

Title: **Track between Selb and Asch**

Country: **Germany**

Duration: **5'00"**

Insert: **Author: Sandra Siegmund**
 Camera: Volker Adam
 Cut: Margret Schöppner

Place of shooting: **Selb, Asch, Blankenstein, Hof, Bayreuth**

Bands:	TC 0'26	Rolf Swart Former station master of Selb
	TC 1'29	Ingo Röttger Forwarding agent in Pöhland, Hof
	TC 2'44	Dr. Klaus von Stetten Local politician
	TC 3'17	Wolfgang Kreil Major of Selb
	TC 3'37	Michael Beger Bavarian Ministry of Economics
	TC 4'12	Jiri Knedlik 2. major of Asch

Text:

If the seven-kilometer long track from 1865 could talk, it would tell stories nonstop. Even at the time of the Cold War it operated and connected the Upper Franconian city of Selb with the close-by Czech city of Asch. And it used to be a vital part of the track between the cities, Hof and Eger.

Quote Rolf Swart, former station master of Selb

In 1945, the border crossing was closed for cars and trains, however, only a couple of weeks later, freight traffic started operating again. Mainly for lignite transport from in order to revive the Upper Franconian economy.

In 1995, the track was closed down because the Bavarian railway company decided that it was not profitable enough.

The companies from that region disagreed on that, at least as far as freight transport was concerned. They said that the track could shift traffic from the roads to the tracks and thus reduce road traffic at the strained border crossing points to the Czech Republic.

The forwarding agent Klaus Pöhland and his manager Ingo Röttger have been for the reactivation of the track between Selb and Asch. As operators of the container terminal in Hof they are interested in a continuous connection to the city of Eger.

Quote Ingo Röttger, forwarding agent in Pöhland

We expect that a lot of industries will settle in the region around Asch. We are aware of what is going on there and many companies have shown their interest in settling there. One of the preconditions for that is, however, a good infrastructure. And insofar, it goes without saying that it is very interesting for us forwarding agents in Pöhland to see the developments there. And we are also willing to invest to a certain extent in that, if we see possibilities to extend our transport chain.

The forwarding agents from Hof are not the only people interested in the reactivation of the track between Selb and Asch.

The cellulose and paper industry in the Thuringian city of Blankenstein would be the perfect candidate for freight transport on tracks. The tracks lead into the company's premises, which

could be used for transporting timber from Bohemia directly to the place where it is processed. Yet, since the connection to the Czech Republic, between Selb and Asch, is interrupted, the trains have to make a big detour.

Other people, such as the Upper Franconian local politician, Klaus von Stetten, have been for the reactivation of the track, not only because of freight transport.

Quote: Klaus von Stetten, local politician

They would have a connection between the Bavarian state bath of Steben and the tree baths Franzensbad, Marienbad and Karlsbad. The porcelain sales of Villeroy and Boch as well as Rosenthal would surely react positively to that. The tourist industry would also profit from that – in my opinion this is a great project to invest in the future and therefore indispensable.

Arguments that do not really convince the mayor of Selb, Wolfgang Kreil.

Quote Wolfgang Kreil, mayor of Selb

A track between Selb and Asch is nonsense. For many people from Selb, Asch can be reached much faster than the train station, where you could take the train to Asch.

The Bavarian railway company also has its doubts about the track's profitability and therefore asked an expert to do a report about it.

Quote Karl Beger, Bavarian Ministry of Economics

We mainly talk about local and regional traffic here, which is not important enough to make it a profitable project that will pay for the high costs. At the moment, we really do not think that this project would be a worthwhile investment.

The responsible people on the Czech side have a totally different opinion on that. They are even convinced that the track will be reactivated and have even already built two bridges that are necessary for that. However, so far, good news from Bavaria has been rare.

Quote Jiri Knedlik, 2. mayor of Asch

They tell us that reactivating the track is not worthwhile. We disagree on that. We are convinced that the track has to be activated again for our region, tourism and the economy. It is vital for us! (20)

The Czech Republic would have to invest almost 12 million euro and the Germans almost 5 million euro. And since they are currently building a bypass close to the border, a new bridge would also be necessary. Nobody is willing or able to pay for that. And therefore, the trains from Selb will, for the time being, only depart in one direction, namely towards the German city of Hof and not the Czech city of Asch.