

What does the Erzgebirge World Heritage consist of? / ID 237

Text zum Artikel

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22 components – two countries – one heritage: which objects have been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status?

The Mining Region Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří consists of a total of 22 component parts: 17 sites on the German side and five on the Czech side. Each individual site vividly exemplifies the World Heritage criteria in itself, but it is only as an association of all 22 components that they demonstrate outstanding universal value.

The application of the Mining Region Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří for the “UNESCO World Heritage” title is a cross-border project between the Free State of Saxony and the Czech Republic. The developments to which mining gave rise were closely interlinked for centuries, irrespective of the political border. As a whole, the selected monuments, natural and cultural landscapes represent the most important mining areas and epochs in Saxon-Bohemian ore mining. They facilitate a comprehensive insight into the extraction and processing of the most important raw materials and cover the mining technologies of the different mining periods from the 12th century until the closure of the mines around 1990 and the present-day resumption of mining activity. Each component consists of different individual objects or landscapes (around 400 on the Saxon side alone!).

In addition to above- and below-ground mining artefacts, historical town and mining landscapes have also been considered, such as lines of heap. To create a comprehensive picture of the mining historical heritage of the region, additional locations have been defined as “associated objects” of the World Heritage sites.

an overview of the parts [here](#)

Which raw materials were actually extracted here?

After silver, the second most important metal to be mined and processed in the Erzgebirge was tin; the Saxon-Bohemian Erzgebirge region became the largest tin producer in the world.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the region was also a leader in the extraction and processing of cobalt ores for the production of colour pigments. These were used to colour glass and as a glaze for ceramics and porcelain, and when European hard-paste porcelain was discovered, they also acquired major significance e.g. for Meissen porcelain. Venetian and Bohemian glass, Delft ceramics and porcelain, whether Chinese or Saxon – cobalt pigment from Saxony spread around the world.

Iron obtained from the Erzgebirge met the demand for iron tools, implements and products from the 14th to the 19th century. Demand for these increased dramatically with the rapid development of silver mining and the foundation of numerous towns.

Uranium was discovered, extracted and processed for the first time in the Erzgebirge. The uranium mining landscapes are testament to the outstanding role played by the Erzgebirge in the extraction of uranium ore and the subsequent model re-cultivation of these landscapes following the decommissioning of the mines. Uranium from the Erzgebirge had worldwide political significance.

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