

ERIH-UK Winter Meeting 14th February 2017, Cardiff

## Reuse of abandoned railways lines for cycle routes

Best Practice Fen-Rail Cycle Route (Belgium/Germany)

Ernst Miglbauer, invent Büro OÖ (Austria)



Ernst Miglbauer | invent Büro OÖ, Linz (Austria)

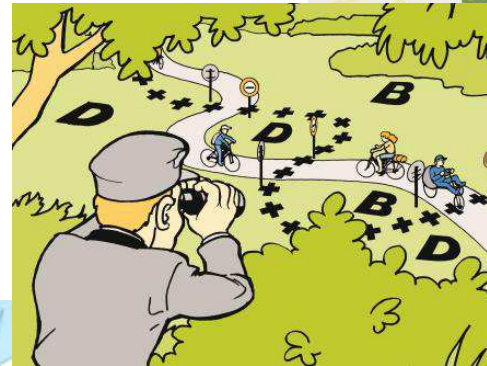
- Consulting in cycle tourism since late '80s
- Key competencies
  - Strategies in cycle
  - Product development
  - Marketing & communication
  - Economic impact of cycling
  - Quality management
- Projects | Expertises | Studies (Austria, Germany, France, Belgium - Vennbahn)
- Presentations, lectures and workshops in European countries;
- Publications: travel magazines, scientific literature;
- And: a passionate cyclist in person!



## Fen Rail Cycle Route

### Characteristic

- Aachen - Troisvierges
- Route: abandoned line of Vennbahn
- Length: 125 km / 78 miles;
- Gradient of the route max. 1,7 %;
- 3 countries, 15 border crossings (!!!),  
5 exclaves
- Opened 2013
- Themes
  - Railway
  - borders / smuggling
  - landscape





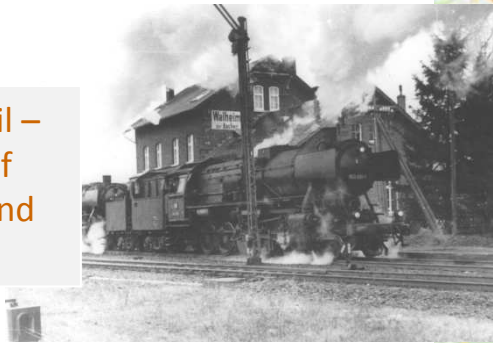
## Fen Rail Cycle Route

### Industrial Heritage

Fire and steam mark Raerens history



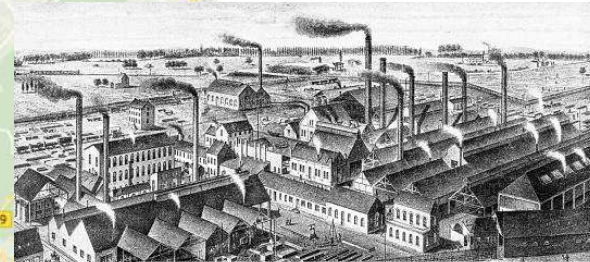
The Fen Rail – Exchange of hard coal and ...



Iron ores and raw iron from Luxembourg



Aachen Rothe Erde – A pace-maker in early industrialisation



„Smuggling“



Monschau – The rise and fall of the textile mills



## Fen Rail Cycle Route - Marketing and Measures

### Success and challenges

#### Mental Map

- Route along fluvial topographies, rail cycle routes between prominent places (Aachen, Luxembourg)



#### Development Strategy of Product & Demand

- Identifying of the right target group for the potential route



#### Developing of basic infrastructure and services

- Innovative elements (storytelling)



#### Awards

- Greenways Award 2013, Cycle Route of the Year 2014 – fietsenwandelbeurs etc.





## Fen Rail Cycle Route - Generated tourism benefits

### Demand

#### Tourism before the Fen-Rail Route

→ Attractions: The Fen Rail – once the first shuttle for discovering the High Fen and the Eifel; High Fen Nature Park (hiking), picturesque Monschau, Eifel-Trail;

#### Length of the Fen-Rail-Tour

- 125 km – 2,5 days

#### Frequency

→ 212.000 bicycles (4 summer months)

#### Share cycle tourists – overnight stays

→ up to 25 % (hotels, pensions)

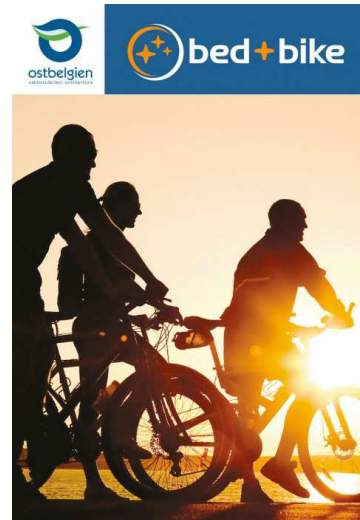


## Fen Rail Cycle Route - Stimulated business through Cycle-Route

### Business and Services

#### Gastronomy & micro Tourism business

→ ~ 50 Restaurants, Coffee Shops & Café de Frites etc. – dishes, services ... battery chargers (e-bikes);



#### Accommodation

→ 45 certified cycling friendly hotels and hostels



#### Shuttle Service

→ 1 bus service  
→ 2 new private providers



#### Cycle tour operators

→ sales ~ 10 tour operators



## Fen Rail Cycle Route - Factors in international Dimension

### Success and challenges

#### Strong cross-border ties

- Political commitment (central belt Aachen, East Belgium and Eifel tourism) followed by

#### Communication – 4 languages

- Print- and digital media

#### Restrictions by nature conservation

- Coordination of long-drawn-out procedures (bats/tunnel, black grouse, whincat)

#### Processing of financing and funding

- Transnational programmes – challenging practice

#### Common understanding

- Marketing and storytelling





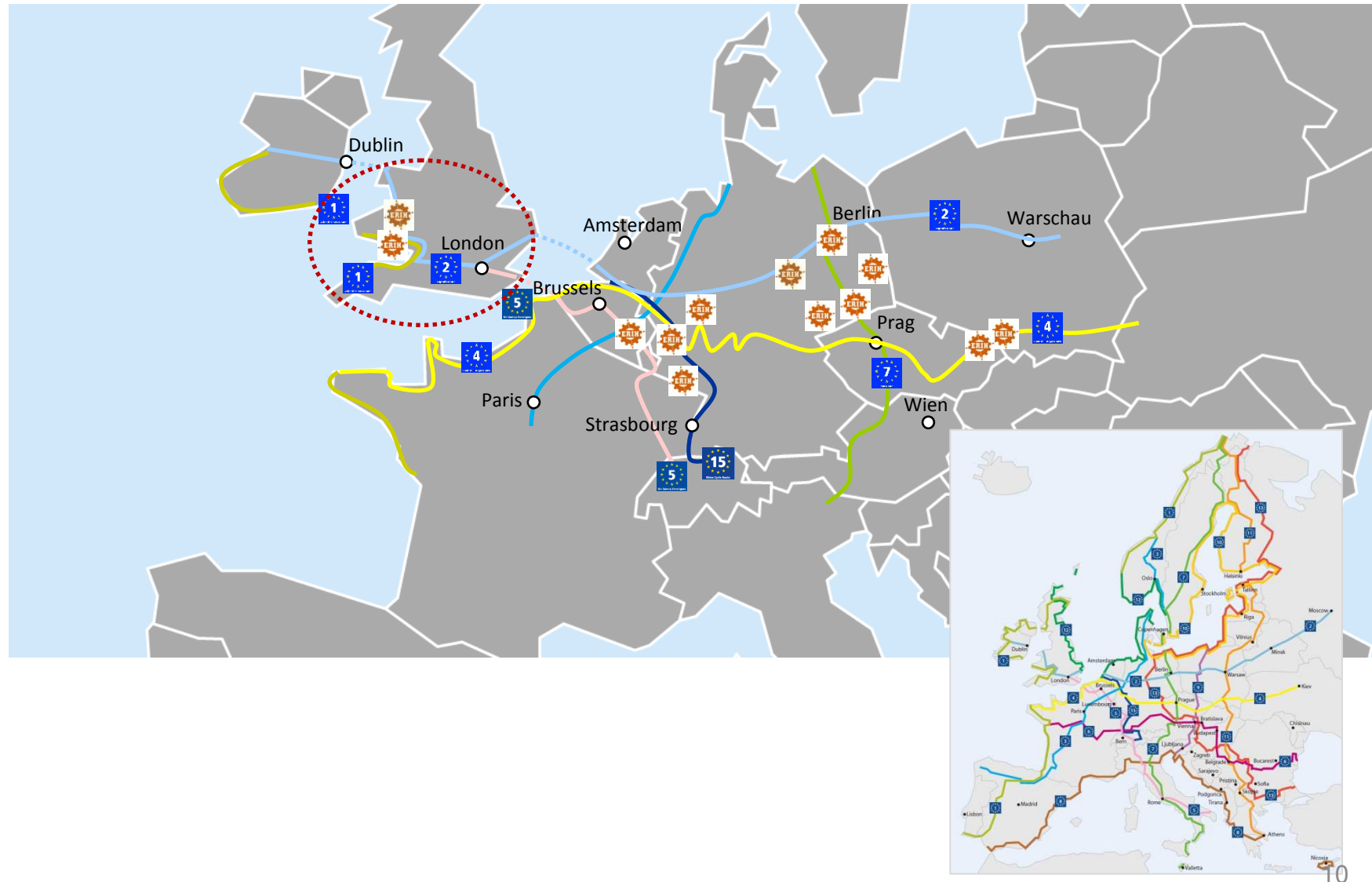
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Feasibility Study

European Route of Industrial Heritage by bike

## Industrial Heritage South Wales + Ironbridge

### European Dimension



## Industrial Heritage South Wales + Ironbridge

### European Dimension – The link to Uk

