Description of Essen

Essen is the central and second largest city of the Ruhr, the largest urban area in Germany. Its population of 583,393 makes it the ninth largest city in Germany and the fourth largest city in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. On the Ruhr and Emscher rivers, Essen is geographically part of the Rhineland region and the larger Rhein-Ruhr metropolitan area. The Ruhrdean dialect spoken in the region has a strong influence on both Lower German (Westphalian) and Lower Kon (East German).

Essen is a member of several regional authorities, as well as eight of the top 100 public German corporations by turnover, including three DAX corporations, which places Essen at the top of all German cities for the number of DAX headquarters along with Munich. Essen is often considered the energy capital of Germany, as E.ON and RWE, Germany's largest energy suppliers, are headquartered in the city. Essen is also known for its influence on the arts thanks to the esteemed Volkwang University of the Arts, its Zollverein School of Management and Design and the Red Dot award for industrial product design. In early 2003, the universities of Essen and the nearby city of Duisburg (both established in 1972) were merged to form Duisburg-Essen University with campuses in both cities and a university hospital in Essen. In 1958 Essen was chosen as the site for the Roman Catholic diocese (often referred to as the Rurbistum or Ruhr Diocese).

Founded around 845, Essen remained a small town within the sphere of influence of an important ecclesiastical principality (the Abbey of Essen) until the beginning of industrialization. The city, especially thanks to the Krupp family's steelworks, became one of the most important coal and steel centers in Germany. Essen attracted workers from all over the country until the 1970s; it was the 5th largest city in Germany between 1929 and 1988, with a population of over 730,000 in 1962. After the decline of heavy industry in the region in the last decades of the 20th century, the city developed a strong tertiary economy. The most notable witness of this Strukturwandel (structural change) is the Zollverein coal mill, which was once the largest of its kind in Europe. Finally closed in 1993, the coke plant and the mine have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001.

Attractions in Essen

1 Zollverein coal mine and coking plant, Arendals Wiese. Tel: +49 231 9311220, e-mail: info@zollverein.de. Since 2002 it has been a World Heritage Site and a symbol of former mining in Essen. The coal mine and the coking plant are two separate areas, each of which can be visited as part of the tour. The tour of the coking plant, which was only closed in 1993, lasts two hours, during which you can visit almost all areas of the coking plant, including a view from below through the smoke