will take time and since diets is a national issue that is implemented through regional health authorities, the policy work needed must be based on science. It will be important to engage a well selected consortium of high level research institutes.

Applications for new EU projects will be one way to continue this work. Łomża now sees a possibility to apply for external funding for the period 2014-2020 for



projects in connection with the implementation of the "Diet for Green Planet", co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and URBACT III.

As is the case in Molétai, Łomża City Hall is mostly used to "hard" projects (buildings, roads etc.). But a concrete result of this project is a widened scope of interest to including also the "soft" issues such as competence building and attitudes. There is an ambition to set up a "Department of Soft Projects" in the city administration, to develop the capacity to apply for new EU projects.

The new political leadership also intends to spread the concept to all the headmasters in the municipality. The project has created a window of opportunity to create a planned cooperation between municipality, headmasters and farmers.

We also recommend the reports made throughout the project in order to get a more complete picture. The reports from the bilateral meetings, the transnational conferences and the Roadmap for Applications provide a more detailed account of the transfer process.

Download the reports on <http://urbact.eu/diet-for-a-green-planet>.

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