

PRESS RELEASE

The President of the Basque Country, Mr Iñigo Urkullu, visits Tekniker on its 40th anniversary

- *The technology centre is celebrating four decades of existence as a key stakeholder in the development of technological solutions aimed at boosting the economic growth of the Basque industrial fabric characterised by a social purpose and scope*
- *Energy transition, digital and smart manufacturing, as well as societal challenges to be dealt with in the post-Covid era will be crucial over the next few months in terms of our activities.*
- *Also attending this commemorative event were the Basque Government's Regional Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and the Environment, Ms Arantxa Tapia; Mr Markel Olano, Head of the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council and Mr Jon Iraola, Mayor of Eibar.*

[Eibar, 24 November 2021] – President Iñigo Urkullu visited **Tekniker's** facilities in Eibar (Gipuzkoa) today on the occasion of the technology centre's 40th anniversary technology centre. After four decades of activities, this outstanding member of the BRTA (Basque and Research Technology Alliance) is playing a key role in terms of R&D&I in the Basque Country thanks to its multiple collaborative actions and proximity to local firms.

The visit was followed by an official commemorative event in the technology centre's auditorium chaired by Mr Urkullu, Luis Uriarte, Managing Director of Tekniker and chairman Jesús Iriondo. Mention was also made of the recently deceased Alex Bengoa, former Managing Director of the technology centre.

Luis Uriarte explained that "Tekniker was born 40 years ago as a metallurgy laboratory to address the needs of local firms. Since then, our organisation has upheld its identity and applied the same criteria to meet the challenges posed by the Basque industrial fabric with regard to furthering its economic growth in accordance with its purpose and social scope by focusing on the European and international markets".

The event shows how the centre's technological specialisation has evolved over these last few decades. Details have also been given on the unique equipment used over the years to apply the technology required to meet the challenges posed by society.

“Having the knowledge, experience and capabilities of Tekniker is essential to position the Basque Country at the forefront of international technology, to boost the competitiveness of our companies, advance in the area of digitisation and improve sustainability”, some of the key points raised in the presentations.

It's certainly no coincidence that part of Tekniker's activities scheduled for 2022 will focus on learning much more about advanced manufacturing technologies, surface engineering and ICTs to foster energy transition actions, smart and digital manufacturing and address healthcare challenges that our post-Covid societies will have to deal with.

In 2022, Tekniker will also do its utmost to strengthen ties with local companies by means of the so-called “Collaborative Company” formula to establish a stable relationship over time and robust connections to deliver a greater impact; specific actions will be deployed to bring the technology centre's offer closer to the industrial fabric, mainly to SMEs; collaborative efforts will be made with other technological and research centres and public administrations, particularly within the framework generated by the BRTA alliance.

Jesús Iriondo also stated that “we at Tekniker firmly believe that R&D&I will provide leverage for our recovery, which explains why we want to carry on working with direct technological dissemination actions that will serve to underpin this approach.

The event has also served to review the centre's most relevant results reported in 2021: more than 23 million in annual turnover and 290 people on the workforce.

From laser to surfaces

In the course of the visit, the President was invited to see some of the centre's most outstanding laboratories and learn more about their activities in areas such as laser technology, inspection and measuring solutions, automation and robotics or surface engineering.

The first stop was the Laser Manufacturing Lab, where director David Gómez explained the possibilities offered by laser technologies in sectors such as shipbuilding or aeronautics as a vector to allow transformations to occur in manufacturing, additive manufacturing, reduction of material wastage and enhanced process efficiency.

The President and his entourage then visited the assembly workshop where Unai Mutilba, Tekniker's coordinator for inspection and measuring solutions, was asked to introduce an innovative machine tool currently on loan from Zayer to be used in research projects. Thanks to this on-site machine, it will now be possible to perform an extensive range of analyses. Technical advances reported by this work space are mainly focused on analysing machine accuracy and dynamics.

The group also was shown the automation and industrial robotics laboratory where Eneko Ugalde, the director in charge of autonomous and smart solutions at Tekniker, explained a number of solutions the technology centre is currently working on such as an inspection and monitoring platform for sectors dealing with renewables, bin-picking applications (i.e., feeding parts into machines, preparing orders, organising returned orders, etc.), and several types of machine-person interactions (voice, gestures, etc.).

The visit concluded at the surface engineering laboratory where Estibaliz Aranzabe, director of Surface Chemistry, explained various "multi-functional surfaces" (anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-dust, super hydrophobic, etc.) associated with multiple applications that are used in the healthcare sector to improve energy efficiency or can also be applied to everyday objects like a sink to drain water quicker. She approached all of these areas from an integral perspective ranging "from the laboratory to the industry", where coatings are produced in laboratories to be scaled-up at a later stage and produced for real applications.

During his visit, President Iñigo Urkullu was accompanied, among others, by Luis Uriarte, director general of Tekniker; and Jesús Iriondo, chairman of Tekniker. There were also other institutional authorities in attendance: Arantxa Tapia, Regional Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and the Environment from the Basque Government; Markel Olano, Head of the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa; Jon Iraola, Mayor of Eibar; Eva Ferreira, Rector of the UPV/EHU; and the provincial deputy for Economic Promotion, Tourism and the Rural Environment of Gipuzkoa, Jabier Larrañaga.

Concerning Tekniker

Tekniker is a technology centre specialised in Advanced Manufacturing, Surface & Product Engineering, and ICTs for manufacturing. Its mission is geared towards fostering growth and wellbeing through R&D&I actions aimed at society and enhancing competitiveness in the business fabric in a sustainable manner. Tekniker is a member of the Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA).

Further information:

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