

# BASIC PRESS RELEASE Summary

## The UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein

**Essen. The "most beautiful coal mine" in the world: the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant in Essen is a landmark of the Ruhr area, a monument of industrial culture and a symbol of the transformation of the once largest coal mine in the world into an attractive location for culture and leisure, education and business. Today, Zollverein stands for an identity-creating culture of remembrance in the Ruhr area and simultaneously for future-oriented location development.**

The site of the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant comprises about 100 hectares. Since the closure of the coal mine in 1986 and of the coking plant in 1993, the facilities have been successively renovated and redeveloped for new uses. The Zollverein UNESCO World Heritage Site is today the region's leading tourist attraction. In addition to the monumental industrial architecture designed by Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremmer, it is above all the museum and cultural offerings that attract visitors from near and far. These include guided tours of the above-ground facilities of the coal mine and coking plant along the Denkmalpfad Zollverein (monument path), which have been preserved in their original state, the permanent and temporary special exhibitions of the Ruhr Museum, the Red Dot Design Museum and cultural events such as "ExtraSchicht" or concerts. Leisure activities and seasonal highlights - e.g. the Zollverein Park, the Works Swimming Pool and the Zollverein® Ice Rink - complete the offer.

Zollverein has also made a name for itself as an event location, and the World Heritage Site has been repeatedly awarded as the best event location in Germany. More than 40 rooms and buildings provide room for a wide variety of events such as congresses, conferences, company events, product presentations or private functions.

In addition, Zollverein Foundation and its partners are continuously developing the World Heritage Site into an innovative business location. Museums and art studios along with some 60 young creative and innovative companies use the former facilities.

The basis for all building activities on the World Heritage Site is the urban master plan developed by Rem Koolhaas, Office for Metropolitan Architecture, in 2002. Between the conflicting interests of existing structures and new ideas, the unique industrial architecture is

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preserved and at the same time redeveloped to meet the requirements of the creative industries.

### **The industrial monument**

Between 1847 and 1986, a total of 240 million tons of coal were mined at the Zollverein Coal Mine, with up to 8,000 miners working in shifts both above and underground. The coal mine with its largely automated workflows was considered to be the largest and most efficient one in the world. The last of a total of twelve shaft facilities was put into operation in 1932 and, due to its functional design in the style of New Objectivity according to plans by Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremmer, has been regarded from the outset as a technical and aesthetic masterpiece of modernism. From 1957 to 1961, the Zollverein Coking Plant was built in the same style west of Shaft XII.

The Zollverein Coal Mine was closed on 23 December 1986 as the last of a total of approximately 290 collieries in Essen, once the largest mining town in Europe. Shortly before the closure, the first parts of Shaft XII had already been put under a preservation order. Three years later, the refurbishment of the complex began within the scope of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Emscher Park, a ten-year future-oriented programme (1989-1999) of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. In addition to Shaft XII, the coking plant and the Shaft Complex 1/2/8 were also declared industrial monuments in 2001. In the same year, the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant was officially included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as the "Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex". The production facilities exemplify the social, economic, aesthetic and industrial history of the coal and steel age.

### **Zollverein Foundation**

The non-profit Zollverein Foundation was founded in 1998 by the City of Essen and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, and is sponsored by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland. In addition to the promotion of culture and the preservation of historical monuments, the foundation's central task is to preserve, secure and develop the existing buildings and facilities of the UNESCO World Heritage Coal Mine and Coking Plant for future use, in line with monument preservation requirements.

Further information is available at: **[www.zollverein.de](http://www.zollverein.de)**