



MAYOR OF GDYNIA

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Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the City of Gdynia I have the honour to submit this application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

The City of Gdynia is actively engaged in developing a society and an environment which are open to diversity as well as in promoting active social life among all groups of inhabitants, with respect to different needs and priorities. Gdynia has an interest in running and promoting innovative projects which aim to improve standard and quality of life of its inhabitants. Particular consideration is given to seniors and people with disabilities. We run diverse initiatives to provide social services, activating projects and make the city services and spaces both more attractive and more accessible for people with different limitations. Our mission is to integrate and promote social innovation solutions based on the inhabitants' needs and the best practices from other cities and communities.

The idea of active communication and social consultations is long popular in European countries. In Poland, due to the previous political situation, the process of building active citizenship among different groups of people is still relatively new. Gdynia has become a leader of social innovation and participation procedures in different aspects of residents' life in our country. Wide range of innovative practices, including: public dialogue on social services quality, the "civil panel" for senior citizens, research walks with seniors and people with disabilities, innovative tele-care system or active participation in design and planning of urban public space, is characterized by the complex approach and active involvement of different partners. Everyone can have their say at each stage of the project and consultation process. In addition, there is the Gdynia Seniors Centre – a unique city unit created over ten years ago to facilitate different forms of activation and inclusion of elderly people in Gdynia, such as: the Third Age University, a network of over 20 active seniors clubs or intergenerational dialogue between seniors and young people. All these activities can serve as examples of best practices for other cities in Poland and abroad.



Europe Prize
2002



Council of Europe
Plaque of Honour
1998



Council of Europe
Flag of Honour
1996



European
Commission
Golden Stars
of Twinning
1995

All the above projects have substantial effects on the Gdynia municipality and, what is the most important, they build up the real dialogue with Gdynia inhabitants by:

- development of the civil potential in Gdynia,
- innovative ways of promoting local democracy,
- decentralization of the decision making process and handing power to local community,
- enabling inhabitants to become the real hosts of the urban space,
- social services, infrastructure, and living environment which meet the inhabitants' expectations.

I believe Gdynia could significantly benefit from joining the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and, at the same time, disseminate its innovative solutions towards friendly ageing among other participants of the network. It would be a pleasure to join the network and cooperate for continuous improvement together.

Yours sincerely,



Wojciech Szczurek