



From Coal to a Green Future: Hrastnik as a Leading Example of Reindustrialization and Brownfield Transformation

Despite the stubborn weather, an inspiring event took place in Hrastnik on Friday, 31 May 2024. This event aimed to transform a former mine site into a green oasis. The Open Day, "From Coal to a Green Future," was organized by the Municipality of Hrastnik, the Zasavska Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, and the Institute of Civil Engineering. The event attracted many visitors eager to contribute to the transformation of Hrastnik.

The round table brought together experts including Marko Funkl, Mayor of the Municipality of Hrastnik, Jože Weingartner, Director of the Regional Technology Centre Zasavje, Martin Šikovc, Head of the Centre for Fair Transition of Zasavje, Tadej Hrovatič and Igor Hrovatič from Nanocut d.o.o., and Dr. Primož Oprčkal, Head of the Laboratory for Stone, Aggregate, and Recycled Materials at the Building Research Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. They shared their vision of Hrastnik's future.

Inspiring discussions opened the door to new ideas and solutions for transforming brown areas into green ones, showing that the future of Zasavje is indeed green.

At the Open Day, innovations were presented by Proga RollerSki, S.O.S. School, Katapult, Neurobeans, Gregor Bohnec s.p., the Technical and Vocational School Trbovlje, ETI Izlake, Steklarna Hrastnik, and the Calvodal Association. Workshops were conducted under the guidance of Nina Juratovec from Regional Development Zasavje and the Hrastnik Youth Centre.

What is the ReInd-BBG Project?

The ReInd-BBG project is an innovative, transnational initiative that aims to reindustrialize the environment based on the principle "Brownfield is better than Greenfield." This means redeveloping brownfield sites instead of encroaching on greenfield sites, thereby preserving our beautiful nature and moving closer to a sustainable future.



"The Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry actively promotes regional and local development, thereby strengthening local micro-economies with the help of European funding. One such initiative is ReInd-BBG, implemented within the framework of the Interreg Danube programme, which will help Hrastnik build a new business incubator in one of its abandoned mine site buildings," said Tanja Faganel, ReInd-BBG project manager.

Tjaša Polc, Director of the Zasavje Chamber of Commerce, added, "Hrastnik's revitalization of former mining facilities is creating a new hub of innovation, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs. It is important that we take advantage of existing old industrial facilities, renovate them, and thus help to create new jobs. We are working to create new jobs and promote entrepreneurship in Hrastnik and Zasavje in general."

The Mayor of Hrastnik, Marko Funkl, stated, "It is crucial that such events are organized right here in Hrastnik. We want to show that the former industrial center can become a model for sustainable development and innovation. Together, we are building a green future for all generations."

The Open Day concluded with a performance by the Zasavje rock phenomenon Ian Ostrožnik, who enriched the already inspiring day with his music. Together, we are creating the future—from coal to green!