

**“Our Vocational Training is among the best but that must not lead us to become self-complacent”**

## Isabel Celáa

Minister of Education, Universities and Research

**“All our programmes will be referenced within the four strategic objectives of the European Union for education and training”**

**ISABEL CELÁA, THE REGIONAL MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH OF THE BASQUE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, HAS HELD THIS POSITION FOR ONE YEAR NOW. SHE STATES THAT VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN EUSKADI IS AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD BUT THAT “THIS MUST NOT LEAD US TO BE SELF-COMPLACENT. WE MUST SEEK EXCELLENCE”.**

- Euskadi is recognised as having good Vocational Training and for being a reference for other Autonomous Communities. What is the Regional Minister for Education's view on this matter?

- It is true that our Vocational Training is among the best; but that must not lead us to become self-complacent, we must search for excellence and become a reference at European level.

- Whilst you were the Deputy Regional Minister for Education in 1994, the Basque Vocational Training Council was created, What memories come to mind and how do you see Vocational Training 16 years later?

- The creation of the Council was a commitment to participation, collaboration and teamwork among public authorities, economic and social agents and educational centres at the start of a process of changes towards a modern conception of Vocational Training which has led to the results which are evident today

- Both society and companies themselves have high regard for Vocational Training in Euskadi. Other Autonomous Communities are also said to look towards the Basque Country as regards Vocational Training. What is your opinion on this matter?

- All the figures available show a good appraisal, by companies, of the skills shown by students who carry out work experience in the companies. This is undoubtedly due to training being more in line with the needs of the economic framework. We must continue along that path: bringing the students' skills in line with the demands of the labour market requires a greater contribution from Vocational Training to the development of our economy and, to be more precise, of our society.

- According to figures published in this academic year, there has been an increase in students in Vocational Training. What is this increase due to?

- This increase is partly due to the economic crisis which favours greater interest for Vocational Training among unemployed people, but I would like to think that another part of the increase is a commitment to a system, that of Vocational Training, which in years prior to the crisis already had a very high rate of insertion into the labour market. Whatever it is, all of these people know that they have made a good choice: increasing their professional skills will make them more employable and will improve their personal skills. Furthermore, studying Vocational Training in the educational system not

only enables a qualification to be obtained in order to perform a profession, but also opens up a training itinerary, which, if they wish, can reach higher levels related to the profession in which they have qualified.

- What are your Department's strategic lines for this term of office and how do they affect Vocational Training?

The variety of teaching and the extension of the educational system make it impossible to mention in a few words my Department's strategies for all of education in this term of office. I will focus on Vocational Training and on the fact that all our programmes will be referenced within the four strategic objectives of the European Union for education and training: making permanent learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training; encouraging equality, social cohesion and active citizens and increasing creativity and renewal, including business spirit, at all levels of education and training.

- What will be the most relevant actions?

Around these objectives, the main actions will focus on achieving a more integrated system among general, professional and university education and within Vocational Training, among its different subsystems. I would also like to contextualise in our economic and social reality, the curriculum of the new LOE qualification and to facilitate the constant adaptation of the training programmes to the demands of the labour market. I would also like to extend and relax the training offers, in particular, with a combination of classroom and telematic training, to enable a balance between studies, work and family responsibilities and to improve the training-research-innovation triangle. We are going to work on greater coordination with the Department of Employment and Social Affairs to develop a guidance system which enables coherent training itineraries, greater territorial adaptation, relations with the productive environment... and we are going to develop important activities around the teaching staff and the "governing" of the centres.

- Both the draft of the proposed Sustainability Law and the agreement proposed by the Minister Angel Gabilondo refer to Vocational Training. What changes do you expect in the short and mid term?

- I must point out that I believe it is very important for the proposed Sustainable Economy Law to devote an entire qualification to Vocational Training. This will undoubtedly be of benefit to Vocational Training as it means that the increase in people's qualification and training are understood to contribute to improving the productivity of the economy, to reducing imbalances between training and preparation to carry out a profession and to improve competitiveness. The Law will reinforce many of the aspects I have highlighted as strategic, such as updating curriculum, integrated training offer, distance training, skills recognition, guidance, cooperation of the centres with the social agents, or collaboration with companies.

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- You have announced the Integrated Vocational Training System as one of the commitments you aim to carry out. What can you tell us about this matter?

- An important line of action is marked by going deeper into the integration of the general education system with that of Vocational Training, and of this with employment and, of all of these with lifetime learning. The new jobs generate a change in the demands for the skills that must accredit jobs, leading to greater basic and transversal skills which imply a greater intellectual content, teamwork, adaptation to change, problem solving, working with ICTs... The challenge of education and training is to generate skills for life and for the job, among which are those corresponding to Vocational Training. Therefore, it is essential in order to achieve a more integrated



“The Lifetime Learning Law is the only legislative commitment with my Department for this term of office”

system which facilitates and accompanies our students in the transfer from the general education system and that of Vocational Training, to the labour market or University. This also implies better relations between the VT subsystem with that of training for employment: VT is unique and it must have as a reference the skills demanded in the labour environment. However, a system of this type must also include the learning produced throughout life. And this is achieved by establishing a recognition system for the skills acquired via work experience, and of non-formal learning. For this purpose we will set up a body with the Department of Employment, an Agency, which will be responsible for recognising these skills.

- Continuous Training (training for employment) and Lifetime Training is of utmost importance in our present and immediate future. What can you tell us about the future Permanent Learning Law on which your department is working? What objectives are set out in that Law? When do you expect to present it to Parliament?

- The Lifetime Learning Law is the only legislative commitment with my Department for this term of office. Everybody is aware that living in this knowledge society requires the permanent updating of skills, not only the professional ones, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the personal, civic and social skills. Guaranteeing universal access to lifetime learning in order to promote the acquisition or development of new skills, will be one of the main objectives of the Law: lifetime training blurs the limits between general, basic or initial training and the learning acquired through work experience or life itself; it breaks away from the same idea that training is only obtained in the Educational System. Extending this new mentality, enabling access to training for everyone, establishing a new methodology for the learning of young people and adults, encouraging the integration and recognition of all forms of learning, establishing a lifetime guidance system are some of the challenges of the Law.

- The previous term of office ended with the Basque Vocational Training Plan, which finalised in 2007. Are you working on a new plan? When do you expect it to be approved?

- The Deputy Regional Ministry for Vocational Training and Permanent Learning is working to highlight the lines of the new Basque Vocational Training Plan 2011-2014, which, as we know, must be analysed by the Basque Vocational Training Council for presentation to the Governing Council. We expect it to be approved in the last quarter of this year.

- Ikaslan and the Vocational Training centres are an important reference for young and old, for the unemployed and working people, as well as for the actual companies. Don't you think that the Vocational Training centres have made a great effort and they have adapted to the new requirements of a productive system and a changing society? What function do you think Ikaslan should fulfil?

- I mentioned before that a great change has taken place in the Vocational Training centres and, of course, not only in purely external aspects, but also and, above all, in adapting to the demands of the productive environment, in the internal management processes and in the qualification of the teaching staff.

It is important for Ikaslan to reinforce the network of contacts between centres in order to tackle the training of the teaching staff, carrying out common activities such as mobility programmes or innovation projects; here Ikaslan and other centre associations can carry out important work.

Iñaki Konde

# Europemobility

## Raising the quantity and quality of work placements abroad

IKASLAN IS TAKING PART AS A PARTNER IN THE EUROPEMOBILITY PROJECT WHICH IS A EUROPEAN PROJECT STARTING IN OCTOBER 2008 AND WILL LAST TWO YEARS. THE AIM AND MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT IS TO STIMULATE BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF MOBILITY IN VET, BY PROMOTING AWARENESS ON THE AS WELL AS ON THE TOOLS, METHODOLOGIES AND SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE. THE MESSAGE WE WANT TO PROMOTE IS “MOBILITY FOR ALL”, INCLUDING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES AS WELL AS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES.

The project is based on the results of the MoVe-iT research which will be transferred to the wide audience of VET professionals, students and enterprises involved, or potentially involved, in mobility. The partnership is composed by different stakeholders representing European networks of VET providers, VET Schools and mobility players, social and economic actors. The project partners are:

- CSCS (Italy)
- PwC (The Netherlands)
- EFVET (Belgium)
- Yes Forum (Germany)
- IKASLAN (Basque Country)
- AVIVA (Poland)
- Swiss Occidental Leonardo (Switzerland)

The project assumes that all partners will cooperate for the next two years and meet on multiple occasions. Since now we have developed meetings every six month in Pistoia (Italy), Stuttgart (Germany) and Wrocław (Poland). Next meeting will take place in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and the project results will be expound in a final conference held in Brussels in September 2010.



Tasks and activities to develop on this project are many and diverse:

1. Create a new printed **guidebook** on how to arrange VET placements abroad. It will be designed for students but also trainers and mobility coordinators can use it as promotional tool to support commitment for going abroad.
2. Create **educational programmes** in order to help trainers and coordinators to organize mobility. It will cover all the cycle for organizing mobility (preparation, implementation and evaluation)
3. **Mobility fairs organized** in the premises of target group institutions, such as Schools, Universities and/or Educational institutions to promote mobility and to raise awareness on benefits, funding opportunities and good practices.
4. Establish an international **community of practice** with public and private organizations involved in and promoting mobility where organizers of mobility can contact with other mobility organizers and share good practices, experiences and tools for a proper arrangement of mobility.
5. Promote, on a yearly basis, a European **Video Contest** for Leonardo and Erasmus mobility students doing a work placement abroad. Mobility students are asked to take part in the contest with a video showing their experience abroad. The aim of this activity is to gather “Ambassadors for mobility” from a wide variety of activities and areas of interest and encourage young people to take advantage of this type of opportunities of mobility.





# Guillermo Ulacia

President of Innobasque, Basque Innovation Agency

**AFTER TAKING OVER FROM PEDRO LUIS URIARTE, SINCE NOVEMBER 2009, GUILLERMO ULACIA (BARAKALDO, 1954) IS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF INNOBASQUE, BASQUE INNOVATION AGENCY. ULACIA POINTS OUT THAT HE IS "VERY FORTUNATE TO CAPTAIN A SHIP THAT IS TRAVELLING AROUND THE WORLD".**

- To what extent does your arrival at the Presidency of Innobasque imply a new stage in Innobasque's career?

- I was already at Innobasque; otherwise it would have been difficult to have taken on this responsibility. Within the planning activity in 2010, after the first stage of conceptualisation and the second of mobilisation, it was time for the third: action. As is often the case, I was in the right place at the right time. When Pedro Luis Uriarte took the decision to retire and a substitute was required, this was carried out in the most natural way with a person who was already part of the Executive Board, who knew what had been done until that time and who accepted the new responsibility of starting a third stage focused on new fields of action of the Innobasque project. If we had to draw a parallel, it could be like Juan Sebastián Elcano. Halfway through the journey he had the great fortune of captaining a ship which was travelling around the world.

- Do you consider that innovation is the key to making progress in a sustainable economic and social development model?

- Yes, absolutely. Innovation is the most powerful and fastest way, not for transformation, but rather for adaptation, in the environment, with tangible results, which ensure that we are not displaced from the global scene by the new emerging economies and that we have at least one opportunity to remain.

In addition, the tendencies at State, European and international levels indicate that, innovation is indeed the key to progressing towards a sustainable economic and social development model, which enables us to satisfy the needs of the current generations, at the same time as it guarantees the wellbeing of the future generations.

**A person with Vocational Training is an asset, they are as important as having a football player or a lawyer**

- VT in the Basque Country has experienced an important transformation in the last decade becoming a reference for other countries. What is your opinion on the matter?

- Indeed, I believe that VT in the Basque Country has experienced a strong transformation over the last few years, as a result of an important and necessary process of reflection promoted from different bodies and institutions, which saw the need to update and innovate this system to adapt to the new demands of society.

The current Vocational Training is a useful tool, not only for young people who are preparing themselves for subsequent incorporation in the labour market, but also as a support for continuous training for those people who are already working, but who need to update their knowledge or strengthen their skills, thus contributing to the development of a knowledge and permanent learning society throughout life. The image that I have of Vocational Training is that of a real incubator of excellent professionals and businesses

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- Does Basque VT lack anything? Do you think it needs to improve in any aspects?

- It needs that non-conformity, that innovation, to be part of its everyday life, because the changes society undergoes are so fast that they are likely to require the relationship between the teacher and the student, and between the centres and businesses, to continue to be dynamic and different to those at this time.

- Is it necessary for VT and the business fabric to become increasingly more interrelated. What role should innovation play?

- It must contribute to finding new formulas for relations between the companies and those responsible for planning the VT curriculum. In my opinion, the companies, in collaboration with the centres, should forecast what type of professional profiles will be required in the mid and long term and what type of skills will enable their incorporation in the labour market in the future.

- For some time now we have been experiencing times of transformation and deep economic crisis. What can Vocational Training contribute in this context?

- According to various studies carried out in Spain, there is an important imbalance between the number of university graduates and the number of people who have a mid-level VT qualification, at the same time as there is an important deficit of intermediate-level experts. In this sense, VT can play an essential part in economic recovery and in job creation.

- Both Ikaolan and the associated Vocational Training centres are working on technological Innovation Projects, with new management models, on entrepreneurship... What is your opinion on these?

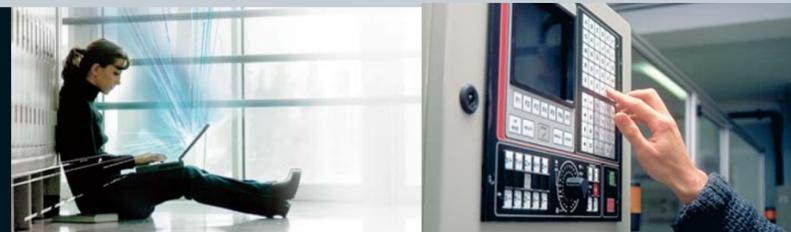
- I believe that tackling all of these matters, which we are also working on in Innobasque, is of vital importance in order to continue with the transformation process that is being carried out in the Basque Vocational Training system and of course, in order to promote innovation in the educational field. When we talk about making Euskadi the European reference in innovation with a 2030 timeline, we cannot forget that we can only achieve this objective by encouraging the assets of innovation among the young people who will later occupy the positions of responsibility in our organisations. For this reason, all investments that we make now in the educational system will contribute to achieving in the future an innovative, economically developed and socially balanced society.

- Would you like to send a message to the Basque VT centres?

- Firstly, I would like to congratulate both the organisations of the Basque Country which are working to improve education in VT, and the VT centres themselves, for the important transformation they have experienced over the last few years and for all the initiatives they have promoted to modernise and innovate this field of the educational system.

Likewise, I encourage them to continue with this work of strengthening a learning education model throughout life, which offers learning and training opportunities to both young people who will access the labour market and people who are already working and for it to adapt to different the scenes and demands of the companies.

**"VT could play an essential part in the economic recovery and job creation"**



**"The current Vocational Training is a useful tool, not only for young people who are preparing themselves for subsequent incorporation in the labour market, but also as a support for continuous training for those people who are already working"**



## Stylianos Mavromoustakos

Vice President of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training



### The European Commission and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy in Basque Country

EFVET is a unique European-wide professional association which has been created by and for providers of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in all European Countries. Its mission is to champion and enrich Technical and Vocational Education and Training through transnational co-operation by building pan European network of institutions and practitioners which will

- Promote quality and innovation in TVET throughout Europe.
- Develop collaboration, mutual co-operation and sharing of good practice.
- Give Colleges a platform of influence in European TVET policy.

Developed with the support of the European Commission and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, EFVET is the only transnational organization of this type for TVET. Its policy is determined by its members, Colleges and schools. It collaborates with but is independent of all government and funding bodies. Its income is derived from membership subscription, grants and sponsorship. EFVET currently represent schools, Colleges and associations from 19 EU member countries and 5 other countries from Europe and Asia.

EFVET organizes its Annual Conference in a different country each year attracting between 150 – 200 delegates. The theme of each conference addresses the wider EU issues, National issues of the host country and recommendations from members and the previous year conference delegates. The program is designed to satisfy the needs of all types of participants, from teachers/trainers to school/college principals. The 2009 Annual Conference, 18th EFVET International Conference, took place in Bilbao, Pais Vasco, Spain with more than 180 delegates. The title of the Conference was "Creativity and Innovation in Vocational Education and Training".

## 18th EFVET International Conference

Last October the 18th EFVET International Conference took place in Bilbao. During four days, Wednesday 21st October to Saturday 24th October, about 170 participants attended this conference and took part in the different activities organized on its context. All these participants came representing different institutions, associations, enterprises and colleges related to Vocational Education and Training in countries such as Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom and Spain. This conference, arranged by Ikaflan with the collaboration of Hetel and Cebanc, was very successful on its purpose of promoting creativity and innovation in Education.

The conference theme this time was "Creativity and Innovation in Vocational Education and Training". 2009 marks the European Year of Creativity and Education – unlike most European Year programmes – this theme reflects a key policy priority for the European Union over the next 10 years. The concepts of Creativity and Innovation will form a major platform across all aspects of European development. They will permeate policy decisions aimed at building the knowledge society, tackling both economic and social cohesion and active citizenship.

The promotion of creativity and enhancing the capacity for innovation through Vocational Education and Training and Lifelong Learning is a key to the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences alongside the well-being of individuals in society.

Creativity and innovation manifest themselves in many aspects of learning. There is a need to promote awareness of their importance alongside entrepreneurship for personal development, creative self expression, acquisition of key competences conducive to innovation, transferable skills to address new skills for jobs and equity and diversity. These are some of the challenges facing education and training managers and practitioners.

The delegates characterized the competence as one of the best in terms of organization, participation and content. The invited speakers were of the highest caliber their presentations were very informative and related to the scope of the conference. The hospitality and warmth of the local organizer were overwhelming which captivated all the participants.

The workshops and round tables provided a golden opportunity for delegates to exchange views, enhance existing networks and to establish new. The satisfaction of delegates with the quality and level of the workshops and richness of the discussions was reflected in the reports prepared by the reporters of each workshop and the overall conclusions of the Conference.

The timing of the Annual conference provides an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas, develop thoughts into ideas and finally transfer ideas into actions. Many European calls of proposals have their deadline within the first two months of the year. The gathering of so much expertise and knowledge lead to the buildup of new projects and new strategies. Most importantly new friendships and synergies for long lasting relationships were developed setting the ground for future collaborations.

Education is the foundation for the wellbeing and further development of any country regardless to how advance the country may be. In times of financial crisis every sector of a Nations economy suffers including education. However, during such times, education should have increase funding, as it is the best investment for the future and way out any crisis. Unfortunately education falls also victim of cuts with innovation being the first to be victimized. Any failures of education today will have an impact a few years later onto the society. Any attempt to save money today will be paid many folds later not only in monetary terms but will be even worst in social problems.

Another funding issue is how the money invested in education is utilized. In many countries there is unbalance between Academic and Vocational education. Usually the poor relative is Vocational Education which most often provides shelter to the less fortunate young people. In countries where a good balance has been reached one can see more effective and just educational systems.

EFVET continues its vital role as an NGO with strong influence on policy issues related to VET at the European level. The Commission considers EFVET as one of the principal representative organizations able to reflect the views of all those at all levels engaged in VET. This reflects the success to the long systematic and patient approach of EFVET to become an influential organization on policy decision at European level. EFVET as a founding member of EUCIS Lifelong Learning Platform has continued to contribute to a range of EC supported discussions forums, public hearings and consultations. In addition, the President of EFVET has been active in forging greater links with Commission officials and had several meeting with the Director General alongside colleagues within EUCIS LLL Platform.

## IKASLANI ATXIKITAKO ZENTRUAK CENTROS ASOCIADOS A IKASLAN

