

OFFICIAL TRIP TO WALES
VISIT TO CAF

Speech of the President of the Basque Country

Wales 12-07-2018

Arratsalde on denoi eta eskerrik asko zuen gonbidapenagatik.

I would like to thank you for your kind invitation to visit this plant that will begin operating later this year.

CAF is one of our leading lights in the Basque Country as well as a major player on the global stage. It is most certainly a fine exponent of the Basque Country brand and this new facility exemplifies all four core aspects of the industrial policy we have been implementing to improve Basque competitiveness, namely: Investment, Industry, Innovation and Internationalisation.

This plant is a great example of how to adapt to a highly competitive global market. It has required investment of nearly 40 million euros and will be a state-of-the-art production plant.

The project will boost growth in the rail industry, a goal that both Wales and the Basque Country share. It will revitalise the network of local suppliers and help to create more than 300 highly skilled jobs.

CAF-ek ia 40 milioi euro inbertitu ditu fabrika berri honetan eta guztira 300 lanpostu berri sortuko dira. Honen bidez, Gales-en eta Euskadi-n lehenasunezkoa den trenbide industria bultzatzen dugu eta lehiakortasuna areagotzen dugu merkatu irekian.

From a business perspective, this investment meets demands for new, more efficient and environmentally friendly trends in mobility. CAF offers electric and energy-efficient mobility solutions.

The Basque Government has its own electric mobility plan precisely to promote this kind of initiative and this factory broadens technological advancement prospects and solutions in this new field of opportunity. CAF, too, has taken a major step forward in its diversification strategy, to advance its position in the area of e-mobility and electric buses.

CAF has also been short-listed by HS2 to bid for the contract for the UK's new high-speed trains. The news vindicates its commitment to its high-speed "OARIS" model and if the contract goes ahead, CAF might be building up to 54 train units at this plant of Wales.

The Basque Government is working to assist CAF in obtaining innovative technology and expand onto new markets.

ETS-EuskoTren and CAF have also signed an agreement to innovate rail technology to be introduced in the Basque rail network. The CBTC system improves train safety and effectiveness using smart running control. We are adapting to new needs and overcoming technological barriers to pioneer the introduction of smart transport systems.

The Basque Country is firmly committed to the model of public-private partnership to successfully implement innovation projects that can contribute added value to the Euskadi brand.

For me, this is a particularly significant visit, coming as it does as we move into the countdown to Brexit, with all the effects that process will have, both in general and more specifically, for the Basque Country. In March last year my government set up a special committee to analyse these issues.

Eusko Jaurlaritzak Brexitaren eragina aztertzeko Batzorde berezi bat osatu zuen lehengo urtean. Gure nahia da euskal interesak defenditzen jarraitzea Erresuma Batuan Brexitaren ondoren ere. Galesek eta Euskadik elkarlana areagotu nahi dugu eta CAF-en fabrika berria helburu horren adibide eredugarria da.

Following Brexit, our government will continue to promote Basque interests in the UK. Our close relationship will continue to grow and the opening by CAF of this factory in Wales is evidence of this. This is a whole new field of opportunity; these facilities will help the company extend its operations throughout the United Kingdom with its sights firmly set on the medium and long-term.

Zorionak eta eskerrik asko!