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Metropole Ruhr

Small Atlas Metropole Ruhr

The Ruhr region in transformation

This publication intends to give some information about the modern Ruhr region – the Metropole Ruhr. It is one of the largest industrial conurbations in Europe. The area displays a big tradition in mining and steel industry, but during the last few decades it has managed structural change towards a climate-friendly and modern future. Almost nowhere else on earth were there so many collieries, blast furnaces and factories on such small stretches of land. The industrial development in the region has led to a high density of population: on 4.439 km² over 5 million people live, in a mosaic of mostly middle-sized towns with a few big cities. With its 53 towns and municipalities the Ruhr region is the largest urban economic zone in Germany.

The Ruhr region lies between two rivers, the Ruhr to the south and the Lippe to the north. Between Ruhr and Lippe the Emscher flows. All three connect to the Rhine, which divides the region to the west. The Ruhr region counts among the greenest regions of Germany: more than 39 % is agricultural land and in addition it has 18.3 %

woodlands! Admittedly, the proportions in the use of space vary from town to town. The administrative district town of Herne, for instance, with its 3,013 inhabitants per km², is densely populated, while the district of Wesel, with its 441 inhabitants per km², is rather rural. The general rule is that the peripheries of the Ruhr area are greener than the heart of it in the triangle of Duisburg-Recklinghausen-Dortmund. The territory is rather characterised as big-city, with cities such as Duisburg, Oberhausen, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Bochum and Dortmund. The Ruhr region stretches 116 kilometres across from east to west and over 67 kilometres from north to south. Its highest point lies in Breckerfeld (442 metres), its lowest at Xanten (13 metres).

The Ruhr region is part of the German Federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW). Straight through the middle runs the border of the landscape associations of Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe. The region moreover constitutes an integral part of the districts of Münster, Arnsberg and Düsseldorf, whose bases lie outside the Ruhr

region. Beyond this the area is subdivided into four districts and eleven cities that are administrative districts in their own right. The administrative unity of the Regional Association Ruhr (Regionalverband Ruhr – RVR) serves as an administrative body, in which the districts and the autonomous towns are all banded together. The RVR – founded in 1920 as the SVR (Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk [Association of the Ruhr Coal Region]) and renamed between 1979 and 2004 as KVR (Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet [Municipal Association for the Ruhr Region]) – is committed to developing the Ruhr region: regional planning, safeguarding of open spaces, infrastructure projects such as the industrial heritage route and the Emscher Landscape Park, as well as the planning and construction of the cycle-path network. It supports the work of its members, e.g. by preparing spatial and statistical data as well as by its public relations work. For a few years it has been profiling the Ruhr region as Metropole Ruhr, in order to express the urban character of the region. Since 2017 this has been reinforced through the international



Urban development in the area Essen/Mülheim | Spörhase 1840



Urban development in the area Essen/Mülheim | Spörhase 1930

place marketing campaign Stadt der Städte (City of Cities). A special sector of the public relations work deals with regional studies, which also gave birth to this publication.

Polycentric structure

As regards population density, the Ruhr region is an urban agglomeration, the largest in Germany and one of the largest in Europe. But it is after all quite a different type of metropolis than, for instance, London, Paris or Barcelona. The region is not only characterised as being big-city; it also has extensive rural areas at its disposal. In specialist literature the Ruhr region is described as a polycentric conurbation: an area with various different local nuclei but no clearly defined centre.

The polycentric character of the Ruhr region does not mean that the towns are easy to distinguish from one another. From the surroundings you often cannot identify which local district you are in, as there is much that is similar. Especially in

the zone at the heart of the Ruhr region, it is sometimes only the place-name signs that show the dividing lines, in an otherwise seemingly continuous area. Where you used to find the church in the middle of a village, owing to subsequent incorporations the same area can now be found on the periphery of a municipal district.

The Ruhr region of today was earlier more reminiscent of a provincial town rather than a true metropolis. In his report *Im Ruhrgebiet* (In the Ruhr region) (1958) the later Nobel prize winner Heinrich Böll wrote: "The towns or villages are just suburbs of a city that does not yet exist and perhaps never will exist." Interestingly it is precisely this in-between towns character – a metropolitan region with no visible division between town and country – that is highly praised in an international study, published in 2016. Because of the polycentric structure of the region the researchers regard the Ruhr region as a model for the so-called Mega-City, which combats huge environmental and infrastructure problems and an increasing lack of governability. Only a glance back enables us to understand

Heinrich Böll's claim back then. In the time before industrialisation the region was an agrarian landscape. Around 1600 Dortmund was the largest town with approximately 4,000 inhabitants, while around 1800 there were not even 400 people living in Gelsenkirchen. Only the discovery of hard coal gave the region a mighty impetus. In the 19th century coal mines were shooting up from the ground like mushrooms. Hard coal was regarded as black gold, the material that drove steam engines. Mining offered a lot of work, so that workers streamed into the region from near and far. The villages and towns surrounding the mine-shafts grew quickly – just as did the extraction of hard coal – and so a plethora of streets, railway lines and canals sprang up. The construction of operating sites and infrastructure was dictated by the industry. Wherever a hard coal field was discovered, a mineshaft and settlement were erected. Thus, the patchwork rug of the Rhineland-Westphalian industrial area emerged. But there were no authorities to steer this Prussian Wild West. The towns that were created grew uncontrolled and in places melted together into one.



Urban development in the area Essen/Mülheim | Spörhase 1970



Urban development in the area Essen/Mülheim | RVR 2010

Decline in the importance of coal and steel

For the Ruhr region the industrial revolution was immensely significant. Thanks to the use of steam engines, the production of coal, iron and steel increased enormously. The annual extraction of hard coal on the Ruhr territory constantly increased: from 1.9 million tons in the year 1850 to 60 million tons in the year 1900. During the same period of time the production of pig-iron increased from 11,500 tons to nearly 3.3 million tons. Companies such as Krupp, Grillo, Stinnes and Thyssen employed thousands of workers. After the First World War production in the Ruhr region had to be driven high again quickly, in order to meet the immense demand for rebuilding. After the Second World War the

Ruhr region then functioned as the engine behind the German economic miracle. Hard coal was a basic commodity and supplier of energy that was greatly in demand. At the same time the need for steel in the automotive and machine industry was permanently on the increase.

The blossoming of the Ruhr region after the Second World War was short-lived however: from 1957 on the first signs of the mining crisis were visible. Through strong competition from overseas and the emergence of cheaper sources of energy (natural gas and oil) the demand for German hard coal diminished. Within ten years the production capacity of the coalmines in the Ruhr region was halved. During this period, dubbed “das große Zechensterben” [the great death of the coalmines], half

of the workforce, almost 500,000 miners, was disbanded. Since 1973 the region has also had to deal with the worldwide steel crisis: the supply of steel exceeded the demand and low-wage countries threatened the ability of the Ruhr region to compete. Thus between 1977 and 1986 a quarter of the steel-workers lost their jobs. State subsidies were supposed to enable above all the mining industry to make a new start. In addition a great deal was invested in establishing university colleges (especially in the 1960s and 1970s) and business innovation initiatives.

However the general public began increasingly to associate the Ruhr region with smoking chimneys, a grey landscape and environmental pollution. Therefore attempts were made to polish up the Ruhr region's image, in the hope of thereby attracting investors to the region. In the 1960s neither cost nor effort was spared to reverse the negative image. The offer read: “We in the Ruhr region have nature, universities, theatres, castles and palaces as well.” For this German-speaking image-campaign ultimately 170 different advertising motifs were distributed. Since 2017, following a few smaller campaigns, the internationally targeted Metropole Ruhr: Stadt der Städte (City of Cities) has been launched. Here it is self-confidently asserted: “We are Germany's biggest city.” The place marketing campaign is supposed to appeal above all to investors, young professionals and students.



Illuminated blast furnace in Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord | RVR photo archives, Permann, o.J.



The last active (until 2018) coal mine in the Ruhr region: Prosper-Haniel in Bottrop | RVR aerial photo collection 2013



Colourfully painted blast furnace in Duisburg-Hamborn | Keil 2012



Dortmund, agricultural use in the south of Bundesstraße 1 | RVR aerial photo collection 1964



University of Dortmund (Campus Nord) | RVR aerial photo collection 1980



University of Dortmund (Campus Nord), Technology Centre (centre of page) and Technology Park (left) | RVR aerial photo collection 2016

From industrial culture to renewable energy

In the late 1980s it was recognised that the Ruhr region had to change totally. 1989 five billion DM flowed across the state of North-Rhine Westphalia for ten years to give the Ruhr region a face-lift. Under the title International Building Exhibition (IBA) conversion of the polluted Emscher – the sewer tunnel for the Ruhr region – was driven forward and its re-naturalisation as Emscher Park made effective publicity. The further development of the greenways in a north-south direction represented a second lead project, and a new east-west connecting greenway was added. The new parkland increased the leisure facilities in

the heart of the Ruhr region. The outstanding feature of this IBA however was that it saved the industrial heritage from demolition, giving it a second chance for development. Thus the IBA selected around 100 collieries, blast furnaces and other industrial complexes in the Ruhr region and developed them as symbols of its industrial culture. Thus the industrial Jahrhunderthalle (century hall) in Bochum has become an events hall, the gasometer in Oberhausen Europe's largest exhibition place and Duisburg's inner harbour a recreation area.

This IBA-concept has not gone unnoticed by the rest of the world. In the year 2001 UNESCO passed a resolution to put the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial complex in

Essen – a mining installation that was due for demolition – on the World Heritage list because it stood as a symbol for the industrial age. Its status as a World Heritage site ensured, among other things, that Essen became the European City of Culture for 2010 in the name of the whole Ruhr region. During RUHR.2010, as the City of Culture year became known, more than 300 projects and 5,500 large and small events took place in the Ruhr region, from a motorway picnic on the A40 and activities at the municipal district level to experimental art using light. With industrial culture as the main theme RUHR.2010 the former Kohlenpott (coal scuttle) showed its new face to the outside world. From home and abroad visitors streamed to the Ruhr region. But the most important thing of all is that the residents themselves have become proud of their region and are self-confidently communicating that feeling to outsiders.

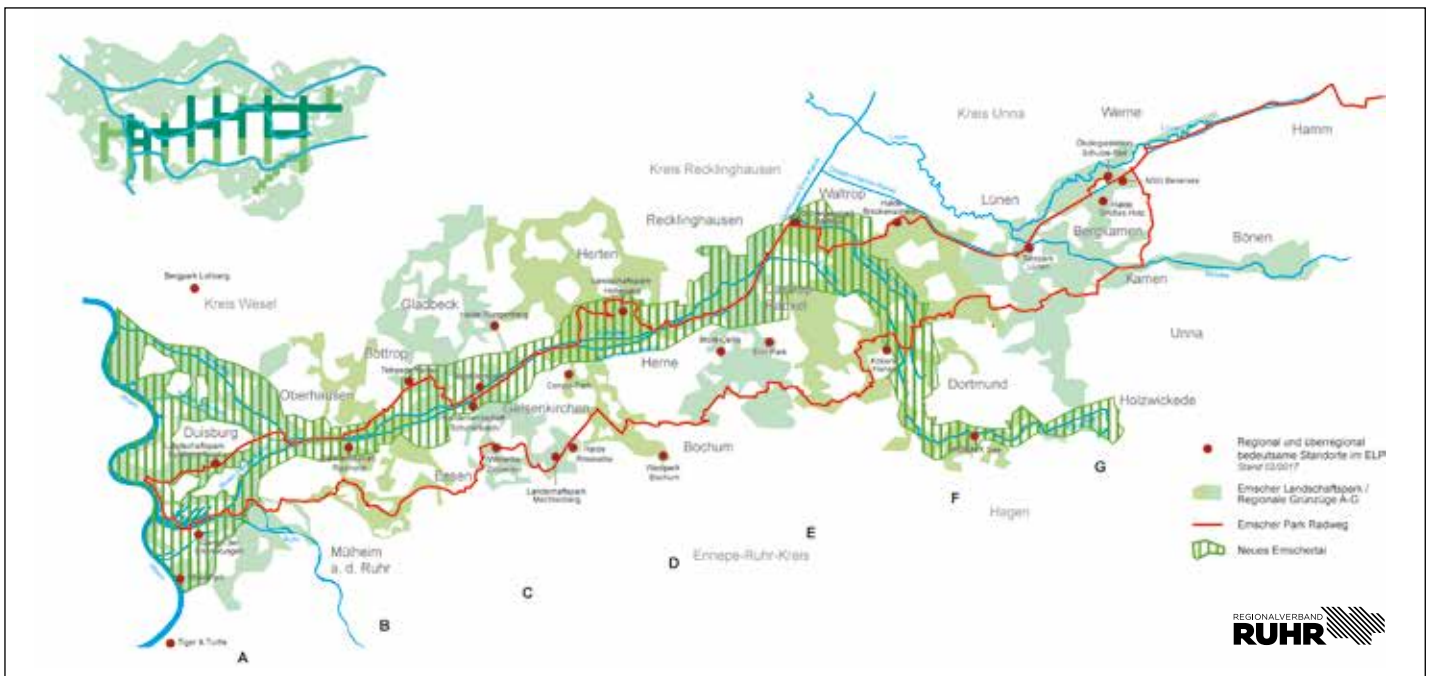


World Heritage Zeche Zollverein | RVR aerial photo collection 2008



Innovation City Bottrop: best practice for climate-friendly urban transformation | Innovation City Management GmbH

With its many years of experience in dealing with fossil energy, the Ruhr region now focuses at the renewable energy revolution. There is huge potential for solar installations on roofs in densely populated areas and wind-power installations in peripheral areas. The Ruhr's seat of initiative has shown since 2010 in Bottrop, the so-called Innovation City, how such an Energy Revolution from the bottom up can be initiated: the energy-related renovation of existing dwellings(!) is accomplished here three to four times faster than in comparable German towns. Bottrop's success is the active participation of its citizens. But the municipality is also involved, for instance by using diverted rainwater for street-cleaning machines. Twenty further districts in the whole of the Ruhr region have followed Bottrop's example as the next step to a climate-friendly urban redevelopment. Essen was given the European Green Capital Award for the year 2017 by the European Commission. With the profile climate metropolis RUHR 2022 the Ruhr region has been marketed since 2012 as a showcase for climate-friendly regional development. The former hard coal territory is no longer just relying on its industrial culture, but is directing its focus on the future. So in 2027 the International horticultural show is to take place in the Ruhr region, decentralised for the first time.



Emscher Landscape Park | RVR team 11-4



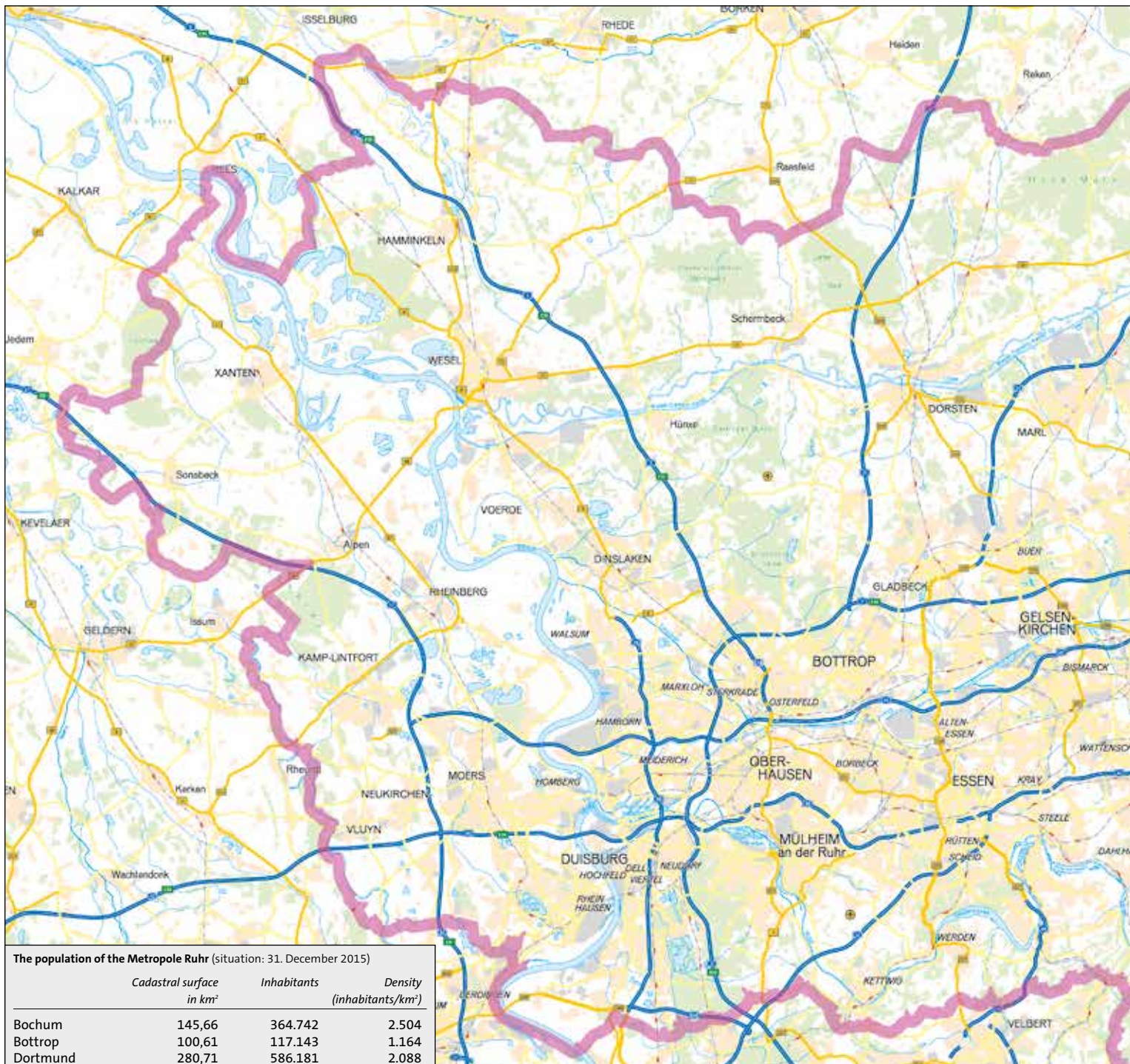
Jahrhunderthalle in Bochum's Westpark | RVR photo archives, Ziese 2013



Duisburg Harbour with recreation area and marina | RVR-Fotoarchiv, Wolff o.J.



Transport of a rotor blade on Herten's Halde Hoppenbruch: symbol for the transformation from coal to renewable energy | Hertener Stadtwerke GmbH 2016



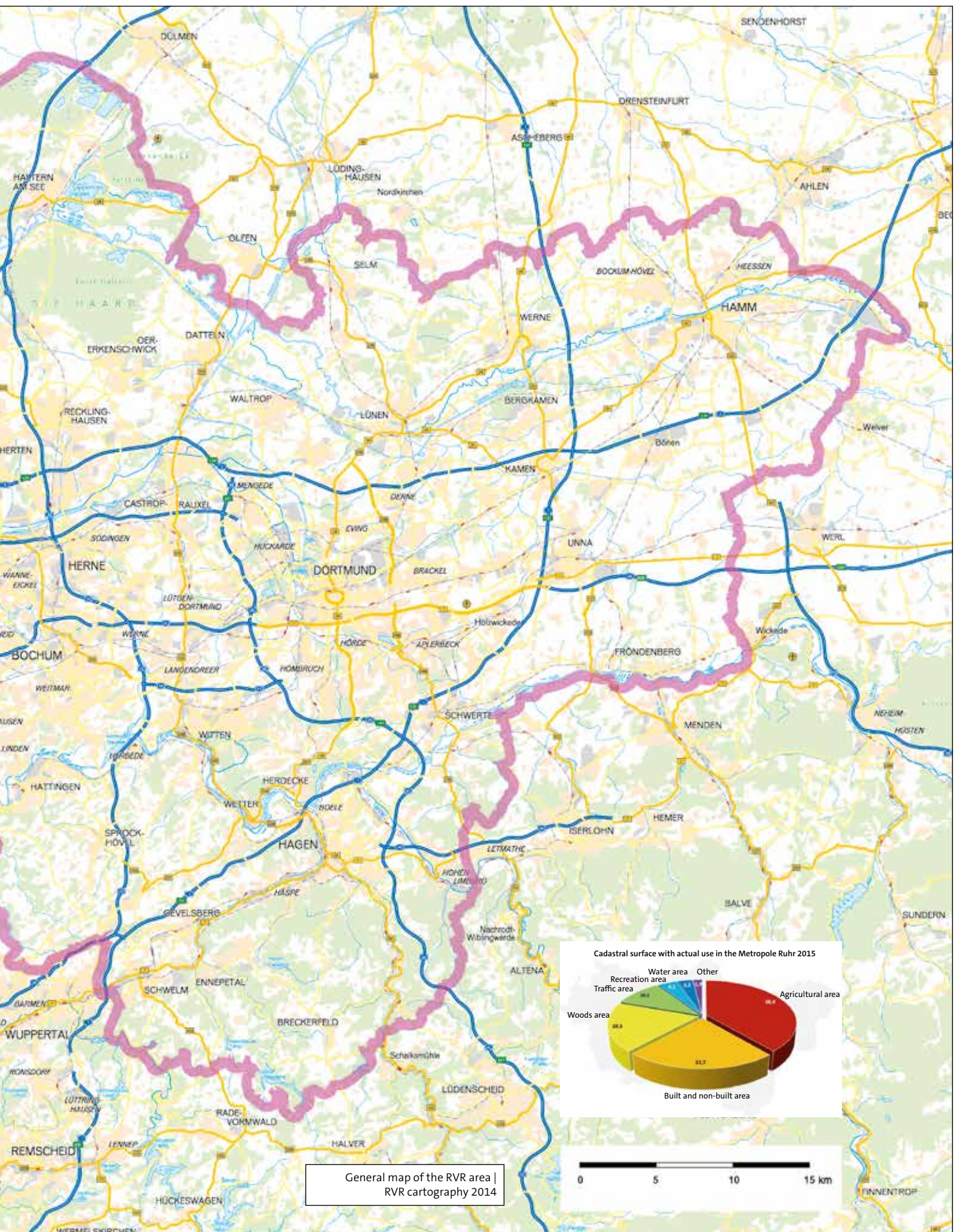
The population of the Metropole Ruhr (situation: 31. December 2015)

	<i>Cadastral surface in km²</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Density (inhabitants/km²)</i>
Bochum	145,66	364.742	2.504
Bottrop	100,61	117.143	1.164
Dortmund	280,71	586.181	2.088
Duisburg	232,80	491.231	2.110
Essen	210,34	582.624	2.770
Gelsenkirchen	104,94	260.368	2.481
Hagen	160,45	189.044	1.178
Hamm	226,43	179.397	792
Herne	51,42	155.851	3.031
Mülheim an der Ruhr	91,28	169.278	1.854
Oberhausen	77,10	210.934	2.736
Autonomous towns (RVR)	1.681,74	3.306.793	1.966
Ennepe-Ruhr-District	409,60	325.954	796
District Recklinghausen	761,30	617.807	812
District Unna	543,21	396.035	729
District Wesel	1.042,80	462.664	444
Districts (RVR)	2.756,91	1.802.460	654
Regionalverband Ruhr	4.438,65	5.109.253	1.151
NRW without RVR	29.673,85	12.756.263	430
NRW	34.112,50	17.865.516	524

Source: Landesbetrieb für Information und Technik, NRW; RVR database



RVR graphics



Labour market and structural change

Until the 1960s the Zollverein Coal Mine industrial complex made a good living possible for 8,000 mine-workers. They lived in the neighbouring borough of Essen-Katernberg and until the mine's closure in 1986 had only to cross the street on foot at every shift changeover. These days the many middle-range and upper class cars that travel onto the grounds of the Zollverein Coal Mine complex give the impression that the industrial complex is now blossoming again. The former mine-workers have only in rare cases been able to profit from it. On the other hand the grounds have become an incubator for creative industries: designers, artists and freelance professionals let themselves derive inspiration from the location. The Red Dot Design Museum

and the Ruhr Museum have been built here as well as some studios. By 2017 around 40 businesses from the creative industry had settled in the Zollverein Coal Mine complex. One example is Schacht One, a think tank from Duisburg's conglomerate Haniel, exploring the digital future for the equities of the Haniel group.

Structural change at the Zollverein Coal Mining complex stands for the rest of the Ruhr region. Whereas in 1960 61 % of the workforce were still working in manufacturing, in 2015 the industrial core (including business services) is still only 18.7 %. Unemployment in the region remains, at 10.0 %, higher than in the rest of North-Rhine Westphalia (6.34 %; status in November 2016). The materials, metal and machine engineering industry – with big names such as Thyssen-Krupp, RAG and Evonik –

give impetus to adjoining leading markets, such as mobility (among other things logistics), resource efficiency (e.g. energy production and recycling), digital communication (IT, data processing and telecommunications) and urban development. There are many jobs in the service sector, above all in the health system, public services, retail and tourism. Well-known companies with their headquarters in the Ruhr region are Aldi, Karstadt and the Radio Media group. Apart from this, large shopping centres and leisure parks (e.g. CentrO and Movie Park Germany) offer many jobs.

The coal-mining and steel industry has lost its dominant position for the Ruhr region. Of the 141 collieries that still existed in the Ruhr region in 1957, just one is still being mined, and this one too – following a federal political decision – is to close during 2018. Yet the heavy industry has left its traces behind. So the Ruhr region distinguishes itself within Germany in environmental and energy management, also known these days as Green Tech.

The hospitals in the Ruhr region (e.g. the university hospital for miners' health-care in Bochum) are prestigious addresses, above all in surgery, rehabilitation and the treatment of lung diseases. With a share of 18.6 % of total employment the national health service is the most significant employer in the region, after manufacturing. In addition this sector is growing in importance for the increasingly aging generations.

A good example of structural change in the Ruhr region is Dortmund. The city's industrial past (coal, steel and beer) has gradually given way to future technologies (biotechnology, nanotechnology and new materials). On brownfield sites new activities are being developed like 'a phoenix from the ashes'. Not just in Dortmund, but in the whole of the Ruhr region structural change remains a constant companion. One study verifies that 83.7 % of the entrepreneurs in the Ruhr region are happy with the location and meanwhile every fifth German manager outside the region can imagine establishing him/herself in the former smokestack region. These are better ratings than during the 1980s – a sign that structural change is a long-term but rewarding process.



Dortmund: outline of the premises of the former steel factory Phoenix-Ost | RVR aerial photo collection 2008



Dortmund: transformation of premises with the new Phoenix Lake and newly created building work around the periphery | RVR aerial photo collection 2012

Melting-pot of cultures

The population of the Ruhr region is diverse: there are a few inhabitants whose families came from the region originally. In 1840 the region was still a rural idyll. With industrialisation the demand for workers grew and the region saw a large influx of migrants. At first they came from neighbouring areas, then from Belgium, England and Russia, from 1880 onwards from the German eastern provinces and the Polish areas. Up until the First World War a million people left their homes to work in the Ruhr region. After the Second World War there was a new wave of migrants, this time from the countries around the Mediterranean, above all Italy, Yugoslavia, Portugal and Spain. The one-millionth guest worker, the Portuguese Amando Sá Rodrigues, was greeted in the Ruhr in 1964 with a moped and a bouquet of flowers. Some of the guest-workers returned to their homelands. But the Ruhr region is still a place of immigration, it remains a melting-pot of different cultures: the population comprises 13 % foreigners (NRW cross-section: 12.8 %), of which, relatively, most have come from Turkey. Owing to the refugee crisis in the Near East the number of Syrians and Iraqis has increased. Duisburg and Gelsen-

kirchen reveal the greatest diversity: they have a foreigner quota of 19 %.

Despite the open attitude in the Ruhr region towards immigrants there has also been discrimination. Thus Günter Wallraff in his book *Ganz unten* (Right at the bottom) (1985) showed that the blast furnace business of Thyssen did not deal exactly gently with its Turkish employees. Foreigners still have a hard time on the employment market in general. In the Ruhr region however integration is far advanced, whereby the heavy work in the mining and steel industry has accelerated integration. The workers were all in the same boat and had to be able to rely on one another. In the changing structure, although foreigners have some difficulties, extreme right parties have never had much success in the Ruhr region. When Duisburg's Marxloh district got the second largest mosque in Germany in 2008, for instance, even the non-Muslim population regarded the mosque at its opening as "their own".

Not only with Turkey, but with the Far East also the Ruhr region fosters a close relationship. Many Hindus have come to the Ruhr region from Sri Lanka as students, medical doctors or engineers. The largest

Tamil Hindu temple in Europe, the Sri-Kamadhchi-Ampal-Temple for instance, has been standing since 2002 in a business park in Hamm-Uentrop. At present – alongside the refugees – Indian and Chinese people are the new foreigners in the Ruhr region. They come less to live and work, but rather to study and invest. The Asians find the region's industrial past "interesting" – so interesting that Chinese investors have even bought, dismantled and shipped out whole industrial complexes, in order to then completely rebuild them in China.



RVR organises Waldjugendspiele (outdoor games for the youth) with young refugees | RVR/Dreyse 2016



The Great Mosque in Duisburg-Marxloh | RVR photo archives, Lueger o.J.



Large Hindu temple in Hamm-Uentrop | RVR photo archives, Lueger o.J.



In terms of surface the Diocese of the Ruhr is Germany's smallest diocese. The seat of the bishop is the city of Essen with its Essen Minster | RVR aerial photo collection 2002

Education in the Ruhr region

The first university in the region existed from 1655 to 1818 in Duisburg. Only in the 1960s did the Ruhr region once more gain educational establishments of this kind: 1962 in Bochum and 1968 in Dortmund. In 1974 in Hagen the first and only public trust, distance-learning university in Germany was added. In 1982 the first German private university followed in Witten. In 2003 Essen's university and technical college, founded in 1972, merged with the university and technical college of Duis-

burg, founded in the same year (from 1994: Gerhard-Mercator-University) to become the Duisburg-Essen University. In addition there is an art college, an administrative services college and 15 further colleges. Thus in less than six decades the densest educational landscape in Europe came into being. Beyond this, since 2007 the Ruhr-University of Bochum, the Technical University of Dortmund and the Duisburg-Essen University have been in close strategic collaboration with the University Alliance of the Ruhr (UAR). With more than 115,000 students and almost 1,300 profes-

sors (male and female) the UAR belongs among the largest science sites in Germany. How university buildings can change a largely agrarian landscape, can be seen from the example of Dortmund on page 5. By contrast the University and Technical College of Essen was built on the northern rim of the inner city on a previously demolished section of a workers' quarter, rich in tradition. Through settlement in a workers' district and proximity to the city, as well as through the scattering of student residences throughout the whole urban area, a close integration of the academics into the city population was supposed to be achieved. In Bochum attempts were made to link the isolated campus university, sited on the south side of the city, with the city centre. Extensively this rather linear link that was targeted spread out into a triangle because of the area of the former Opel works I in the Bochum district of Laer. The masterplan, published in 2009, clearly shows the added value from profiling and functional networking: scientific institutes, service providers, technology, creative businesses and residences are predominantly indicated, but above all networking with one with another.

The North-Rhine Westphalian government had tried at first to regionalise the state-wide tertiary education landscape and, with the help of integrated study courses with practical relevance, to make studying possible above all for students from non-academic families. Although the Ruhr region had to import most of the required academics until the 1960s, the Metropolitan Ruhr today is recognised as an exporter of education. Alongside the university teaching field, research plays a major part. It is also being conducted in many extra-university institutes, of which 47 have joined together to form a study association in the Ruhr Science Forum. All of these institutes need teachers, researchers and learners, who for a long time have no longer just been coming from this region. An advantage of the Ruhr region is its pronounced integration capability. Just as it once attracted miners from the whole of Europe and for a long time has linked teachers and students from the whole world, it is currently coping with the integration of refugees through its characteristic culture of welcome.



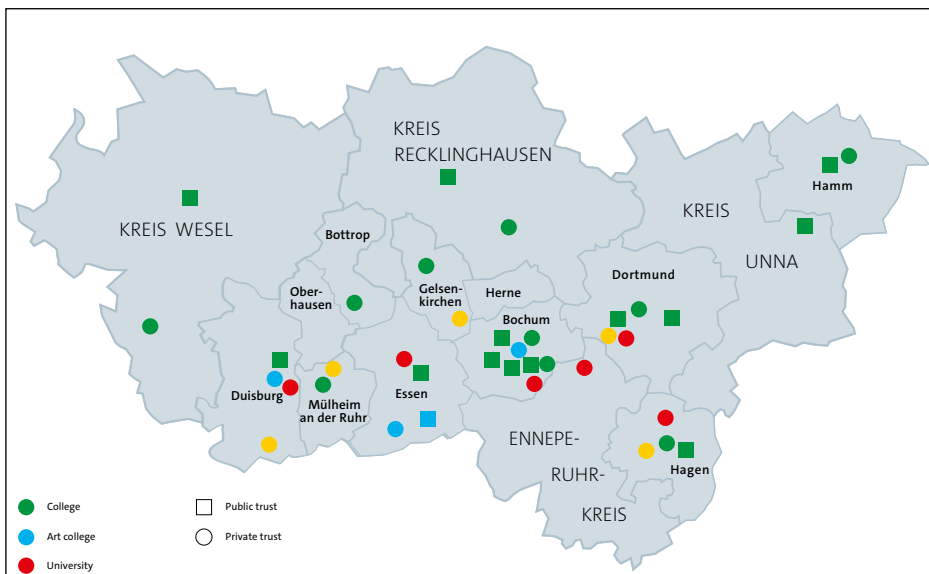
Technical University of Dortmund | Huhn, o.J.



Distance university in Hagen ©



Private university Witten/Herdecke ©



Spatial division of universities and colleges in the Ruhr region | basics: RVR team 3-2

Mobility and logistics

When you want to travel by tram from one town to another in the Ruhr region, it may happen that, owing to different widths of track, you have to change trams.



End station Buerer Straße in Gelsenkirchen with tram at normal track rails and tram at one meter track rails | RVR photo archives, Ströh 2004

The trams in Duisburg and Dortmund run on 1,435 millimetre-wide, normal track rails, while the width of track in Essen or Bochum is usually only one metre. For outsiders this at first bizarre-seeming situation can be explained through the gradual growing together of the municipalities, which, at the time of industrialisation in the Ruhr region, was characterised by a phenomenon known as church tower policy. The industry determined the spatial structure, through which the region attained a colourful mix of town and country, which today can still be seen in parts of the peripheral zone of the conurbation.

Hereby the Ruhr region has developed into a multi-faceted traffic laboratory. The Cabinentaxi (cabin taxi) in Hagen, the

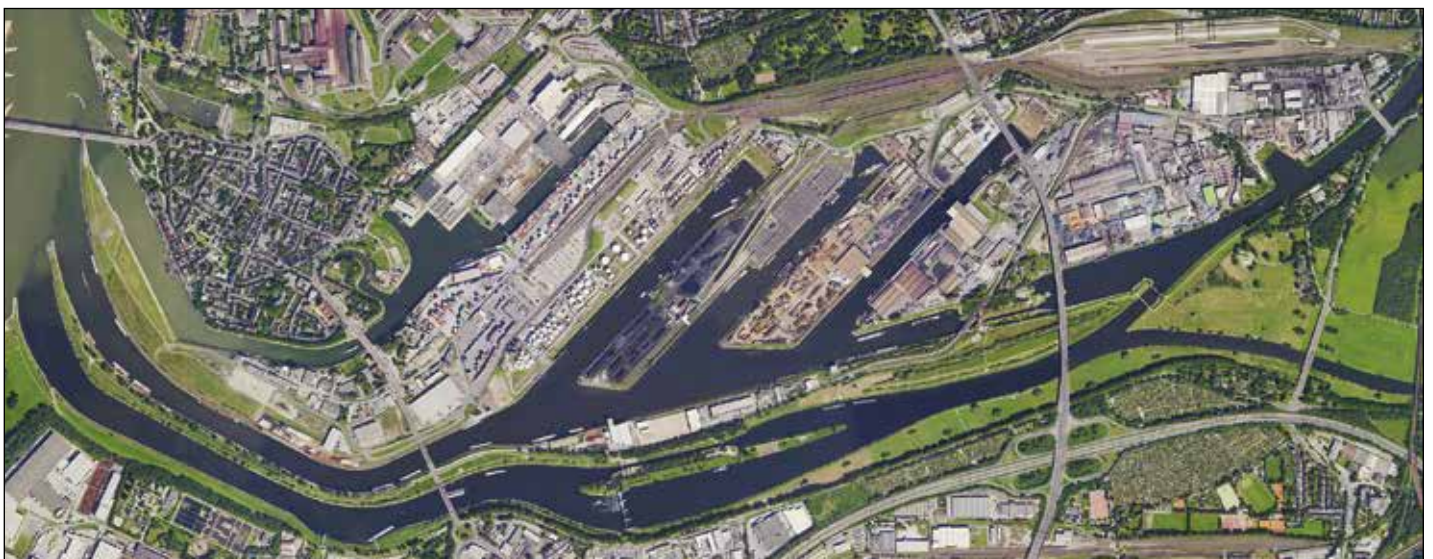


H-Bahn in Dortmund | RVR photo archives, Krüger o. J.

Duo-Spurbus (duo-track bus) in Essen, the H-Bahn in Dortmund or the CargoCap in Bochum are evidence that this conurbation, despite, and even because of, the extreme increase in traffic can deliver innovative answers to mobility. While a few of these experiments finally failed for various reasons, others continue to be preserved in everyday life and have even become models for other transport-providers: thus for example the principle of the fully automatic steering in the H-Bahn (gondola lift) – which since 1984 has transported up to 8,000 travellers per day in the area around the Technical University of Dortmund –

has been transferred to the SkyTrain at Düsseldorf Airport. The H-Bahn is thereby integrated into the ÖPNV-Network in the city of Dortmund and contractually into the Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Ruhr VRR (Transport Association of Rhine-Ruhr).

The efforts of the Metropole Ruhr with regard to intermodal transport have gained international recognition. Alongside a multitude of locations for the combined cargo transport, the Duisburg harbours serve as a prime example, which at the same time clearly reflects constant structural change: sea-ports and free ports right inland, sheds projecting out above the water for weather-protected transferral of goods between rail, road and water, daily transports on the railway to and from China; yesterday it was still a coal exporting harbour, today it imports coal and a lot more besides. The importance of Duisburg Harbours' value to the Metropole Ruhr becomes particularly understandable, when you realise that among the 100 largest harbours worldwide Duisburg in 2016 with a container turnover of 3.7 million TEU stands in 36th place – and this is as a single inland port! Hereby the Duisburg harbours, on the confluence of the Ruhr and the Rhine, with an overall turnover of over 130 million ton and net profit of around 3 million Euros a year constitute the largest inland harbour worldwide. Around 300 logistics-orientated businesses are based in Duisburg Harbour. A total of 22,000 jobs in Duisburg are reliant on the harbour; in the region it is over 45,000. Harbour-related investment in these settled businesses amounts annually to more than 250 million Euros.



Duisburg Harbour (crop) | RVR aerial photo collection 2015

Economy and demography

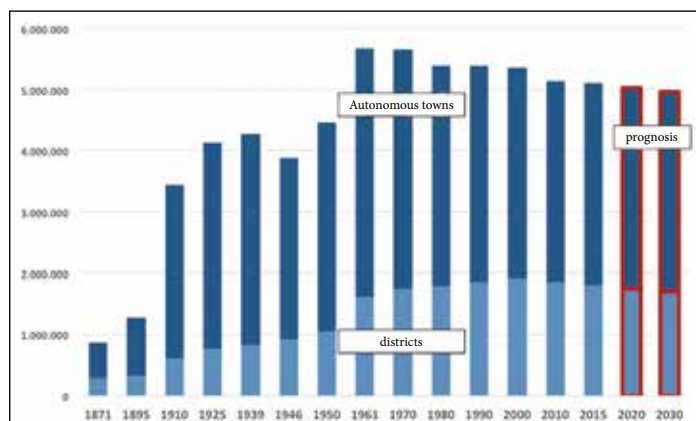
Increasing competition between European regions requires increasing cooperation among the cities in the Ruhr region. As an individual city it is not easy to catch the eye of foreign investors – as part of the Metropole Ruhr you have greater chances of success. Not least from this point of view in 2007 the regional economic support association wmr (Wirtschaftsförderung Metropole Ruhr) was created, regarding itself as a service partner for businesses and investors. Since 2017 it is acting under the name Business Metropole Ruhr (BMR).

With more than five million inhabitants the Ruhr region still belongs among the most densely populated areas in Europe. According to demographic prognoses the region will shrink: in 2030 the Metropole Ruhr should have barely 4.8 million inhabitants left. Even if the number of inhabitants in the Ruhr region has slightly increased since 2016 owing to the influx of refugees, there is still no sustained, recog-

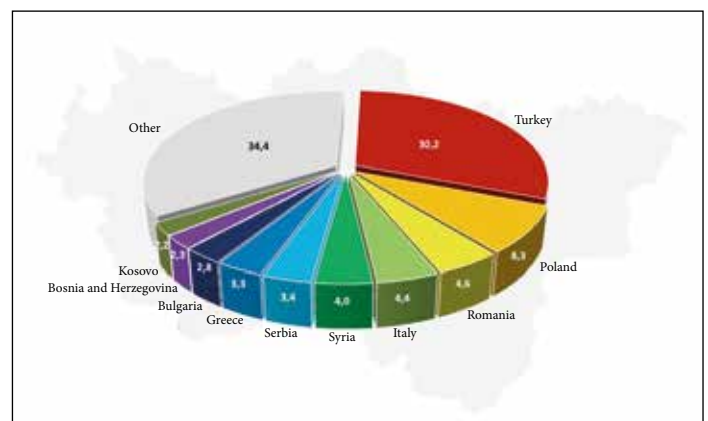
nisable change of trend. Therefore the drop in population remains, at least temporarily, a structural development.

The process of shrinkage has been going on for a long time already. Especially during the 1970s many well-educated younger people left the region. While at the beginning people talked about a brain drain, today this development is classed as education export within the framework of a lively global exchange of knowledge and skills. A further change in the population structure in the Ruhr region is noteworthy: as well as being fewer the Ruhr region has also become more colourful, i.e. the proportion of migrants in the population is rising. In the regional shrinking process intelligent solutions for public facilities and unused pieces of land are developed, guaranteeing that districts do not become poverty-stricken and that the quality of life is maintained. The search for opportunities from demographic shrinkage sheds some things in a different light: the polycentric character of the Ruhr region is increasingly being regar-

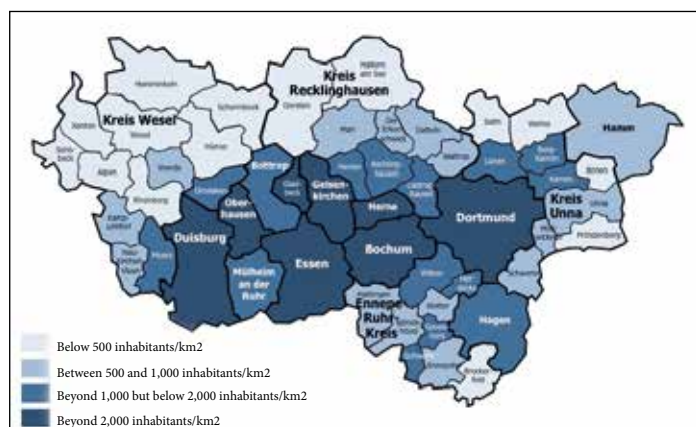
ded as an advantage. So for instance, in contrast to the situation in rural areas, facilities for local supplies in the urbanised Ruhr region are never far away. From an economic point of view shrinkage also offers opportunities. The Metropole Ruhr will by 2030 be a region with a large proportion of older people and migrants. Both groups have their own specific needs. In the case of the elderly we talk about an economy for best ager or a silver economy: a large proportion of the economy will offer services for seniors. Entrepreneurs in the Metropole Ruhr are, for instance, experimenting with telemedicine and smart homes, so that elderly people are able to live in their own homes for longer. Ethnomarketing (serving the needs of migrants) is a growth market as well. Thus there are advertising agencies, insurance brokers and banks that concentrate on the large share of Turkish people. It is precisely this adaptability that makes the Ruhr region so fascinating. If we are talking about transformation, the Metropole Ruhr comes first – yesterday, today and tomorrow.



Demographic development in the Ruhr region (1871-2015) and prognosis (2020-2030) | RVR data



Nationalities in the Ruhr region 2015 | RVR database



Population density in Ruhr region 2015 | RVR database



This is the place where Turkish women from all over Europe buy their wedding dresses: the Weseler Straße in Duisburg-Marxloh | RVR photo archives, Kzonsek o.J.



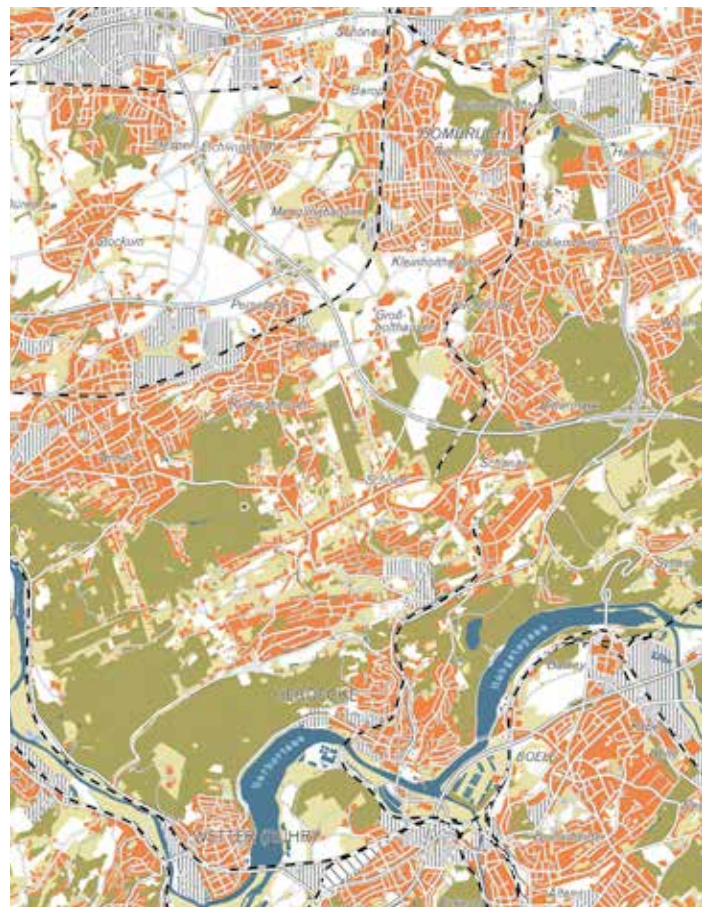
Urban development in area Hagen/Herdecke | Spörhase 1840



Urban development in area Hagen/Herdecke | Spörhase 1930



Urban development in area Hagen/Herdecke | Spörhase 1970



Urban development in area Hagen/Herdecke | RVR 2010

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Picture at title page: Tiger & Turtle in Duisburg:

A landmark that can be walked on | RVR photo
archives,

Schumacher 2011

Panorama of Landscape Park Hoheward near Herten | RVR photo archives, Adler 2011

