



Past - Present - Future



REGIONAL STRATEGY ON “NEW INDUSTRIAL CULTURE”

Finalisation report

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T1.5.1



RP 6



PP3, City of Leoben



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0. Abstract

With the start of InduCult2.0 the city of Leoben founded a regional focus group “Industrial Culture along the Styrian Iron Route (Steirische Eisenstrasse)” to support the establishment of the new concept of industrial culture as well as supervise regional InduCult2.0 activities. The members of the focus group were representatives of regional economy, regional development, administration, culture, education and tourism.

The focus group developed a regional strategy paper with strategies on Industrial Culture, pointing beyond project time. This document summarizes the process of developing the strategy paper as well as the content of the strategy paper itself.

1. Project Context

InduCult2.0 defines the idea of living industrial culture in Central Europe. It aims to reveal, strengthen and utilize the unique cultural character of industrial regions. This project does not only deal with the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage, but it brings together past, present, future cultural assets related to industry in an innovative way. Thus, industrial museums, schools, companies and creative communities work together to create a successful cooperation. This is the key for living industrial culture as a vivid concept that reflects current transformations of industrial economy and shapes cultural perceptions of the regions.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project has a budget of 3 million euros. The ten participating partners, located in different countries in Central Europe, work together with their stakeholders to realize the full potential of Industrial Culture in their regions. Participating partners come from regions in Germany, Poland, Belgium, Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy.

With the start of InduCult2.0, the city of Leoben founded a regional focus group “Industrial Culture along the Styrian Iron Route (Steirische Eisenstrasse)” to support the promotion of a vivid industrial culture as well as supervise regional InduCult2.0 activities. The members of the focus group are representatives of regional economy, regional development, administration, culture, education and tourism. Together they developed a regional argumentation paper (T1.3.1) that emphasizes the importance of the specific regional industrial culture. The next milestone was reached with three regional action plans that present concrete projects in the field of regional identity (T2.6.2) economic development (T3.5.2) and innovation through industrial culture (T4.6.2). The third milestone of the regional focus group is a strategy paper (T1.5.1) which is summarized here.

2. Introduction

Industrial production and mining has played a decisive role in the development of Leoben and the Styrian Iron Route over the last two centuries and even further back, and it influenced the inhabitants culturally providing them with a sort of “industrial/mining DNA”. At present, this industrial culture values historical aspects, such as traditions and architectural monuments (‘Industrial Culture 1.0’). However, industry is still the economic engine in the district today with big players such as the steel company voestalpine and will continue to be the decisive economic driving force of the region in the future.

Because the region did not only possess this strong industrial base in the past, but also owns it now and will continue to do so, industrial culture can develop here as a living form of culture - a potential that has so far been little perceived or exploited: A lively industrial culture, which - in addition to the industrial past - also refers to the industrial present and future, offers itself as a contemporary identity anchor of the region as well as an essential location and image factor for the region ('Industrial Culture 2.0').

In this sense - in addition to the industrial museums, traditional associations and tour operators - industrial companies, technical oriented schools and the mining university of Leoben, but also extracurricular learning and experience spaces (e.g. Fablabs, Cultural and Creative Centres) are essential institutions: precisely through their cooperation industrial culture comes alive and becomes visible as a theme which connects society overarching the epochs.

3. Objective

The aim of the regional strategy paper is:

- to make aware, illuminate and anchor living industrial culture as an essential element in the identity profile of the rural district and its towns and communities;
- to explain the different ways in which industrial culture can come to life;
- to give strategic recommendations for action for a contemporary industrial culture roadmap into the future.

With its recommendations, the strategy paper primarily addresses the political, cultural and economic decision-makers of the region "Styrian Iron Route (Steirische Eisenstrasse)".

The regional argumentation paper (T1.3.1) and the regional actions plans (T2.6.2, T3.5.2, T4.6.2) also supplement the regional strategy paper.

4. Regional strategy paper

This strategy paper is the result of intensive cooperation between a wide range of actors, who participated in the focus group 'Living Industrial Culture along Styrian Iron Route. Since 2016 the focus group has been organized by the city of Leoben as part of the EU project InduCult2.0.

4.1 Status-quo

As in other regions of Austria and Central Europe, many actors and the majority of the population associate industrial culture primarily with museums, monuments or traditional festivals. At the institutional level, this corresponds to the fact that it is currently primarily the industrial museums and to a lesser extent the tourism associations that are committed to promoting industrial culture.

Companies, universities, schools as well as cultural and creative workers have only recently begun to see themselves as places and actors of industrial culture. Nonetheless, there are already

successful examples today where an expanded understanding of epoch- and sector-spanning industrial culture in the region Styrian Iron Route can be seen and experienced:

- Rostfest www.rostfest.at
- Development as a “montane” tourist destination by the regional tourism association “Hochsteiermark” with industrial tourism, industrial culture and the topic “montane/mining” being of 3 main pillars.
- Joint activities of companies, museums & universities - e.g. “Rohstoffausstellung” in the museum centre Leoben.
- Re-use of old industrial objects, e.g. Porubskyhalle Leoben or the old electricity station in Trofaiach as cultural halls.

4.2 Values promoted through Industrial Culture

Industrial culture goes hand in hand with a certain framework of values: With the interpretation of the term industrial culture one agrees - often unconsciously - on what is regarded as important (giving meaning, worth preserving, worth promoting, ...). In this sense, industrial culture - as one participant of the focus group put it - can quickly become a 'question of attitude', especially if, as in this paper, a new understanding is suggested.

With the concept of a living industrial culture, a new, contemporary impulse is set in the previous value framework of the district on the subject of industrial culture, these are ...

- > Self-confidence (also in the sense of a ‘knowledge of cultural uniqueness’)
- > Tolerance
- > Local affinity
- > Openness towards New

Living industrial culture is cultural work in the confrontation with past, present and future industries and their social effects.

4.2 Fields of action for living industrial culture

In the strategy paper, 4 essential fields of action for a living industrial culture are defined. Living industrial culture is considered

- as everyday culture;
- as corporate culture;
- as a culture of innovation;
- as image of the region.

In the strategy, each field of action is briefly characterized and strategic recommendations are formulated. These strategic recommendations are given in respect to a long-term, sustainable and target-oriented view.

4.3 Regional cooperation

Living industrial culture is characterized by its cross-sectoral character: It relates the fields of culture, economy, tourism, education, creative industries and civil society to each other.

At the same time, this special quality entails the risk that responsibilities are often unclear or distributed among several actors. In order to create the highest possible level of commitment, the strategy paper recommends the establishment of a core team based on the experiences of the EU InduCult2.0 project.

The core team

The core team should preferably consist of the network anchors of the above mentioned sectors:

- Verein Steirische Eisenstrasse (Association Styrian Iron Route)
- Museumsverbund Steirische Eisenstrasse (Museum Association Styrian Iron Route)
- Tourism associations Erzberg Land & Leoben
- Selected members of the focus group representing economy, municipalities, the mining university of Leoben, schools and civil society incl. traditional clubs and cultural institutions

These key actors have signaled their fundamental willingness to work together as a core team and to shape the actor forum.

In the core team, the association Styrian Iron Route shall assume a chairmanship function. The Museum Association Styrian Iron Route could act as an additional second head.

With the focus on the transnational cooperation developed in the EU project InduCult2.0, the association Styrian Iron Route can ensure that the exchange with comparable regions, e.g. in Germany and other EU states, is kept alive. Each institution of the core team should assume sector-specific responsibility for ensuring that industrial culture is perceived in its field of work and carry out/support appropriate actions.

The core team continues the work of the “Focus Group Living Industrial Culture along the Styrian Iron Route” founded in InduCult2.0 as an actor forum. It will also keep up the contact with the established focus group and report regularly about current developments. When necessary meetings focus group meetings on certain topics will be organized. Core team & focus group will primarily work on the following tasks:

- Regular exchange between the actors of industrial culture in the region;
- Thematic links between culture, industry, education, creative industries and civil society;
- Joint (further) development of industrial cultural projects;
- Making the topic and the actors visible, generating publicity;
- Strategy work;
- Networking of the industrial culture actors with funding institutions, foundations;
- Active partnership in ERIH
- Valorising the intangible UNESCO heritage (“traditions of miners and industrial workers of the Styrian Iron Route”)

4.4 Strategic integration

At the time of the preparation of the strategy paper, the following strategic integration possibilities for a living industrial culture are particularly suitable:

- Incorporation in local LEADER strategy as interdisciplinary topic;
- Incorporation in new regional culture concept of Styrian Iron Route (due spring 2019)
- Consideration in sectoral strategies at municipal level, in particular cultural, economic, tourism, educational, creative and social promotion;
- Increased participation in ERIH network being Austria's representative (includes increase of Austrian ERIH members)
- Participation of a regional industrial culture coordinator in a network of Central European industrial culture.

5. Evaluation/transnational added value

By January 2019 the strategy paper was finalized. It will be confirmed by the participants of the focus group in a side meeting of the national dissemination workshop in March/April 2019. Purpose is to declare their intent to take the strategy into account in their own strategic considerations.

The strategy fulfils the original objectives completely; stakeholders feed back that they are happy about its existence. The applied interactive process of preparation has as well been repeatedly positively commented on by the regional actors. By it, a strong commitment has been created in the actor arena for the topic which will ensure its continued pursuit in the future.

The transnational value consists on the one hand in the exchange with partners about appropriate contents of the strategy which took place in the half-yearly partner meetings 3 (Opole), 4 (Genk) +5 (Sisak).

On the other hand, this regional strategy is also a basis for the transnational strategy developed by the scientific partners in the project for the Central European coordinators' network of Industrial Culture.

Finally, structure, contents and approach are available through this summary for re-application in other regions.

6. Outlook and sustainability

For 2019 it is planned:

- To present the strategy paper in the national dissemination workshop (March/April 2019)
- To the general assembly of the association Styrian Iron Route (May 2019)
- To continue the focus group after the end of InduCult2.0 as regional actor forum 'Living Industrial Culture' for the purpose of implementing the strategy, led by the core team.
- To apply for LEADER fundings for industrial-culture related activities
- To apply for 2 Interreg fundings (Alpine Space & Aut-Slo) dealing with industrial culture

For 2020 is planned: A book on industrial culture of Styrian Iron Route shall be published

For 2021 is planned: Implementation of the strategy is to be reflected by the focus group, and to be adjusted if necessary. Afterwards, the implementation of the strategy as well as Central European cooperation has to be continued.

7. Annexes

Regional strategy paper