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# The Impact of Culture on Tourism

CASE STUDY OF POLAND

SILESIA TOURIST ORGANISATION



Centre for  
Entrepreneurship,  
SMEs and Local  
Development



# The Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, Poland

## *Introduction*

This case study concerns the tourist attractiveness of the Silesian *voivodeship* area. It presents the local authorities' policy and activities undertaken to develop tourism in the region, more specifically, the work of the Silesian Tourist Organisation and Silesian *Voivodeship* Speaker's Office to create an attractive image for the Silesian *voivodeship*.

The main aim of the strategy is the promotion of the Silesian *voivodeship* as an attractive region. The stereotype of Silesia as a region of heavy industry is slowly being overcome by various publications, information in the media and presentation of its tourism potential at tourist fairs in Poland and abroad.

The Silesian *voivodeship* is a unique and diverse region:

- The north and south areas (the Krakowsko-Częstochowska Upland and Beskidy Mountains) are notable for their natural beauty and the potential for tourism development. The northern part (Jura Krakowsko-Częstochowska) has picturesque ruins of castles forming the Trail of Eagle Nests (castles in Mirów, Bobolice, Olsztyn, Ogrodzieniec, Będzin); the southern part (Beskidy Mountains) is considered a ski paradise (Ustrów, Szczyrk, Wisła, Korbielów) and has well-developed accommodation and catering facilities and ideal conditions for skiing and snowboarding (200 km of ski runs and 150 ski lifts).
- The central part has historic mines ("Ignacy" in Rybnik, Silver Mine in Tarnowskie Góry, etc.), palaces and museums such as the Museum of Bread in Radzionków, the Castle Museum in Pszczyna, the Tychy Brewing Museum in Tychy, the Duke's Brewery in Tychy, and the Silesian Museum in Katowice, which has one of the best collections of Polish paintings.
- Silesia has one of the biggest sanctuaries of the Virgin Mary in the world, Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, which is the spiritual capital of Poland. In the *voivodeship*, there is also the Upper Silesian Narrow-Gauge Railway in Bytom, the oldest in Europe, and a mining complex with a functional steam engine from 1915 (Open-Air "Queen Luiza" Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze).

The diversity of the region together with a well-developed infrastructure - good communication facilities, international airport, road and motorway network, and excellent accommodation and catering facilities - make the Silesian *voivodeship* a region highly attractive for tourists.

The important element in promoting the uniqueness and attractiveness of the region is the branding of authentic Silesian products. Regional organisations and local authorities cooperate in working out a strategy for tourism development. One such product in the Silesian *voivodeship* is the "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*" as industrial legacy constitutes an integral part of the cultural heritage of the region.

The project is aimed at raising attractiveness of the Silesian *voivodeship* through the creation of a new brand, namely the "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*".

## ***Background***

### *Identity of the location and inventory of cultural resources*

The Silesian *voivodeship* created in January 1999 is the fourteenth *voivodeship* in Poland in terms of the area (12 294 km<sup>2</sup>) and second in terms of population (4 830 000 inhabitants). The population density is 393 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, the highest in Poland. The Silesian *voivodeship* is located in the south of Poland and is divided into 19 city counties and 17 land counties which are further divided into 166 districts (*gminas*). There are 71 towns and 1 518 villages in the area. The capital of the *voivodeship* is Katowice (329 000 inhabitants).

The Silesian *voivodeship* is the most industrialised region in Poland. The Upper Silesian Industrial District comprises the industrial units in the central-east part of Upper Silesia and Dąbrowa Coal Mining Region. There are also several minor industrial districts around the bigger cities (Częstochowa, Bielsko-Biała). The Silesian *voivodeship* has natural areas (six landscape parks and 60 nature reserves) and diverse land form features (Jura Krakowsko-Częstochowska, Beskidy).

Numerous cultural events and international festivals are held in the *voivodeship*, e.g. the International Rawa Blues Festival, the LOTOS Jazz Festival “Bielska Zadymka Jazzowa”, and the International Church Music Festival “Gaude Mater”. Other events are the International Vocal Music Festival “Viva Il Canto,” the International Students Folklore Festival, the Week of Beskidy Culture, the International Brass Bands Festival “Golden Lyre” and the annual Silesian Cuisine Festival.

### *Issues related to the location attractiveness*

Because of its geographical situation and natural resources, the Silesian region has been the object of numerous diplomatic and military actions by neighbouring countries throughout the ages. Silesia has become a multicultural region due to past changes in affiliation of this area (Polish, Czech, Austrian and Prussian).

Industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the creation and development of steel works and mines. The application of a steam engine to drain precious metal mines in Tarnowskie Góry and construction of the great coke-fired stove turned Silesia into an important European industrial centre where new investments increased the demand for workforce. Consequently, the influx of people resulted in the region becoming one with the highest population density. The rapid development of ironwork, glasswork and zincwork, as well as improvements in the land and water communication systems, transformed Silesia into a region of technical and industrial culture.

In recent years, the closure of numerous historical plants became necessary. It questioned the future of the region’s heritage. Working out effective forms of preservation and promotion of the industrial heritage is one of the aims of the strategy of regional and local development. This is how the idea of the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” came into being. This route is closely connected with the industrial legacy of the Silesian *voivodeship*.

The post-industrial areas, *i.e.* those remaining after the closure of industrial plants or belonging to the plants in the process of closure, occupy a considerable area of Poland (about 8 000 km<sup>2</sup>). It is estimated that about 4 000 km<sup>2</sup> within the Silesian *voivodeship* are polluted areas. Solving the problem of pollution would require the following:

- An information system about the polluted areas.
- A complex program of de-industrialisation, mostly through rational management which requires cleaning of polluted areas and transforming them according to the land development plan.
- The implementation of effective and environment-friendly revitalisation technologies.

- The revitalisation of the service sector (modernisation of buildings).
- The conversion of old industrial centres into tourist facilities.

The revitalisation of industrial areas gives an opportunity for development, as examples in the U. S. and European Union have shown. New work places will be created and these areas will acquire new value for potential investments. This will contribute significantly to the economic development of the *voivodeship*.

Tourism needs good infrastructure to work properly. Around Katowice the improvement of infrastructure and the creation of new shopping and business centres have resulted in a better image of the *voivodeship*. New communication networks are being created (Katowice International Airport), the road network is being modernised, the hotel and restaurant network and the shopping and entertainment centres are being developed.

All this has resulted in the transformation of the Silesian *voivodeship* into an area of great investment potential at national and international levels. The conversion of old industrial plants into tourist facilities contributes undoubtedly to innovation in tourism in the *voivodeship*.

### ***Typology of the programme***

Local authorities, tourism and social organisations participated in the development of the Strategy of Tourism Development in the Silesian *voivodeship* (2004-13).

Among the numerous cultural; natural and sports products proposed by the region, the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” is unique and is strongly related with the history, economy and culture of the Silesian *voivodeship*. It has the potential to become an international tourism product and the promotion of this route contributes to the popularisation of the cultural heritage of the Silesian *voivodeship*.

### ***Attractiveness of the location***

The economic development of the region through tourism might contribute to increase its attractiveness. The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” creates new value and constitutes a basis for regional identity and tourism development. This project supports the promotion of the region and also allows for the preservation and utilisation of the unique sites along the route.

This project allows for the creation of new work places and for change in the image of the region. As a consequence, it fosters new investment opportunities, which in turn will result in broadening of the tourist offer.

### ***Competitiveness of the location***

Tourism stimulates economic development, as shown by examples such as the Nord-Pas de Calais region in France or the North Rhine-Westphalia and Saarland in Germany. It has numerous direct and indirect economic impacts. In Silesia, for every ten accommodation places created, it can be assumed that around a hundred jobs (direct and indirect) could be generated. People who have lost jobs as a result of the closure of old industrial centres might find employment in tourism.

### ***Main objectives***

The official opening of the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” took place in October 2006. The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” is a thematic route which connects industrial heritage sites of the Silesian *voivodeship*. It includes the 31 most important and interesting, historically and architecturally, sites which have witnessed the industrial revolution.

The industrialisation of the region began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which completely changed the image of Silesia. The landscape was modified by the chimneys of power stations, mine shafts and steelworks' stoves. The remnants of those times are scattered all around the *voivodeship*.

The "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*" reflects the culture of the region allowing for the preservation and utilisation of unique sites. The route presents a wide range of sites and progressively, the route will develop and include new component destinations.

The idea behind the creation of the route was to cluster a wide range of sites to create new value. The route aims to:

- Create a branded tourist product on the basis of the most important and interesting (historically and architecturally) industrial sites of the region.
- Show the richness of the economic and cultural heritage of the *voivodeship*.
- Preserve the historic industrial sites.
- Promote a new image of the Silesian *voivodeship* and to overcome the "grey Silesia" stereotype.
- Show the monuments of techniques as unique nationally and internationally.
- Restructure and convert industrial sites into facilities for service, trade and business sectors.
- Encourage potential investments.
- Ease unemployment, *i.e.* creation of employment in former industrial plants converted into tourist facilities.

### *Programme features*

The target locations are the 31 sites on the "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*". The primary target group is composed of industrial tourism lovers and the secondary target group is composed of school children (educational school trips), students (history and technical faculties from Poland and abroad), scientists and their students, families with children (educational offer), business tourists from Poland and abroad interested in investments in the post-industrial areas and foreign tourists.

The Self-Government of the Silesian *Voivodeship* financially supported the project by developing its strategy, creating its logo and information boards, among others. The Ministry of Economy supports the Silesian Tourist Organisation while the Silesian *Voivodeship* Speaker's Office supports regular trainings seminars.

The project was realised by the Department for Promotion of the Region, Tourism and Sport of the Silesian *Voivodeship* Speaker's Office in co-operation with the Silesian Cultural Heritage Centre and the Silesian Tourist Organisation. Priority has been given to promotion (*e.g.* tourism files, website [www.gosilesia.pl/szt](http://www.gosilesia.pl/szt), road signs, marketing strategy).

In February 2008, the first offer for commercial trips on the "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*" was published. The "Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*":

- Presents what is outstanding about the region.
- Identifies the region and characterises it through its traditions, customs, everyday activities and items.

- Reflects the traditional culture of the region and gives the visitors an opportunity to experience it.
- Is based on regional products and services which are easy to identify and to distinguish.
- Comprises not only the tradition and past of the region but also its contemporary image, transformation and character.
- Allows for the creation of the desired image of the region.

It is important to use suitable marketing tools for the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” in order to monitor its development. The sites of the route need to have a common identity; thus it becomes important to have close co-operation between various actors (local authorities, non-governmental and private organisations).

The Silesian Tourist Organisation promotes the uniqueness of the route not only by participating in national and international tourist fairs but also by co-operating with local tourist organisations and agencies, which contribute to the development and promotion of the brand through:

- Classification of the sites within the route.
- Patronage over the trips on the route organised by local companies and tour operators.
- Support for various promotion tools, in co-operation with the Silesian Tourist Organisation, such as the publication and distribution of maps, guidebooks, folders, leaflets, etc.
- Efforts to include the route in the “European Route of Industrial Heritage” (ERIH).

The Polish Tourism Development Agency designed the route's logo and organised the training for the establishment of the local tourist organisations.

### ***Lessons learnt and evaluation***

#### *The stages in realisation of the project*

- July 2004-June 2005: The creation of the route started by nine audits realised by the Silesian *Voivodeship* Speaker’s Office and the Silesian Cultural Heritage Centre. 53 sites were identified. The accessibility of the sites, their condition and the surrounding tourist infrastructure were taken into account. The importance of the sites in the history of technique, architecture or industrial tradition of the region was analysed. The local authorities, owners, restoration services and tourist organisations and companies were invited to participate. The Silesian *Voivodeship* Management established the new regional tourist product “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” composed of 29 sites and provided financial resources for the project.
- August-October 2005: The Polish Tourism Development developed a logo for the route together with its Visual Identification Catalogue.
- March 2006: In March 2006, the Polish Tourism Development Agency conducted training on the establishment and operational rules of the local tourist organisations. The search began to identify a coordinator for the creation of the route.
- May-August 2006: A document “The Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship* Information System” was prepared.

- August-October 2006: The route was mapped out in the field and each site was provided with an information board. 260 000 copies of the map-brochure were published (Polish, English and German) and made available in tourist information points. Moreover, a thematic website was launched.
- January-October 2007: The “Silesian China” Factory in Katowice and the Historic “Guido” Coal Mine in Zabrze were added to the route. The route was awarded by the Polish Tourist Organisation a certificate for being the “Best Tourist Product of 2007”.

### *Assessment of the project*

The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” attracts a lot of attention, especially among Polish tourists. Foreign tourists also frequently visit the route, as statistics confirm. For example, the Brewery Museum in Żywiec, which was opened recently, was visited by about 103 000 tourists during the period of September 2006 to February 2008. Among the visitors, the largest group was composed of Polish tourists, but there were also a number of tourists from other European countries and other continents, e.g. North and South America, Asia.

In 2007, the Silesian Tourist Organisation conducted a marketing research devoted to the image of the Silesian *voivodeship*. The inhabitants of the *voivodeship* indicated diversity as the *voivodeship*’s distinguishing feature and potential for development. Positive changes in the region were acknowledged: infrastructure development, increase in investments, decrease in pollution and unemployment. Respondents showed deep understanding for the need to preserve the cultural achievements of the region, including its industrial heritage. Opinions were voiced that this potential should be utilised for the needs of the tourism industry.

The creation of the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” as a branded tourist product favoured the image of industrial tourism as historically, ethnographically and educationally attractive.

Surveys were carried out to determine the popularity of each site. For example, the Tychy Brewing Museum, which offers guided visits in several languages (English, German, French, Czech and Italian) is visited by several dozens of groups (several foreign groups among them) weekly. Its total number of visitors in 2007 reached 36 000, 5 400 of which were foreign tourists (15%).

The Brewery Museum in Żywiec, which has been open for only 16 months, had about 103 000 visitors during the period between September 2006 to February 2008.

In 2006, the Silver Mine was visited by 66 812 tourists, 5 481 of which were from abroad. In the same year, the Black Trout Drift was visited by a total of 41 212 people. In 2007, the Silver Mine was visited by 75 327 tourists, 6 507 of which were foreign visitors, and the Black Trout Drift was visited by 44 200 tourists. In comparison with 2004, the number of tourists visiting both sites in 2007 rose considerably. The number of tourists visiting the Silver Mine rose by 11% (increase of 7 691 visitors), and the number of visitors in the Black Trout Drift rose by 8% (increase of 3 320 visitors).

In the “Queen Luiza” Coal Mining Open-Air Museum in Zabrze, there was a registered increase of 76% in the number of visitors from 2004. The museum was visited by 9 510 tourists in 2004 compared to 16 753 in 2007.

It can be concluded that there is an increasing interest in industrial tourism and that the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” has gained popularity and international renown.

There are examples in the Silesian *voivodeship* of post-industrial sites that have been converted into new sites not related with industry. Monuments have been converted into galleries, museums, colleges or science institutions. These have acquired a new identity, but several other precious monuments have not been saved.

Tourism gives vast opportunities to preserve industrial heritage and to make it attractive. The financing of industrial heritage with local, national and foreign funds contributes to the increase in the investment attractiveness of the *voivodeship* in the tourism sector (accommodation, catering and related services).

The promotion of the *voivodeship* as a tourism destination might stimulate programmes aimed at the preservation of the industrial heritage in the Silesian *voivodeship*. The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” is a model in this regard. By visiting the route, tourists have the chance to learn about the cultural and economic identity of the region. The route not only shows the history and traditions of the region but also its contemporary image and the changes it has undergone.

Barriers exist due to the *i*) perceived image of the Silesian *voivodeship* as a typical industrial, polluted, degraded and unattractive area; *ii*) the lack of a conceptual approach for using post-industrial sites in economic development; *iii*) the strong competition from tourist resorts abroad; and *iv*) limited access to external sources of funds. This is why it is important to have a joint policy between the state, *voivodeship* authorities and the tourist sector to formulate solutions to these problems.

The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” should be constantly developed and improved by effective co-operation between the various sites and by increasing the identity of the sites with the route, which may be quite low in some cases.

The promotion and development of the route is the task of the local authorities, *i.e.* the Silesian *Voivodeship* Speaker’s Office, and the organisations for development of tourism, *e.g.* the Silesian Tourist Organisation, which should present the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” as an attractive product. The sites in the route should participate in the promotion activity. The co-operation of all sites is primordial as only joint interest in the project guarantees its success.

The “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” is constantly being developed and new sites are being added, which increases its attractiveness. The marketing strategy for the route is planned for the long term. The important task will be the development of the distribution channels for the tourist product. An important element in the process of building the product is the efforts to include the “Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian *Voivodeship*” in the European Route of Industrial Heritage.