



Speech of the President of the Association of Basque Municipalities (EUEDEL),
Jokin Bildarratz Sorron

EISCO 2008 - 27 September 2008

Egunon, good morning. Eskerrik asko, many thanks for offering us this opportunity. An opportunity that we, as a country, accept as a commitment:

In **2005**, the Lehendakari, the President of Euskadi, inaugurated the **2nd World Summit on Cities and Local Authorities**. I imagine that some of you will have attended this, and so will have made some progress with “Introductory Basque or Euskera”. It’s very simple: egunon means good morning and eskerrik asko means thank you very much. However, you won’t need to speak it to be able to attend EISCO 2010, which I have the honour of presenting to you today.

The commitment that we put before you today is two-fold. On the one hand, it is an external commitment; the Association of Basque Municipalities, EUEDEL, has always maintained its European links and I myself am a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. EISCO 2010 is, therefore, a new step forward in this policy of direct relations with the European municipalities.

And it is also a responsibility that we take on internally. We believe in the Town Councils as the driving force for change within the municipality. We are formed by 251 town councils and we represent more than two million people. Our objective is to form a network of cities and to do so, the interconnection between them is fundamental. Our wish is for the Town Councils to always “be there” for the general public.

I began with the 2005 Summit because we believe it to be a true **milestone for the Basque Country**. The **Digital Local Agenda** project in Basque municipalities came about as a result of this Summit. From that moment on, EUEDEL established the promotion of the DLA as a priority, and via this project our incorporation into the **Information Society**.

So now in 2010, we will host this EISCO encounter. And we wish to do so with a **challenge**. We find ourselves in the “infrastructure phase”; we have five years for all Basque municipalities to become completely adapted to the digital age in which we live. We have now turned the **focus on the public**, and are at the disposal of our citizens. And our collective challenge for EISCO 2010 consists of making sure that all Basque Town Councils are “open to the public” 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; we hope to train the general public in new technologies, providing them and also businesses with better access to the Internet and new technologies, closing the digital gap between members of the public, opening the institutions.... We believe that this should be our “digital service” to the public, and this is the challenge that we have set ourselves. To be there; and to be there always.

EISCO is the main encounter forum for the municipalities, the place where we can exchange ideas, projects and experiences. Looking at these objectives, many of you will have a lot to teach us and others will have a lot to learn. I am sure that this focus will help us all to make the most of this encounter in the Basque Country.

And in addition to "business" we have "pleasure". The “image problems” of the Basque Country are undeniable. So, as a result we have developed our “**hospitality instinct**” to the maximum. Every time that someone visits us we are anxious for them to discover the true reality of our Country and enjoy their stay with us. For this reason, we want EISCO 2010 to be the culmination of this natural tendency of ours, of all the Basque municipalities. We have set out to **surprise and delight you**, and when a Basque sets out to do something important and true, nothing will stop him!

And so it only remains for me to make one final recommendation: don't miss EISCO 2010 in the Basque Country and don't come alone!

Good morning to you all, egunon. And many thanks for your attention, eskerrik asko.