



IsoCaRP 40th World Congress:
Management of Urban Regions

MAYORS SUMMIT

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Iñaki Azkuna

Iñaki Azkuna studied at the University of Salamanca Medical School and became Doctor of Medicine and Surgery in 1971. In 1973 he began a career in education as Profesor de Medicina Física and radiología at the University of País Vasco. In 1973 he became Assistant Doctor for the Hospital de Cruces, later becoming the head doctor and head of Radiology until 1986. During that time, in 1979, Mr. Azkuna acquired appointed as President of the Hospitals Committee of the Association of Doctors in Bizkaia (the Basque Region). In 1981 his experience in medicine and hospital operations lead him to become Director of the Hospital de Cruces and in 1982 Director of Hospitals for the Basque Government.




In 1989-91 Mr. Azkuna's political career took off with an appointment in the Basque Government as Consejero-Secretario for the Office of the Basque Regional Prime Minister. In 1999 his wide experience in public health and regional politics led him to run for the Mayorship of The City of Bilbao where he has successfully led since 1999.

The Town Council of the City of Bilbao is led by the Mayor who is both president of the municipal corporation and head of the local administration. The 29 member Council is elected every four years by constituents, and have responsibilities for finance, planning and development approvals, waste, environment, municipal regulations and orders, and other governance issues. The Mayor is elected from a vote by Council every new term.

Bilbao

Fast facts	City	Metro Area
POPULATION	375,000	865,000
AREA	41.25km ²	500km ²
GDP (EUROS)	19,648	17,512
PER CAPITA		
MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS	financial services, banking, commerce, tourism	Port Industries, light Manufacturing



The City

Bilbao, is the largest city and port on the north coast of Spain. The metropolitan area of Bilbao is the largest urban agglomeration of the Basque Country and the fifth largest in Spain, after Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Sevilla.

Metropolitan Bilbao comprises 30 municipalities, with a total area of close to 500 square Kms. This agglomeration represents 4/5ths of the total population of the province of Bizkaia and close to 50% of the total population of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC).

The quality of life in Bilbao is regarded as one of the best in Spain, and the Metropolitan Area is currently experiencing a tremendous period of urban regeneration. A number of modern large scale projects are slowly transforming Bilbao's urban fabric into *the city-region metropolis* for northern Spain, connecting the rest of Europe to the Iberian Peninsula. To date, many developments, such as the new Metro, the Guggenheim Museum, the city-wide Tramway, the Port of the Abra, and the Airport expansion, to name a few, have been initiated. One of the most important projects is the 35-hectare Abandoibarra area which has been designated for a new mixed-use redevelopment project which will accommodate new housing, business, industry, park land, and public urban spaces.

The Economy

Bilbao is the industrial hub of northern Spain, and the political capital for the Basque region. Shipping, shipbuilding, and the steel industries have made it prosperous, which has resulted in strong financial and industrial sectors. Among cities of the Basque region, Bilbao has the highest population and is one of the most affluent regions in Spain. The GDP of Metropolitan Bilbao represents half of the total GDP of the entire Basque Autonomous Community.

A traditional port city, this area has been and still remains an industrial heartland highly specialised in heavy manufacturing, notably steel and shipbuilding, metal products and basic chemicals, together with a strong specialisation in financial services.