Preface
The Gipuzkoa model, a solid trajectory

Markel Olano, Diputado General de Gipuzkoa

Etorkizuna Eraikiz started out in the spring of 2016. Regional universities, representatives of organised society, businesses, associations and so on – we all pitched in towards a goal we found particularly attractive: addressing the construction of a new Gipuzkoa that would leave the problems of the past behind. Many of the queries we tabled at the time, such as new forms of mobility, the ageing of society and climate change, are now front-page news in the modern world.

Since then, Gipuzkoa has been hard at work to anticipate the future, and to guarantee the social and economic development of our society through cooperation. I wish to emphasise the notion of cooperation: one of the greatest contributions by Etorkizuna Eraikiz to the territory is probably the expansion of open, collaborative governance, conveying something which is so much a part of us – collaboration – to public policies, in order to provide answers for the territory’s main challenges.

In a bid to explain the importance of collaboration, I home in on Rousseau’s hunters’ dilemma. In ancient times, a group of hunters are hunting a large stag, which will provide food for them and also for the rest of the village. To make the hunting expedition successful, however, there must be collaboration between all the members of the group. The threat lies in individualism: each hunter can abandon the stag hunt and instead go and hunt a hare, a task which is much easier. This means the group of hunters can eat, but the stag will run off, and the rest of the village will have no food.

Amid the gigantic challenges faced by Gipuzkoa and the modern world, what Etorkizuna Eraikiz is saying is that individual solutions do not work, and that we must work together to come up with a response to these problems. We are up against some magnitudes, processes of transformation which affect society as a whole, and any responses we may come up with for these processes must be shared and consensual.

In addition to the method of working, some significant results have been achieved. Our Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme has rolled out a new agenda which in the next ten years will enable us to become a more social, greener and
more competitive territory, with a more powerful and innovative economy that will enable us to continue to transform the territory, and with a cohesive society establishing limits for social inequalities. In this regard, since 2016 more than 50,000 people have taken part in various initiatives and projects launched by Etorkizuna Eraikiz, and hundreds of social and economic agents have made some kind of contribution.

There can be no doubt that the current context poses some difficulties in achieving this objective. We have undergone a triple crisis in recent years – health, economic and social – and some major economic uncertainties and concerns are still in place. We do not know what tomorrow has in store for us, but what we do know is that we do not intend to simply sit on our hands and do nothing: we must reach an agreement on solutions to these problems, and strive to turn threats into opportunities.

Experimentation is the other distinctive characteristic of Etorkizuna Eraikiz. It basically consists of applying the scientific method to the construction of the future. The project has a number of laboratories acting as testing grounds for problems of the future: trial, error, more trials, and again until the proper result is achieved. In short, we face a gigantic social innovation exercise which, as already mentioned, seeks to involve society as a whole. It is no idle challenge, but we believe that our society has more than enough power and enthusiasm to face up to it.

However, in the current context, amid the various crises we face at the present time and will have to face in the future, our main priority is to protect those who are more vulnerable in order to prevent any regression in the welfare of families and the general public in Gipuzkoa. The Gipuzkoa Provincial Council is hard at work on this, on collaboration with other Basque institutions and Gipuzkoa society. At the same time, we are making an even greater effort, not only to maintain the current economic level, but to boost the future economy and generate quality employment.

However, a solid economy and a cohesive society are two sides of the same coin. Both constitute the core of the Gipuzkoa model. This is because we cannot maintain the level of welfare that characterises our society without a competitive economy based on state-of-the-art industry; and because the values linked to social welfare, such as education, gender equality and social cohesion, are basic values for the operation of a strong, competitive economy.

For the future of Gipuzkoa, it is essential to continue to develop this binomial if further progress is to be made. In view of the uncertainty and economic difficulties already affecting families and individuals in Gipuzkoa, this binomial, this Gipuzkoa model we hold so dear, marks out the path. It is a solid trajectory to address the current situation, giving priority to social
By taking action in relation to these two challenges, all of us will continue to build a social, competitive, green Gipuzkoa, a Gipuzkoa that will continue to be a territory with one of the lowest levels of social inequality in Europe. And, just like every time we talk about inequality, we address the issue from a broader perspective – social, economic, gender, linguistics, etc. – because the society of the future we all wish to build together must be cohesive in all its aspects.