



European Route
of Industrial Heritage

Cultural route
of the Council of Europe
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du Conseil de l'Europe



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ERIH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

Welcome to the ERIH newsletter in December focusing on a key topic: the ERIH annual conference "Industrial heritage as an engine for sustainable social and economic community regeneration" on 9 November in Bilbao, Basque Country in northern Spain. We look back on a number of inspiring presentations and summarise some of the ideas from the afternoon's workshops. We also present the first ERIH Regional Route in Italy, take another look at this year's WORK it OUT dance event on video and report on a new feature on the website.



*Bilbao (E). Basque Country
Industrial Heritage
Warehouse. Linotype*

The topics at a glance:

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ERIH Event: Bilbao – the lectures

Almost 200 participants attended this year's annual conference in Bilbao: more than 90 on site and over 100 online. ERIH President Prof Meinrad Grewenig kicked off the event with an appeal for peace given the wars in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza and welcomed the Basque Minister of Tourism and Trade, Javier Hurtado, among others. The latter issued a short statement in which he emphasised the major importance of industrial heritage and industrial tourism for the image and self-perception of the Basque Country. ERIH board member Javier Puertas then introduced the theme of the day, its subtitle referring to the "New European Bauhaus" (NEB). This European Commission initiative, which aims to bridge the scientific and technological sector with art, culture and civic engagement using the motto "Beautiful - Sustainable - Together", holds a great deal of promise for industrial heritage. This applies both to its potential role as a sustainable social and economic driver for the regeneration of economically underdeveloped neighbourhoods and as an opportunity to involve the general public and local communities in the preservation, promotion and reuse of shared industrial heritage.



Prof Dr Meinrad Maria Grewenig (l), Javier Hurtado (m), Javier Puertas

The speakers who followed clearly demonstrated what this could look like in detail. **Maria Spada** from the ERIH member [National Centre for Industrial Culture \(IK-CNCI\)](#) in Luxembourg provided various examples to illustrate sustainable strategies for the industrial south of the Duchy. In line with the NEB, the manifold activities in the development of the historical heritage focus on the quality of public space, affordable housing, a circular economy, ecological sustainability and urban mixing, among other things.



Katrin Kanus-Sieber from the New European Bauhaus Network Saxony-Anhalt and **Roman Mikhaylov** from Zeitz Municipality (both DE) introduced the audience to another once massively industrialised region: the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany, for decades a powerhouse of opencast lignite mining and today home to around 36,000 listed buildings and sites, around a third of which are classified as industrial heritage. As examples, they mentioned the ERIH site [Brown Coal Processing Museum in the „Herrmannschacht“ Briquette Factory](#), the oldest preserved plant of its kind in the world, and a former pasta factory converted into a hotel, both located in the industrial town of Zeitz in southern Saxony-Anhalt. The Zekiwa factory, once the largest tram factory in Europe and an important landmark of local identity, is also located there and will be developed and transformed as a pilot project based on the NEB initiative.



Heather Alcock from Port Sunlight Village Trust (UK) outlined the marketing strategy for the ERIH Anchor Point [Port Sunlight](#): as a flagship for the ethical identity and brand values of the Lever/Unilever company - "this is how we treat people, this is how we care for the environment" - as well as in terms of enhancing the visitor engagement via research, storytelling and interaction. Among other things, this entails dealing with the negative effects of company policy, for example racism and exploitation in subsidiary plants in the Solomon Islands and the Belgian Congo. This and much more is analysed in publications, workshops and other activities that actively involve visitors.



"In terms of industrial heritage, we are a generation behind the West," was one of the key statements made by **Marek Golosz** from the ERIH member site [Ignacy Historic Mine](#) in the Silesian industrial town of Rybnik (PL). The reason: around Rybnik itself, 24 mines are still in operation and some 80,000 people still depend on the mining industry there. This is why many of them lack an understanding of industrial heritage, with derelict industrial plants still being demolished, and in the context of strong trade unions in the coal sector, the European Green Deal faces widespread opposition. This makes it all the more difficult for industrial heritage sites to fulfil the NEB guidelines, which are closely linked to the Green Deal. Their implementation often fails due to high costs and is also considered questionable with regard to the authenticity of industrial monuments. Nevertheless, the speaker illustrated that a large number of NEB criteria were successfully implemented during the restoration and conversion of the Ignacy mine.



Anna Theil from the Pfefferberg Foundation shed light on the history and complex tenancy situation of the former industrial site and current ERIH member [Pfefferberg](#) in Berlin (DE). Since the mid-19th century, the extensive inner-city premises have successively housed a brewery plus beer garden, a chocolate factory, a large bakery and a printing works with adjoining publishing facilities. After the Berlin Wall came down, the site became a laboratory for social, cultural and political initiatives, organised by a local association for the promotion of urban culture. The Pfefferberg Foundation, established in 1999, supports educational and social projects across Berlin, with a particular focus on programmes for children and young people. Despite being over 20 years old, the local neighbourhood development concept meets many of the current NEB criteria.



Youth were also at the centre of the presentation by **Ingrid Haugroning** from the ERIH Anchor Point [Textile Industry Museum](#) in Salhus (NO). She reported on a project in cooperation with schools that combines industrial heritage with fast fashion and thus provides a sustainable context. Over the course of one week with activities divided equally between the participating school and the museum, the pupils developed approaches and measures to combat the global problem of textile overproduction. The pilot event generated many creative ideas, but also revealed the challenge of identifying committed teachers and schools for cooperation. In order to simplify collaboration, the content of the project week shall now be further digitalised.



Finally, **Stefania Carretti** from ERIH member site [Officine Reggiane Historical Archive](#) (I) outlined the thoughtful transformation and appropriation of a 12-hectare former company site of an aircraft and engine manufacturer, which relies heavily on cooperation, exchange and collective intelligence. Her institution, the Historical Archive, focuses primarily on intangible heritage. Documents and photos, for example, were "translated" into comics in cooperation with artists in order to bring the testimony of the former workforce and their families to life. In another campaign, 20,000 personal files were made accessible to local residents, enabling them to retrace the history of their families and share their experiences with others. Essentially, the aim is to get people involved and get them moving. There are no plans to create a museum (for the time being).



ERIH Event: Bilbao – the workshops

The afternoon workshops were split into two stages. Initially, participants pinned their thoughts and statements to sticky notes on display boards covering a total of six topics - sustainability, communication, networking (regional and national), tourism, advocacy and lobbying, and inspiration for young people. Each board was divided into five sections: challenges, goals, current site activities and ideas for the future. In a fifth field - "We want to work on this" - sites, organisations and individuals were given the opportunity to indicate their interest in continuing to work on the topic. During a second phase, participants gathered around the boards of the topics they were most interested in and discussed the pinned contributions as a group.



The results of the workshops will be documented elsewhere. They will serve as inspiration for ERIH's projects and ongoing work in the years to come. For now, we will merely provide a few examples. **Sustainability**, for example, was one of the particularly well-attended topics. Participants highlighted challenges such as money and staff shortages as well as the ability to achieve the green transformation as quickly as required by the EU. One suggestion for the goal

section read: "Emphasise the role of industrial heritage in terms of innovation and international exchange". "Repair guidance" was one of the site activities mentioned, and as an idea, someone suggested supporting new technologies for different types of heating concepts (adding "low tech vs high tech"). Another suggestion was to promote the contributions of 20th and 21st century industries to green or clean energy, thus drawing attention to the "green" role of industrial heritage in recent times.

The topic of **inspiration for young people** was also met with great interest. Attendees explored the question of how to organise generational change and knowledge transfer at the sites and among their target groups. Of current activities, the international ERIH dance event [WORK it OUT](#) and the Berlin [Industrial Heritage Summer School](#) were particularly praised. New ideas ranged from the keyword "career structures" to city games and steam punk. The projected "ERIH Young Professionals' Network" is another upcoming activity. The **networking** section included the idea that an internal database could help to research resources and opportunities at individual sites. In terms of **communication**, part of the discussion revolved around the call for more storytelling and the need to share knowledge and learn from each other in specialised workshops (B2B, B2C). Specific suggestions for the future involved researching and interviewing experts who are particularly familiar with certain industries such as textiles or coal in order to provide valuable input. In addition, it was suggested to establish a platform for exchange between sites, similar to [szttygar.eu](#), the communication tool of the [Silesian Industrial Monuments Route](#) in Poland.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank for the generous hospitality, tremendous support and warm welcome of the Basque Tourism Board, the regional government of the Basque Country and, last but not least, our Spanish ERIH representative and member of the board Javier Puertas in his tireless commitment.

The ERIH Annual Conference 2023 in the Basque Country was a very special event that will always be a wonderful memory for all those who attended. Many thanks for that.

 [Review ERIH Conference Bilbao: Presentations, Photo Gallery, Video](#)

ERIH Event: Video review on Work it OUT 2023

Young teams in 10 countries are the stars of this video: With their thrilling dance performances, they have showcased a total of 30 ERIH sites - once again making industrial heritage a living part of contemporary European culture. Watch now on YouTube!

 [Video ERIH WORK it OUT 2023](#)



ERIH Members: ERIH Young Professionals' network

The idea of an "ERIH Young Professionals' network" was born in the course of the [Industrial Heritage Summer School](#), a student camp held in Berlin in August. This involves a new membership category aimed at young people, particularly students, but also new professionals and trainees at the ERIH sites. The idea is to have them actively participating in discussions and projects in the ERIH network and contributing their perspectives on sustainability, climate change, working conditions, accessibility, digitalisation and shaping industrial heritage. The ERIH General Assembly has commissioned the Executive Board to develop a new membership category for this purpose. It will target students, volunteers, trainees, interns, postgraduates and all those who are in the first five years of their professional career. The approach is interdisciplinary. All disciplines relevant to industrial heritage are welcome, such as architecture and urban planning, cultural studies and history, heritage conservation, industrial archaeology, cultural and tourism management, sustainability and communication sciences as well as related fields. A team of young Summer School students is currently developing the general framework in collaboration with the ERIH Board. Applications will be possible as of early 2024.



ERIH Young Professionals Network

ERIH Regional: "Po Valley Water Routes", Italy

The Po is not only the longest river in Italy, it has also spawned Italy's most important agricultural and industrial region. Its enormous significance as a fundamental resource for food, hygiene, energy, communication and recreation in the region and beyond is at the centre of the new Regional Route "Po Valley Water Routes", which is also Italy's first ERIH route. From Chiavenna on the Swiss border to Pavia south of Milan and from Lago di Como in the west to Lago di Garda in the east, a total of twelve sites bring the region's industrial heritage to life. These include the only ERIH Anchor Point, the [Museum of Hydroelectric Energy](#) in Cedegolo, as well as the ERIH member sites [Museum of Iron](#) in Brescia, the [Crespi d'Adda World Heritage Site](#) in Capriate San Gervasio, the [Cantoni Cotton Mill - LIUC University](#) in Castellanza and the [AEMuseum](#) in Milan. They illustrate the central role of water as a driving force not only for the textile industry, but also for the development of the electrical industry, with its history of bringing together technology, culture and business in a new synthesis.

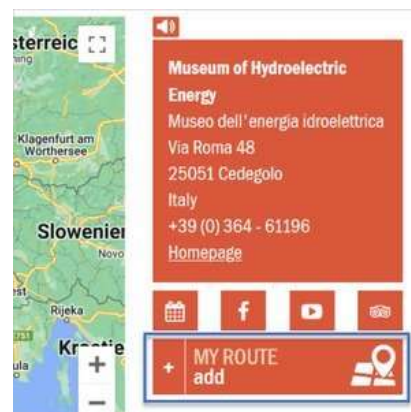


 [ERIH Regional Route „Po Valley Water Routes“](#)

ERIH Online: Customised route design made even easier

The ERIH website is not limited to providing an overview of Europe's industrial heritage and its tourist highlights, but also offers a starting point for personalised itineraries via "My ERIH Route". Two additional features make it even easier to create and use a customised ERIH route:

- The PDF download of saved sites now also displays, alongside the site address, the corresponding Google Maps link.
- The geodata of the selected sites can now be downloaded in GPX format and thus fed into navigation systems, for example.



To add locations to your individual ERIH route, simply click on the corresponding button in the site description (right next to the map as part of the contact details). Access the route in the bottom left section of the ERIH website.

 [My ERIH route](#)

ERIH Calendar: Save the date

On **8 September 2024**, people across Europe will be dancing in industrial settings again - at the **WORK it OUT** dance event, launched by ERIH for the 7th time. Save the date and schedule now!

The date and place of the next **ERIH Annual Conference and General Assembly** have also been set: they will be held from **23-25 October 2024** in **Łódź (PL)**.

As always, we will share detailed information on both events in our newsletter, on the website and via email to ERIH members.

 [Other events dealing with industrial heritage \(tourism\)](#)

We wish a Merry Christmas to everyone and all the best for a peaceful and safe 2024. Our hearts remain particularly with all those living in crisis and war-torn regions around the world. We would like to thank you for the good and trustful cooperation and look forward to carrying on in the new year.



ERIH - European Route of Industrial Heritage e.V.

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