

COAL HERITAGE

RFCS Accompanying Measure Project

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Workshop Highlights: Protecting the Living Memory of Coal Mining Heritage

by dr. Sylwia Jarosławska-Sobór



Figure 1. Final meeting was attended by 47 people, including delegates from project partners CERTH in Greece, BRGM in France, DMT-THGA in Germany, PV in Slovenia, KOMAG and GIG-PIB in Poland, as well as representatives of institutions alongside museums, cultural institutions, universities, mining communities and NGO's. (photo: GIGPIB, Mariusz Borek)

On 6th June 2025, the Experimental Mine Barbara in Mikołów hosted a final workshop of the COAL HERITAGE project, gathering 47 on-site and 10 online participants. Organised by the Central Mining Institute – National Research Institute (GIG-PIB), the event aimed to disseminate and promote results of COALHERITAGE project and advance efforts in safeguarding Europe's coal mining heritage.

The meeting was attended by 47 people, including delegates from project partners CERTH in Greece, BRGM in France, DMT-THGA in Germany, PV in Slovenia, KOMAG and GIG-PIB in Poland, as well as representatives of institutions alongside museums, cultural institutions, universities, mining communities and NGO's. Theodoros Zarogiannis on behalf of coordination CERTH team presented an overview of the CoalHeritage, emphasizing its focus on the project's main objectives, and the work carried out per work package related to coordination, data collection, mapping, and dissemination strategies. Key results demonstrated the project's impact on regional development, tourism, and community engagement, supported by strong digital tools and stakeholder collaboration. During the presentation of Christina Karatrantou from CERTH on European Visual Map Journal attendees were introduced to the content of the platform and its possibilities such as the visualisation of geospatial data on the platform together with descriptive

text and images, exploration of mining objects with 3D models. WP3 session - Inventory of assets and management of sites was discussed by Kamil Szeverda representative of KOMAG. The algorithm for creating and publishing 3D models used in the COAL HERITAGE project was presented. The benefits of using 3D models and modern technology to digitise mining heritage were summarised.

Second part of the workshop was dedicated to the stakeholders' engagement in preservation and promotion of the coal mining heritage. The discussion was preceded by presentations reports of 2 surveys: completed by the THGA survey on public perception of industrial heritage and first results GIG-PIB survey on stakeholders' involvement in the process of protection and promotion of mining heritage.

After the presentation a vibrant discussion on the results of the research and the main challenges in the promotion and protection of mining heritage took place. Participants considered the challenges related to the preservation and promotion of mining heritage, focusing on the experiences of France, Germany, Polish and the United Kingdom. Laurent Becaletto, BRGM talked over the problems of French coal museums, related primarily to the need for systematic documentation in order to secure the history of mining depositaries of memory. He also pointed out that bottom-up initiatives and local authorities actions must be supported by government maintenance.

The other participants of the discussion emphasized the importance of the involvement of local communities and political support for the effective transformation of post-mining regions. It was recognized that the preservation of mining heritage in the era of transformation is a comprehensive challenge that requires both political and financial support, as well as grassroots initiatives of local communities. It is crucial not only to preserve tangible objects, but above all to nurture living intangible heritage, which is the basis of the identity of post-mining regions. Lack of integration of local communities and local governments in the transformation process may lead to the loss of identity and social disintegration. There is a need for a strategic approach to revitalization, taking into account not only the cultural aspect, but also the economic and social one, using the experience of other countries.

The workshop confirmed one thing clearly: Europe's coal past still fuels a vibrant cultural future if we choose to invest in it.



Figure 2. Hernan Flores presentation at final workshop (photo: GIGPIB, Mariusz Borek)

INDUSTRIADA 2025 with COAL HERITAGE project

by dr. Sylwia Jarosławska-Sobór

On June 7th, 2025, the Barbara Experimental Mine in Mikołów, part of the Central Mining Institute – National Research Institute (GIG-PIB), transformed into a living museum of European industrial legacy during INDUSTRIADA 2025, the largest festival of industrial heritage in Central and Eastern Europe. This year's edition was especially meaningful. The Barbara Mine GIG-PIB was officially recognized as a "Friendly Facility of INDUSTRIADA", one of only ten institutions in Poland to earn the prestigious title. In a vibrant blend of history, innovation, and storytelling, INDUSTRIADA became a celebration of coal mining's role in shaping communities, economies and the environment. At the heart of it all was COAL HERITAGE project, dedicated to preserving and promoting Europe's coal mining legacy through digital tools, education, and immersive experiences.

Barbara Mine welcomed 340 curious guests, families and history enthusiasts for a day of immersive discovery. Visitors explored the European Visual Map Journal — a digital platform mapping mining stories across Europe. The excitement continued underground, with rare guided tours

through the Barbara Mine's experimental underground workings, usually off-limits to the public. The thrill was real above ground too, with spectacular live demonstrations of dust explosions and methane extinguishing, a powerful reminder of mining's scientific complexity and risks.

Guests were introduced to the project's flagship innovation — the European Visual Map Journal, an interactive digital platform collecting and sharing mining stories across countries. A VR zone curated by the KOMAG Institute allowed guests to interact with digitized heritage objects. Visitors experienced heritage like never before: touching, rotating, and examining digitized mining artifacts in virtual reality.

For younger audiences, INDUSTRIADA became an adventure zone. The imaginative outdoor game "The B Mine - hunters of the treasures of the earth", led by the LUFCEK NA KORBKE industrial theatre, turned the entire area into a playground of historical riddles and technological wonders.

Promotional films, educational stations, hands-on exploration and open conversations with researchers made the event not only a celebration of the past but a bridge to the future. With its combination of storytelling, science, and community engagement, INDUSTRIADA 2025 at the Barbara Mine proved that mining heritage is far from forgotten. It's alive, evolving, and ready to inspire the next generation.



Figure 3 & 4. Industriada at Experimental Mine Barbara GIG-PIB (photo: GIGPIB, Andrzej Ferenc, Mariusz Borek)

Figure 5 & 6. Industriada & Komag VR stand at Industriada at Experimental Mine Barbara GIG-PIB (photo: Lufcicknakorbke)

Why Mining Heritage Matters. Insights from the CoalHeritage Stakeholder Survey

by dr. Sylwia Jarosławska-Sobór

In an era where the post-industrial landscape is being redefined, the CoalHeritage project asked a timely question: Do we still need mining heritage – and who should take care of it? A recent multinational survey and report have delivered compelling answers, drawing on perspectives from five European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Poland, and Slovenia.

The stakeholder engagement survey developed by GIG-PIB, gathered opinions from a diverse audience, including local governments, mining industry and heritage professionals, educators, cultural organizations and local associations. The goal? To gain different stakeholders's opinion on their involvement in the process of protection and promotion of mining heritage. In this part, methodology, data analysis, results and survey conclusions have been discussed.

Participants were asked to assess: the current level of stakeholder involvement, their awareness of cooperation methods, perceptions of public engagement and financial support, the most effective promotional tools and the key benefits and future needs of mining heritage initiatives.

The key takeaway? Stakeholder engagement is essential. Most respondents rated stakeholder engagement as high or very high, particularly from local communities, governments, and educational institutions. Tourism development, local cultural events, and educational programs were viewed as the most effective methods for promoting mining heritage. By contrast, artistic initiatives, media campaigns, and conferences were seen as less impactful, though still valuable when paired with more interactive approaches. The greatest barriers identified were limited financial resources and insufficient knowledge about mining heritage.

Respondents emphasized that external support, such as funding for heritage projects, creating new tourist attractions, and marketing assistance, was vital. Educational outreach, especially in schools, and community-based events were seen as top priorities for raising public awareness.

The survey also confirmed that mining heritage plays a crucial role in protecting historical and cultural values, boosting tourism and local economies and creating new job opportunities. As the final report notes, a successful transition from coal-based economies depends on inclusive, well-funded, and digitally innovative stakeholder strategies. Projects, like COAL HERITAGE demonstrate that mining heritage is not only a memory of the past, but an important support for coal region's identity preservation.

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