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# **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**



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## **INDUSTRIAL CULTURE AS AN EMERGING ELEMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the frame of major societal and economic changes, Europe's industrial societies have transformed over the last decades towards networked information societies that are increasingly based on knowledge-intensive services and creative industries. However, these developments are affecting territories in very different and uneven ways. Urban agglomerations are the major hubs in this development, while small and medium-sized towns in rural environments often continue to have a small industrial base, but they do not succeed in attracting the knowledge economy.

At the same time, political attention to industrial production is increasing in the aftermath of the financial crisis. In a recent communication to the EU Parliament, the EU Commission "considers that a strong industrial base will be of key importance for Europe's economic recovery and competitiveness" (European Commission 2014). In a similar vein, national and regional governments set up strategies for reindustrialisation through the development of "Industry 4.0" or smart specialisation strategies, both aiming at a valorisation of industrial labour. We can also notice a new interest in former industrial sites and heritage through events and exhibition centres, connected to Cultural Capital of Europe or World Heritage titles (i.e. Ruhr 2012 or Völklinger Hütte). To understand these trends and their possible impact on regional development in peripheral old-industrialised areas in Central Europe, this article will refer to the term Industrial Culture, as a tool to unlock un-used potentials in such areas.

This article will discuss this situation by referring to the recently started InduCult2.0 Central Europe INTERREG project (2016-2019) focussing on Industrial Culture in small- and medium-sized towns. The paper will focus on the framework conditions of Industrial Culture and the specific challenges in former industrialised towns outside agglomeration areas and illustrate the use of Industrial Culture by highlighting examples from Central Europe.

**Key words:** Regional development, Small and medium-sized towns, Industry, Creative Industry, Culture