

## **New initiatives aiming at the preservation of industrial heritage in Poland. Museum of Zinc Production History in Katowice –Szopienice.**

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The activities carried out by the Foundation of Industrial Heritage Preservation in the Silesia region aiming at establishing the Museum of Zinc Production History in Katowice – Szopienice are coming to an end.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the Upper Silesia was one of the biggest manufacturers of zinc in the world. Smelting and processing of zinc was one of the most important fields of industry influencing the economic development of the Upper Silesia.

The Foundation deals with the active protection of industrial heritage in the Silesia, the most important industrial region in Poland. As part of the Foundation, the Museum of Industry and Railway in Jaworzyna Śląska has been operating since 2004, established for the purpose of saving an antique locomotive shed to be liquidated, located in the area of an old important railway node, which came into being in 1843. The aim of the Museum is to substantiate and make available the industrial heritage of the Silesia region, first of all connected with railways. Railway manufacture in the 19th and 20th centuries was one of the most important fields of industry in the Lower Silesia, obtaining also significant results in Europe.

Nowadays the Museum holds a collection of over 120 track vehicles and is one of the most important technical and railway museums in Poland. Eleven years' experience in managing the Museum not only enabled to significantly extend the collection but also to assign special tasks to the Museum. Currently the Museum again acts as a locomotive shed serving the rolling stock. Thanks to its own renovated locomotives and antique carriages, since 2015 local connections for tourists have been launched. In the area of the museum locomotive shed there is a workshop serving the operating rolling stock and restoring railway exhibits located in the Museum.

Currently, as part of the Foundation, a project is realized connected with the rescue of a historic Zinc Rolling Mill of 1903 located in the Upper Silesia in Katowice- Szopienice. This monument has survived as until 2002 it had been manufacturing zinc coated steel sheet in original machines dated 1903. After the manufacture process had been finished, the plant, left unattended, became more and more destroyed. It was purchased in 2013 and rescue actions were taken up which enabled to preserve the facility and the manufacturing machinery. Currently final construction, maintenance and organizational work is in progress, aiming at the opening of the Museum of Zinc Production History in the Silesia region as part of the antique Zinc Rolling Mill.

The Museum will substantiate the history of getting and processing zinc. After the maintenance process has been finished, a complete process of manufacturing zinc sheet in antique machinery will be presented.

It is going to be the first Museum substantiating the history of the process of mining and processing zinc.