

# RuhrFAN

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## Director's Corner

Dear Friends and Alumni of the Ruhr Area,

Building alliances – this attitude has a long tradition in the Ruhr Area. And this is the strength that will mold the new Ruhr Area. Even years ago the so-called “Schulterschluss,” a demonstration of unity by the miners underground, guaranteed success in work and survival when danger arose. This idea has now surfaced and become a key concept, a new philosophy of cooperation.

The University Alliance Metropolis Ruhr is a trailblazer for this type of development. One notices a return to “unity is strength,” for example, in cultural life through the NRW Culture Portal and through the creation of the new regional business promotion.

This has all happened in the year in which the Treaties of Rome will celebrate 50 years. They laid the cornerstone for the realization of the European Union. The concept of equality and coexistence among nations, in which the success of the entity is also seen as one's own success – as Hans-Dietrich Genscher recently stated in an interview – unified Europe after the Second World War. Those of us in the Ruhr Area must help make this concept a reality and create innovative solutions to remain competitive, both nationally and internationally.



ConRuhr is proud to be a guide along this path. This edition of the RuhrFAN Newsletter is being sent to more than 1000 addresses in the USA with the request that you too will forge alliances and represent the Ruhr Area throughout the USA and the rest of the world effectively and with internal enthusiasm - just as we do in New York. If we can ever assist you in this, please do not hesitate to call or write to us. We are always there for you!

*Mit einem herzlichen Glückauf,*

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Rolf Kinne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Rolf Kinne  
Director ConRuhr  
Consortium of Germany's Ruhr Area Universities  
Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg-Essen

# The Ruhr Area – International!

## ConRuhr Conference on Knowledge Transfer

**The transfer of knowledge between universities, industry, politics and the public, both domestically and abroad, was the topic of the conference *Knowledge Transfer of Tomorrow*, in Washington DC. Politicians, scholars and experts on knowledge transfer from both the USA and Germany exchanged ideas for future development.**

In February ConRuhr, along with six other academic liaison offices in New York, organized the conference *Knowledge Transfer of Tomorrow* at the renowned Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research sponsored the event.

Topics of discussion included different methods of handling science and scholarship in politics in the two countries, especially the role of science in society and its economic impacts. Participants also discussed the lower risk propensity in Germany as a possible hurdle to innovation, as well as the USA's position as the most important location for science and scholarship. A central question at the event was: How can ideas and knowledge find their way into the industry?

Michael Ryan, who researches creative economic models at the George Washington University School of Law, offered words of reassurance to German guests in his talk. He claimed that Germany is a globally-oriented country, which would give it some advantages over the more insular tendency in America. Still, it is important that the German institutions of higher learning cooperate more closely with industry. He named Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as good examples to follow. Dietmar Harhoff, Director of the Institute for Innovation Research and Technology Management (INNO-tec) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, also demanded more entrepreneurial spirit from the universities. On the other hand, there is no reliable data to prove whether or not the lack of risk-taking in Germany is responsible for this deficit. Rolf Kinne, Director of ConRuhr, sees the knowledge transfer as an educational goal: "This notion of knowledge transfer is a habit that should be taught in school. We need to enhance this discipline throughout life and continually remind ourselves to work interdisciplinarily."

» [www.innovation-transfer.org](http://www.innovation-transfer.org)

## ConRuhr Advertises for the Ruhr Area in Cambridge

**The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) campus in Cambridge was host to the Euro Career Fair in February. Students from American Ivy Leagues were able to gather information about opportunities at the Universities of Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg-Essen at the ConRuhr information booth.**

The European Career Fair is an exclusive forum that attracts representatives from 100 European companies and research institutions, as well as more than 4000 students and graduates from the famous Ivy League universities in New England – such as MIT, Harvard and Yale. Before the event, potential employers are able to view the students' resumes online and invite the more interesting candidates to an interview with just one click of the mouse. Exhibits and presentations inform the students about opportunities to study or work in Europe.

ConRuhr presented research and study opportunities at the Universities of Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg-Essen, raised awareness for the region, and counseled students on the programs of study and courses in the Ruhr Area. Visitors to the stand were interested in both long-term scholarly projects and doctoral and post-doc programs as well as short-term programs and internships. The Universität Duisburg-Essen's *Business Summer Academy* especially appealed to American students, with its possibilities for internships. ConRuhr's presence at the career fair was made possible by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Max-Planck Society and the *Fraunhofer Gesellschaft*, as well as many other scholarly organizations. The joint presentation by the Germans occurred under the theme "Research in Germany – Land of Ideas" and was made possible by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.



Barbara Schneider, Office of International Relations, Uni Dortmund, and Rolf Kinne, Director of ConRuhr, present the Ruhr Area as a location for higher learning  
Photo: Mirco Uhlending

» [www.conruhr.org](http://www.conruhr.org)

## Partners: North Rhine-Westphalia and Pennsylvania

**Research, innovation, education and culture – NRW and the US state of Pennsylvania want to cooperate more in these areas. Minister President Rüttgers also brought back new ideas for the Ruhr Area after his trip to the USA in the middle of February.**

A festive ceremony served as the backdrop when Minister President of North Rhine Westphalia Jürgen Rüttgers and Governor of Pennsylvania Ed Rendell signed a partnership agreement between their two states. Minister President Dr. Rüttgers emphasized the close connection between both states through their long traditions in the coal and steel industries. The agreed-upon cooperation should offer excellent chances for success in both regions. One main focus of the future collaboration will be the topic of energy; conferences on the topics energy conservation and energy efficiency will take place over the next few months. Moreover, the existing cooperation agreements between North Rhine-Westphalia and Pennsylvania will be extended and intensified. For example, a partnership between the cities of Dortmund and Pittsburgh, the initiative “PiDo 2010,” has existed since 2001. It promotes cooperation among the research and educational institutions in both cities and the internationalization of their companies and assists exchanges in the area of regional networks.

After signing the contract, Minister President Dr. Rüttgers joined experts for a round table discussion in order to gather information about Pennsylvania’s successful transformation from a coal and steel location to one of the most successful technology sites in the USA. “I learned a lot about the successful organization of this sort of transformation in the discussions in Pennsylvania and how we can tackle this in the Ruhr Area. I am confident that we cannot neglect factors such as culture and the quality of life on our way to being the number one technology region in Germany.”

Signed a cooperation contract in Pittsburgh:  
Governor Ed Rendell and Minister President Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers (l to r)  
Photo: Ralph Sondermann

» [http://www.presseservice.nrw.de/presse2007/02\\_2007/070212STK\\_USA.php](http://www.presseservice.nrw.de/presse2007/02_2007/070212STK_USA.php)  
» [http://www.economicdevelopment-dortmund.de/wirtschaft/highlights/pittsburgh/index\\_x4.jsp](http://www.economicdevelopment-dortmund.de/wirtschaft/highlights/pittsburgh/index_x4.jsp)



## News from Teaching and Research

### Young Researchers from the Ruhr Area among the Best

**With the help of the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences, the best young researches in the state will find financial, scholarly and creative support. Four of the 13 scholars in the “Junges Kolleg” come from the Universities of Bochum and Duisburg-Essen.**

“Being accepted into the *Kolleg* is a great achievement,” declared Prof. Andreas Pinkwart, Minister of Innovation for the state of NRW, at the reception for the scholarship recipients. Almost all of the chosen young scholars already followed an interdisciplinary approach during their studies, which is also obvious in their current research. This approach will also be promoted in the “Junges Kolleg”: The members can discuss their projects in interdisciplinary work groups, exchange ideas with established experts and take advantage of the academy’s infrastructure for their own research. Dr. Cedrik Meier, physicist at the Uni Duisburg-Essen, and from Bochum Dr. Eva Neuhaus (Biology), Dr. Andreas Shalchi (Physics) and Dr.-Ing. Martin Wagner (Mechanical Engineering) will each receive four-year scholarships in the amount of 10,000 euros per year and additional money for foreign stays. The *Kolleg* is financed with a total of 2.93 million euros for six years by the Essen-based Mercator Foundation, and the NRW Ministry of Science is assisting the *Kolleg* by funding two full-time positions.

» [http://develop.servicesite.de/akdw/index\\_akdw.php](http://develop.servicesite.de/akdw/index_akdw.php)

# ConRuhr Universities Establish the University Alliance Metropolis Ruhr

**The Universities of Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg-Essen have joined forces for an alliance.  
The goal: building a joint profile instead of mutual competition.**

“The three universities already collaborate extensively. We will use that to form a strategic alliance; that is what we are sealing today in a contract,” explained Prof. Dr. Eberhard Becker, Rector of the Universität Dortmund, on the occasion of the contract signing. The alliance merges 89,000 students, 1,250 professors and an annual budget of 840 million euros and enables a much closer cooperation between the three universities than ever before. Bochum and Dortmund have now founded the “Engineering Unit Ruhr,” a collaboration of the Mechanical Engineering departments at each university. Duisburg-Essen and Bochum are planning a joint Faculty of Medicine.

The broad spectrum of subjects gives the students a greater variety of study possibilities; moreover, the development of a joint eLearning platform should improve the quality of the study programs. Synergies will also arise from the integration and cooperation of the administrative levels. A joint electronic admissions and registration process and a uniform student ID for access to libraries at all three sites are in the works.

The Minister of Innovation for the state of NRW, Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart, is excited about the establishment of the university alliance; he claims it shows how “imaginatively, powerfully and focused the NRW universities are working toward the future.” The rectors of the university alliance have agreed to develop a mutual internet presence. Still, the universities will remain independent entities. Prof. Dr. Lothar Zechlin, Rector of the Universität Duisburg-Essen: “One must not consolidate in order to march forward together well.” He reminds all that “we have been running an office in New York for the past three years in an attempt to raise awareness for the Ruhr universities in the USA.”



The rectors of the university alliance together with the Minister: Prof. Dr. Lothar Zechlin, Universität Duisburg-Essen; Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart, NRW Minister of Innovation; Prof. Dr. Elmar Weiler, Ruhr-Universität Bochum and Prof. Dr. Eberhard Becker, Universität Dortmund (l to r). Photo: RUB Public Relations Office

## Diverse Research Focuses

Prior to the alliance establishment, the rectors, along with the Minister of Innovation for the state of NRW, signed their statement of objectives in February for the first time together in one location. Here they documented the respective research focuses of each university. While the Ruhr-Universität Bochum sets out to strengthen its main profile fields of structural biology, plasma research, neuroscience, materials research, systems chemistry, IT-security, subterranean engineering and global change, the Universität Dortmund is concentrating on production and

logistics, chemical biology and biotechnology, model building, simulation and the optimization of complex processes as well as youth, school and education research. The Universität Duisburg-Essen is focusing on the following profile characteristics: nanoscience, empirical education research, urban systems, genetic medicine and medical biotechnology.

## Improving Technology Transfer and Attracting International Attention

Furthermore, the three Ruhr universities want to further the transfer of technology. They plan to cooperate more intensively with the industry, to expand their range of services for start-ups and to develop more innovative transfer concepts. In addition, internationalization is another aspect of the statement of agreed objectives; the Ruhr universities want to attract more students from abroad. More internationally oriented degree programs are to be established, and the range of services and counseling for international students is to be expanded. Moreover, the alumni of the Ruhr Area universities will be prompted more to advertise for the Ruhr Area as a site of scholarship. This is the concept with which ConRuhr began to represent the alliance universities in New York three years ago in. The liaison office successfully promotes the exchange of students and scholars and, thus, carries out active alumni work for the Ruhr Area in North America.



Sites of the alliance: [www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de](http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de) [www.uni-dortmund.de](http://www.uni-dortmund.de) [www.uni-duisburg-essen.de](http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de)

## Best Bet for Your Money: Medicine Program in Bochum Ranks Top

**A panel of experts at North Rhine-Westphalen's Ministry of Innovation analyzed and ranked the schools of medicine throughout the state. The result: Bochum is especially effective.**

The report "Hochschulmedizin in Nordrhein-Westfalen" (Engl. "University Medicine in North Rhine-Westphalen") certified that the Faculty of Medicine at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum is strong in many areas of the medical training and clinical-theoretical subjects. The faculty in Bochum showed great performance for very little money and ranks top in the ratio of funds raised to the applied budget resources. It also took first place in the ratio of so-called "impact factors," the number of international scientific publications and the quotation of these texts by other scientists to the applied budget resources. Similar to the Ruhr-Universität's success in the national excellence initiative, this high ranking for the Medicine program in Bochum comes as no surprise to insiders. "The close interdisciplinary cooperation with other faculties at the Ruhr-Universität and with external research institutions such as the Max-Planck-Institute for Molecular Physiology in Dortmund has paid off," explains Dean of the Medical Faculty, Prof. Dr. Gert Muhr. "The Center for Clinical Research, which began as a suggestion by the Science Council, increasingly serves as a focal point for intertwining research in the medical training, theoretical and clinical medicine."

▶ [www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/medizin/index.htm](http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/medizin/index.htm)

## "Geist Begeistert": Cornucopia of Religions in the Ruhr Area

**Religion scholars at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum won the Federal Ministry of Education and Research's competition "Geist begeistert," a part of the 2007 Year of the Humanities.**

The plethora of religions in the Ruhr Area spans from Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity to Judaism and Islam to Asian religions. Religion scholars from Bochum want to collect information about religious practices, about beliefs grounded in folk belief and tradition and about community life in the different religions. Moreover, they are investigating the effects of the religions on everyday life, as well as activities that promote understanding among the religions. The results will be made available to the public in exhibits and lectures, as content for school projects and on the internet. "Since cultural differences often serve as the foundation for various religious beliefs, the project hopes to make a contribution to cultural understanding on local, regional, national and even global levels," states Prof. Krech, Chair for Religious Studies at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research awarded the project "Der Geist der Globalisierung und die Vielfalt religiöser Symbolsprachen" (Engl. The Spirit of Globalization and the Variety of Religious Symbolic Languages) with 15,000 euros.

▶ <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/ev-theol/>

## Network of Microorganisms: EU Project on Systems Biology

**The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is dedicating approximately 630,000 euros to sponsor the collective research project *Systems Biology of Microorganisms* at the Universität Duisburg-Essen (UDE).**

Over the next three years researchers from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and England will work together under the direction of Dr. Bettina Siebers (UDE) and Prof. Dr. Christa Schleper (University of Bergen, Norway). The systems biologists aim to better understand and represent the complex and dynamic processes of protozoa. They are arranging a plethora of data and recreating the information in the computer in order to enable simulations and predictions without experimenting in the laboratory, an approach that requires a large amount of personnel and know-how. The EU Project fills a gap that up to now was not available in a high enough capacity in any of the countries. In addition, the project should promote cooperation between science and industry, as well as the transfer from science into practical application. Scientists from both the Center for Molecular Systems (ZMU) and the Center for Medical Biotechnology (ZMB) will represent the UDE.

▶ [http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de/home/fb/zmu/startseite/de\\_index.shtml](http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de/home/fb/zmu/startseite/de_index.shtml)  
▶ [http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de/home/fb/zmb/startseite/en\\_index.shtml](http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de/home/fb/zmb/startseite/en_index.shtml)

## Best Logistics Students at the Universität Duisburg-Essen

**The Universität Duisburg-Essen took first place in the list of the 50 best Logistics schools in Germany. Even on the European level, most of the top students are registered here, as was shown in the achievement comparison of the scholarly journal *Logistik inside*.**

More than 700 students from 110 universities and colleges in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands participated in the eight-month competition “Logistik Master” for students in Logistics Master programs. They received a total of 80 questions about all of the important fields in logistics. The results from the ten best Logistics students at each university were used for the total results, which made Duisburg-Essen the winner. The university has Master programs for Logistics Management, Technical Logistics, Public Transport Management and Mechanical Engineering (Production Logistics). The interdisciplinary center of logistics consists of a collaboration of 22 chairs and institutes. With about 2.6 million jobs in the field of logistics, the entire branch has earned sales of more than 150 billion euros per year, according to a study by the German federal government; this makes up about 7 percent of the gross domestic product. The authors of the study expect a future annual growth rate of up to six percent.

» [www.uni-duisburg-essen.de](http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de)

## Focus on the Media

**The Institute for Journalism at the Universität Dortmund will present a new online magazine, the “Medien Monitor.” The publication focuses on the categories media region NRW and media research.**

Journalism students developed and implemented the “Medien Monitor” (Engl. Media Monitor) under the direction of project leaders Prof. Dr. Horst Pöttker and Tobias Eberwein. The website presents global news from the branch, portrays various people in the media in North Rhine-Westphalia and informs about technical developments in the media. But the editors are also busy working as media testers themselves; e-books, YouTube and search engines for children are some of the tested products. In addition, the prospective online editors present the latest research in journalism and communication science. Readers can thus get information about media research from one source, in which for example a study about European reporting or the work of German or American correspondents is portrayed. The benefit for the students’ cooperation in the “Medien Monitor” is also twofold: this *training on the job* helps them internalize online journalism and the work with their own branch sensitizes the editorial staff to the processes in their future field of work, as the project leaders explain.

» [www.medien-monitor.com](http://www.medien-monitor.com)



## Dortmunder Entrepreneurial Network a Success

**For the past year the NRW-Bank has been sponsoring business start-ups by college graduates with low-interest loans. The first three young entrepreneurs are from institutions of higher learning in Dortmund and are being supervised by the *Gründernetzwerk der Dortmunder Hochschulen* (Engl. Entrepreneurial Network of Dortmund Universities), G-DUR.**

The young entrepreneurs receive up to 100,000 euros from the NRW-Bank – at low interest rates and without collateral, but the prerequisite for the funding is a promising and appraised business plan. The graduates that are being supervised by G-DUR were convincing: two start-ups received loans in January; accordingly, the first three sponsored start-ups come from Dortmund. The liaison office at the Universität Dortmund is coordinating G-DUR.

Kirsten Weeke is receiving assistance for her company “docix.” The software company develops programs that simplify the exchange of data between grocery stores and their suppliers. The second entrepreneur also became an independent contractor with a software company; his company “tradespark” offers software solutions for the energy industry.

» [www.uni-dortmund.de](http://www.uni-dortmund.de)

# Ruhr Campus Life

## Celebration: Ten Year Anniversary for Student Orchestra

**In February the musicians at the Universität Duisburg-Essen celebrated the tenth anniversary of the orchestra in a special concert in the *Erlöserkirche* in Essen.**

It started off small: in 1996 two Medicine students from Essen were searching for an opportunity to



make music with other young people. The idea to start an orchestra was soon met with a great deal of interest; within a short time students from twelve different departments had signed up. Today the student orchestra has over 50 members – both active students at the Universität Duisburg-Essen and alumni.

Each semester the musicians learn a repertoire for two concerts in which guest musicians also appear; the orchestra gives the professionally trained graduates at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen-Werden the chance to show what they can do solo within the framework of a large concert. Additionally, soloists from the Düsseldorf Symphonic, the Essen Aalto-Theater and the Essen Philharmonic have also performed with the student orchestra. But not only soloists are welcome guest musicians; since some seats, for example those for the violas and horns, cannot always be filled with their own members, the students have set up a contact platform for temporary musicians. They call this database “Mugge.” Both professionals and semi-professionals who want to jump in as temporary musicians can register on the orchestra’s website. The dates and program are published online, and practice takes place every Monday.

In order to raise awareness for the group at the university and to acquire new musicians, the orchestra is starting a postcard campaign at the start of this semester. The message: “Wir freuen uns auf neue Mitspieler!” (Engl. We would love to have new members!)

The orchestra’s repertoire consists of compositions from the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; the premieres are especially popular among the audience. At the anniversary concert in February three hundred spectators were even able to experience the premiere of a composition project from the Folkwang-Hochschule. “For us it was really paid off to work a lot harder for the celebration than we normally do,” explains Miriam Fahlbusch, violincellist in the orchestra. This semester the student orchestra will once again have the opportunity to play a piece by a student in the Folkwang composition class. In addition, the audience will also get the chance to hear Max Bruch’s double concerto for clarinet/violin, viola and orchestra in e-minor Op. 88 and von Brahms’s Symphony Nr. 4 in e-minor Op. 98. The next concerts will take place on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>; the concert location will be announced on the orchestra’s website.

» <http://eso.chennig.de/index.htm>

## Business News

### Business Promotion Society for Entire Ruhr Area

**With the creation of the “metropoleruhr GmbH” there is now a central contact for all economic questions about the Ruhr Area. The *Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft* (Engl. business promotion society) is located in Mülheim an der Ruhr.**

The goal of the new society is to develop a common way to market the Ruhr Area location. The society will cooperate with local industry sponsors and the region’s companies. As a subsidiary of the *Regionalverband Ruhr* (Ruhr Regional Association), the “metropoleruhr GmbH” closes the gap between business support on both the local and the state levels. The society’s website offers a compact overview of data and facts about the Ruhr Area market, assists companies in site selection, makes all service information about the phases of business management available online, announces dates for trade fairs and events and lists all of the important contacts and networks in the field of business support. In addition, the portal includes company portraits, in which companies from all of the cities and counties in the Ruhr Area may enter their information at no cost.

» [www.businessportal-ruhr.de](http://www.businessportal-ruhr.de)

## Checklist: The Rhine-Ruhr Clinic Guide

**The *Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet* will publish the third edition of the Rhine-Ruhr clinic guide in the fall with a new concept which aims at making the hospital services more transparent for patients.**

Where would you get treated? In order to help give patients a better orientation of the broad services available at the clinics in the region, the authors of the clinic guide have questioned doctors about where they would get treated. Moreover, they have analyzed the patient assessments and the number of particular procedures at the individual hospitals and listed the number of beds, the main treatment focuses and the services. In addition to the 13 previously represented departments, the new clinic guide investigates for the first time the treatment in neurosurgery, pneumology, dermatology and pediatrics in the Ruhr Area and the Rhineland.

The second edition in 2005/2006 sold 30,000 copies, and the corresponding website recorded almost 700,000 hits. The third edition of the clinic guide will be the result of a cooperation with the Chair for Medicine Management at the Universität Duisburg-Essen and the German Picker Institute. The Picker Institute develops patient and employee questionnaires in the healthcare and welfare system and specializes in medical facilities. The goal of the questionnaire is to improve the quality of the care in the German health care system for the patients. The Boston Consulting Group is also one of the *Initiativkreis*'s project partners.

» [www.i-r.de](http://www.i-r.de)

## Things Are Getting Even Better

**Increasing business activity and growth in the Ruhr Area: this is mirrored in the development of the gross domestic product, sinking unemployment statistics and the latest report on the Ruhr situation by the Chambers of Commerce.**

The gross domestic product (GDP) is considered to be a central indicator for business activity and growth in a region. The *Regionalverband Ruhr* (Ruhr Regional Association) published a report in February, according to which the GDP in the Ruhr Area is developing better than in the rest of NRW. It reached 126,026 billion euros in the year 2004, which corresponded to a growth of 2.8 percent compared to the previous year. The rest of the state reported 2.6 percent growth. Unemployment statistics in the Ruhr Area have also developed better than the state average. According to the Federal Employment Agency, the number of unemployed in the Ruhr Area (without the county of Wesel) decreased in February by 0.7 percent; the entire state had a decrease of 0.5 percent. Accordingly, 308,495 people in the Ruhr Area were unemployed in February, a rate of 13.6 percent; throughout all of NRW this number was 930,849. The Federal Employment Agency believes that the reasons for the continued decrease in unemployment are first and foremost the stable business activity and the currently mild weather conditions.

In the current report on the Ruhr situation, the Chambers of Commerce in the region chronicled the best business climate in 16 years. For the first time in a long time, more companies want to hire rather than lay off employees. Things are going especially well for the companies in the field of metal production and metal working as well as mechanical engineering. In addition, B2B services and wholesale are experiencing an economic recovery.

» [http://www.bochum.ihk.de/linebreak4/mod/netmedia\\_document/data/Ruhrlagebericht07.pdf?PHPSESSID=95d05333e0e78fbee8cd9462134eb36e](http://www.bochum.ihk.de/linebreak4/mod/netmedia_document/data/Ruhrlagebericht07.pdf?PHPSESSID=95d05333e0e78fbee8cd9462134eb36e)

## Mülheim Enterprise Expands to the USA

**The US subsidiary A & P from the Mülheim-based group Tengelmann buys the American retail store chain Pathmark for approximately one billion euros.**

After taking control of the 141 Pathmark stores, A & P will run a total of 550 supermarkets with annual sales of 11 billion US dollars, according to the company. The supermarket chain Pathmark operates in the four states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The Mülheim-based family company Tengelmann aimed in the last fiscal year for global sales of about 26 billion euros. Among the companies in the Tengelmann group are the discount store Plus, the textile store KiK, as well as the home improvement store Obi.

## Pommes-Currywurst: A Ruhr Classic Gets More Expensive

**Due to the horrible potato harvest last year, the prices for industrial potatoes have almost tripled in comparison to the year before. French fries will become more expensive.**



"Pommes Currywurst Mayo": along with "Pommes Schranke" (with mayonnaise and ketchup), one of the Ruhr classics. Image: PixelQuelle.de

First it was too cold, then too hot and finally too wet – the weather last summer was anything but beneficial for the potato farmers. Throughout Europe there are only half as many potatoes as last year. In addition, many of the tubers in the 2006 harvest are not suitable for the production of French fries. Due to the bad harvest, the prices rose from 10.80 euros per 100 kilograms at the beginning of 2006 to 27.70 euros in March of this year. The consumer will also notice the effects of this. "The producers cannot absorb all of this price increase alone," explains Horst-Peter Karos, director of the Federal Association for the Potato Processing Industry. According to the newspaper *onruhr*, the prices will soon increase noticeably at fast food stands: wherever a small portion of fries used to cost one euro, 1.20 euros may be on the menu.

## Culturescape Ruhr

### Mozart's Legacy in the Ruhr Area

**With its classical concerts, jazz, contemporary music and children's concerts, the world's largest piano event is a cultural figurehead for the Ruhr Area: the Ruhr Piano Festival.**

For more than two months 94 pianists from 25 nations will play 90 concerts. "Mozart's Legacy: Ludwig van Beethoven" – this is the focus that the Ruhr Piano Festival will take to continue its three-year Mozart cycle. Almost the entire collection of piano pieces by this composer who was born in Bonn can be heard from May 12<sup>th</sup> until July 20<sup>th</sup>. The interpreters include, among others, Daniel Barenboim and the *Staatskapelle Berlin*.

Ticket sales for the 2007 Ruhr Piano Festival began spectacularly; five of the concerts were already sold out within four hours. Keith Jarrett's festival debut with his trio partners Gray Peacock and Jack DeJohnette was sold out practically within the blink of an eye. The Ruhr Piano Festival is a project by the *Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet*; as director of the festival, the *Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet's* managing director, Prof. Franz Xaver Ohnesorg, has been bringing pianists from the entire world to the Ruhr Area since 1989.

» [www.klavierfestival.de](http://www.klavierfestival.de)

### Born of Fire: Pittsburgh and the Ruhr Area

**Through paintings, sketches and photographs, the *Rheinisches Industriemuseum* documents America's entry into the Industrial Age – and contrasts images of the steel metropolises Pittsburgh and the Ruhr Area.**

For a long time Pittsburgh and the Ruhr Area, with their blast furnaces and steel works, were both synonymous with the Industrial Age. Unlike the Ruhr Area, today there are hardly any architectural mementos of the steel era in Pittsburgh; this period has all but been forgotten. The *Rheinisches Industriemuseum* in Oberhausen now reminds us of historic Pittsburgh in the exhibit "Born of Fire." In cooperation with the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, now through May 1, 2007, it will show approximately 90 paintings, photographs and sketches from the blue-collar world. For the first time ever, images of the American steel metropolis will be shown alongside portrayals of the industrial Ruhr Area in the *Rheinisches Industriemuseum*.

» [www.route-industriekultur.de/karte/rim/](http://www.route-industriekultur.de/karte/rim/)

## Connected: NRW Stages Start a Culture Portal

**Music, theater and dance in North Rhine-Westphalia is now available with one click; 25 stages have been presenting themselves since January 22<sup>nd</sup> in the cooperative internet portal [www.nrw-buehnen.de](http://www.nrw-buehnen.de).**

The portal bundles all of the event information from each of the partners together and gives an overview of the following categories: premiers, musical theater, plays, musicals, dance, concerts, children and youth and special events. With the help of the individually programmable download functions, each user can create his or her own personal profile. Several venues from the Ruhr Area are also participating in the portal, for example the city theaters in Bochum, Dortmund, Essen, Hagen, Mülheim and Oberhausen, the NRW state theaters, as well as the Prinz Regent Theater Bochum, the Aalto Ballet Theater Essen, the Aalto Musical Theater Essen, the Philharmonic Orchestra in Essen and the PACT Zollverein Essen.

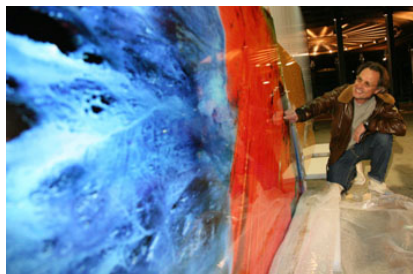
» [www.nrw-buehnen.de](http://www.nrw-buehnen.de)

## “The Eye of the Sky” in Oberhausen

**Premiere in Oberhausen: Starting March 29<sup>th</sup> the *Gasometer* will show satellite images of the earth that have never before been seen in this dimension in any other German exhibit.**

Oberhausen’s landmark, the *Gasometer*, is simultaneously an industrial monument and a spectacular exhibition space. At 118 meters, it is the tallest exhibition hall in Europe and has been host to over two million visitors. From the roof of the *Gasometer*, which is accessed through a glass panorama elevator in the core of the tower, the visitor has an amazing view over the western Ruhr Area.

The exhibit “The eye of the Sky” will use the gasholder, which was shut down in 1988, to show large-scale high resolution satellite images of the earth. Spanning 260 by 130 centimeters, one will see not only mountain chains, deserts, rivers and oceans but also industrial metropolises. Exhibits and films from the fields of remote sensing and geology complete the photographs. Visitors can actively participate and explore the world through “Google Earth” at one large-screened terminal. The exhibit has been made possible by a cooperation with the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and will continue through December 2, 2007.



The *Gasometer* in Oberhausen and curator Wolfgang Volz during the arrival of the first satellite pictures.  
Photos: Anja Bäcker (l), Parschick and Lüning (r)



» [www.gasometer.de](http://www.gasometer.de)

## Announcements

### ConRuhr Organizes Minister Pinkwart’s Visit in New York

The main topics that will be covered during the visit include the creation of new international Summer Academies in NRW and a closer cooperation between the New York Academy of Sciences and both the *Akademie NRW* and the universities. Among others, Pinkwart will meet with the directors of the DFG Office North America, the German Academic International Network, the DAAD North America and the Carl Duisberg Society International, as well as the president of the New York Academy of Sciences. The minister’s visit will be arranged by Prof. Dr. Rolf Kinne, Director of the Academic Liaison Office ConRuhr.

» [www.conruhr.org](http://www.conruhr.org)

### NAFSA 2007: International Education Fair

ConRuhr will be represented at the *Association of International Educators’* education fair at the end of May in Minneapolis. Seven thousand participants from universities, government initiatives, exchange organizations and endowments will have the opportunity to gather information about international exchange programs in the Ruhr Area.

» [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

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### ConRuhr

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### Initiativekreis Ruhrgebiet

Since 1989 the *Initiativekreis Ruhrgebiet*, consisting of representatives of the Rhine and Ruhr Region's leading concerns in trade and industry and public institutions, has been working to promote the region's development. And with great success: their commitment has lent significant momentum to structural change in the Ruhr Region and is making a substantial contribution to radically improving the region's image.

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