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THE EUROPEAN MINING ROUTES
OF SAINT BARBARA FEDERATION

The European Mining Routes

OF SAINT BARBARA FEDERATION

PORTFOLIO

Partners:

- Barborská Cesta (Slovakia)
- Comarca Andorra - Sierra de Arcos (Spain)
- Fondazione Cammino Minerario di Santa Barbara (Italy)
- Idrija Mercury Heritage Management Center (Slovenia)
- Les Sentiers de Grande Randonnée asbl (Belgium)
- Mission Bassin Minier (France)
- Municipio de Aljustrel (Portugal)

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Walking through Europe's mining heritage

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THE EUROPEAN MINING ROUTES OF SAINT BARBARA FEDERATION

01 About us

The European Federation of Santa Barbara Mining Routes (MINES.B) brings together a network of partners committed to revitalizing, enhancing, and showcasing the potential of territories that once played a key role in Europe's mining history.

At the heart of the initiative lies the **tangible and intangible mining heritage**, presented through a **cultural and tourist route** that virtually links several important mining areas across Europe.

A distinctive feature of this "route" is its integration of multiple local hiking paths. MINES.B partners work to make this remarkable mining heritage accessible by developing itineraries designed for walking and cycling, fully embracing the principles of **slow and sustainable tourism**.

The Federation aims to keep alive the memory of the miners: men and women who, through their work, shaped daily life and made a decisive contribution to humanity's progress and to the development of a **shared European identity**.



02 Our values

The core elements that define the mission and activities of the MINES.B Federation are:

- **Cooperation among partners**, fostering shared initiatives and collective growth.
- **Promotion of the memory, history, and European heritage** linked to mining life.
- **Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans**, aimed at passing on knowledge, stories, and traditions connected to the great mining legacy.
- **Cultural and artistic engagement**, through music- and art-related events that bring new life to the most significant sites of mining archaeology.
- **Sustainable cultural tourism and development**, encouraging green mobility by creating and managing walking and cycling routes along ancient mining paths.











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BARBORSKÁ CESTA
TERRA MONTANAE

ANDORRA
SIERRA
DE ARCOS
TERUEL

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FONDAZIONE
CAMMINO MINERARIO DI SANTA BARBARA

Center za upravljanje
z dediščino živega srebra
IDRIJA Mercury Heritage
Management Centre

GR®
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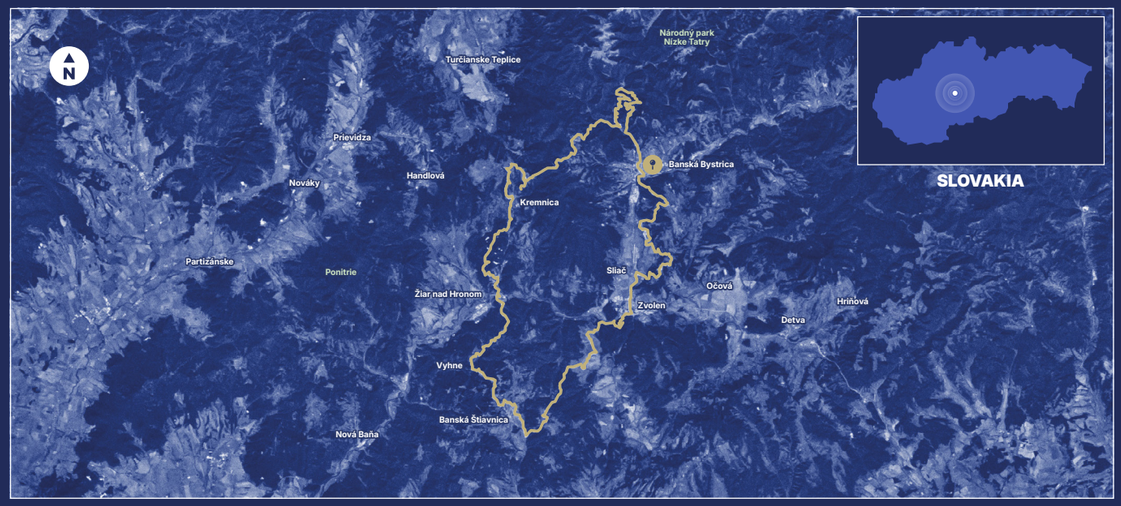
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Barborská Cesta

Slovakia



The **Barborská Cesta (the Barbara Route)** is an educational and tourist itinerary of nearly 200 km that links the main mining towns and sites of central Slovakia.

The project is promoted by the civic association **Banský Región Terra Montanae**, which brings together public institutions, entrepreneurs, tourism organizations, mining associations, schools, universities, and citizens.

The earliest evidence of metal extraction dates back to the Eneolithic period, while systematic mining, metallurgy, coin minting, and copper processing began as early as the 10th century. After the founding of the Kingdom of Hungary, German and Flemish miners introduced advanced extraction techniques, which were gradually adopted by the local population. Thanks to this thriving activity, the region became one of Europe's most important commercial crossroads—a place where peoples, languages, religions, and cultures converged, creating a rich mosaic of historical and cultural heritage.

This is where the first **Mining and Forestry Academy in Europe** was founded, and where the principles of modern accounting and of an organized social system were applied for the first time.

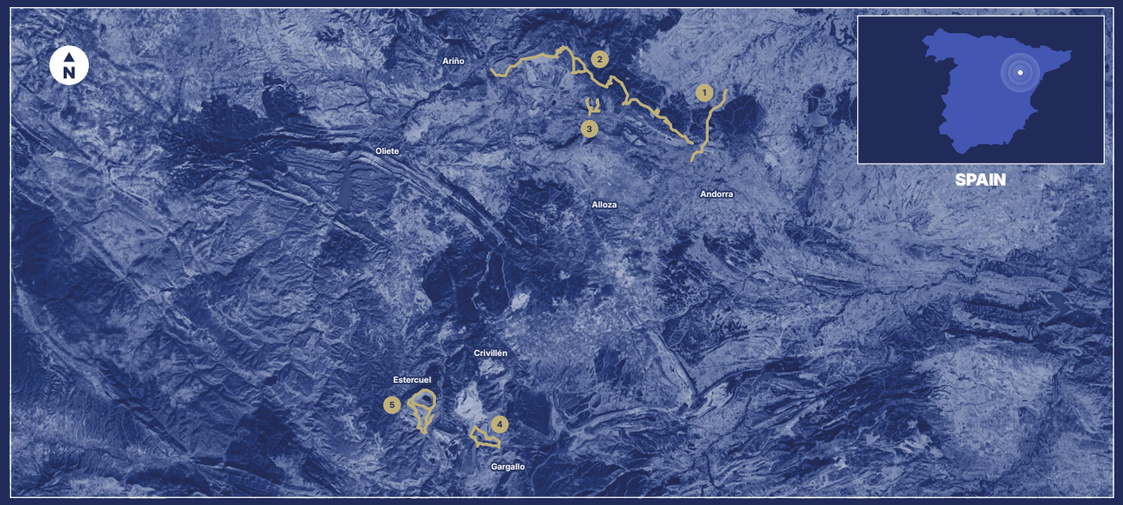
The Barborská Cesta makes this extraordinary mining and cultural heritage accessible, aiming to revive and further develop it within a multinational and multicultural context at the heart of contemporary Europe.

ANDORRA
SIERRA
DE ARCOS
TERUEL



Comarca Andorra Sierra de Arcos

Spain



The **Andorra–Sierra de Arcos region**, in northern Teruel, is an area where contrasting landscapes, geology, archaeology, architecture, art, and tradition coexist harmoniously. At the heart of its identity lies a rich mining heritage, the legacy of a long history of coal and lignite extraction that has shaped the region's economy, society, and landscape. Mines, industrial infrastructures, workers' settlements, and terrains transformed by human activity are today highlighted by the **MWINAS Mining Museum** and by the **Caminos Mineros**, a project that turns this past into a widespread visitor experience.

The Caminos Mineros connect all places preserving traces of mining activity through hiking and cycling routes designed for sustainable tourism. The entire region becomes an open-air museum, featuring interpretive panels, scenic viewpoints, visual installations, and digital content that guide visitors through the area's historical memory.

The routes cross the two main mining zones: **Val de Ariño** and the **Escuriza Valley**, each characterized by its own history and distinctive landscapes. Among the most significant paths are the **Mining Railway Route**, which follows the old coal train line; the **Sierra de Arcos Route**, the longest trail, featuring remains of underground mines and panoramic views over large quarries; **Corta Alloza**, a former quarry transformed into a protected wetland; **Corta Gargallo**, which runs alongside a vast open-pit mine with an impressive viewpoint; and **Corta Gargallo Oeste**, which illustrates the mining evolution of Estercuel—from coal extraction to clay production.

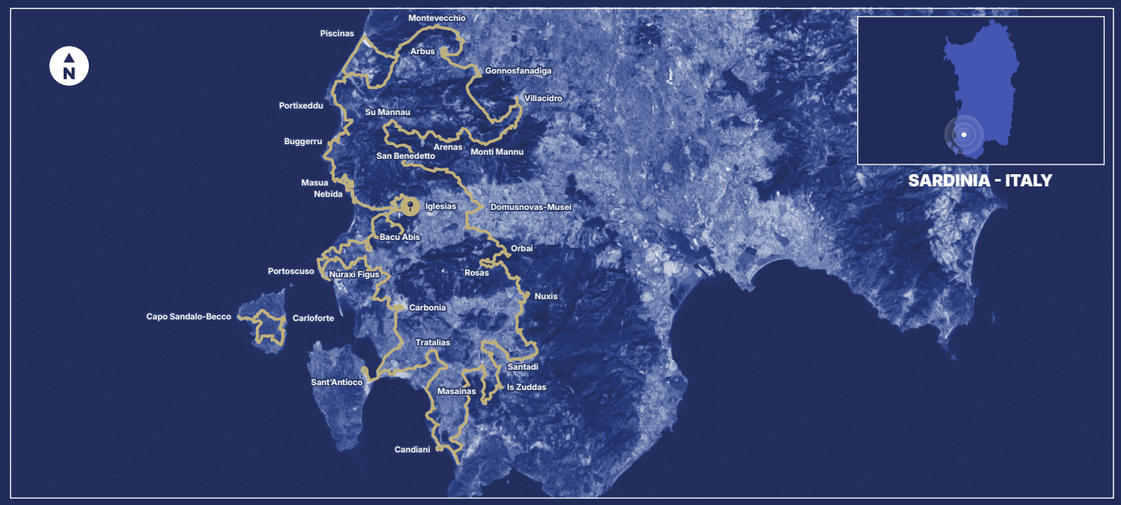
In total, the routes cover **38.5 km**, offering an immersive journey through history, memory, and nature, showing how an industrial past can be reborn as a new form of contemporary beauty.

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CAMMINO MINERARIO DI SANTA BARBARA



Fondazione Cammino Minerario di Santa Barbara

Italy



The C**ammino Minerario di Santa Barbara Foundation** manages the **Santa Barbara Mining Trail (CMSB)**, a 500 km hiking route that can be traveled on foot, by bicycle, or on horseback.

The itinerary follows the ancient paths of the miners, where industrial archaeology blends with extraordinary and ever-changing landscapes. Along the route, visitors can admire remarkable natural monuments as well as significant examples of classical archaeology, including *nuraghi*, *domus de janas*, and *Giants' Tombs*.

The Foundation CMSB is committed to the redevelopment of abandoned mining sites, working to recover their history and make them accessible to the public. At the same time, it oversees the restoration and maintenance of historical trails, preserving the paths once used by miners.

In addition to these activities, the Foundation organizes numerous cultural events to promote local culture and celebrate the region's mining history and heritage.

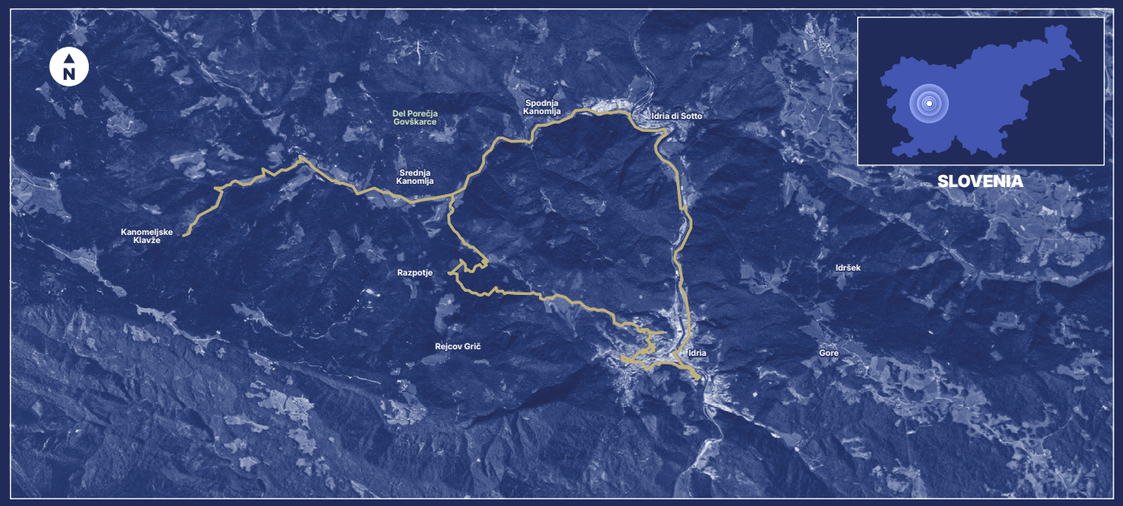
Memory, identity, and slow tourism are the key pillars of the project, which aims to engage younger generations in enhancing both the tangible and intangible mining heritage.

Center za upravljanje
z dediščino živega srebra
IDRIJA Mercury Heritage
Management Centre



Idrija Mercury Heritage Management Center

Slovenia



The site **Heritage of Mercury. Almadén and Idrija**, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2012, includes the mining complexes of Almadén in Spain—active since antiquity—and Idrija in Slovenia, the country's oldest mining town, where mercury was discovered in 1490.

The UNESCO area of Idrija encompasses the entire heritage associated with the mine: the cinnabar deposit, shafts and underground galleries, mining entrances, administrative buildings, the smelting plant, mercury and grain warehouses, miners' dwellings, schools, churches, and the historic transport routes once used to export the mineral. Together, these elements form an essential part of the region's history, culture, and identity, offering a direct link to its past.

Preserving this mining heritage involves not only protecting the physical sites and artifacts, but also promoting responsible tourism, developing educational programs, and actively engaging the local community. To ensure the integrated and sustainable management of the cultural and natural assets connected to the mine, the Slovenian government established the **Idrija Mercury Heritage Management Centre**.

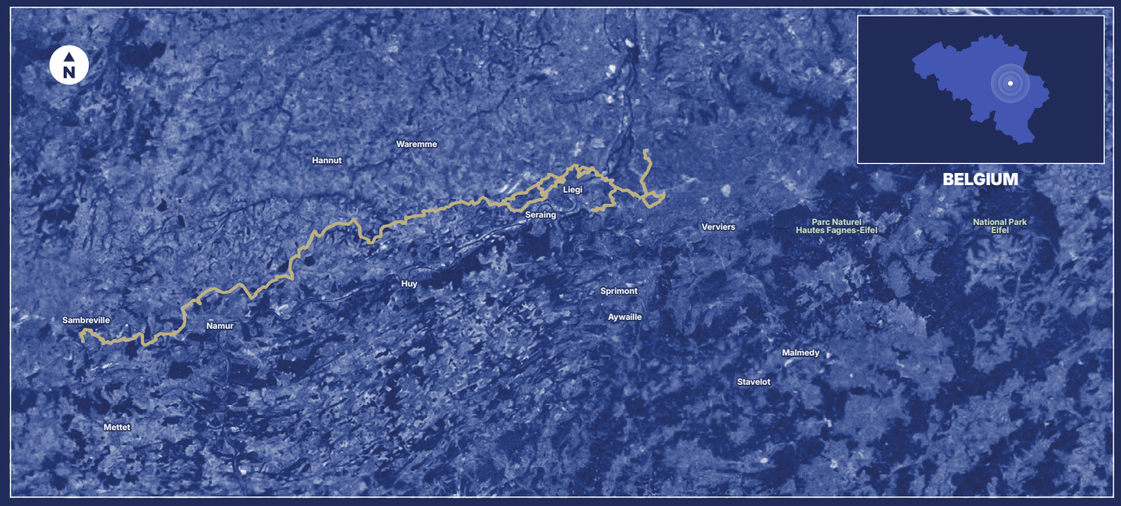
It was thanks to the Centre's participation in the MINES.B Federation that the "**Idrija's Mining Route**" project was created, with the aim of enhancing the city's extraordinary mining legacy and transforming it into a meaningful and accessible cultural experience.

As part of this collaboration, a **33-km itinerary** was developed to celebrate more than five centuries of mining history, showcasing the most representative examples of Idrija's technical, cultural, natural, and sacred heritage. Following the ancient miners' paths, the route—accessible on foot or by bicycle—runs along the historical trails that shaped the identity of the local community, strengthening collective memory and building a lasting bridge between generations.



Les Sentiers de Grande Randonnée

Belgium



The **GR412 - Le Sentier des Terrils** was created as a tribute to the miners who worked in the many mines of this region of Belgium. Stretching for nearly 300 km, the route extends from Bernissart to the Blegny mine, crossing the historic mining areas of Borinage, Centre, Charleroi, and Liège. The trail's name, GR412, refers to December 4th, the feast day of Saint Barbara, the patron saint of miners.

From the Bernissart fire station to the Blegny mine, the GR412 follows the chain of terrils—the iconic slag heaps that define the region's landscape—offering a hiking route built around former coal mines. Today, these landscapes of Wallonia are among the most striking in the region: the man-made hills (terrils), created by mining activities between the 19th and 20th centuries, are now recognized as monuments of natural and historical heritage.

At the foot of the terrils, visitors can discover emblematic sites such as **Grand-Hornu**, **Bois-du-Luc**, **Bois du Cazier**, and **Blegny-Mine**, along with other places that preserve the memory of the men, women, and children who worked in the mines and contributed to Belgium's development during the Industrial Revolution.

The trail winds along waterways, footpaths, and former railway lines once used to transport minerals. Amid slag heaps and historic routes, the GR412 also crosses areas of great biological interest, making the hike an experience that combines history, nature, and industrial memory.

mission
bassin minier
NORD - PAS DE CALAIS



Mission Bassin Minier

France

The **Mission Bassin Minier (MBM)** was created in 2000 by decision of the French government. This public body supports local and regional authorities in promoting urban regeneration and the sustainable redevelopment of the former coalfield.

Since 2012, the Nord–Pas de Calais coal basin has been inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**. It is considered a treasure of humanity—a "living and evolving cultural landscape."

MBM's responsibilities include the protection and promotion of mining heritage, as well as the implementation of a wide range of actions: spatial planning, urban regeneration, rehabilitation of former coal miners' housing complexes, development of the coalfield's green belt, and studies and expertise aimed at revitalizing and reusing closed coal shafts, former railway lines, and mining sites.

One of the most important goals of the Mission Bassin Minier is to organize educational initiatives to help the local population discover the rich mining heritage of the Nord–Pas de Calais coal basin.

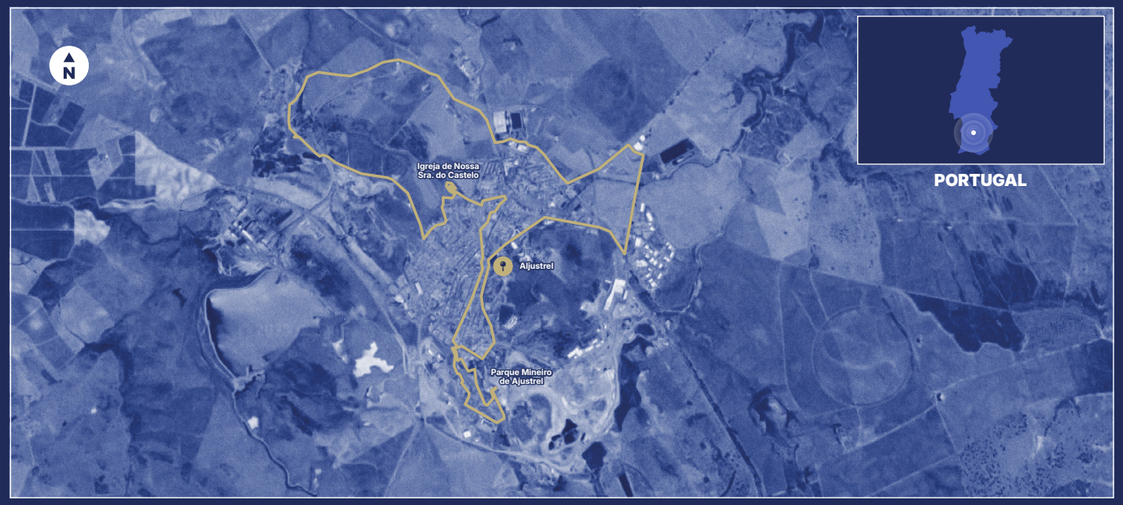
Soon, the French mining trails will be connected to Belgium's GR412 paths, creating a **cross-border route** that enhances and interlinks the mining heritage of both regions.

município
Aljustrel
terra viva



Municipio de Aljustrel

Portogallo



Located in the heart of the Alentejo region in southern Portugal, the **Municipality of Aljustrel** covers 458 km² and has just under 10,000 inhabitants distributed across four parishes. Despite its small population, Aljustrel is a vast territory rich in natural and cultural diversity, ideal for exploration on foot or by bicycle, through rural landscapes and millennia-old historical sites.

The history of Aljustrel is deeply intertwined with mining activity, which has left an indelible mark on both the landscape and the life of the community. In recent decades, thanks to environmental rehabilitation projects and support from the European Union, many abandoned extraction areas have been restored and returned to the population. The reopening—under more sustainable conditions—of certain mining operations has made it possible for industry, tourism, and environmental protection to coexist.

A symbol of this transformation is the **Aljustrel Mining Park**, inaugurated in 2023, which integrates walking and cycling routes and today stands as a national and international benchmark for the enhancement of mining heritage, recognized in 2024 as a sustainable development project.

Within this framework lies the project "**Aljustrel tem uma mina**", the largest urban mining itinerary in Portugal. Stretching for 12 km, the route invites visitors to discover the secrets and richness of a territory with ancient mining roots dating back to Roman times, when the city was known as Vipasca, one of the most important extraction centers of the Empire.

The trail crosses the mining complex, the urban center, and the rural landscape, offering the opportunity to learn about the history and life of miners through machinery, facilities, workers' quarters, and architectural remains. Highlights include the historic center, the Mining Park, and the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Castle, which offers panoramic views over the entire area.



▲ Inauguration of the exhibition “Men and Women of Mining”, Jozef Shaft, Idrija, Slovenia – 2024



▲ Conference “Mining Treasures of Central Slovakia”, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia – 2024



▲ General Assembly, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia – 2024



▲ Inauguration of the “St. Barbara Route”, Idrija, Slovenia – 2024



▲ “Stati Generali” of the Santa Barbara Mining Trail, Iglesias, Italy – 2024



▲ Filming for the documentary “Voices from the Mines”, Andorra, Spain – 2025



▲ Giampiero Pinna, founder of the project, on the day the MINES.B Federation was established – 4 December 2020



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A shared heritage, a shared journey.

European Mining Routes of Santa Barbara Federation

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