

Excursion to the Ruhr Area

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The Ruhr Regional Association

The former “Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk” (SVR) was founded in 1920 to fulfill the reparation claims from the Treaty of Versailles. Today, the Ruhr Regional Association (RVR), “with its offices in Essen, is the regional hub of the 11 independent municipalities and four districts of the Ruhr Metropolis with its approx. 5.2 million inhabitants”.¹

The main function of the Ruhr Regional Association is the regional planning and development of the Ruhr Metropolis, including infrastructure projects such as the “Industrial Heritage Trail” and the “Emscher Landscape Park” but also regional business and tourism development. Another important function of the Ruhr Regional Association is the public relations for the Ruhr Metropolis “to make the strengths and possibilities of the region visible and [...] to emphasize its character”.² Hence, the Ruhr Regional Association offers day trips for groups which lead through the Ruhr Metropolis mostly by bus.



(Lukas)

¹ <http://www.metropoleruhr.de/en/home/the-ruhr-regional-association.html>

² <http://www.metropoleruhr.de/en/home/the-ruhr-regional-association/public-relations.html>

ThyssenKrupp Quarter / Essen “Grüne Mitte

When the founder of Krupp died in 1866, his son Alfred Krupp took over the company at the age of 14. When Alfred Krupp took over the company, it almost went bankrupt but was later turned into a successful steel company.



He and his family first moved into a small house shown below. Today, it is a symbol of the difficulties in the beginning of ThyssenKrupp. Later on the Krupp family moved into the Krupp estate called “Villa Hügel” which still exists and is a museum today.

In 1999 ThyssenKrupp, a global player, emerged out of a fusion in 1999. For a long time its headquarters were located in Düsseldorf. Later they relocated to Essen “Grüne Mitte”, the former location of industrial production, because of the better location factors.



Q1 Thyssen Headquarter



Thyssen Logo

The new headquarter of ThyssenKrupp is located next to the small house of Alfred Krupp. Its modern and transparent architecture is very important and reflects the company’s success. Most of the used material was made by ThyssenKrupp itself. On the campus there are trees from five different continents to show ThyssenKrupp’s international cooperation. From the top floors you have a wide view over Essen.

Earlier the campus was used as an industrial site. The main products of the company were steel and elevators. In 2009 there were 150.000 employees.

The Logo of ThyssenKrupp shows what the company has become famous and successful for: the bow is the original logo of Thyssen whereas the three rings show the seamless railway wheel, which was invented and first produced in large numbers by the Krupp Company.

(Stella, Steffi)

World Cultural Heritage - Coal mine and Coke Oven Zollverein

Industrial monument:

The site of the Coal mine and Coke Oven Zollverein is of the most impressive industrial monuments and has been World cultural heritage since 2001. When opened, Zollverein was the largest and most modern coal mine in Europe. Today the facility still shows the complexity of the coal industry in former times.



The left photograph shows the “Ehrengarten” of the Zeche Zollverein, which is an important characteristic of Zollverein. It symbolizes the beauty of the coal mine and shows that its construction did not only follow function but that its architecture was also meant to impress the viewer and to reflect the former pride in the industrial success achieved in the Ruhr area. It was not accessible for the workers of the coal mine when the mine was still operating. The symmetry of the two buildings on the right and on the left catches the observer’s eyes.

Complex architecture:

Bauhaus style with its expressionistic design influenced the architecture of the industrial site that was exemplary for decades for modern industrial buildings.

- Aesthetic importance → first construction of a mine with the focus on the design
- Many windows and symmetry
- It is called a twin-shaft coal mine → many following mines were inspired by this style

New functions:

Today the huge area houses several different functions:

- Museum for the history of the formerly largest coal mine in the world
- Depiction of the lives of the workers and their working conditions
- Festival rooms
- Red Dot Design Museum
- A lot of leisure facilities and offers (e.g. swimming pool, ice skating, open-air cinema)

(Aron, Mustafa)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zollverein_Coal_Mine_Industrial_Complex#Becoming_a_monument

http://www.unesco.de/welterbe_zeche_zollverein.html

<http://www.zollverein.de/angebote>

The New Emscher Valley

On our way to the CentrO we stopped on a bridge crossing the Emscher and the Rhein-Herne Canal (picture).

The new Emscher Valley Project has the goal to preserve the natural heritage of the Emscher region. In times of industrialization, there was a huge population growth which increased the need of drinking water, but at the same time the mines had to dispose of their waste water. This dual use caused diseases in the population. Therefore the river was turned into a main sewer and drinking was taken from the river Ruhr.

The Emscher is still contaminated because of earlier times of industrialization. This can be seen by the lack of vegetation in some areas and also in the straight course of the river which is not natural. The responsible people in the region developed a master plan to improve the situation. As a result water treatment plants were built and some are still in planning.



In the picture you can see the river Emscher with its straight course in Oberhausen. You can also see the dark color of the water which also can be an indicator for a contaminated river.

In the map you can see the course of the river Emscher. We visited the core area at Oberhausen where the river there has not been returned to its former state yet. So far just the upper reaches have been renaturated and the people responsible for the Emscher project work their way down from the source to the mouth. Today the area around the Emscher is mainly used for free time activities; we noticed that many bikers on the cycle track that runs along the river, for example.

(Jonas, Mohamed)

CentrO Oberhausen and the Gasometer Oberhausen

CentrO

Today the “*CentrO Oberhausen*” is one of the biggest shopping malls in Europe. It is located east of the city of Oberhausen, in the middle of the Ruhr Area. It is part of the “*Neue Mitte Oberhausen*” complex, a holiday and commercial center, which contains theme parks, a concert arena, different museums, cine theaters, a sports arena and a marina. It was built on the site of the former steel plant “*Gute-Hoffnungs-Hütte*”, which was closed down during the late 1980s and later dismantled. After that the area was mostly wasteland with contaminated soil.

The British investor “*Stadium*” bought part of the areal for the CentrO in 1991. The whole project cost 2 billion DM (ca. 1 million €) and was finished in 1996. During the designing of the “*CentrO*”, the architects took “*Meadowhall-Mall*” in Sheffield as an example for the interior design. Because of the history of the location the “*CentrO*” was built in the style of the industrial architecture (e.g. the use of bricks and steel).

In 2014 “*Stadium*” announced to withdraw from the “*CentrO*” and sold 50% of its company shares to a Canadian and the other 50% to a French investor. In 2004 “*Stadium*” planed to expand the “*CentrO*” by adding 30000 m² per floor to it. This was the reason why 8 cities from the Ruhr-Area accused the city of Oberhausen of accepting this plan. The cities feared that the expansion of “*CentrO*” would attract more people to shops there and that they would lose tourists and their retail potential customers as a consequence. The administrative appeal council of NRW turned the lawsuit of the cities down.



The expansion was carried out and in 2011 the “*CentrO*” was again expanded and 17000 m² per floor were added. The local public transport system of the Ruhr connects the “*CentrO*” and the “*Neue Mitte*” with the Central Station of Oberhausen. Furthermore it has a direct link to the highway 42 and in a radius of 2,5 km there 12 other highway links.

A survey among 18000 „*CentrO*“ visitors in 2008, asking people about their place of origin had the following result: *Oberhausen* 13,9 %, *Duisburg* 9 %, *Gelsenkirchen* 7,8 %, *Essen* 5,6 %, *Netherlands*

5,3 %, Bottrop 5,5 %, Mulheim-on-Ruhr 5 %, Dinslaken 4 %, Gladbeck 2,1 %, other origin in Germany and foreign countries 41,8%. This shows the enormous catchment area. Today the “Centro”, together with the “Neue Mitte” is an interregional center that attracts people from the whole Ruhr-Area and even the Netherlands and other regions of Germany to visit Oberhausen and to explore and discover the “new” Ruhr-Area, which arose of the old industrial center of Germany.

Gasometer Oberhausen

In the past the “Gasometer Oberhausen” was a gas tank for the exhaust gases of the blast furnaces of the “Gute-Hoffnungs-Hütte”. It was built in 1929 and damaged during the Second World War. With the decline of the “GHH”-plant, the gas tank was closed in 1988. Today the “Gasometer” is used for exhibitions and has a glass roof. Because of the proximity to the “Centro” it’s also a tourist magnet.



(Julian, Georg)

Bottrop Tetrahedron

Because of the storm damage we weren't able to visit the tetrahedron. However, due to its enormous size it could be seen from the distance

The „Haldenereignis Emscherblick“ is a steel construction with a length of 60m and a height of 50m which is located at the Beckstraße which is 120m high and used to be a mine dump. Stairs and observation platforms make the tetrahedron walkable. It has the shape of a pyramid which stands on four concrete pillars. As the landmark of Bottrop it can be seen from the central station of Essen. It was designed by Wolfgang Christ and Klaus Bollinger and constructed by the Rüter GmbH. The opening was on October 3rd, 1995.

At night time lighting effects and the four concrete pillars create the impression that the tetrahedron is floating. Even though the architect wanted the visitors to lose sight of the surrounding industry and city, the edgy black rocks that surround the sculpture are a reminder of the hard work underground.

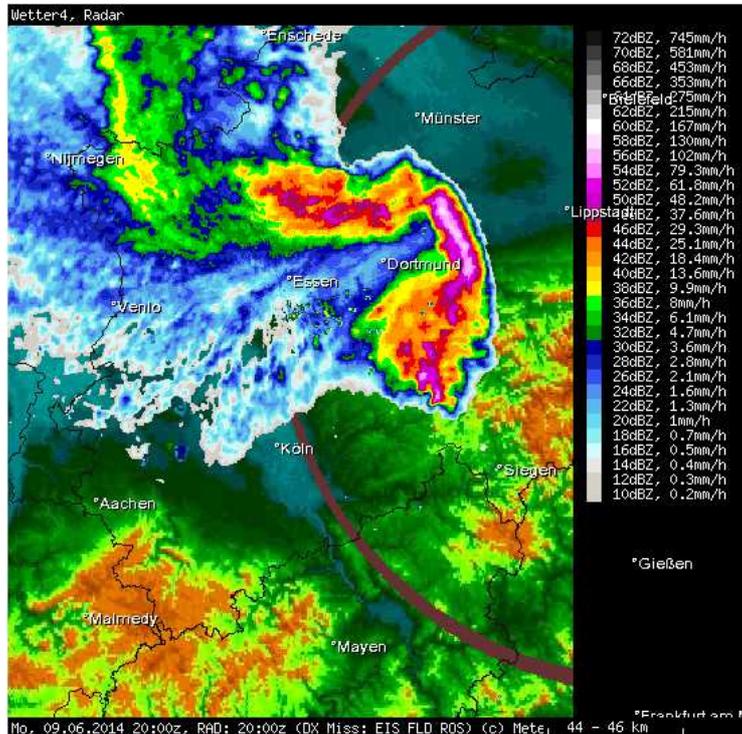


http://www.standortvest.de/images/bottrop+tetraeder_bottrop+bild_1.jpg

(Lisa, Sarah)

Storm “Ela” and its impact on the excursion

Severe storm cells had moved through North Rhine Westphalia on the evening of 9 June to 10 June. There was a trail of devastation that reached from Cologne in the south up to Essen and beyond in the North of the German federal state. Even now, a week later, the damage of the storm is still not cleared.



<http://www.uwr.de/de/de/karte/sturm/nordrhein-westfalen/duisburg>

Still today even 2 weeks after the hit of the storm ,the city council of Duisburg is warning hikers and people that jog to stay out of the forest areas because not all of the damage is cleared yet and people could easily get hit by falling trees.



(Christopher)

Duisburg Inland-Harbor

During the boom of the Industrial Revolution over a century the central harbor was used as the trading center of the Ruhr-Area. Constitution development of the harbor started in 1893. In 1990 an urban redevelopment project was launched, after the decline of the harbor due to industrial decline. In 1990, city planners, famous Architects like Lord Norman Foster, project-developers, and local architecture firms had begun with the development and the accomplishment of the project. Old buildings such as the ones used for storage were converted into public estates e.g. many different museums and event halls that are now used for exhibitions, competitions in art, festivals, concerts, etc.

Due the storm damage in the area, we were not able to go to the Inner-harbor of Duisburg. Though, it is not less of importance. The harbor is a big project by the city of Duisburg which was already constituted in 1893. One aim of this project was to make the harbor more attractive for tourists as well as the citizens and to create a family-friendly cultural and business location.

Until now, 450 out of 700 buildings have been finished. The housing estates are very cost expensive and high-class-built. Their footprints have loft and penthouse characters. Over and above these very attractive locations, 35 senior-focused housing complexes were built in order to attract people of all ages.

The Inner-harbor is not only a modern place of residence, but also tourist destination due to a huge diversity of gastronomy such as restaurants, bars, etc.



(Julia)

Duisburg - Landschaftspark Nord

The landscape garden of Duisburg in the Ruhr area used to be the area of a blast furnace for the production of pig iron in the beginning of the 20th century. Since the transport links were ideal and a cokery plant and a pit were in the vicinity of the production site, the location offered many advantages. The Ruhr and the Köln- Minden railroad made it possible to transport the pig iron to Thyssen's steel works for further processing.



The blast furnace gas was formerly stored in a huge gasometer, which today is used as one of the largest diving basins in Europe. Before it could open the contaminated mud was carried out.



There is a Cast House in the North of Duisburg that has been turned into a stand and movie theatre to make the area more attractive for tourists.

Resources were stored in the Müller- Bunkeranlage, which today is a climbing park and playground for children. In the past the growth of vegetation was prevented. Since the closure of the plant large parts of the estate have been recaptured by abundant vegetation.



All these functional changes were made possible by the Internationale Bauausstellung of Duisburg (IBA) in cooperation with other organizations.

The main objectives of these projects were the preservation of the significant symbolic character of the former industrial area, the revival of flora and fauna, and the improvement of the region's image. Furthermore many attractions and events take place. "Hochofen 5" is one of the main attractions of the Landschaftspark Duisburg as it can be ascended, it offers a great view over the entire park.

(Nassim, Tugce)



View from the top of the blast furnace

"Extraschicht" - Night of Industrial Culture (28 June 2014)

- Fascination with industrial heritage
 - 1 night
 - 1 ticket
 - 25 cities
 - 2.000 artists
 - 50 venues
 - 500 events
 - 190 shuttle busses
 - 200,000 visitors
 - 6pm to 2am
 - €12 to €18
- Former coal mines, coking plants and steel mills present themselves all across the Ruhr area, which developed into fascinating temples of cultures
- The 'Night of Industrial Culture' offers over 50 venues and 500 events
- Winding towers, gasometer and wage halls turn into stages for streetart, poetry slam, music and theatre performances, light and pyrotechnic shows
- Visitors experience the individual tour, travelling from venue to venue by shuttle busses or trams

³Venues:



(Juan)

³ http://issuu.com/ruhr_tourismus/docs/140304_mobiplan_2014_web?e=5593876/7836231

Map showing the route of the excursion



- A) Helmholtz-Gymnasium
- B) Ruhr Regional Association Essen
- C) ThyssenKrupp Quarter
- D) Coal Mine and Coke Oven Zollverein
- E) CentrO and Gasometer Oberhausen
- F) Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord

