

context of not only its metropolitan area but also within the strategic regional planning of the entire Basque Country.

- *Citizen participation and support.* Bilbao also enjoys the full and active support of the local business community for the recovery of the city. In fact, there has been the successful creation of a number of dynamic public and private partnerships, such as the “Bilbao Metropoli 30” and the “Bilbao Ría 2000.”
- *Successful pilot projects.* The importance of the successful initial projects cannot be overestimated. These initial experiences, such as the treatment of old industrial sites, the recovery of the historical center, the Metro system, the Guggenheim Museum, the Opera House and Convention Center, the new airport, and the extension of the Port of Bilbao, etc., have generated tremendous local, national and international publicity.

However, these changes that I have described in the city are only the surface changes. The greatest miracle that Bilbao is experiencing is a dramatic change in attitude. The feelings of failure and pessimism brought about by prolonged economic crisis and political conflicts have given way to a collective optimism in Bilbao and the Basque society as a whole. The majority of the Basque community – the public institutions, the private sector, and the civil society – is now convinced that it is indeed possible to reinvent Bilbao and the Basque Country in the new post-industrial age. This is the true miracle of Bilbao.