



Welcome to the "Ruhr Metropolis"

Content

Area and population	3
Coal, iron and steel	4
Mix of trades and industry.....	5
Hard Location Factors – Soft Location Factors	6
Education and Science	7
Environmental Protection	8
Cultural and recreational facilities	9
Imprint	10

Area and population

With its area of 4,439 km² and its 5.1 million inhabitants, the Ruhr Area is one of the largest industrial centres in Europe.

While the Ruhr Area recorded an increase of around 1 million people in the 1950s to 5.6 million by 1961, this region has lost more than 500,000 inhabitants to date.

On the other hand, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia had a population increase of more than 2 million inhabitants in the same period.

The population density of the Ruhr Area is 1,150 inhabitants per km² and is almost

twice the value of North Rhine-Westphalia with 525 inhabitants per km² and a number five times higher than the Federal Republic of Germany with 233 inhabitants per km².

However, in the Ruhr Area varying demographic conditions can be found due to the natural structure of the landscape. The more agriculturally structured Lower Rhine district of Wesel counts only 441 inhabitants per km², whereas the city of Herne is the most populated in the middle of the dense industrial zone with 3,048 inhabitants per km².

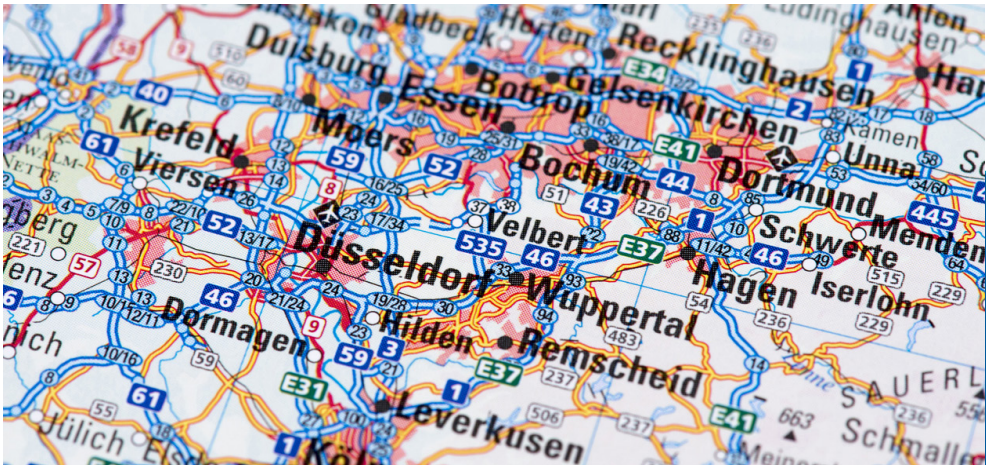


Photo credit: iStock/omersukrugoksu

Coal, iron and steel

A fundamental reorientation of the economic structure of the Ruhr Area took place neither after the end of the first nor after the Second World War. The one-sided focus on the heavy industry coal, iron and steel sector continued to exist despite the unbundling policy pursued by the Western Allies.

The general shortage of energy during the Korean War and the need for steel for reconstruction led to an "artificial" renaissance of the mining industry. The end of the reconstruction phase in the early 1960s made it increasingly clear that the former engine of growth - coal, iron and steel - had become a lagging regional economic moment.

Coal mining ran into sales difficulties because of the pressure of cheap crude oil, which was the first visible sign of the coal crisis in 1957. The former bulk buyers - the chemical industry, the electricity industry and from the 1970s the steel industry - lost more and more importance. Coal mining fell from 123 million tonnes in 1957 to 2 million tonnes in 2018, and the number of employees fell from 397,000 to 3,400 over the same period. The number of operating mines

went from 147 to one. This closed in December 2018. So ended the coal industry in the Ruhr area.

After the first severe sales problems of the steel industry in the recession of 1966/67, the production of pig iron peaked in the 1970s and then declined. The production was concentrated in the efficient locations, as a result of which the number of employees decreased from over 150,000 to around 30,000 from 1974 to today.

Between 1960 and 2020, the mining sector lost around half a million jobs, and the share of the total workforce in the Ruhr Area fell from around 28% to 2%.

The traditional image of towns in the Ruhr Area with their winding towers and blast furnaces belongs to the past, the steel industry was concentrated in Duisburg.

Mix of trades and industry

The shift from the primary/secondary to the tertiary sector in the national accounts clearly shows the structural change in the Ruhr Area.

In 2019, manufacturing accounted for only 26% of gross value added, whereas in the areas of commerce, transport and hospitality (21%), financing, leasing, business service providers (27%) and public and private service providers (27%), the combined share was 74%. This trend towards the tertiary sector is slightly above the comparable values for North Rhine-Westphalia.

Parallel developments can also be observed among the employees subject to social security contributions. In 1982, primary and secondary employment was 54% and tertiary 46%, while in 2020 only 23% were primary/secondary and 77% tertiary. Considering that until a few decades ago, the tertiary sector was regionally focused on the needs of the area and now has supra-regional and in part international importance, this is sufficient proof of the will and the capacity for structural change.

According to a survey of the newspaper

"Die Welt", 29 of the 500 largest companies in the Federal Republic of Germany have their headquarters in the Ruhr Area, of which 11 can be assigned to the industrial and 18 the trade and service sectors. The future of the growing importance of the service sector will be based above all on a solid foundation in the manufacturing sector in order to continue to play a major role in the structural change of this region.

Hard Location Factors – Soft Location Factors

A decisive prerequisite for the close interaction between the tertiary and the secondary sector is the creation of a favourable investment climate in the Ruhr Area.

In addition to the "hard location factors", so-called "soft location factors" such as education and research facilities as well as the environment and leisure facilities are becoming increasingly important in order to remain attractive when choosing a location in comparison to competing European regions.

The central traffic situation of the Ruhr Area in Europe has gained additional value with the opening of the markets in Eastern Europe and with the associated reactivation of the European West-East-Main. The Ruhr Area opens up a market of 60 million people within a radius of 250 km, more than 15% of the EU population.

In addition to numerous direct connections to the international road, rail, waterway and air traffic networks, the Ruhr Area has a well developed and efficient transport infrastructure compared to other

metropolitan areas. This includes, for example, the largest transport association for public local transport in the Federal Republic of Germany, the "Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Ruhr".

Education and Science

The Ruhr Area became a university location late in life. Since the founding of the first universities in Bochum, Dortmund, Duisburg and Essen in the 1960s and 1970s, however, there has been an enormous boom in the education and economic sectors.

With five universities and 15 technical

colleges of applied sciences and more than 60 non-university research institutes, the Ruhr Area is today one of the most diverse and densely populated scientific regions in Europe.



Photo credit: iStock/sanjeri

Environmental Protection

The ecological consequences of industrialisation such as air pollution, water pollution, deterioration of the landscape, waste and noise pollution were already recognised at the turn of the century as a central problem of an industrially densified region. Even then, the Ruhr Area Chambers of Industry and Commerce demanded regional and supraregional solutions beyond the borders of individual cities.

State, municipalities and the industry regulated the water industry even before the First World War with the founding of water industry associations. These associations continue to fulfil their environmental responsibilities and are based in Essen.

The renaturation of former industrial wastelands as well as planned landscape management and the nature conservation are implemented systematically, waste grounds are transformed into leisure destinations.

The "Internationale Bauausstellung Emscherpark" (IBA), funded by the North Rhine-Westphalian state government, aimed to restore old industrial structures

for new uses and to restore the landscapes and ecological systems destroyed by industrialisation to their original condition, including in Essen, Mülheim the Ruhr and Oberhausen.

A particularly special project is the Emscher regeneration. Europe's most polluted river is being restored, creating completely new living and working environments.

Cultural and leisure activities

The opportunities for cultural, sports and more generally in the area of recreation offer a wide range of leisure activities. Many of the district theatres, opera houses and concert halls have a charisma which extends far beyond the region.

The art museums of the cities in the Ruhr Area display a variety of art from the antique to the contemporary. The industrial history of the region is documented by museums in Essen, Oberhausen, Bochum and Dortmund, as well as heritage-protected commercial and industrial facilities which provide a historical social, economic and technical overview of the region. The sports facilities of the Ruhr Area, for both professional, amateur and

recreational sports, enable a variety of sporting activities.

The five so-called Revierparks and numerous recreational areas (including Haard, Hohe Mark), parks and green spaces are used for recreational purposes.

There is also more than just a few castles, palaces, Romanesque and Gothic churches and manor houses which bear witness to the region's ancient cultural traditions. Those who wish to escape urbanity will find more than enough space in the Ruhr Area; the Ruhr Area is still 38% agricultural and 19% forest.



"Ludwiggalerie Schloss Oberhausen"

Photo credit: iStock/Eivaisla

Imprint

Cover photo:
iStock/esinesra

Responsible for the content:
Heinz-Jürgen Hacks

Layout:
Josephine Stachelhaus

Contact:
Heinz-Jürgen Hacks
Phone: 0201 1892-224
Email: heinz-juergen.hacks@essen.ihk.de

Edition:
December 2021