



Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Culture and society

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Driving through Germany's Ruhr region reveals a network of cities that have grown together so much so that it's difficult to tell where the borders are. It is a region of stark contrasts: There are industrial landscapes, green spaces, and a vibrant cultural scene, but there is also high unemployment. The Ruhrpott (the Ruhr is a river in the region while Pott colloquially means "mine") is one of the most densely populated areas in Europe. The reason for this is hidden deep in the earth: coal – once the "black gold" of the region.

The region developed from a barren agricultural landscape in the Middle Ages to a center of mining and heavy industry in Germany since 1800. Tunnels were dug to a depth of 1,300 meters. The Ruhr region represented not only coal dust and hard work but also prosperity and progress. The foundations for Germany's "economic miracle" after the Second World War were laid down in the Ruhrpott. The coal crisis at the end of the 1950s put an end to this legendary era. The last mine was closed in 2018, partly due to modern environmental policy.