



Past - Present - Future

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT FOR TOURIST ACTIONS COMBINING INDUSTRIAL HISTORY AND PRESENCE

Regional Concept

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PP3, city of Leoben



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1. Project Context

The Central Europe Project InduCult2.0 (www.inducult.eu) addresses Central European regions mono-focused on industrial production. Through InduCult typical regions utilise the tangible and intangible cultural assets of their industrial past, present and future in a synergetic way for positioning their regions as attractive places for working, living and recreation. Together with local stakeholders, they rediscover and develop the positive elements of industrial communities. Specifically, the partnership intends to:

- promote and establish the idea of Industrial Culture in Central Europe;
- strengthen the distinct culture of industrial regions and utilise it as location factor;
- empower industrial regions by re-activating their pioneer spirit.

Involved are eight representative regions from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and Poland. They are supported by two scientific partners from Germany and Austria.

Work package 2 - “Priming Industrial Culture as a unique feature of regional identity” - compiles a range of awareness-raising activities: (1) promoting cultural resources of industry: ‘industry goes public’, (2) industrial tourism combining heritage and present, (3) image-shaping through industry-related cultural events, interlinked with an eye-catching transnational feature. All WP activities are laid out to connect industrial heritage and current/upcoming cultural resources. Among others, activity T5.2 deals with testing measures fostering industry cultural tourism; the concept development for tourist actions combining industrial history and presence is part of it - besides industry-related experimental accommodation facilities and mapping tools for industrial tourism.

2. Introduction

Industrial Culture (IC) is a young member of the European culture family. Its roots can be found in many European regions, which 200 years ago were not only cradles of industrialisation, but have been up to now sites of industrial production. A typical representative is the region “Styrian Iron Route” and the adjoining Mur-Mürz-valley. Over the centuries the hegemony of industrial production and mining has created a specific cultural climate, which - apart from visible monuments and artefacts - can be experienced in specific values, traditions, skills and a distinctive way of living. Nowadays the region is one of the most important industrial regions in Austria, with the city of Leoben and the

Styrian Iron route - with the global steel player voestalpine, the mining university and the breathtaking site “ore mine Erzberg” (where according to the legend, ore has been extracted for more than 1300 years) - in its centre.

Industrial Culture has shaped the regions’ cities, villages and landscapes for centuries. Heritage and history and thus the roots of IC can be experienced in a dozen museums of the “museum association Styrian Iron Route”: from the first blast furnaces up to the industrial history of the 20th century. In addition IC comes to life also outside museums - through stories told by people, buildings and landscapes.

Industrial Culture has been an attractive resource for tourism for the past decades. The outstanding visitor centre and tours at Erzberg (www.abenteuer-erzberg.at), together with other industry/mining-related sites and traditions, are well-known touristic hotspots. The IC sites and offers are one of the key USPs of the touristic region “Hochsteiermark” (Upper Styria) to further promote tourism and thus create jobs.

Outstanding and unique is that industry and mining cannot only be experienced in form of the “golden past”, but mining as well as industrial production are still not only ongoing but are accessible and visible by fascinating tours. That makes it possible to create unique touristic experiences (and story telling of IC) hardly found in any other parts of Europe.

3. Objective

The regional argumentation paper “10 good reasons for a living Industrial Culture in Upper Styria” has listed the touristic potential of living industry as well as its heritage as one of the key arguments for IC.

The concept presented here shows possible ways of how to create (improve/mingle existing) and promote tourist products combining industrial history and presence and use them for the benefit of strengthening the regions’ tourism. It is based on improved tourist cooperation between industrial museums, companies, IC organisations, tourism associations and the mining university Leoben.

4. Applied Approach

In the region “Styrian Iron Route” a focus group on Industrial Culture was established in autumn 2016. To structure and focus its work a workshop series on IC was organized from June to August 2017 (4 workshops). It was carried out in form of a “design thinking” process based on the method of appreciative inquiry. The outcome was discussed with further regional players in the fields of tourism, heritage and industry.

5. Results

5.1 Major players in the field of industrial tourism along the region Styrian Iron Route

The region Styrian Iron Route hosts about a dozen museums dedicated to its industrial history, several innovative industrial companies, the still operating opencast mine Erzberg and the mining university Leoben. They all together form a vivid picture of past industrial times and living industry. To use their potentials a stronger cooperation is recommended.

Major actors are:

- The museum association Styrian Iron Route (www.eisenstrassenmuseen.at), which offers a roof for 13 museums in the region (umbrella branding, mutual activities etc.)
- The industrial and mining companies
 - voestalpine in Leoben (steel plant; free tours offered regularly)
 - Gösser brewery (museum and tours of operating brewery - Austria's largest brewery)
 - VA Erzberg (operating opencast mine in Eisenerz with touristic profit center)
- The mining university of Leoben (> 4000 students)
- The tourism association "Hochsteiermark" (regional tourism marketing of "Upper Styria East")
- The local tourism associations Leoben, Herzbergland & Erlebnisregion Erzberg
- The heritage association Styrian Iron Route

5.2 Approaches for integrative industrial tourism in the region Styrian Iron Route

5.2.1 Integrative touristic IC products

There are several options in the region for the development of integrative touristic products. It is suggested to use a set of „modules“ which can be combined individually in respect to the interest of visiting groups or for certain target groups (families, silver ages, kids or schools...). Through skillful combination of the different actors/institutions/companies interest for a visit can be raised for the different target groups. In addition a couple of standard tours should be provided. An integrative approach also means that apart from IC other tourist attractions (and actors such as hotels, restaurants etc.) have to be involved to create “saleable” tourist products.

Following IC modules are available (list to be extended regularly):

- Museum visits in the 13 museums of the Styrian Iron route (www.eisenstrassenmuseen.at). Highlights:
 - museum center Leoben with strong IC focus
 - blast furnace museum Radwerk IV in Vordernberg incl. modern presentation of voestalpine production process
- Visit of “Abenteuer Erzberg” (“adventure Erzberg”) - living mining industry in combination with adventure tours and a visit of the visitor mine
- Tour with mining railway “Erzbergbahn” (connecting the village of Vordernberg with its old blast furnaces with the Erzberg)
- Free tour of voestalpine steel plant (can be arranged individually for groups; in addition fixed tours approximately every month in summer season); guides of partly recruited from the mining university Leoben
- Tour of Gösser brewery (brewery museum and brewery plant)

Standard tour 1 (suggestion):

- Voestalpine tour in Leoben in the morning (2 hours)
- Lunch in the city center Leoben
- Afternoon city tour with visit of museum center

Standard tour 2 (suggestion):

- Visit of Adventure Erzberg (morning)
- Lunch in Eisenerz
- Gösser brewery tour (afternoon)

Standard tour 3 (suggestion):

- Visit of Radwerk IV (old blast furnace + modern visual multimedia art installation about industrial introduction of voestalpine)
- Lunch in Vordernberg (restaurant “Goldener Adler”)
- Afternoon: Visit of Erzberg or Gösser brewery or city center Leoben



5.2.2 Special Events

Events provide the opportunity to raise additional touristic interest to visit the region.

- Rostfest: A post-industrial festival which uses the remains/setting of the mining heritage in combination with the still operating mine at Erzberg. So far more than 1000 visitors stay overnight at the festival.
- Industrial Culture festival: An integrative approach to focus on the topic of IC for one or two days and draw visitors to the region (transnational example: Industriada)
- Special exhibitions: Especially the museum center Leoben is well-known for its exhibitions, which are promoted throughout all of Austria. A stronger cooperation with the industry (e.g. presentation of industry in museum center or combination with the modules of 5.2.1) can be of benefit for both sides. Guides of the mining university can add an additional “industrial” touch

5.2.3 Other possibilities

- Story Telling:
 - (former) industrial workers/miners tell about their experiences in a museum
 - (former) industrial workers/miners act as guides
- Extraordinary tours: E.g. tour with an oldtimer bus (available for rent in the region) from Leoben two Eisenerz passing the industrial scenery of the steel plants and of the Erzberg mine, plus a visit of one or two museums
- Industrial Culture visitor centre: Such a centre is about to come in the forthcoming years (hopefully voestalpine will create it on its premises). In the meantime the museum center Leoben will act as an IC visitor centre - either in the museum or in form of a container in front of the museum center.
- Augmented Reality / virtual reality: installations of industrial production in museums
- Use of vacant industrial buildings for exhibitions, cultural events etc. (e.g. “Porubsky-Halle” in Leoben)
- Accommodation: The hotel “Kongress” in Leoben offers special “industry”-dedicated rooms - e.g. a “rail-room” oder a “Gösser brewery”-room

5.2.4 Promotion

Promotion is essential to raise attention for the touristic topic: “industry/industrial culture”. Promotion should be carried out by

- A mutual branding (region’s USP of industrial culture)
 - Mutual promotion material
 - Cross-wise promotion
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- A common “brand” is essential to launch the specific product “industrial tourism” on the market. Already the topic “montan” is one of the three pillars of the regional tourism association “Hochsteiermark”. In addition the four local tourism

associations of the Styrian iron route” are about to start a new promotion cooperation with the umbrella name “Erzberg-Leoben”, which allows better than before to focus on this topic and present an overall picture of the touristic relevant industrial features of the region.

- One marketing product already realised in 2017 is the guide book “(R)EISEN - Erzberg. Eisenstrasse. Hochsteiermark”, which tells the story of the industrial region’s past and presence and vivid language and pictures.
- Mutual promotion material is a basis for successful marketing. Industrial tourism should be a key element in the promotion material of the tourism associations. In addition there should be a specific promotion of the modules of 5.2.1 (leaflet/brochure, website, social media etc.). A mutual “blog” could be helpful.
- Cross-wise promotion will be carried out by all actors (see 5.1) individually.
- The region “Styrian iron Route” is member of the ERIH network (European Route of Industrial heritage) - as a route by itself and with the anchor point Erzberg. This network also allows the promotion of the region’s assets transnationally

5.2.5 Pilot actions

In 2018 pilot actions will be implemented based on the conceptional approaches (5.2.1-5.2.4).

A promotional brochure will present attractive packages of integrative tourist actions combining history and past.

Distribution:

- Regional heritage institutions, monuments, places of excursion in the region
- Tourist information offices
- Tourism fairs (Steiermarkfrühling in Vienna, Aufsteirern in Graz, ITB Berlin etc. - with cooperation partners Hochsteiermark and Erzberg-Leoben)

Further cost-neutral measures that will be carried out:

- Promotion of packages/touristic offers on the websites of the museum association Styrian Iron Route, Incoming Styrian Iron Route and the tourism associations Hochsteiermark www.hochsteiermark.at and www.erzberg-leoben.at/at/

The successful implementation strongly depends on the will of the stakeholders to cooperate:

- Industrial companies offering visitor tours on a (more) regular base
- Regional partners distributing promotion material / packages

The pilot implementation will show what works well and should outline further options of increased cooperation between museums and companies.

6. Evaluation/transnational added value

The exchange with the InduCult project partners has shown possibilities how cooperation between living industry, museums and other heritage institutions can be carried out (could be carried out in future) in other countries. It has also proved that the concept of forming tourist products with industrial past and presence is quite innovative in Central Europe and is a sort of pioneer work. This can be said as well about whole Europe, as has shown the ERIH (European Route of Industrial Heritage) conference in Copenhagen in September 2017, which was dedicated to the topic “Industrial Tourism: Linking the past with the present and future”. Among others the panel discussion “How can industrial heritage and living industry be linked” brought valuable input for the concept.

7. Outlook and sustainability

At the moment the association Styrian Iron Route and the museum association Styrian Iron Route (13 museums) are in charge of the coordination, preservation and continuation of the region’s mining and industrial culture and heritage (on behalf of the municipalities). They are the key actors in the forthcoming months and years to build stronger ties with the local living industry and to stimulate the cooperation of all actors (including the tourism associations) in the field of IC. They will be in charge of bundling existing offers and developing interesting new touristic offers combining the region’s industrial past and presence. Based on this concept pilot actions will be carried out in 2018 including the production of marketing material presenting the newly developed offers (see also chapter 5.2.5).

8. Summary

Industrial cultural tourism is a chance for old industrial and mining regions to promote their heritage as well as living industry. Benefits can be gained by tourism itself as well as by shaping the regions’ image and of regional identity. The “Styrian Iron Route” houses some spectacular heritage remains such as “Erzberg”, the Erzberg railway and the blast furnace museum Radwerk IV. In addition the museum association Styrian Iron Route collects and presents the regions’ heritage in 13 museums. Living industry and mining is present at the Erzberg and at successful industrial companies and plants such as voestalpine in Leoben. The concept for tourist actions combining industrial history and presence aims at forming new touristic offers by combining past and presence. This can be achieved with new packages, creative events and supporting promotion (common brand, cross-wise promotion etc.). Based on the concept pilot actions will be carried out in 2018 including the production of marketing material presenting the newly developed offers.