



Open-cast mine Welzow-Süd Year: 2007 | ID: VF000522

## New perspectives after turnaround (VEAG/Laubag – Lausitz)

When the Berlin Wall fell, the structures in the east changed, not least in Lusatia. The first consequences were plant closures and layoffs. However, these laid the foundations for realistic long-term perspectives.

### Dramatic changes after the fall of the wall

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, hardly a stone was left unturned in Lusatia, at least metaphorically. Some 108,000 people had worked in the predecessor works of LAUBAG and VEAG (and thus VE Mining and VE Generation) in 1989. A good ten years later, the lignite operations of Vattenfall Europe required no more than 8,275 employees. Of the 17 previously active open-cast mines, only five had long-term prospects. The VEAG corporate concept included

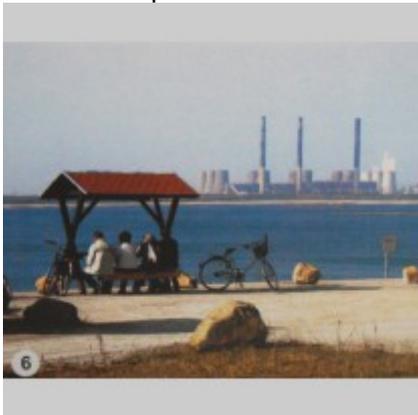
the shutdown of 8,536 MW of power plant capacity as well as the modernisation and ecological retrofitting of eight 500-MW blocks.

## New prospects: lignite as a future model



Cornerstone PP Jänschwalde

A total of €10.4 billion has flowed into the Lusatian power plants and open-cast mines since 1990. Chancellor Helmut Kohl gave the symbolic start signal on 22 October 1992 by laying the foundation stone for the construction of flue gas desulphurisation plants at Jänschwalde. Thanks to the advanced technology used at the power plants in Jänschwalde, Boxberg and Schwarze Pumpe, they not only fulfil Germany's rigorous environmental specifications, but actually surpass them. A comparison with the 1990 figures makes this clear: dust emissions down by 100%, sulphur dioxide by 96% and nitrogen oxides by 60%. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per generated kilowatt-hour have dropped by almost a quarter. The open-cast operations, inclusive of re-cultivation, also reflect internationally recognised standards. Lignite has become an important economic driver for eastern Germany, as well as a partner for art, sport and culture. The other side of the coin is resettlement and encroachment on the countryside. More than 29,000 people had to make way for open-cast lignite mining in the period from 1922 to 1990. The signing of the Kausche agreement on 13 December 1993 saw the start of a completely new chapter in resettlement policy. For the first time in the history of the district, the complete and socially acceptable resettlement of an entire locality was arranged. Today we talk about the Lusatian model: turning victims into partners.



Box Bärwalder See



New power plant Schwarze Pumpe

Many people from far and near are following the re-cultivation of former open-cast mines with great interest. The Lusatian lake region is now on the way to becoming the largest continuous man-made aquatic landscape in Europe.

In 2016 the lignite business was sold to Czech company EPH and its financial partner PPF. The deal included the power plants Jänschwalde, Boxberg, Schwarze Pumpe and Lippendorf R, as well as the open-cast mines Reichwalde, Welzow-Süd, Nochten, Jänschwalde and Cottbus-Nord (closed in 2015).