

albiste laburrak news in brief

OCTOBER

THE LEHENDAKARI OPENED THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

During the opening of the new academic year, Juan José Ibarretxe stated that in these times of "financial, political and social decline" it is important to "make a critical review of our attitudes" in all areas of life.

THE ICT SECTOR GENERATED 3.9% OF THE WEALTH CREATED BY THE BASQUE ECONOMY IN 2006.

According to data from the EUSTAT, the Information and Communication Technologies sector (ICT), with 2,175 companies and 24,277 people actually in operation, produced 3.9% of the Gross Domestic Product of the Basque Country in 2006. This means it reached a turnover of 4,931.3 million euros and generated wealth in terms of added value to the figure of 2,146.8 million.



JUAN MARI ARZAK, WELL-KNOWN CHEF, RECEIVED THE 2008 UNIVERSAL BASQUE AWARD FROM THE LEHENDAKARI

In an act celebrated in the Lehendakaritza, the President of the Basque Government's offices, Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe gave the 2008 Universal Basque award to the chef, Juan Mari Arzak. "Basque cuisine, by its own merits, has earned its place in the world, not necessarily better or worse, but ours is our own and it is different, and we are entitled to occupy a rightful place in that global world that we are building day by day", declared the Lehendakari.

THE POLITICAL COUNCIL OF THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT STATED THAT THE FORTHCOMING TRIAL AGAINST THE LEHENDAKARI IS NOT GOING TO DEFLECT IT FROM ITS POLITICAL CONVICTIONS

After the Basque Cabinet of Ministers' weekly meeting, the Political Council met to assess the start of the oral

proceedings against the Lehendakari on 8th January. In a statement read out to the press, the Vice-lehendakari Idoia Zenarrutzabeitia asserted that "this trial against the Lehendakari is not going to deflect us from our political convictions and commitments to peace, dialogue and political standardisation."

THE BASQUE ECONOMY WILL GROW 2.3% IN 2008

The Vice-lehendakari Idoia Zenarrutzabeitia appeared before the press after the Basque Cabinet of Ministers' meeting. The Vice-lehendakari expressed her concern about the crisis, but also declared that she is optimistic about the coming year.

"In Euskadi we are better prepared than others to get through this crisis, and so we will be less affected by it and we will be able to increase our growth", she declared.

THE CRIME RATE REMAINS ALMOST FORTY POINTS BELOW THE STATE AVERAGE

The Spokesperson for the Basque Government, Miren Azkarate, announced the data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the crime rate. According to this data, crime in the Basque Country has remained at the same rate since 1997. This means that the crime rate in the Basque Country is almost 40 points lower than the state average. This progression has been constant since 1982, when the Ertzaintza (Basque Police) came into force.

NOVEMBER

THE LEHENDAKARI ASSURED THAT 2009 WOULD BE A KEY YEAR FOR THE BASQUE ECONOMY

Juan José Ibarretxe opened the 4th Euskadi Intergune at the BEC, an annual business event backing the internationalisation of companies. During his speech, he recalled the fact that, in 10 years, the SPRI [Association for the Promotion of Industry] has managed to secure its presence in 51 countries. He also added that Euskadi sells seven out of ten euros that it produces, "which makes us one of the most open nations to the European area, if not the most open."

HABE CELEBRATED ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HABE, the Institute for Basque Culture, Language and Adult Literacy, celebrated its 25th anniversary in an act held at the Kursaal in San Sebastian. A total of 350,000 students have attended the euskaltegis over the years, and the network of euskaltegis has not stopped growing. This year, for example, over 35,000 people are learning Euskara in classes given by 1,500 teachers in 107 euskaltegis. There are also 60 agreements with 60 Basque Centers outside the Basque Country. The Lehendakari, Juan José Ibarretxe, and the Minister of Culture, Miren Azkarate, attended the event.

THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS WILL BACK 10 STRATEGIC PROJECTS TO CREATE 2500 JOBS IN THREE YEARS

The Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe announced the measures adopted by

the Economic Promotion Council to the press. This venture allocates 31 million euros to subsidize ten strategic industrial projects that will create over 2,500 new jobs between 2008 and 2011. The Lehendakari assured that, despite the difficult times ahead, "we will get through them", because "we are a responsible country", with "reliable companies and dedicated workers" who are committed to the country's future.

THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM IN BILBAO HOSTED THE BIKAIN CERTIFICATE-GIVING CEREMONY

Bikain is the official, public and free certificate that recognises and assesses the continuous standardisation of Euskara in the business world and in the socio-economic environment. They have been awarded this year for the first time, and they have been given to 30 companies, 22 of which belong to the service sector and the other 8 to the industrial sector.

THE BASQUE POPULATION READS MORE, COMPARED WITH THE REST OF SPAIN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The "Statistics of cultural habits, practices and consumption in the Basque Country 2007-2008" were released this week. These figures reveal, among other things, that the Basque population generally reads more than the Spanish and European average. This same study also compared the data regarding visits to the cinema, theatre, concerts and libraries.

DECEMBER

INTERNATIONAL EUSKARA DAY: UKAN PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY AND INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION

On 3rd December, International Euskara Day was celebrated all around the world. The Ukan Awards prize-giving ceremony was held at the Regional President's headquarters and the Basque Minister of Culture Miren Azkarate read out an institutional declaration regarding this event. The gala was left somewhat lacklustre because of the attack on Inaxio Uribe, out of respect for which the ceremony's musical performances and all other entertainment aspects were suspended.



The Lehendakari with Patxi Baztarrika, Vice-minister for Language Policy; Miren Azkarate, Minister