

Annual Report

2016



Prázdné domy



An annual account of the Vacant Houses association for the year 2016

The foundation of Vacant Houses

In January 2015, Petr Zeman made a public announcement via the social network Facebook that he is looking for collaborators on his project: Vacant houses ("Prázdné Domy"). The aim of this initiative is to map and investigate the problematics of abandoned and dilapidated property in the Czech Republic. Alex Peterka reacted to Peter's proposal as he had already founded the public domain www.prazdnedomy.cz in 2014. The urbex enthusiast and photographer Radomír Kočí also got onboard and the three started the initiative Prázdné Domy: Vacant houses. They put together the online database of empty properties, which is continuously updated with further dilapidated properties being added. Apart from the online database, their facebook page is expanding whilst gaining support through a growing network of followers. In January 2016, more members were welcomed. Vacant Houses was joined by: Kateřina Nohelová, Simona Benátská and later in the year by Dita Krouželková and Šárka Tesiková.

The project

Our work is based on the following thesis:

We believe that once a house is built, it should remain in use. A long-term vacant property carries difficulties for the community. It often becomes a platform for socially undesirable displays, bringing down the value of the surrounding neighborhood. We often see empty spaces within cities being filled with construction sites for new buildings, while a steadily increasing amount of buildings become vacant and carry unfulfilled potential. There is no database providing information about the numbers and qualities of empty properties within cities. Vacant Houses wishes to fill this gap and create such a database which will provide information regarding the status, previous usage and cause for vacancy. The platform will try to actively communicate with owners of the vacant properties. The police will be informed in case of emergencies or immediate danger with regards to empty houses. The initiative also aims to motivate owners to restore unused properties, referring them to low-cost renovation options. Owners will also be offered examples and potential aid in establishing space for temporary use of their property.

Furthermore, our goal is to cultivate social responsibility within fellow citizens and motivate liability for our shared cities.

The corner stone of our initiative is mapping empty houses in the Czech Republic, their categorization and information regarding their former purpose and dilapidation. We also draw attention to positive examples of buildings that have been restored. In some cases we act as activists for progressive change. We are in the transition between mapping and researching the extent of this issue and collective solution through actions. We also organize tours around the cities, where we share the unique and individual stories of each property.

Timeline of main events and initiatives in 2016

7th February - The domain contains 500 properties

17th February - Our Facebook post has been seen 150 000 times

19th February - 10 000 followers on Facebook

18th March - Radio wave mentions Vacant Houses in District program profile: "We need to learn to help preserve empty properties" http://www.rozhlas.cz/radiowave/distrikt/_zprava/distrikt-prazdne-domy-musime-umet-zachranit--1595834

25th March - The first article comes out: "Website Vacant houses is launched, help us keep to map up to date" http://www.rozhlas.cz/radiowave/wavenews/_zprava/web-prazdne-domy-je-spusten-pomahejte-do-plnovat-mapu--1470438

3rd May - We have registered 1000 vacant properties in the database

24th May - The pilot episode of the Vacant houses series is aired in collaboration with RTV+ <http://www.rtvplus.cz/porad-92-Smutny-fenomen-prazdnych-domu>

1st August - The second episode of the Vacant houses series is aired in collaboration with RTV+ <http://www.rtvplus.cz/porad-104-Prazdne-domy-Palac-U-Styblu>

16th August - An article about empty houses is published on the iDnes portal http://bydleni.idnes.cz/prazdne-domy-opustene-stavby-bydleni-v-praze-faf-/stavba.aspx?c=A160811_105959_stavba_web



26th August - Our first guided city tour takes place: Vacant houses in the center of Prague (Florenc-Můstek)- Prague 1 in collaboration with Dobrovous z.s



19th September -Third episode of the Vacant houses series is aired in collaboration with RTV+ <http://www.rtvplus.cz/porad-111-Radnicni-domy-ozivaji>

21st September - Participation in the discussion panel at the Periferie Conference



2nd October - Guided city tour- Day of architecture– Vacant houses in the heart of Prague - Prague 1

We have received positive feedback to the city tours by the public. This is a contributing factor to the willingness to register ourselves as an association and gain trade licensing for the guided city tours.

Members of the association are: Petr Zeman, Radomír Kočí, Kateřina Nohelová, Dita Krouželová, Alex Peterka and Šárka Těšíková. Jiří Suchomel, Simona Benátská, Dagmar Pavlíčková and Adam Scheinherr will be joining at the end of the year.

6th October- The members of the association Vacant Houses meet and elect Kateřina Nohelová as the chairwoman of the board and board committee members: Petr Zeman and Radomír Kočí

24th October – The association is registered by court in Pardubice (IČO 05470650)



25th October - guided city tour - Vacant houses below Vyšehrad and Petřín - Prague 2 and 5

27th October - We receive our trade license valid from 24. 10.

28th October - An article is published in Blesk.cz: "Is Prague the city of ghosts? Vacant houses contaminate the center, owners await their collapse" <http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/regiony-praha-praha-zpravy/427055/je-praha-mestem-uchu-prazdne-budovy-hyzdi-centrum-jejich-majitele-cekaji-az-spadnou.html>

6th November - Repeated city tour in the vacant houses in the center of Prague – Guided tour Prague 1

17th November - Lecture at the Gymnasium Jana Keplera

25th November - An article on the web of the Czech Radio- "Unique project Vacant Houses: more than 1400 unused properties in the Czech republic" (ON-LINE MAP) http://www.rozhlas.cz/plus/trendy/_zprava/unikatni-projekt-prazdne-domy-vice-nez-1400-objektu-v-cr-je-zatim-bez-vyuziti-online-mapa--1673167

27th November - We have an Instagram account

15th of December - Guided tour through Holešovice and talk in collaboration with the cultural platform Centrála

18th December - Coverage of "Vast amount of vacant houses" within the Czech national TV program Nedej se (ČT2) - <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10800462866-obcanske-noviny/216562248430038-plno-prazdnych-domu/>

26th December - Article on aktuálně.cz - "Abandoned houses in the city of Prague. You might be shocked to find out you walk past them everyday" <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/regiony/praha/fo-to-prazdne-domy-v-okoli-vaclavaku/r~cae43d02597511e68afb002590604f2e/>

Vacant Houses have been working on creating and updating their database throughout the year. They have introduced the topic to the public, creating awareness and raising interest in the media, through public talks and guided tours. Throughout the year Vacant Houses have self-sufficiently mapped out properties in Prague 7, documenting their exteriors in photographs. All buildings, including the ones in used were filed. The aim of this extensive mapping was to draw attention to the ratio of used: unused buildings within Prague 7. This was done under the auspices of the deputy mayor of Prague 7 Mr. Mareš.

Vacant Houses have from the start been collaborating and coordinating their activities with the Institute for Planning and development and been part of the Citymakers initiative.

Plan of activities for 2017

We will continue our guided tours in the upcoming year. These are not only a viable source of income, but also a means to meet people with a common interest of raising awareness on the topic of dilapidated properties. These people often introduce us and draw attention to interesting facts that allow us to expand our horizons.

Furthermore, we would like to organize a tour around abandoned and dilapidated churches in Lounsko. This area is unique and interesting and we would like to raise awareness of its abandoned churches through collaborations with local organizations that are working to restore these and other empty buildings.

In the midst of 2017 we plan to launch our new and improved web domain www.prazdnedomy.cz. The financing of this comes partially through our dedicated followers. The new domain will be more user friendly, offer uploads of photographs, search filters and successful examples of restored buildings.

Our collaboration with IPR will continue as will the Citymakers project.

2016		
Revenues	Membership fees	3 000
	Gate - money	12 700
	Donations	5 000
Expenditures		1 000
Balance		19 700

Financing matters

The main source of income for the association has been the profit from the guided city tours, which are being organized approx. once a month. Visitors are charged 100 czk and informed that the entire profit will be dedicated towards further improvements to the www.prazdnedomy.cz domain. The members of the association are not financially awarded. Another source of income are membership fees. Following our talk at the Jan Kepler gymnasium, we were contacted by Ludmila Knappová who kindly offered a contribution of 5000 czk for the new web domain. We are deeply grateful to Mrs. Knappova and others who have generously contributed to our mission.

The tax form for 2016 was sent to the financial Institute in Žamberk, which is where the association is officially registered.

In the following year we plan to gain profit from small retail items such as buttons and bags. We are also looking for collaborations with donors. We plan to register on the domain darujeme.cz. We will continue to organize the guided tours and utilize the profit for specific causes. One of our aims is to aid a local initiative in sponsoring new windows in the church of Vrbice u Hořoviček.

Made by: Petr Zeman, Kateřina Nohelová

Confirmed by: