

# THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN SPAIN: ANALYSIS FROM A TOURISM PERSPECTIVE AND THE TERRITORIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SOME RENOVATION PROJECTS

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## I. A HERITAGE OF CULTURAL INTEREST

The interest in the preservation and reuse of the industrial heritage has broadened the general concept of heritage and developed a great fascination for cultural legacy as a whole.

Once the initial difficulties related to the process of transformation of the old factories into refurbished centres for leisure and culture were overcome, many projects of renovation have been developed since the 1960's, revealing one of the most solvent areas, and with most future prospects, of the tourism sector at present.

The many options for restructuring are an energising and generating factor for new income. What is more, the re-use of buildings, the improvement of the surrounding area, the environmentally-friendly use for tourism and the creation of grass roots projects and companies are in tune with the approach of the new sustainable economy. From a geographical point of view, this heritage is seen as part of a landscape and as a resource of a territorial basis which is able to boost tourist activity.

## II. TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROTECTED INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

The industrial heritage is not expressly found in the state law 16/85, of June 25, of the Spanish industrial heritage. It is a broad law which covers in its articles all types of heritage. According to the definition contained in article 1.2, Spanish heritage is made up of buildings and assets of artistic, historical, paleontological, archeological, ethnographical, scientific or technical interest. No reference is made to industrial, although the legal tenure is broad and an industrial property could be declared to be of cultural interest.

Since the end of the 1990's there has been a large amount of quite explicit legislation regarding the protection of the industrial heritage at a local government level. One of the best examples is Asturias, whose 2001 law extends the state law of 1985 and the regulations of other autonomous regions.

The total number of industrial buildings declared to be of cultural interest in the whole country is 100, including a wide variety of building types (factories, canals, viaducts, railway stations, salt mines...) This figure represents 0.6% of all property of cultural interest in Spain, which is lower than in other central and northern European countries where on the one hand there was greater industrialization and on the other, less artistic heritage. In any case, 0.6% of Spain is comparable to other Mediterranean countries. The number is greater than the average in Asturias, The Basque Country, La Rioja, Castilla-La-Mancha, Madrid, Extremadura, The Canarys, Murcia, Aragón and Catalonia. In Cantabria, Navarra and Castilla y León the figure is similar to the national average and lower in the remaining regions. In any case, industrial cultural heritage buildings have greatly increased in number since 1990, before which they were relatively sparse.

Some regional initiatives and the National Plan of Industrial Heritage, began in 2000, have worked in that direction and have managed to protect a large part of our industrial history, with specific interventions in the most significant buildings.

### III. INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE MUSEUMS: A DIVERSE RANGE

Industrial heritage museums constitute an initiative intended to recall the evidence of the end of the classic model of industrialization. Beyond the actual difficulties of remodeling for tourism (big investments, poor social consideration, abandoned buildings of little monumental potential, neglected landscapes in the area, etc..) a very wide range of museums that can be divided into 4 main types: cultural centres, performance centres, ecomuseums and thematic museums.

The *cultural centres* exhibit permanent or temporary collections, of an artistic or other variety, in renovated industrial buildings as an evocative and fascinating framework. These are the industrial heritage museums with the greatest number of tourist visitors. (CaixaForum in Barcelona)

The *performance centres* explain the industrial area completely, with the technical and architectural elements that make up a determinate production process. In these museums great importance is given to the heritage value of the collections and buildings (Iron and Steel Museum, en Langreo).

The *ecomuseums* facilitate understanding of the industrial or mining impact on a wide area and allow the tourist to understand various heritage elements that are interrelated. These museums show the advantage of offering a global image but their size obliges the establishment of more or less organized visit routes (Mining Park of Riotinto).

The *thematic museums* explain the logic of a determinate production, or of a specific aspect of the industrialization of an area. The content focuses broadly on explanatory interest and the specific knowledge of the old production process confers a high didactic value on this category of industrial museums.

#### IV. TOURISM SIGNIFICANCE AND TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVITY OF THE SELECTED MUSEUMS OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE.

The survey carried out in various industrial heritage museums, which are significant because of their renovation projects and large territorial representativity, has allowed this tourism resource to become better known.

The majority of these museums were created from 1990 onwards (90.8%), with a very significant percentage between 2000 and 2008 (45.4%) They are establishments that have been created very recently, along with the spread of the preservation of monuments of industrialization and the practice of this tourism type as much in regions of greater industrial tradition as in those less industrialized.

The number of rooms is not high and the average exhibition area is 2,760m<sup>2</sup>, while the total is 6,590. This means a relation between both surfaces of 42%. Without counting the ecomuseums, which contain buildings and extensive areas, the biggest industrial heritage museum is the Museu de la Ciència i Tècnica, in Tarrasa, which occupies an area of 11,000m<sup>2</sup> in an urban plot of 24,000m<sup>2</sup>.

Visits to the surveyed museums are calculated in annual and monthly totals - modest figures that indicate a level of tourist attraction that is very far from the great European heritage centres. The museums with higher than average figures (28,903 a year) are located, excepting the Mining Park of Riotinto, in Catalonia: CaixaForum, Museu de la Ciència i de la Tècnica, Museu de les Aigües y Museu de la Colonia Vidal. They are centres with bigger tourist attraction and with annual visits that have not stopped increasing since the start of 2000.

The visit periods reveal a double pattern: firstly, with the area where the museum is located. For those located in rural areas, the period with most visits corresponds to the school year, especially during the months of Spring and Autumn; those in urban or metropolitan areas do it in two main periods: March-April, coinciding with Easter Week, and July-August-September as summer holidays, particularly in the case of museums found in coastal cities. Secondly, with the type of visit, seeing as group visits get underway specially between October and May, which coincides with school visits at all levels of education, while individual or family visits increase during the summer months. This information shows that these museums play a didactic role, with group visits during the school year, especially in Spring and Autumn; and a tourism role, with individual or family visits in summer and, to a lesser extent, Easter Week.

The public mainly come from the same area where the museum is located or from nearby areas and the visits diminish with distance. The limit from which visits start to go down is 50 kilometers (*local area of maximum frequentation*). From 50 to 100 kilometers (*local periphery*) visits go down notably, but they still represent a significant percentage within the whole. It is from 100 kilometers and above all, from 150, that the number of visitors reduces considerably (*distant periphery of minimum frequentation*).

## **V. CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TOURISM**

The promotion of this tourism in Spain has undergone a significant increase, as much at a local level as at a regional and national level. With the latter, the National Plan of Industrial Heritage stands out, as does the annual celebration of the Conferences of Industrial Heritage tourism, since 2006, with the intention of creating a meeting point made up of institutions, organisations and companies in order to analyse and share public and private models of tourism management. Some more specific objectives stand out: the need to disseminate the most representative experiences undertaken in our country; to generate knowledge of management of destinations and places with tourism resources of an industrial nature; to encourage personal and institutional synergy to facilitate co-operation and collaboration between the different agents; to create a permanent platform for the exchange of experiences; to bring closer to society the renovated or as yet unrenovated areas that have potential for tourism development.

Future tourism development seems hopeful due to the presence of a series of strong points and opportunities that are overcoming not only the weaknesses, threats and initial resistance, but also the risks and most recent weak points.