

The Telegraphenberg in Potsdam

Station No. 4 of the optical-mechanical
telegraph line in Prussia Berlin–Coblenz 1832–1852



The figure shows the signal dummy
of the telegraph station No. 4 erected by
the GeoForschungsZentrum GFZ on
top of the Telegraphenberg in 2009
Foto: Bouche 01 March 2012

- (1) The famous optical-mechanical telegraph line in Prussia was built from 1832 to 1833 and it extended 588 km from Berlin to Coblenz via Potsdam, Magdeburg, Goslar, Paderborn, Soest, and Cologne. The entire telegraph line only operated for 16 years until the segment from Berlin to Cologne was closed in 1849 and the segment between Cologne and Coblenz in 1852.
- (2) In Prussia riders on horses were used for fast communication until 1833. Since 1849 a more efficient electromagnetic telegraph line operated between Berlin and Aachen via Potsdam and Cologne. This technology is related to famous names as Morse and Siemens.
- (3) Recently, all station locations have been re-determined by GPS (geographic coordinates with WGS 84 datum, linked to Google Earth):
 - The arithmetic mean separation between the 62 stations is 9.6 km, the smallest separation being 2.1 km and the largest 16.0 km.
 - The distance of station No. 4 Potsdam Telegraphenberg to Station No. 3 Berlin-Wannsee Schäferberg is 6.0 km, the distance to station No. 5 Glindow Fuchsberg is 12.2 km.
 - The station elevations above sea level vary between 34 m in Berlin und 440 m in the Rheinisches Schiefergebirge.
 - The top of the Telegraphenberg in Potsdam with its former telegraph station No. 4 is 96 m above sea level. The hill got his shape during the last ice age, the Weichselian glacial time. It is about 20 000 years old.
- (4) The accurate locations of the stations are the basis for future touristic development of telegraph stations. Along the telegraph line a bicycle route will be installed from Coblenz to Berlin.
- (5) In summary:
 - The telegraph line was the mobile phone of the Prussian king.
 - The optical-mechanical telegraph line is a unique cultural-historical band which crosses and thereby links the capital of Berlin with the states of Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Lower-Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Rhineland-Palatinate.
- (6) For more information visit www.optischerTelegraph4.de

