



6.1 Connecting the Atlantic and Mediterranean arcs.

ized European regions and the European regions evolving new industrial structures. It is also located at the intersection of the Paris–Madrid axis and the Ebro Valley–northern Spain corridor. The Basque Country is therefore extremely well located as a “hinge-point” to lead the process of connecting the Atlantic Arc with the Mediterranean Arc through the Ebro Axis, which is one of the most dynamic in the Spanish economy.

The city-region has a surface area roughly that of the metropolitan area of a city like Miami or Sydney. With a population of some 2 million inhabitants, the reconceptualization of the Basque Country as a city-region is critical to its efforts to be relevant and competitive in the global economy.

The key points of the Basque regional strategy are:

- 1 *Creating a system of complementary capitals.* The three largest Basque cities – Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz – are almost perfectly distributed in the region. The distances between the three cities are short, and each city clearly has its own function and personality. Bilbao is the economic and financial center, Donostia-San Sebastian is the elegant capital of culture and tourism, while Vitoria-Gasteiz is the political and administrative capital.

The challenge is to identify and strengthen the mutual complementarities of each urban node, interconnecting them with essential and modern infrastructure systems, such as the proposed Basque “Y” of the High-Speed Rail system. The system of complementary capitals will build a solid interrelationship while maintaining their distinctive urban profiles.

- 2 *Renewing the roles of the Basque network of medium-sized cities.* The