The Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří on its journey to World Heritage status

800 years of mining | 85 component parts
39 elements | 7 facets
The first discovery of silver near Christiansdorf (today Freiberg) in 1168 had a profound and lasting effect on the development of the entire Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains). From that date, thousands of miners, craftsmen, merchants and adventurers rushed to the mining region in search of work, luck and fortune. Over the following centuries, mining encompassed the entire mountain range and led to the founding of numerous mining towns and mining settlements on both the Saxon and the Bohemian sides of the Erzgebirge.
Due to the distribution of deposits, clearly geographically defined mining areas developed. In addition to silver and tin, other ores such as arsenic, lead, iron, cobalt, nickel, uranium and zinc, as well as non-metallic raw materials such as lime, kaolin, clay and coal were also extracted, smelted and, in many cases, processed. Over the course of centuries, mining in the Erzgebirge repeatedly flourished and declined, producing six chronologically distinct mining periods. With the closure of the uranium mines and the last tin mines in 1990/91, mining halted almost completely in the Erzgebirge. But globally rising prices for raw materials in recent years have led to new explorations for deposits and the opening of the first new mine for fluorite and heavy spar near Oberwiesenthal. From as early as the 18th century, and with greater intensity from the start of industrialisation around 1800, new trades and industries developed from mining in the Erzgebirge. Today these trades and industries continue to shape the economic structure of the region as one of the most densely populated low mountain regions in Europe.

For centuries, mining was the most important motor for the development of the Erzgebirge on both sides of the German-Czech border. Over 800 years of mining have had a lasting influence on the region, its people and culture, and led to the emergence of a mining cultural landscape of international importance. The influence of mining can still be felt and experienced today in the region in many areas of daily life. Not only a multitude of preserved, significant monuments are a testimony to the formative influence of mining in the region: it is also demonstrated by the vibrant conservation, deeply rooted in mining, of crafts, customs and tradition.

The intended date for the Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohorský to be accepted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is 2016. This is a unique opportunity to preserve the Erzgebirge as a vibrant, developing cultural landscape of outstanding universal value for world heritage of mankind as a whole, to communicate the area to a worldwide audience and to give the region new stimuli for development.
Outstanding universal value

The transboundary serial property Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří is located in the Erzgebirge, a Central European low mountain region in the south-east of the Federal Republic of Germany and the north-west of the Czech Republic. This geographical, historical and cultural entity has emerged from a long, shared history and remains united today. The serial property is composed of 85 component parts that are representative of the historical mining landscape. The component parts have been carefully selected in order to bear witness to the formative influence of centuries of mining activities on the development of a particular landscape and the society associated to it.

Each component part is characterised by a specific combination of the three determining attributes that are decisive for outstanding universal value:

1. A long history of mining without chronological interruption:

From the Middle Ages to the present day, numerous different ores and other raw materials have been mined and processed in the Erzgebirge. Over the course of centuries, this has led to the emergence of a mining cultural landscape of outstanding universal value on both sides of the German-Czech border.

2. The diversity of the mineral resources extracted and processed:

Today the Erzgebirge still possesses an outstanding variety of raw materials, which are found in a relatively small geographical area: starting with silver via lead, tin, copper, iron, cobalt, arsenic, tungsten, bismuth, nickel and zinc through to uranium and other raw materials, such as clay, kaolin, lime, marble and coal.

3. A broad spectrum of monuments and the associated cultural values:

Mining and metallurgy have had a formative influence not only on the landscape, but also on the architecture, art, culture, science, economy, politics and society of the Erzgebirge mining landscape. The lasting influence of mining can still be seen today in a large number of original, historical monuments, in the landscape features, and in the cultural and economic features of the region.
The categories and values of the Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří

The broad spectrum of mining, industrial and cultural monuments and the associated cultural values characterise the Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří.

The categories (C) of mining monuments:

- Mining and ore-processing sites (C1)
- Mining infrastructure (C2)
- Mining landscapes (C3)
- Post mining industries, mining related and following up industries (C4)
- Mining settlements with their related social and administrative structures (C5)
- Sites of particular importance for mining and geo-sciences (C6)

The associated cultural values (V):

- The transboundary character of the mining cultural landscape (V1)
- The political and historical dimensions of the mining cultural landscape (V2)
- The supra-regional and international influence of mining in the Ore Mountains, especially in the areas of education, science and technology (V3)
- Arts, crafts, music and literature of the mining cultural landscape (V4)
- The folk art and the customs of the mining cultural landscape (V5)

Müdisdorfer man-made ditch, part of the Freiberg Water Management System
The Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří illustrates an important interchange of values on the development of a transboundary mining landscape and a mining society within the time span of more than 800 years;

(iii) The Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří is an exceptional illustration in material form of the social, economic and administrative structures of an 800-year old mining civilization;

(iv) The Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří represents a valuable source for our presentday knowledge of mining techniques, related settlements, buildings and structures and illustrates the gradual changes of the landscape;

(vi) The Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří represents a region which is directly associated with the culture of an old mining territory and which is strongly associated with the system of knowledge representing the ideas and theories of mining and geo-sciences.
An important fact for the justification and preservation of the outstanding universal value of the Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří is integrity and authenticity of the serial property, as well as protection and management of the property.

**Integrity**

The carefully selected series bears witness to the complete spectrum of mining activities in the region and the associated social and cultural dimensions from the Middle Ages to the modern era. It enables a complete representation of all significant milestones in the history of the region, the historical processes that affected it and the dynamic development of a mining cultural landscape. The State Parties and the management organisations of the serial property ensure the preservation of the component parts and their protection for the long term. Last but not least, the strong awareness within the community as to the importance of its historical heritage and the resulting commitment make a significant contribution to the preservation of its historical monuments.

**Authenticity**

With its well-preserved historical objects from mining, its mining landscapes and settlement structures, its precious secular and religious buildings, and its vibrant cultural traditions and traditional crafts, the serial property is an authentic testimony to the long-running development of a unique mining cultural landscape and the intensive interaction between its inhabitants and their natural environment. The authenticity of the mining monuments is credibly expressed in their form and design, material and substance, which are original to a large extent, and their original location and setting.

**Protection and management**

At a national level, all component parts and buffer zones of the nominated serial property are protected by different legal instruments. In addition, international agreements form the basis for collaboration between the two State Parties and the protection of the nominated serial property at an international level. In a Memorandum of Understanding, the competent ministries expressed their common will to protect the nominated serial property in accordance with the World Heritage Convention and to establish an effective, transboundary management structure that will be used to coordinate all joint matters and interests. Based on the structure already established during the nomination process a future management system was developed that involves all stakeholders on the national and the international level. A joint management plan sets the fundamental objectives and creates an overarching framework for the preservation, conservation and further development of the property.
The outstanding universal value of the Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří is manifested in particular in its diversity of facets, which is to say in the connection between a number of tangible witnesses and their closely associated cultural values. The categories of monuments and their associated cultural values can be summarised in seven characteristic facets, described below.
- Above- and below-ground mining monuments
- Mining landscapes with flora and fauna
- Post-mining industries and mining-related industries
- Mining towns, settlements and monuments

- Art, music and literature
- Folk art, customs and crafts
- Education, science and regional politics
Above- and below-ground mining monuments
From the Middle Ages up until the recent past, mining left behind characteristic above- and below-ground installations, such as head frames, shaft buildings, mine forges, administration and assembly buildings, shafts, mine workings and adits. The dressing, smelting and processing of the mined raw materials generally took place in the immediate vicinity of the mines, as is demonstrated by smelteries, mining works, stamp mills and forges. How the installations functioned is documented by preserved technical facilities, such as bellows, waterwheels, turbines or steam machines, amongst others.

A prerequisite for the operation of the mines and smelteries was the establishment of mining infrastructure that served not only as a means of transport but also supplied energy to the mines. Today the well-preserved systems for mining water management bear witness to this infrastructure.

**Frohnauer Hammer**

In the Frohnauer Hammer, first silver, then copper and finally iron were processed from the early 17th century. The hammer mill is preserved with its complete technical equipment and the associated manor house. Frohnauer Hammer is the oldest protected technical monument in Germany.