

# The Transformative Power of Industrial Culture

A dynamic approach to the culture of industrial regions





# Foreword

*With this brochure, eight pioneer industrial regions of Central Europe seek to raise awareness for Industrial Culture – as an impetus that empowers them to pro-actively shape the upcoming transition while staying grounded in their specific cultural characteristics.*

*Until now, political attention in Europe has focused mainly on fostering industry, technological and procedural innovations. Industrial Culture, on the other side, has not yet been considered as an equivalent factor for economic as well as societal progress.*

*A progressive interpretation of Industrial Culture can be a driving force for increasing the resilience of (post-) industrial regions. It is the joint task of communities, politics and companies to cultivate and shape this distinct Industrial Culture and create a unique and open-minded climate in these regions. The brochure in your hand is a first step on that path. Enjoy the read!*

*The InduCult2.0 Partnership*

# EUROPE, HOME TO INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL CULTURE

## The Impressive Story of Industry in Europe

Being the cradle of worldwide industrialisation, Europe's economy is defined by its industry to this day. Such is its relevance, that in the wake of the 2007-2008 financial crisis, industrial production has been broadly re-considered to be a stronghold of real value, of secure income and jobs, and a path to wealth for large segments of the population (EU Competitiveness Report 2013).

Ever since its rise, industry underwent repeated transformations induced by technical and organisational innovations: steam engine, electrification, mass production, computerisation, automation. It is now entering yet another cycle of change – 'Industry 4.0' or the 'digital transformation' as often referred to.

Europe's industrial cities and regions contribute substantially to the continent's prosperity. Some regions have had an industrial character for decades and centuries, adapting themselves repeatedly to wider changes in industrial production patterns. It is therefore without doubt that the upcoming transformation will once again impact industrial cities and regions. As Europe is facing major challenges, we believe that its regions have to be culturally well prepared to cope with them in an appropriate manner.







## Industrial Culture integrating Past, Present and Future

Industry, industrial heritage and interrelated industrial culture are truly European topics: even if the national histories differ in detail, the industrial past is one of the central common European roots. Even the first steps towards today's unified Europe were based on industry with the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 – thus, the European Union itself is part of the developing industrial culture.

Industrial production has been a fertile ground for a particular culture to emerge. This culture consists of both tangible and intangible assets: Factories designed as palaces, miners' parades, crafts and engineering skills, inherited entrepreneurial genes – to name just a few. Specific mind-sets, loyalties, and attitudes are the fundament of the social fabric and everyday life in industrial regions, even if people are often not aware of it.

Industry and Industrial Culture are inevitably interlinked, as one shapes the other. On the one hand, the cultural setting enables and limits certain economic developments. On the other hand, the industrial frame is a basic parameter for future regional and cultural perspectives.

During the past years, the term *Industrial Culture* received increasing attention especially in the field of tourism development. However, it is still most often only focused on industrial heritage aspects, e.g. the preservation and re-utilisation of old industrial sites, landscapes, and traditions of industry.

While this constitutes an important strand, the InduCult2.0 project widens the understanding of Industrial Culture by supplementing the historical component with contemporary cultural features and anticipations of the future. Indeed, identity and related regional potentials are not only framed through references to the industrial past alone but also by drawing on present day cultural assets and upcoming industrial trends.

***'Industrial Culture is a dynamic and locally embedded approach, based on interaction between industry and society.'***

## The transformative power of Industrial Culture

During the last decades, Europe's industrial regions have been confronted with major societal and economic changes caused among others by the transition from state-led to market economies, globalisation and digitalisation. Currently, they are facing a new transformation towards knowledge-based societies. The demand for 'Smart Specialisation' emphasizes innovation and competitiveness. These structural changes will again have profound social and cultural consequences that are going to be felt across Europe, albeit in uneven ways.

Urban agglomerations are usually better situated to cope with these transformational challenges - they are preferred locations for creativity and research as well as gateways to international networks.

In many cases, small and medium-sized towns in more rural or non-metropolitan environments continue to have a sound industrial base as well. They are characterised by a certain cultural milieu based on their industrial setting – which, however, is usually less open to change and not entirely attractive to creative minds.

On the other hand, the distinct local *Industrial Culture* can serve as strong foundation and starting point for dedicated development trajectories – if re-invented in a more inclusive and dynamic way.

*Industrial Culture* holds the potential of altering a region's identity and image, improving regional company and labour force commitment, while also fostering creativity and innovation. All these aspects form core needs of old-industrialised regions across Europe to stay strong in the industrial transition ahead. Through discourses and offers that bridge industrial history, presence and future, communities in old industrial regions will be empowered to actively shape their region's future while maintaining its unique characteristics.

Linking up to today's innovative technologies with the regions' creative potential, Industrial Culture can also be a bridge between the cultural identity of a region and its future industrial development.

***'Industrial Culture supports an integrated and sustainable development in old industrial regions making them more attractive places for living and working.'***



## The relevance of Industrial Culture for European policies

This brochure seeks to inspire current policy making which still puts a strong focus on fostering industry, technological and procedural innovations. Industrial Culture, on the other hand, has not yet been considered as a key factor for economic and societal progress.

Currently, sectoral European development strategies are focussing either on the 'Re-industrialisation of Europe' (e.g. Competitiveness Report 2013) or on capitalising on the past by fostering cultural heritage as an important driver for change (e.g. European Parliament DG IP 2013).

Industrial Culture does not only link the two above mentioned strategies by combining all available cultural assets (from industrial past, present and future), but also addresses and fills a cultural policy gap.

With its focus on place-based potentials, Industrial Culture is fully in line with the EU's territorial strategies. In unison with the European Territorial Agenda 2020 (EU Ministers of Spatial Planning and Territorial Development 2011), it considers the 'distinctive identities of local and regional communities' as being of key relevance for regional development. Just as strongly, the active involvement of local population through Industrial Culture resonates with the 'civil society' strand of the EU's 'Smart Specialisation Strategy' (e.g. the S3 platform).

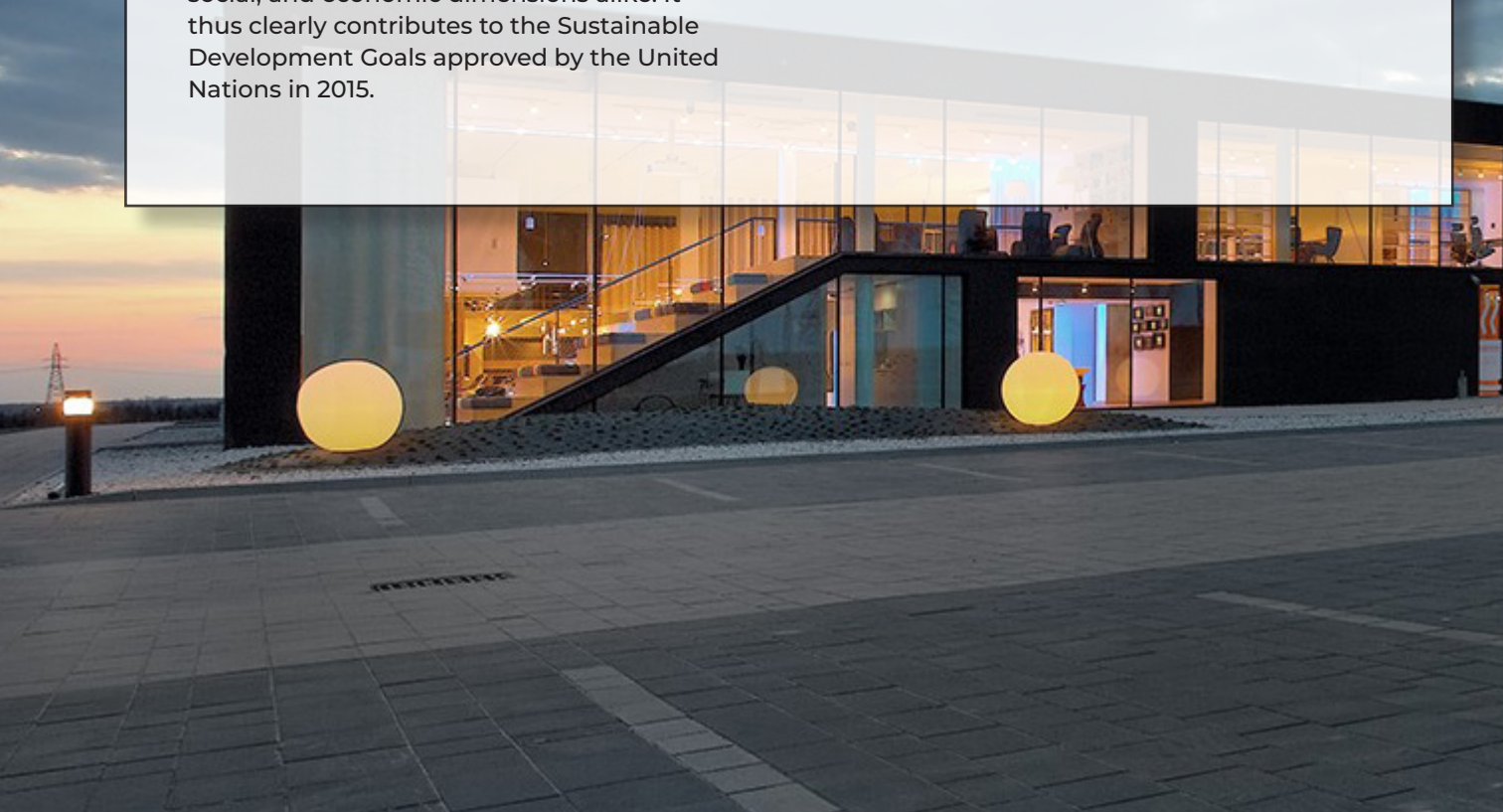


## The added value of Industrial Culture for European regions

This brochure contains arguments that outline the potential of Industrial Culture for regions with a strong industrial past and present and which are situated outside major agglomeration areas in (Central) Europe. The arguments seek to demonstrate the benefits of reviving the cultural spirit of such long-standing industrial regions as well as the advantages of developing the positive elements of industrial communities.

Being an integrated, cross-disciplinary concept, Industrial Culture naturally affects cultural, social, and economic dimensions alike. It thus clearly contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals approved by the United Nations in 2015.

The arguments are the result of the close cooperation and exchange between the partners and their stakeholders. They are based on actual experiences, ambitions and best-practices. We therefore strongly believe that the potentials defined in the brochure can be of transnational value, and advantageous for other European industry regions as well – often facing the same challenges going along with the current industrial transformations.





# INDUSTRIAL CULTURE AND ITS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

## The Social Dimension

As a communication platform, Industrial Culture provides a frame for a public discourse on industrial transformation. Industrial Culture depicts new opportunities to keep up with changing times and environments. A new dialogue can be opened that sensitizes and involves the population into shaping the economic and societal future whilst staying rooted in the region's past. Linking the educational system and the industrial sphere, locals (pupils, workers) engage with the specifics of their home region and broaden their views. Thus, Industrial Culture fosters cohesion and inclusion in industrial regions and promotes lifelong learning.

## The Cultural Dimension

Industrial Culture is both a means to preserve a distinct cultural heritage, as well as a concept to strengthen the present and future cultural diversity in longstanding industrial cities and regions. Referring on the one hand to local traditions, skills and monuments, Industrial Culture is clearly rooted in regional history. On the other hand, with its dynamic and forward-looking character, it enables inclusive cultural progress.

## The Economic Dimension

Industrial Culture brings forth structures and processes of industrial production towards creative mind-sets. This cross-over generates innovation and leads to a diversification of the economic basis. In this way, Industrial Culture contributes to a contemporary re- and post-industrialisation which leads, consequently, to sustainable economic growth and new employment opportunities.





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# ARGUMENTS FOR A PROGRESSIVE INDUSTRIAL CULTURE IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND BEYOND

## Industrial Culture is a unique regional feature and an endogenous nucleus of identity

Long-term industrial production in the past but also in the present is rooted in the collective memory of a region and brings about specific cultural patterns. Thus, Industrial Culture constitutes a core element of regional identity and influences the population's perception of its region today. However, its impact on a region's development is today often underestimated. Therefore, we argue for an active regional identity-building carving out a place-specific Industrial Culture based on the following specificities:

- Industrial communities are characterised by specific traditions, values, habits and mind-sets such as solidarity or entrepreneurial thinking;
- Historical and contemporary industrial infrastructures are emotional and cultural symbols of a region's identity and shape and mark the region;
- A contemporary understanding of Industrial Culture enables the local population to participate actively in the identity-building process of a region.

Therefore, we claim that a progressively understood Industrial Culture should play a major role in education, lifelong-learning opportunities, cooperation with present industrial production sites and the preservation of historic relicts and traditions.

## Erzberg

The Erzberg ('ore mountain') is the biggest and most modern mining area in Central Europe and the most important ore deposit in the Alps. It is a symbol of Austrian industrialization, and the center of the touristic route 'Steirische Eisenstraße'. For more than 1.300 years, people have been mining the precious mineral on this mountain called 'Erzberg'. Still today, more than 12 million tons of rock are mined per year.

The Erzberg is a significant part of identification for the region of the Steirische Eisenstraße ('Styrian Iron Route'). Its pyramid-like profile shapes the landscape significantly. The resources of the mountain and their use are still important reference points for today's economy, research and regional development in the area.







## Industrial Culture is a tool for reviving pioneer spirit, attracting labour force and keeping the young

Industrial Culture is directly relevant for the performance and progress of local industries. It contributes to attracting agile workforce to industrial production.

A progressive Industrial Culture:

- highlights the connection from the early industrial founders in the 18th and 19th century up to today's success stories,
- revives local entrepreneurial spirit and encourages people to pursue own business ideas,
- opens up physical and imaginative spaces of possibility for creative pioneers,
- attracts skilled work forces and raises interest of the youth in industrial production by promoting the region 's Industrial Culture as a distinct feature.

Enterprises can use Industrial Culture as location factor and strengthen it at the same time. They are encouraged to develop their own offers or support their staff in pursuing cultural activities - in short, they are cultural agents themselves: Industrial Culture should be a key part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.

By means of information, activation and participation, Industrial Culture helps to counteract the current brain-drain and to keep a skilled labour reserve in the regions.

## Open Factory School

The 'Open Factory' festival is the most important event with regard to industrial and manufacturing culture in North-Eastern Italy. It involves companies from various industries offering both on-site visits as well as the opportunity to participate in workshops and events to understand what is 'behind the product'.

Since 2017, the project 'Open Factory School' opens the festival for secondary schools.

Through the above mentioned workshops and company visits, 'Open Factory School' aims to sensitize the young generation to the social and cultural role of companies and give them the opportunity to discover enterprises on their own. Young people get activated and informed about employment opportunities in order to keep them in the region.



*“Quanto  
sai  
non  
deve  
impedirti  
di  
sapere  
quanto  
dovesti.”  
Dossi*

BIOKAP



## Industrial Culture is an image and location factor as well as a marketing tool

In general, industrial regions are not considered as culturally attractive today. A progressive Industrial Culture has the potential to reverse this image and to create a positive picture of the region and its diversity to the outside. In fact, Industrial Culture can play a key role for location marketing and for fostering tourism.

Besides highlighting the values of the industrial past, we aim at promoting culturally relevant features of the producing and upcoming industries.

This is envisaged by:

- showcasing the innovative side of industry,
- telling the vibrant story of regional industrial production,
- depicting the link between 'old' and 'new' Industrial Culture, e.g. combining industrial monuments with modern industrial architecture.

The cultural evolution of a region overarching its industrial past, present and future can become a unique selling point to promote the region as an attractive place to live, work or invest. Thus, Industrial Culture is a means to sharpen the profile of a region and gain greater visibility on a national and European scale.

# Ferropolis

Ferropolis, the City of Iron, is located in Gräfenhainichen (Germany). Five enormous excavators that form the city of iron and a young artificial landscape of contrasts are not only witnesses of almost 100 years of industrial heritage but nowadays also provide a breath-taking setting for all kinds of activities, events and festivals. The industrial history of this place is used to illustrate a future-orientated presence. The unique setting is home to a museum, a station of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, numerous international and national music events and other purposes. Ferropolis connects the industrial past to the regions presence and future by showing a way between new utilizations of former industrial places and a preservation of their material and immaterial settings.







## Industrial Culture is an instrument to shape the economic transition

Industrial Culture offers the chance to better cope with the ongoing economic transition happening within the regions. Based on the experience of past changes, Industrial Culture can be of key relevance for the future competitiveness of the regions. It has the potential to break up the circle of only looking backwards towards a 'golden industrial past'. Instead it can actively shape this transition process by:

- Combining 'old' regional qualities and 'new' upcoming opportunities,
- Highlighting the adaptive capacities and pioneer spirit of old-industrial regions,
- Providing a platform for discussing economic, social and cultural effects of the transition and supporting people to enter the new era.

## The Box

'The Box' is an initiative developed by the Belgian social profit organization Stebo and was set up in cooperation with the municipality of Genk. The main goal of the fully equipped pop-up retail is to promote entrepreneurship and skills by boosting innovative ideas. It is situated in a former shopping street nearby a former mine that turned into a cultural hotspot. Creative entrepreneurship and education are omnipresent. Entrepreneurs are offered the opportunity to set up, test and showcase their products to the general public without having to cope with the risk factors starters are generally confronted with. The mix between past and future is maximized by entrepreneurs working with both traditional and new technologies.

This initiative depicts the link between 'old' and 'new' Industrial Culture opportunities, promoting progressive methods in communication. 'The Box' shows that there is an enormous potential in connecting innovation and creativity of current industries with old-industrial locations.





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## Industrial Culture is a means to combine traditional production and innovativeness/creativity

The concept of Industrial Culture allows to address the transition from today's industrial production patterns to new production modes. Industrial Culture creates a cultural setting which fosters the development of new products and the redevelopment of traditional products as well as innovation in production and organisational processes.

Industrial Culture offers a profound knowledge basis upon which future research and innovation can build. It combines historical assets with future-oriented thinking by:

- Preserving traditional industrial professions and production skills for future generations and using traditional knowledge and expertise in the development of new products and designs,
- Bringing creatives into industrial processes and supporting innovation in modern industrial production,
- Creating new options in the way of product development, e.g. through cross-sectoral innovation or combination of traditional and modern techniques,
- Finding new purposes for the physical legacy of past industrial production by new and innovative approaches, e.g. by forming creative hubs in old-industrial sites,
- Establishing industrial regions as places of knowledge preservation and generation.

## Dobroteka

Situated in the Polish region of Opolskie Silesia, Dobroteka is a multifunctional centre for designers, creatives and local inhabitants focused on furniture production. The centre is endorsed by potent and reliable brands of manufacturers that are operating in the area of the Dobrodzień city, where the craftsmanship has a 200-year-old tradition. With its overwhelming interior design it comprises also a unique gallery dedicated to the fields of architecture and interior design.

Dobroteka is an ambassador of design, promoting an innovative look at everyday objects and opening up new horizons. It paves the way for young designers and also creates opportunities where creativity can meet experience and old traditions. They can build here their own projects and test them on the market, also under specially created brand. Additionally, Dobroteka spreads its mission by organizing special events and workshops for children and students in cooperation with regional authorities of Opolskie and municipalities from all Silesian regions, especially for the 'Silesian June of Design'.





## THE INDUCULT2.0 PARTNERSHIP

The Central Europe INTERREG project 'InduCult2.0' brings together 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.

The project intends to:

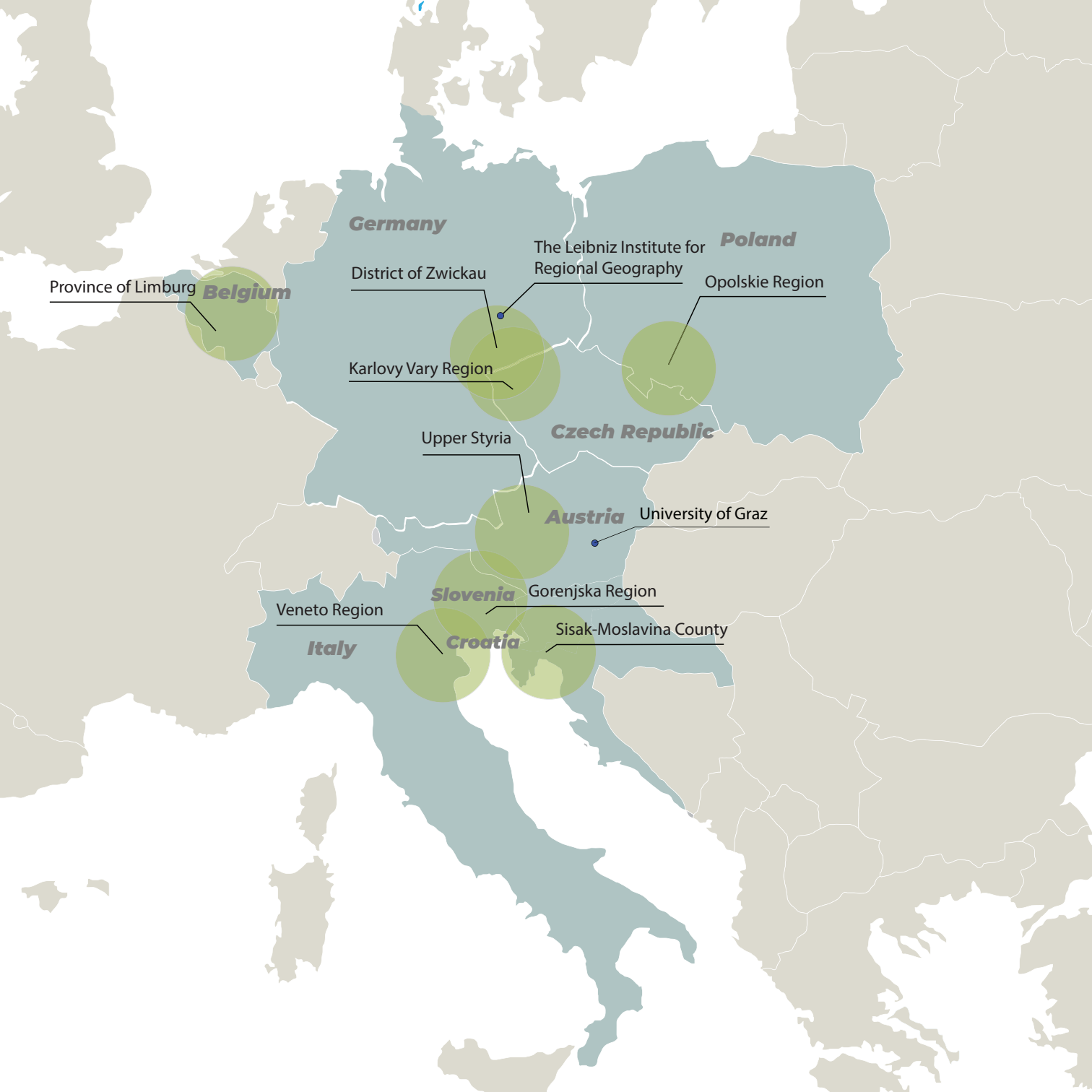
- Promote and establish the idea of Industrial Culture in Central Europe;
- Strengthen the distinct culture of industrial regions and utilise it as location factor;
- Empower industrial regions by re-activating their pioneer spirit.

The InduCult2.0 project is implemented by the Central Europe INTERREG B programme and co-funded by ERDF. The project run-time is from summer 2016 to summer 2019.

**The District of Zwickau** in Germany has a long tradition of mining, machine construction, textile and automotive industry. More than 200 years ago the region of Chemnitz and Zwickau became one of the leading industrial centres of Germany. The industrial development formed the economy, society and architecture in the region. Industry continues to define the heartbeat of the region today which consequently markets itself as 'engine of Saxon economy'. Traditional skills and knowledge that grew over several decades and the existing engineering spirit constitute the specific image. Beyond the industrial heritage, new cultural offers add to the scenery, e.g. the Days of Industrial Culture or a renowned annual graffiti festival in industrial ruins.

**The city of Leoben** is the intellectual, cultural, economic and research centre of the region 'Upper Styria'. Over the centuries the hegemony of industrial production and mining has created a specific cultural climate. The industrial heritage can be experienced in the museums of the association 'Styrian Iron Route'. Global industrial players have their headquarters in Leoben. The cultural department and the museum centre of Leoben and other associations such as the associations "Styrian Iron Route" and "Rostfrei" are highly engaged in the valorisation of Industrial Culture, with a strong focus on the youth and the creative sector (e.g. establishing the post-industrial festival 'Rostfest').

**The Karlovy Vary region** in Czech Republic is known as an industrial and spa region. Industry (e.g. glass, mining, and musical instruments) has played a significant role since the 19th century onwards. However, traditional industries lost their market position or disappeared completely in the 1990s. Building on the historic legacies, many museums are focused on industry today. Schools, enterprises, and museums are currently building a cooperation network in the field of Industrial Culture to promote regional industries, technical skills and creativity.



**Germany**

**Poland**

Province of Limburg

**Belgium**

District of Zwickau

The Leibniz Institute for  
Regional Geography

Opolskie Region

Karlovy Vary Region

**Czech Republic**

Upper Styria

**Austria**

University of Graz

Veneto Region

**Italy**

**Slovenia**

Gorenjska Region

**Croatia**

Sisak-Moslavina County

**In the Veneto Region**, industrial communities have grown around the industrial clusters for decades. They are thus shaping the identity of many generations up to today. The distinctive character of industrial culture is rooted in the complex relations of environment, art, culture and industry, which are still present and changing, reflecting the unique 'Italian way' to industrialization (e.g. the roots of the unique glass district in Murano – Venice; Industrial Festivals).

**The Gorenjska region** in Slovenia used to be one of the most industrially advanced regions, its major industries being steel, machinery, textile, wood, construction and energy where more than one third of the population was employed. The independence of Slovenia and the loss of the Yugoslav market caused serious trouble to many companies. Regional stakeholders want to foster industrial culture, tapping synergies of cooperation between heritage and cultural institutions and current industry, and upgrading the cooperation between schools and companies for future employment opportunities.

The area of **Sisak-Moslavina County** in Croatia knows a rich industrial tradition from crafts and large plants to new technologies and value-added products. The town of Sisak was an important industrial centre in the 20th century. Its rich industrial heritage has influenced the development of the town and its visual identity. Industrial culture is an important and necessary component of cultural activities and the development of the region.

The main economic branches – in the past and still today – of **Opolskie region** are the construction, automotive, machine and metal industry, as well as the chemical, fertilizer, and furniture industry. The region's economy has been undergoing substantial transformation since the 1990s. New companies have developed since, using the available knowledge, skills and sites – often based on the tangible and intangible remains of the multi-ethnic industrial past. Industrial Culture is an integrated part of the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy enriching educational, cultural and touristic offers and fostering the use of endogenous resources.

The industrialization of the **Province of Limburg** (Belgium), a peripheral industrial area with small- and medium-sized cities, was initiated by the discovery of coal in 1902. During the last 50 years, after the closure of the mines, the region has firmly diversified in industrial sectors (automotive, logistics, steel, production, construction). As an ex-traditional industrial region transforming into a creative area, Limburg has a remarkable richness of relevant examples in industrial culture (e.g. C-mine cultural centre).

## ***INFORMATION ON SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS***

Two scientific partners support the regional partners - the **Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography** and the Department of Geography and Regional Science of the **University of Graz**. They are responsible for the overall strategic framework of the InduCult 2.0 project as well as the organisation and sustainability of the transnational knowledge transfer in the project's learning network.

Both scientific partners support the regional partners by giving thematic input as well as structural and methodological guidance for the development of the pilot actions. Furthermore, they are monitoring and evaluating the implementation and documentation of the pilots.

**Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography Leipzig (Germany)** is the only research institute for Geography in Germany which is not attached to a university. Under the heading 'New Geographies of Europe' the researchers analyse socio-economic and spatial structures and ongoing processes, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Further research areas focus on the theoretical and historical foundations of Regional Geography as well as innovative ways of visualising geographical knowledge and the related principles of operation.

**University of Graz, Department of Geography and Regional Science (Austria)** was founded in 1585 and is one of the largest in Austria. Within the Faculty of Environmental and Regional Sciences and Education, the Department of Geography and Regional Science covers research fields such as Human Geography and Geographical Education, Tourism and Regional Development, Climate Change and Alpine Landscape Dynamics and Geospatial Technologies. The Department has a long-standing interest in the research on industrial regions, covering aspects such as brownfield reclamation, innovation policy and regional development strategies. The University of Graz collaborates in this project with the University of Ljubljana, Department of Landscape Architecture.



## **COLOPHON**

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# Past - Present - Future

