



Wind Europe 2019ko apirilaren 2an Ministerial Opening Plenary Auditorium 1 and 2, Level 4, BEC

Welcome to the Basque Country: “a country which is a world capital and host of wind energy activity, from today and until Thursday the 4th of April.

As a minister of the Basque Government, it is an honour for me to welcome you to this edition of Wind Europe and to welcome the people and companies that are visiting us.

The Basque Country is a small country with just over two million inhabitants, but it is a country which is dedicated to and deeply involved in industrial activity.

Wind Europe represents an exceptional event for our industry; for our technology; for our institutions and for Basque society.

I hope this will be a successful event and that you will feel at home, learning, teaching and sharing knowledge and experiences.

From the industrial point of view of the energy sector, I wish to highlight four areas on which Basque industry is focused and in which we could offer knowledge and added value.

1. WIND ENERGY.
2. THE DIGITALIZATION OF ELECTRICITY NETWORKS
3. ELECTRIC MOBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF BATERIES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Staging the Wind Europe event in the Basque Country provides us with a perfect opportunity to showcase the potential of our industry and the region’s strong commitment to wind power.

The first wind farms to be erected here back in the 1990s with public-sector backing. That was the germ of a powerful industry which is now increasingly enjoying worldwide projection, led by internationally renowned Basque firms which are in turn acting as the driving force behind technological developments in hundreds of other companies.

The Basque Country boasts:

Iberdrola. World leader in renewable energy, especially wind energy. Through its sister company in the UK (Scottish Power) it is leading the development of marine wind energy in the EU (UK, Germany ...); and the same in the USA through Avangrid.



Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energies. A world leader in the manufacture of wind turbines, both onshore and offshore.

Such firms contribute to innovation and advanced management among small and medium suppliers in their ecosystem.

The industrial sector of energy goes even further:

The Basque Country has over 100 companies working in the wind energy sector that cover the whole value chain (promotion, design and manufacture of wind farm elements, installation, operation and maintenance).

Turnover is over 7,000 M€ (over 90% is generated outside the Basque Country) with over 15,000 people employed (3,000 in the Basque Country)

And there is no competitive industry without technological backing.

Energy and especially wind energy has been included within RIS3 (intelligent specialization strategy), as a priority area of action. The Basque Country has a very powerful network of research centres that gives technological support to the above companies. We should highlight Tecnalia and IK4 (Tekniker, Ikerlan ...). Similarly, we have public and private university institutions that collaborate with technology centres and companies.

Looking to the future:

It seems clear that technological development will have to focus more on offshore wind, and particularly on developing new materials that can better endure the inclement conditions at sea; equipment requiring less maintenance and, above all, floating platforms, given the increasing need to build further and further from the coast where deeper seas will require new solutions.

Offshore wind is one of the most strategic industries due to the involvement of a very large number of companies and the exports it can generate.

The Basque Country has committed to two ambitious projects that will affect innovation in the region's wind industry: Windbox, a research centre for the wind industry, and BIMEP, for offshore wind.

The two infrastructures are helping drive an energy policy that seeks to lever growth, competitiveness and sustainability, working towards a new and more sustainable energy model.

Curiously, having been a country dedicated to the industrial and technological development in this sector, and having been able to position this technology at a world level, our capacity for self-generation in the Basque Country is limited.

The social and political response in the past against the installation of wind farms to generate energy in the Basque Country is, as I say, a thing of the past.



Fortunately, the Basque Country advances along a path of agreements that make it possible to carry out planning that leaves the doors open to new wind installations.

The challenge for Basque industry, as for European industry, is a reduction in the costs of wind energy based on technology and innovation.

In turn, the business fabric explores new ways of collaboration to be able to offer solutions to the whole of the value chain, highly affected by a high degree of digitalization.

The challenge for the Basque Country, as a country, is to consolidate and position itself in the world, of course, but also to become the generators of our own energy in order to be more efficient environmentally and economically.

Finding ourselves in the middle of an energy transition, we must continue to improve, building an energy system which responds to the needs of the whole of society, and the economic and industrial fabric, which has been and is the guarantor of welfare and growth.

Thank you very much.