



## Welcome to Bilbao

### AN INVITATION TO BILBAO

*Iñaki Azkuna, Mayor of the City of Bilbao*

Bilbao is the largest city as well as the financial and industrial capital of the Basque Country, one of the most exciting regions in Europe. Our city is fully immersed in a restructuring process that will allow it to face the new century with the same guarantees of success that it had at the turn of the twentieth century.

Bilbao is more than the location of the world-renowned Guggenheim Museum; our city is a landmark example of city building. We have many centuries of history, and our lively historical centre retains our traditional past. At the same time, we have a new Metro system, new hotels, a new opera house, and other important economic and urban infrastructure. We have also a revitalised new waterfront along the Nervión Estuary as well as improved urban spaces.

I am very pleased and proud at how our city is being transformed. For us to continue moving forward, I consider it fundamental not only to maintain but also to increase individual and collective values such as social cohesion in an increasingly plural and multicultural society, work ethic and quality, and of course, democratic values. If there are no values, there can be no collective projects. If there are neither collective projects nor good administration, there can be no advancement.

I am very proud to welcome the 41st ISoCaRP Congress to our city. I invite you to come and experience Bilbao.

### PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

*Alfonso Vegara, President ISoCaRP – AIU – IGSRP*

For over four decades, the ISoCaRP Congresses have been an important forum for debate and collaboration for planners from around the world, as we respond to urban trends that we observe happening, and as we work to create new visions to guide the urban evolution of our cities and regions.

This year, the Basque city of Bilbao will host the 41st Annual ISoCaRP Congress with the theme "Making Spaces for the Creative Economy". The city of Bilbao is instantly recognised for its Guggenheim Museum and is enjoying its new-found status as a "renaissance city". The city has also become internationally-known for the "Guggenheim Effect" of socio-economic spin-offs, which the city is channelling successfully into a clear vision for the urban future of the greater metropolitan region. While there is a shift towards a more technological and digital economy, there is a corresponding interest and investment in art, culture and other creative industries. Bilbao therefore is a very appropriate Host City for the congress theme.

I invite all of you to join us in Bilbao in October 2005 for what promises to be a milestone ISoCaRP Congress!

### LOC's WELCOME

*Waikien Ng, Local Organising Committee*

Bilbao is much more than the Guggenheim. It is the largest city as well as the economic centre of the Basque region. Metropolitan Bilbao has about one million inhabitants, or about half of the Basque population. The city combines tradition and modernity, and is the gateway to the rest of the region.

After decades of de-industrialisation, the city of Bilbao is fully immersed in an on-going urban transformation that is already showing impressive physical results. A fundamental aspect of this renovation process is the incorporation of new urban spaces into the life of our evolving city, and redeveloping key waterfront areas for activities linked to the creative economy. As an urban laboratory of urban regeneration, Bilbao is the ideal setting in which to discuss the making of creative urban spaces. We look forward to welcoming you to Bilbao.