



Geo-products of urban areas: Silesian Metropolis, Southern Poland

Ryszard Chybiorz and Anna Abramowicz

Faculty of Earth Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice, Sosnowiec, Poland

Silesian Metropolis is located in the Silesian Voivodeship, in the most important industrial region in Poland. It consists of 14 cities with powiat rights, which create the largest urban center in Poland and one of the largest in Central and Eastern Europe. Almost 2 million people live in its territory. A large concentration of the population is associated with industrialization and especially with the development of the mining industry (Upper Silesian Coal Basin) and the processing industry (steelworks, textile industry) at the end of 19th century.

One hundred years later, during the creation of the modern sectors of the economy, processes of metallurgy and mining restructuring have been started. Created mechanisms and conditions for development of post-industrial areas were consistent with the principles of sustainable development and had many new features, including cultural and touristic features. The Industrial Monuments Route was opened for the inhabitants and visitors in October 2006. The route joined the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) in 2010. Its most interesting mining attractions are located in Silesian Metropolis, and the most frequently visited object on the route is the Guido Historical Coal Mine in Zabrze and the Historical Silver Mine in Tarnowskie Góry. The project, which is realized in Zabrze, will provide for tourists a system of underground corridors, which were used for coal transportation in the 19th century. Visitors will be able to actively explore the work of miners, moving by underground boats, railway and suspension railway. Surface mines are also available for geotourists. The Ecological and Geological Education Center GEOSfera was created in a former Triassic quarry in Jaworzno.

Although the area of the Silesian Metropolis is characterized by a very large devastation of the environment, the following objects were created (and are still created) on the basis of inanimate nature and they have a touristic value for the region and the country. Some of them already provide for the implementation of geotouristic purposes.