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Where Prussia and Saxony caress

Southwest Brandenburg

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie is smiling and holding a green and white brochure. He is standing outdoors in a park-like setting with a large green tree behind him and a bronze bust on a stone pedestal to his right. The background also shows a half-timbered building. The brochure he is holding has the text 'Landkreis Elbe-Elster' and 'Wo neue Sachsen...' on it.

CHRISTIAN HEINRICH-JASCHINSKI
Chief Executive of the county of Elbe-Elster

Elbe-Elster,
for a full life
in a natural
environment

1

What is the population of south-west Brandenburg?

ANSWER: Somewhere in the region of 104,500 people live in this area, which is largely rural in nature. It is a county which offers space for ideas to develop, bear fruit and make a difference.

2

How many pine trees are there in Elbe-Elster?

ANSWER: No-one's got round to counting them yet. But thinking of us only in terms of pine forests means you risk failing to see the wood for the trees. There is also heathland here, as well as river meadows, moors, rivers and lakes – but most importantly, a high quality of life in a natural setting.

3

Do they speak High German here, or the Saxon dialect?

ANSWER: Both! In the north of the county they speak High German with a Berlin twang, and in the south the Osterland people speak Saxon. The two groups are separated by the 'Eierschecke frontier', so called because Prussians and Saxons make this cake in different ways.

4

What makes this a good place to settle down?

ANSWER: Many young people are drawn to the idea of putting down roots in a region with a down-to-earth attitude to life and where there are opportunities to grow. And those who sometimes hanker after city air will find Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig right on their doorstep.

5

And what sort of things go on there?

ANSWER: Why not see for yourself? Just drop in any weekend of the year. The county's cultural and sporting calendars are generally so full that you'll soon run out of time.

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a striped shirt and a baby sling, is looking up at a man in a white shirt. The man is holding a large, round, crusty loaf of bread. They are in a bakery or cafe, with shelves of various breads in the background. The woman is also holding a large wicker basket filled with fresh vegetables, including carrots, leafy greens, and a bouquet of small white and purple flowers. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

6.14 AM

A bright
and early
start at Café
Plätzchen

NICOLE THINIUS AND CHRISTIAN GRAF ARE UP AT THE CRACK OF DAWN.

By the time they open their Café Plätzchen in Herzberg at 6.30, the master baker will already have spent several hours working in the bakery with the same name. The atmosphere in the café is reminiscent of another time; Christian uses traditional artisanal recipes and has no time for ready-mixed ingredients. Regional products and healthy eating are central to the couple's business plan, and they made a conscious decision to settle in Herzberg. "Elbe-Elster gives us space to grow our business and live the kind of life that's right for us", they say.

The county and its people in southwest Brandenburg



AT THE HEART OF THINGS. The county of Elbe-Elster is situated in the south of Brandenburg within the triangle formed by the cities of Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig, and has Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt as its next-door neighbours.

ON THE ELBE AND THE ELSTER. 104,500 inhabitants live in this area of 1,900 square kilometres. The county takes its name from two rivers: the Black Elster and the Elbe. These flow through its southern regions, while to the east is the western area of Lower Lausitz; its northern neighbour is Lower Fläming.

STRADDLING THE 'EIERSCHKECKE FRONTIER'. Owned for centuries by Saxony, the area fell into the hands of Brandenburg in Prussia following the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Echoes of this ancient border can still be heard today in the region's Saxon and Lower Lausitz dialects.

A PLACE OF LEGENDS. Singing is an important part of the culture of Finsterwalde, famous for the popular song, 'Wir sind die Sänger von Finsterwalde'. The first itinerant puppet theatre troupes in central Germany formed in the Black Elster region 250 years ago, and the Battle of Mühlberg determined the course of the Reformation in 1547. The Elbe-Elster area brims with stories – some more historically significant than others – which are just waiting to be discovered and revived.

SPACE FOR IDEAS. The people here are open and friendly, and have a hunger for the new. The region offers them the space to make their ideas and ambitions a reality.

THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW. The county of Elbe-Elster is an energy and climate protection region, and as such has adopted an innovative and forward-looking approach to dealing with the industrial legacy of brown coal mining.



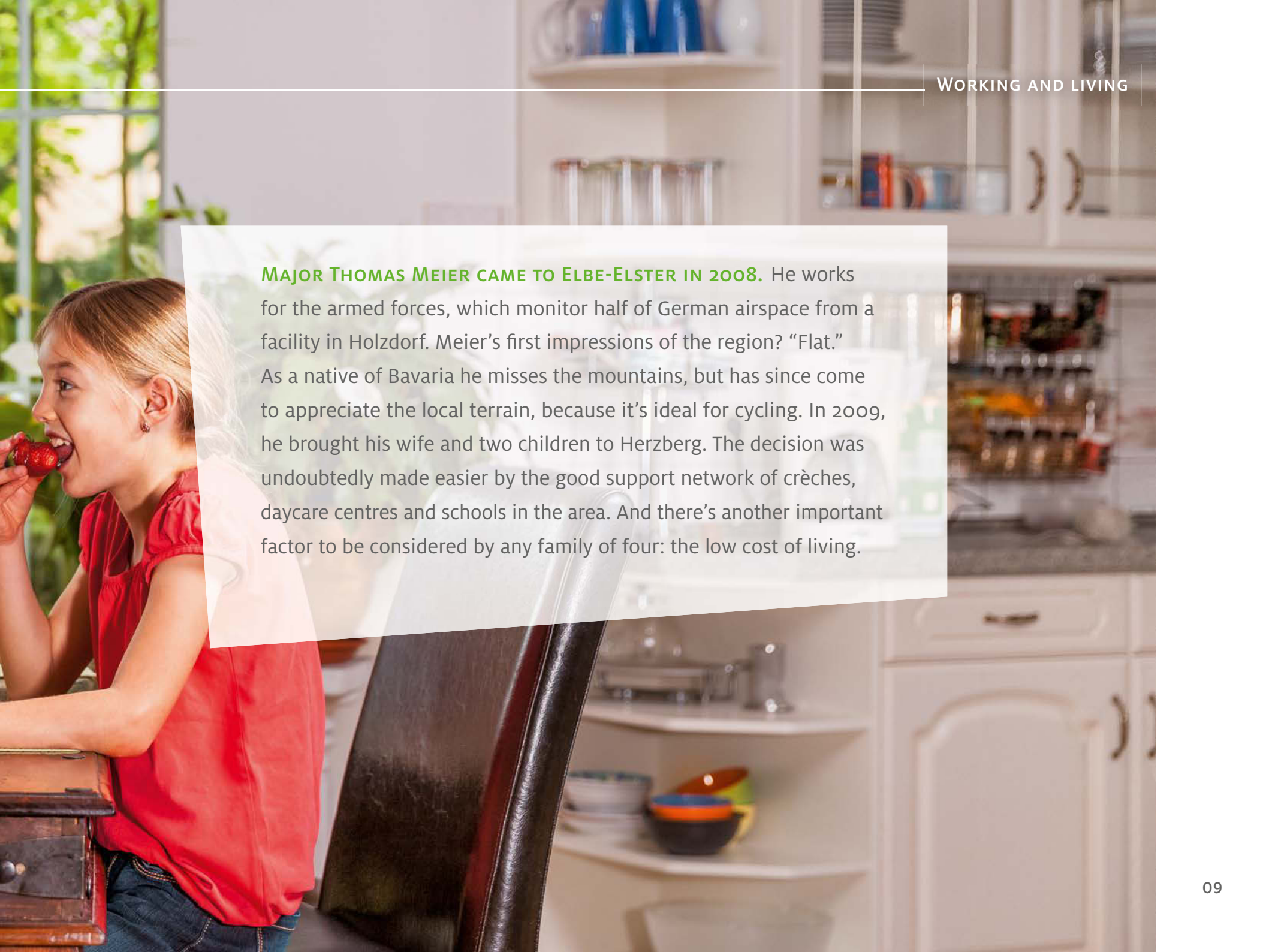


Punting through unspoilt nature in the Little Spreewald near Wahrenbrück (centre top). Herzberg's town centre has been beautifully restored (left). Out and about: Elbe-Elster offers attractive rambling and cycling routes (centre bottom). The church at Saathain is just one of a wide variety of historic places of worship (right). Locally-sourced: apple crop in the pomological show garden at Döllingen (bottom).

6.30 AM

Gearing up
for another
day at work
or school



A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a red short-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is sitting at a wooden table in a kitchen. She is smiling and eating a strawberry. In the background, there are white kitchen cabinets, a countertop with various items, and a window showing greenery outside. A semi-transparent white box containing text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

MAJOR THOMAS MEIER CAME TO ELBE-ELSTER IN 2008. He works for the armed forces, which monitor half of German airspace from a facility in Holzdorf. Meier's first impressions of the region? "Flat." As a native of Bavaria he misses the mountains, but has since come to appreciate the local terrain, because it's ideal for cycling. In 2009, he brought his wife and two children to Herzberg. The decision was undoubtedly made easier by the good support network of crèches, daycare centres and schools in the area. And there's another important factor to be considered by any family of four: the low cost of living.

A place with prospects of a bright new future



WORKING IN ELBE-ELSTER. The county offers excellent opportunities for professional development and promotion. Businesses in the region are keen to keep employee turnover rates low, so they open doors to advancement which might not be so readily available elsewhere.

A LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES. Apart from agriculture, medium-sized industries and crafts and trades are the most important employers in the region. The service industries are proving to be a growth sector, particularly in the area of healthcare.

A GREAT PLACE FOR EDUCATION. The county's bureau of education and educational conference support businesses by ensuring that educational provision in the region keeps abreast of the latest developments, and that career and study opportunities are systematically orientated towards future needs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The public sector in Elbe-Elster adopts a wide range of initiatives so as to ensure that local enterprises can call on a skilled workforce. Creating links between business and education from early on means that potential recruits are aware of local job opportunities well in advance. The county awards 'training stars' to enterprises which demonstrate a commitment to training.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS. The 'Comeback Elbe-Elster' initiative has been designed to entice former residents back home to the county by making them aware of what the region can offer in both personal and career terms. Those keen to return can access a network which also benefits the county's businesses, local authorities and institutions.





Sandra Schäfer from Röderland GmbH is the delighted recipient of the training star awarded to her company in 2014 (top). If necessary, Stephanie Auras from the Comeback EE initiative is also prepared to help with the move back home (centre). Apprentices problem-solving at enviaM's modern training centre in Falkenberg (left). Building contractor Andreas Schumann from Doberlug-Kirchhain specialises in barrier-free construction (right).

8.05 AM

Jeanne
Scholze needs
to pay close
attention



THE LABEL PASSES THE TEST! Jeanne Scholze and colleague Thomas Wartenberger ensure that the products of Bauer Fruchtsaft GmbH in Bad Liebenwerda are correctly labelled when they reach lovers of healthy fruit juices. Jeanne Scholze is an industrial technician. When an opportunity arose at the long-established company, she seized it with both hands. “Office work isn’t for me”, she admits. She enjoys everything about Bauer: the good team atmosphere, the chance of promotion, the innovative products and the modern filling technology, which demands every last ounce of her expertise on a daily basis. This is just one of many economic success stories in the region.

A major plus: the state of the economy in Elbe-Elster



WELL CONNECTED. The Elbe-Elster economic area lies at the three-state border between Brandenburg, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, close to the conurbations of Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden. Poland and the Czech Republic are only one or two hours away. The region has good access to national transport networks.

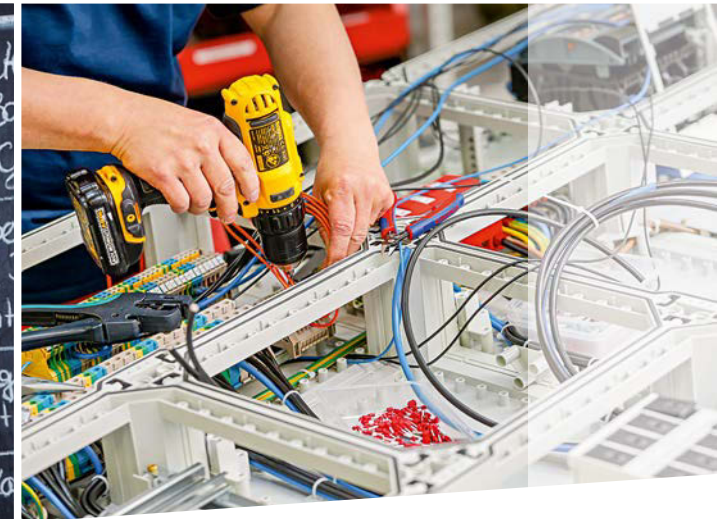
INDUSTRIAL PROFILE. The county of Elbe-Elster specialises mainly in the chemical, metalworking and food sectors. The leading industrial and commercial centres are in the towns of Bad Liebenwerda, Elsterwerda, Falkenberg, Finsterwalde, Herzberg, Mühlberg and Schlieben.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE. Farming is a major industry in the county of Elbe-Elster, which has some 50 percent of its land in agriculture use. Alongside forestry, there is an important economic potential here.

TRADE AND COMMERCE. Most of the region's medium-sized businesses specialise in crafts, skilled trades and the retail sector, and offer a wide range of services. Bad Liebenwerda, Elsterwerda, Finsterwalde and Herzberg are popular, bustling shopping centres.

SUPPORT FROM DAY ONE. Elbe-Elster business development agency supports companies looking to invest, provides guidance as they seek to establish new products or production processes, assists with the recruitment of skilled workers and with professional development, and helps them to slot into regional networks.





Modern animal husbandry at Agrargesellschaft Präsen mbH (top). Precision work is the order of the day at REISS Büromöbel GmbH in Bad Liebenwerda (left and bottom). A business idea with regional roots: Ricarda Barich's 'Dein Suppengrün' in Finsterwalde serves locally-sourced food (centre). Electrical equipment for industry and the energy supply sector is designed, manufactured and assembled at uesa GmbH in Uebigau (right).

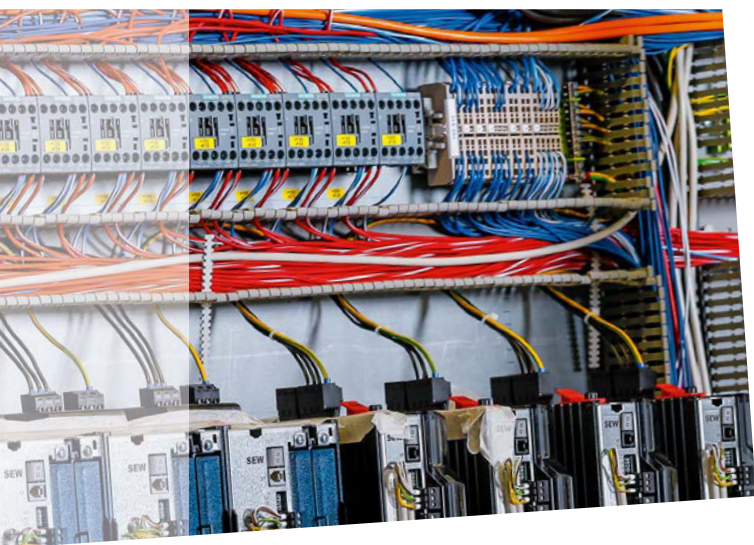
9.37 AM

Beate
Zimmermann
gets her feet
wet at work



BROWN COAL MINING TRANSFORMED THE LAUSITZ REGION LIKE A NEW ICE AGE. It left behind lakes where previously there had been none. The work of geoecologist Dr. Beate Zimmermann from the Research Institute for Post-Mining Landscapes in Finsterwalde involves returning this new landscape to a usable condition. “We are developing innovative strategies aimed at finding the best ways of controlling processes in the wake of mining”, she says. The team from the institute works on identifying sustainable uses for this changed environment in a sort of landscape laboratory.

Elbe-Elster: up to speed, and full of bright ideas



INNOVATION CREATES OPPORTUNITIES.

Enterprises in Elbe-Elster secure their future by being innovative. Players on the global market are based here, but so are many medium-sized companies which use their capacity for innovation to meet challenging customer requirements on an individual level.

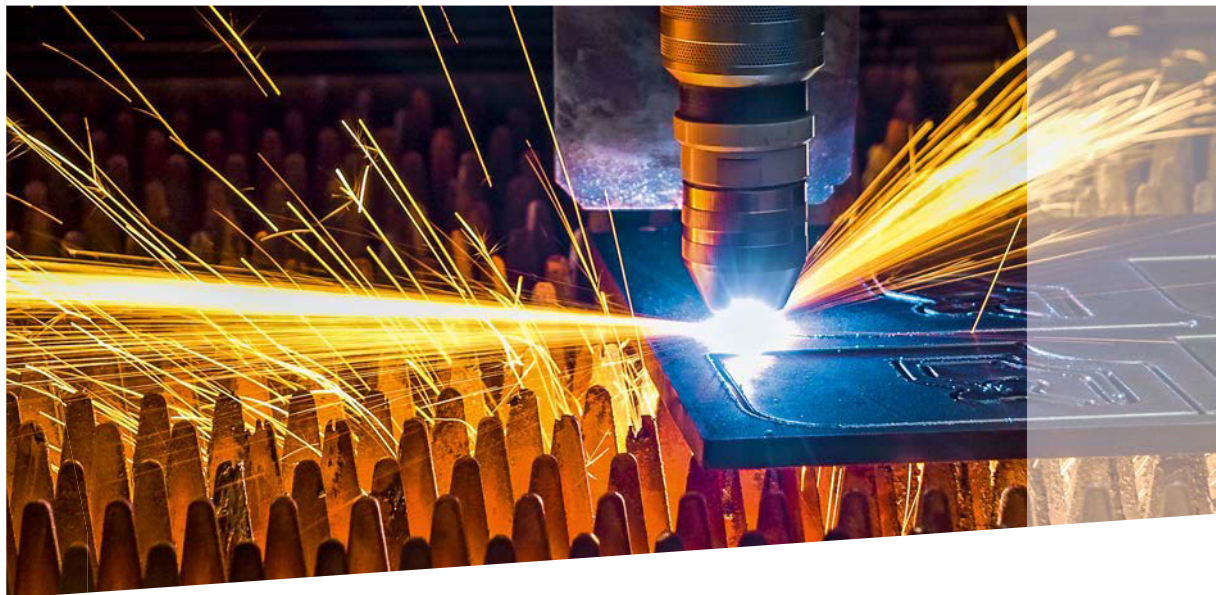
CLOSE TO CENTRES OF INTELLECT. The door to German universities and research institutes is open wide. The most important partner in the region is Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus-Senftenberg, but the universities in Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden are also near neighbours.

A POSITIVE IMPETUS. Industry networks and regional growth centres bring innovation to the region and create links between businesses and R&D organisations. Parts of the county of Elbe-Elster lie in the West Lausitz growth centre, which is a particular funding hotspot.

GOOD USE OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL.

The region offers companies attractive incentives. Municipal tax rates are below the national average, making this a great place for them to set up in business and benefit from strategic advantages. In the LEADER region of Elbe-Elster, the focus is on innovative public interest services, which are having to respond to recent changes in demographic conditions.

PROTECTING THE FUTURE. Agriculture too is benefiting from innovation. 'Precision farming' is now part of everyday life for agricultural enterprises in the region. Brandenburg is showing the rest of Germany the way forward when it comes to renewable energies. Thanks to a series of future-oriented climate projects, the county of Elbe-Elster is also doing its bit for climate protection.



G & B Automatisierungstechnik GmbH & Co. KG in Elsterwerda specialises in customised automated systems for production process sequences (top). Predl GmbH Bönitz manufactures optimised components for the sewer networks of the future (left and bottom). The plasma cutting systems of Kjellberg Finsterwalde Plasma und Maschinen GmbH have an excellent reputation in the global market (right).



11.26 AM

The future
looks rosy for
trainee Kosta
Georgiev

A NEW COUNTRY, NEW LANGUAGE, AND NEW PEOPLE. When Kosta Georgiev began his apprenticeship at the Elbe-Elster Sparkasse, there were major hurdles for the young Bulgarian to overcome. “He came through with flying colours”, says his HR manager Riccardo Sawkin. The bank has played a leading role in the county’s integration of EU apprentices, and is currently training young Spaniards, Greeks, Bulgarians and Poles. This not only secures its own future workforce, but also sends out a signal that the county of Elbe-Elster is cosmopolitan, tolerant and has an international outlook.



Sparkasse
Elbe-Elster

In the region. For the region.

Welcome to the land of the Elbe and the Black Elster



OPEN AND WELCOMING. The county of Elbe-Elster is cosmopolitan and curious about the world. Its inhabitants are well used to rubbing shoulders with unfamiliar cultural influences, and have assimilated them into their everyday lives. Although Wendish was the only language spoken in many of the villages hereabouts until the mid-19th century, industrialisation brought a huge influx of outsiders to the area. One of the region's strengths is its ability to blend the old with the new.

FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD. The county of Elbe-Elster and its towns maintain partnerships with some of their peers elsewhere in Germany, in other parts of Europe, and abroad. The region has built up longstanding relationships with the Märkischer Kreis in North Rhine-Westphalia and with the town of Racibórz and Nakło County in Poland; it also has ties with Wrexham in the UK.

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS. Schoolchildren visit our twinned towns, their inhabitants celebrate festivals together, and there are shared associations. These international partnerships also exist on a cultural level. Artists from twinned areas, for instance, are constantly being invited to the county's art exhibitions. These encounters bring bright new splashes of colour to everyday life around the Elbe and the Elster, and help to open doors to a greater understanding of other people's traditions and perspectives.

REFUGEES WELCOME. Refugee initiatives run by committed volunteers in many parts of the county are promoting and practising an open outlook towards others, and supporting newcomers when they first arrive in Germany.



COSMOPOLITAN AND INQUISITIVE



Children from Mühlberg bake alongside their guests from Polish partner regions (top left). The municipal federation of Schradenland attracted an international line-up of artists to the region with its open-air event on the theme of the 'Land between the Elbe and the Elster' (top right). Playing sport together during diversity week in Elsterwerda (left). The Berg primary school in Doberlug-Kirchhain has internationalism on the curriculum with its Comenius Project (right).

A man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a teal polo shirt with a logo, is sitting in a forest. He is holding a small green sapling with both hands. The background consists of large, stacked logs. A green text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

12.42 PM

Christoph Mertzig plans decades in advance

ABOUT SEVEN PERCENT OF BRANDENBURG'S WOODLAND IS TO BE FOUND IN THE COUNTY OF ELBE-ELSTER. The region's woods are a resource, a green lung and a sanctuary. As well as the rows of pines lined up with Prussian precision, there are also romantic deciduous forests. But not enough, reckons Christoph Mertzig. Together with his colleagues from the local forestry agency in Doberlug, he is working to convert the woodland and create greater diversity. "We're planting beech and oak trees", says the forester, who tends to plan generations ahead. But even the region's pine forests have their charms: the sunlight plays through the trees, and there is a wonderful scent of resin.

Where you can take a lungful of fresh country air



TO DISCOVER AT YOUR LEISURE. The area around the Elbe and the Black Elster has its own tranquil beauty which should be explored at a gentle pace. Those wishing to escape the rat-race and leave everyday life behind will find woods and river meadows, wide fields, meadows, rivers, lakes and moors.

A SYMPHONY IN HEATHER. Each season has its own charms. While nature-lovers are attracted by the spring blossom in the many surviving orchard meadows, they also come in the autumn for the vivid purple heather.

HIDDEN TREASURES. The gently rolling landscape has secret wonders, such as the Schraden: the lowland areas around the Black Elster and the Pulsnitz were once the hunting grounds of Saxon electors. The Loben is one of the last moors of Lower Lausitz to have survived intact; its flora and fauna are typical of the region's moors and heathlands.



THE FRONT LINE BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE. Large parts of the Elbe-Elster area are situated in the Lower Lusatian Heath Nature Park. Here one finds unspoilt landscapes, but also the more problematic legacy of generations of human activity. The visitor centre in Bad Liebenwerda should be your first port of call. The region is also right next door to the Lower Lusatian Ridge Nature Park.

A NATURAL PARADISE. The Grünhaus nature reserve occupies a post-mining landscape at the former open-cast mine of Kleinleipisch. The NABU Foundation for National Natural Heritage ensures that the some 2,000 hectare site can provide a suitable habitat for plants and animals. Visitors are able to experience this natural paradise on a guided walk.





The river meadows by the Black Elster are an inviting place to walk and cycle (left). Capercaillies have returned to the heathland of Lower Lausitz (top). Lookin' at Schnucken: Heidschnucke sheep are right at home on the region's heaths (right). An enchanting sight on the Loben moors: the fluffy heads of cotton grass (bottom).



1.46 PM

Why did the
Spanish swim
across the
Elbe in 1547?



IN 1547, THE SAXON ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK 'MET HIS WATERLOO'. At the little town of Mühlberg on the River Elbe, the Protestant Schmalkaldic League which fought under his banner was defeated by the Catholic alliance of Emperor Charles V. Martina Pöschl tells of a battle which changed the course not only of the Reformation, but also of Europe itself, at the Mühlberg 1547 museum. The history of Elbe-Elster is not just related in its museums: there are many castles and historic organs too, while its industrial heritage trail is another visitor attraction.



A rich history: Where Prussia and Saxony caress



DISCOVER THE PAST. The museum association of the county of Elbe-Elster presents the fascinating cultural history of the area at four sites. The central German puppetry museum in Bad Liebenwerda tells of the 250-year-old history of itinerant puppet theatre troupes in Saxony and preserves the musical heritage of the Graun brothers, shining lights of Frederick the Great's Hofkapelle in the 18th century.

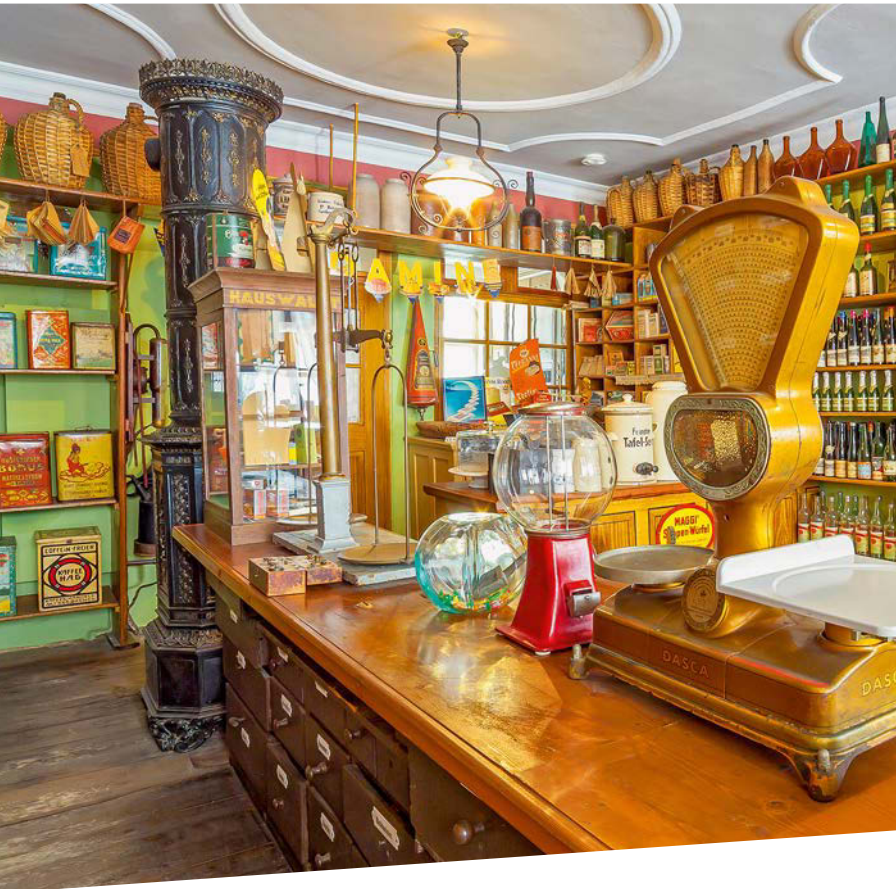
LINKS WITH THE REFORMATION. European history was written at Mühlberg. The Schmalkaldic War altered the course of the Reformation; it culminated in the Battle of Mühlberg, which is the main theme of the Mühlberg 1547 museum.

A GLITTERING RESIDENCE. The magnificent palace of Doberlug once belonged to the Elector of Saxony. Visitors today can still get a sense of its heyday in the 17th and 18th centuries, when it was used as a secondary residence and hunting lodge by the dukes of Saxe-Merseburg.

DOWN AT THE LOCAL SHOP. The colonial goods store of G.F. Wittke with its original fixtures and fittings lies at the heart of the singers' and shopkeepers' museum in Finsterwalde, and is the archetype of a small, local, family-owned shop. The Finsterwalde singers invite you to wend your way through a display which relates the history of the famous 'singer-song' and of communal singing.

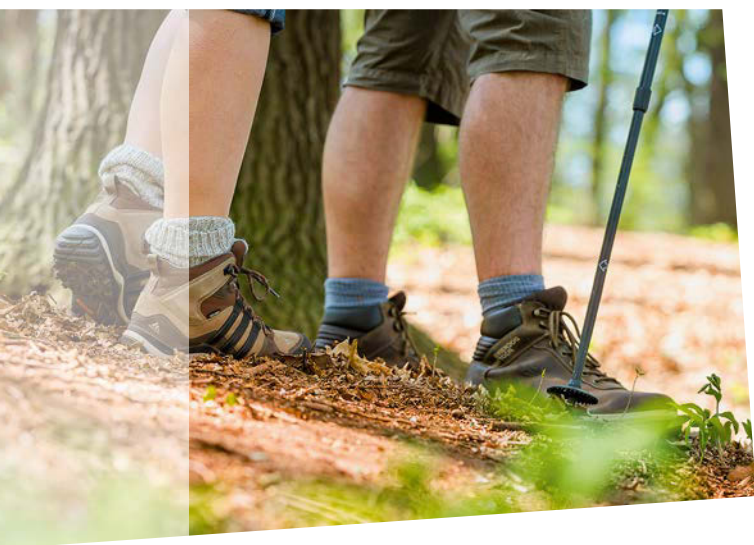
A HISTORY IN STONE. Elbe-Elster is famous for its castles: architectural gems wait to be discovered by the curious in Elsterwerda, Neu-deck, Martinskirchen, Sallgast, Finsterwalde, Doberlug and elsewhere.





The museum in Bad Liebenwerda keeps the central German tradition of itinerant puppet troupes alive (top). Gottfried Wittke's 'colonial goods' store in Finsterwalde takes you back to the retail world of the 19th century, and the items available to buy in those days (left). Schloss Doberlug, once the secondary residence of the dukes of Saxe-Merseburg, has been magnificently restored (right). There is a wide variety of fine organs to be seen in Elbe-Elster, including the Silbermann organ in Lebusa (centre).

Out and about by the Elbe and the Black Elster



GIANTS FROM THE COAL INDUSTRY. Coal has left its mark on the region. There is no longer any active mining in the county of Elbe-Elster, but traces remain of an industrial culture which was characterised by human ingenuity and a changing landscape. Show mine F6o in Lichterfeld is a leviathan of brown coal open-cast mining, and is now open to the public. In Domsdorf, the former Louise briquette factory is today a technical monument where you can see at first hand how briquettes were once made from brown coal.

FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. The 'coal, wind and water' cycle trail leads the curious on a 250 km journey of discovery, as they follow coal from the mine to the power station. Other themed cycle routes you might enjoy include the Brandenburg tour, the Elster cycle tour, the Count Pückler Way and the Elbe cycle route.

OUT AND ABOUT ON YOUR BIKE. Our extensive network of cycle paths takes you to natural beauty spots and historic town centres and through distinct landscapes. What's more, it's mostly flat, so not too challenging. Ramblers are welcome, as are inline skaters. Lower Lausitz leads the nation when it comes to barrier-free tourism. We try to cater for wheelchair users, those with a hearing or visual disability, and allergy sufferers.

ON THE WATER. Take a canoe or punt trip on the Black or Small Elster or through the Little Spreewald, areas of unspoilt nature where there is always the chance of a surprise encounter: you might come across cranes, storks or reclusive beavers. Lakes and ponds are enticing places to visit in the summer, and with the Wonnemar indoor pool in Bad Liebenwerda and the fiwave in Finsterwalde, you can enjoy swimming all year round.

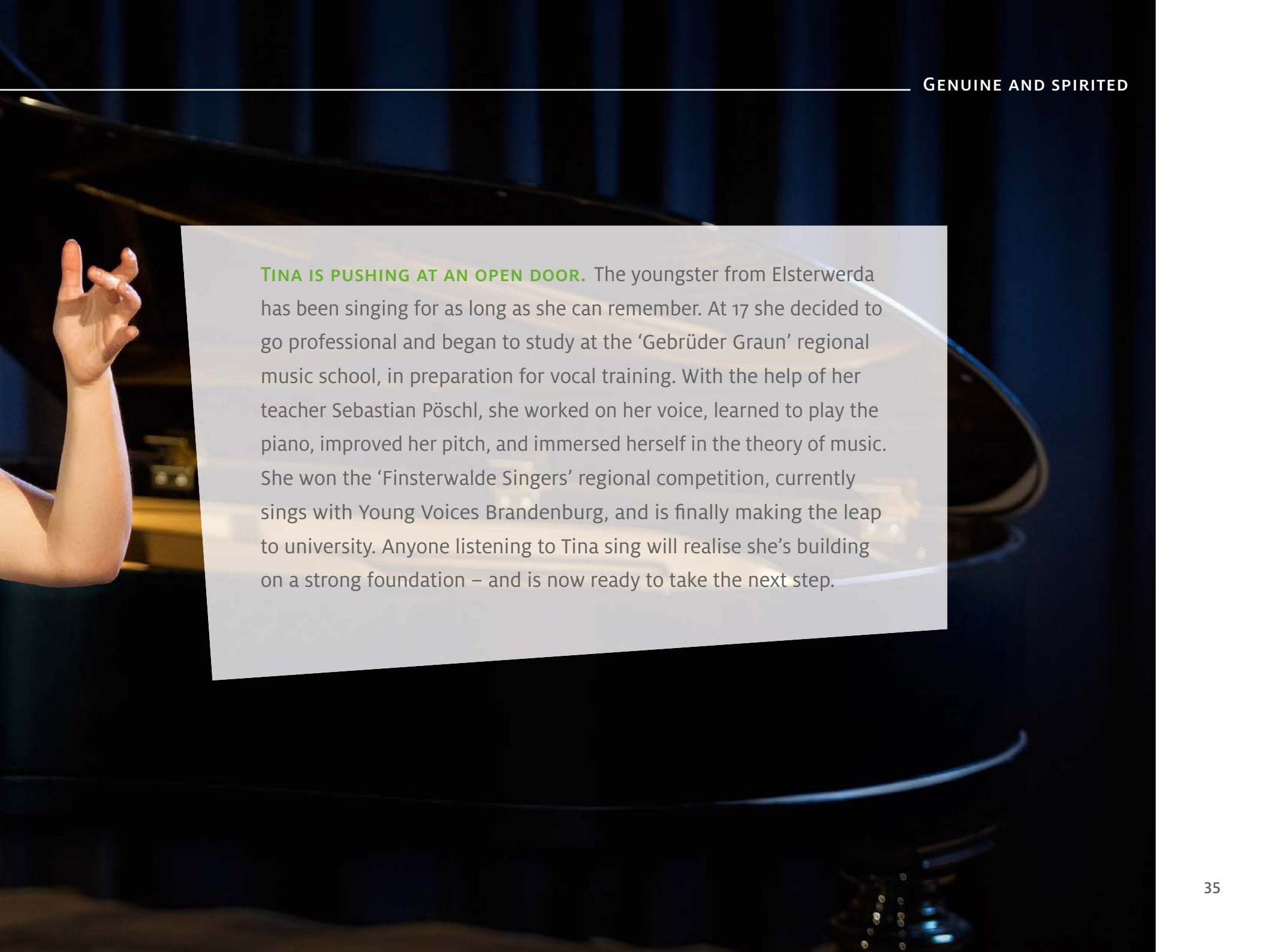


A leviathan of brown coal mining: the F6o mine in Lichterfeld is now open to the public (left). The Louise briquette factory in Domsdorf is a technical monument which brings the industrial past to life (centre top). Paddling a canoe on the Black Elster in the Little Spreewald near Wahrenbrück (centre bottom). A picnic at the Elster mill in Plessa (right).

3.23 PM

Carried away:
Tina May
is in a world
of her own



A photograph of a person's arm and hand reaching upwards, with a grand piano in the background. The piano is dark and polished, with its lid open. The lighting is dramatic, with the piano's interior lights glowing. The background is dark and out of focus.

TINA IS PUSHING AT AN OPEN DOOR. The youngster from Elsterwerda has been singing for as long as she can remember. At 17 she decided to go professional and began to study at the 'Gebrüder Graun' regional music school, in preparation for vocal training. With the help of her teacher Sebastian Pöschl, she worked on her voice, learned to play the piano, improved her pitch, and immersed herself in the theory of music. She won the 'Finsterwalde Singers' regional competition, currently sings with Young Voices Brandenburg, and is finally making the leap to university. Anyone listening to Tina sing will realise she's building on a strong foundation – and is now ready to take the next step.

Elbe-Elster artistic and cultural landscape



A LIVELY ARTS SCENE. The artists who live and work around the Elbe and the Black Elster are creating a lively arts scene with their activities and creations. There are private initiatives such as the Altenau 04 and Werenzhain studio courtyards and the 'Gruppe Phorm' in Finsterwalde, but also art exhibitions and open-air events organised by the county of Elbe-Elster and its municipalities.

TRADITION AND THE PRESENT DAY. The history and geography of the area around the Elbe and the Elster continue to inspire, as they always have – as witnessed in the pottery produced in the villages of Crinitz and Hohenleipisch, the garden at Saxdorf and the former mining landscape. The annual International Puppet Theatre Festival is rooted in the 250-year-old tradition of itinerant puppet troupes in central Germany.

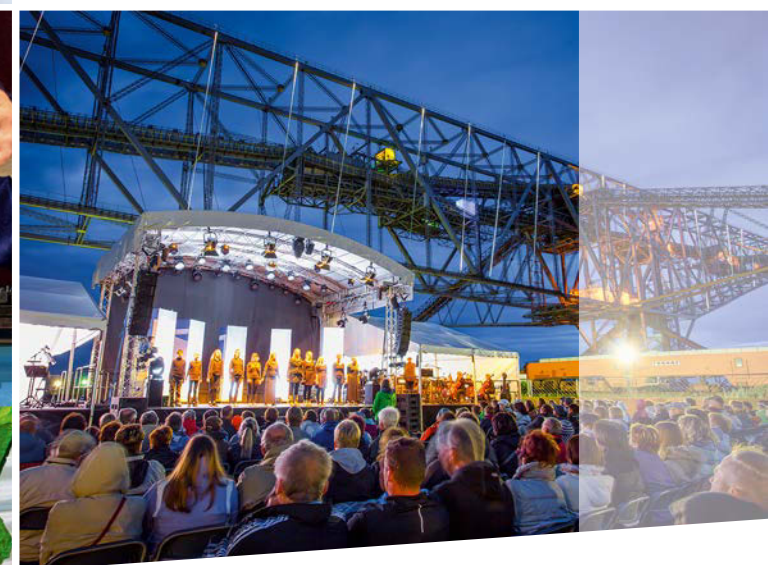
A RICH CULTURE. The area has an exciting artistic and cultural scene. For instance, the international competitions associated with the 'Finsterwalde Singers' and for the 'Brothers Graun Award' have attracted attention far beyond the borders of Germany. Both festivals are rooted in the region's musical traditions and spur on the next generation of musicians to reach for the stars.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE. An age-old story which was set to music in the 18th century by Carl Heinrich Graun and revived as a youth opera in the 21st century in the county of Elbe-Elster. All of those singing and playing in the celebrated production were pupils of the local 'Gebrüder Graun' music school, one of the largest such institutions in the state of Brandenburg.





GENUINE AND SPIRITED



Bettina Quest sang her way to a 'Finsterwalde Singers' trophy in 2015 (top left). Finsterwalde artist Jens Puppe in his studio at an old cloth mill (top right). Christel Kiesel, a potter from Crinitz, adopts a classical-modernist approach to interpreting a regional tradition (left). Performance at the Puppet Theatre Festival (centre). Stage set for the youth opera 'Orpheus an der Elster' against the backdrop of the F60 show mine in Lichterfeld (right).

4.02 PM

Medical excellence using tiny endoscopes



IS IT REASONABLE TO EXPECT A SMALL HOSPITAL TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF MEDICAL CARE? Well in the case of the Elbe-Elster medical centre, it is: every day of the year. Prof. Roland Reinehr of Herzberg, a specialist in internal medicine, inserts tiny high-performance endoscopes into the body's natural orifices so that he can see directly into the stomach or intestines of his patients. This helps him not only to identify diseases, but also to treat them. "We want everyone to have ready access to high medical standards", says the doctor. The Elbe-Elster medical centre has worked hard to achieve its good reputation. And as a teaching hospital of the Brandenburg School of Medicine, it is also doing its best to uphold it.

A strong foundation for an excellent quality of life



PRIORITISING EDUCATION. A robust infrastructure makes a long-term contribution to the excellent quality of life enjoyed in the county of Elbe-Elster. Particular attention is paid to caring for and bringing on the next generation. Our dense network of well-equipped daycare centres, primary and secondary schools, both state-run and independent, speaks for itself.

DOCTORS ON YOUR DOORSTEP. There is a good level of healthcare provision in the region. GPs and specialists are easy to access, as is the Elbe-Elster medical centre, which is run by the local authority. No-one in the region is more than 22 minutes away by car from one of the three hospitals run by the medical centre.

GOOD CONNECTIONS. The well-developed transport network links the county to its neighbours. The local public transport system ensures that the inhabitants of this rural area have a reliable means of reaching their destinations.

A GOOD OPERATING ENVIRONMENT. Increasing numbers of people in the region now have a broadband connection. Local and national energy suppliers ensure that a dependable supply is available. Moderate rates of trade and municipal tax make the county an attractive place to run a business.



A ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE



Children from the 'Fichten-Wichtel' daycare centre in Fichtenberg get hands-on with nature (left). The Fontana Clinic in Bad Liebenwerda uses locally-sourced moor mud for therapeutic treatments (centre top). Elbe-Elster's 'Gesunde Kinder' ('Healthy Children') network provides support for young families (centre bottom). Fast surfing: the county has a good network infrastructure (right).

5.38 PM

Catch, drive,
and glide over
the surface of
the River Elbe



IN MÜHLBERG, PEOPLE LIVE BY AND IN HARMONY WITH THE RIVER.

But sometimes also on the river. Such as during training, like Annabell and Julia from Mühlberg rowing club. Twice a week they step into their skiffs and row against the current. Again and again, they dip their oars into the water and pull through. “Strength, good coordination, a team spirit and willpower are all skills required by successful rowers”, says club chairman Matthias Lohfink. Perhaps it’s because of the current on the Elbe, not to mention the excellent training they receive at the club, but whatever the reason, the oarsmen and women from Mühlberg are feared opponents at regattas.

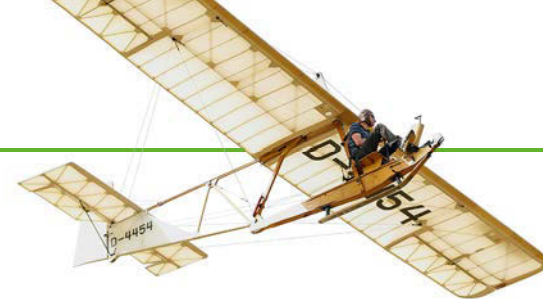
Spirit and a charm of its own: a great place to live



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FREE TIME.

The county of Elbe-Elster has plenty going on. Its clubs and associations – too numerous to mention – make for a colourful and diverse range of leisure activities. They depend on the commitment of their members, who volunteer to organise not only major sporting events, but also public festivals, and who uphold their clubs' traditions and pass them on to new members.

BOREDOM IS AN ALIEN CONCEPT. You can swim at the Wonnemar leisure and sports pool in Bad Liebenwerda or the fiwave indoor swimming pool in Finsterwalde all year round, while the Herzberg climbing park attracts those with a head for heights. Sports clubs are welcome to use the well-equipped sports facilities located in the county's towns and parishes.



A FULL CALENDAR OF FESTIVALS. People enjoy a good celebration in these parts. The Finsterwalde Singers' Festival is the largest public festival in Brandenburg, with the emphasis on – surprise, surprise! – singing. The festival at Herzberg zoo has a party atmosphere, while the Schlieben 'Moie' ('maiden') market has deep roots in the history of the small wine-producing town. Trades and crafts are on offer at the spring festival in Elsterwerda.

SOMETHING FOR ALL AGES. The county of Elbe-Elster has plenty to offer regardless of your age. Those spending their twilight years here enjoy a good standard of care. Accommodation suitable for the elderly and care homes are widely available in the county.



LEISURE ACTIVITIES



The Moie market in Schlieben brings the town's streets and squares to life (left). Negotiating the high-rope course at the Herzberg ElsterPark (centre top). Young and old enjoy spending time together at the multi-generation home in Rückersdorf (centre bottom). Apart from swimming, health treatments are also available at the Wonnemar pool complex in Bad Liebenwerda (right). The SG38 training glider belonging to the Otto Lilienthal e.V. Finsterwalde private aviation club challenges every aspect of the pilot's skill (bottom).

The county of Elbe-Elster: where to find out more



Addresses

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Tourist association:

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www.elbe-elster-land.de

The county of Elbe-Elster online

www.amt-kleine-elster.de, www.amt-schlieben.de, www.amt-schradenland.de
www.badliebenwerda.de, www.doberlug-kirchhain.de, www.elsterland.de
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www.uebigau-wahrenbrueck.de

THE COUNTY OF ELBE-ELSTER





OLIVER AND MARIA ARE STAR-GAZING.

When night falls in Elbe-Elster, you shouldn't forget to look up. While the big cities disappear into a fog of air and light pollution, the county enjoys clean air and clear skies. The Elbe-Elster climate protection region also has some of the lowest levels of cloud cover and rainfall in Germany. Stargazers from far and near are all too aware of this, and set out in their hordes on pilgrimages to the telescope gatherings held in Herzberg. As far as Oliver Marsch and Maria Sehmisch are concerned, the star-studded sky above Elbe-Elster has long since ceased to be their own little secret: still, the two friends thoroughly enjoy the uplifting experience. Why not give it a go? We can heartily recommend it!

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The businesses, institutions and individuals included in this brochure are representative of the diversity to be found in the county of Elbe-Elster. We would like to thank them all for their cooperation.

