

BASQUE COUNTRY

The Basque Country, located in North Spain, is one of the wealthiest regions in Europe. The Statute of Autonomy defines all the competences of the Basque Country. The Basque Parliament is the supreme representative body. The three internationally renowned capitals are: Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz. The Basque Country has made great progress in the environmental area in recent years, thanks to the endeavours of the general public, companies, civil society and the authorities. The joint effort has positioned our country as a benchmark on the international Environmental Performance Index.

Climate change is one of the challenges facing us, even though the Basque Country only contributes 0.5% of the total emissions of the European Union. The Basque Government has embraced the principle of shared responsibility that governs the international emission reduction policies. Basque society is progressing towards a low-carbon economy and has assumed its share of responsibility with a demanding and far-reaching commitment. Limiting greenhouse gases, increasing the capacity of the carbon sinks, evolving towards more efficient electricity generation and with fewer emissions, the drop in industrial energy consumption, fostering mobility with lower emissions, energy efficiency at home, leverage of the livestock and agriculture biomass and stabilizing waste generation are some of the achievements obtained in recent years.

The Basque Country undertakes its own contributions to achieve the political goal of acting as an important actor in the EU. The Basque Country has taken significant steps in its climate change policy and has managed to begin to get mitigation and adaptation to be present in the main sectorial plans of the Basque Government, of the Provincial Councils and of the municipalities. In turn, companies and the general public have significantly contributed to the advances that have been achieved.

Year	Main milestones in policies related to climate change
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020 Start of calculating the GHG annual inventories
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical guide to prepare Municipal Sustainable Mobility Plans
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Basque Plan to fight against Climate Change 2008-2012. Setting up the BC3, Basque Centre for Climate Change
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of the Stop CO2 Euskadi, platform, voluntary reductions and emissions register. First Climate Change municipal bylaw (Durango)
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge Map of Climate Change in the Basque Country.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of Impacts and Adaptation in the Basque Country (K-Egokitzen) Maps shown likelihood of flooding from rising sea levels and peaks along the whole Basque coastline in climate change scenarios.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban planning manual for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change and Guide to prepare municipal climate change adaptation programs.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact analysis on the marine ecosystem and resources of the Bay of Biscay (European MEECE project). Strategic focus to prepare the Basque Climate Change Strategy
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Framework Program 2020 of the Basque Country. Roadmap to a low-carbon economy. 19 Basque municipalities signed up to the European Covenants of Mayors initiative. Carbon budgets of the Basque Administration. The Basque Country signed up to the "Compact of Regions"
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 municipalities have climate change programs and 6 have specific legislation in that regard Climate Change Strategy of the Basque Country to 2050

Innovative Centres	Description
<i>Biscay Marine Energy Platform – bimep (2007)</i>	Dedicated to the research, demonstration and exploiting of marine energy harnessing systems.
<i>BC3 Basque Centre for Climate Change (2008)</i>	Dedicated to research to cut emissions, analyse the climate and the natural environment, health and climate policy.
<i>Basque Ecodesign Centre (2011)</i>	Focused on driving the development of business policies and ideas by means of Eco design, in such a way as to improve competitiveness and cutting GHG emissions.
<i>CIC Energigune (2011)</i>	Energy research centre dedicated to research excellence, knowledge transfer, high level training and coordinating R&D&i projects.

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the Basque Country in 2013 stood at 19,304 ktCO₂e, with the energy sector, transport and industry being the main emitters accounting for 85% of the total emissions. The evolution of GHG emissions from 1990 to the present has been mainly influenced by the reality of those three sectors. Emissions from industry were cut by 45% and those from energy by 15% between 1990 and 2013. However, transport emissions rose by 97% during that same period

With the new **Climate Change Strategy of the Basque Country to 2050**, (approved by the Basque Government, 2 of June 2015) the Basque Country has designed a future of sustainable human development. The Vision of the Strategy is: *“The Basque Country has a low-carbon competitive economy and which is adapted to climate effects, arising from the consolidation of a knowledge-based climate change policy, which has allowed the opportunities offered by innovation and technological development to be seized. This has been possible thanks to the co-responsibility of all stakeholders of Basque society, driven by the exemplary action of the Public Administration”*.

The Basque Country aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% in 2030 and by at least 80% in 2050, with respect to 2005. Furthermore, the Basque Country has decided to increase the share of renewable energy consumption out of the final consumption by 2050 and finally, to ensure the resilience of the Basque territory to climate change

The starting position:

Population 2.2 million (2013)
GDP 30.349 EUR per capita (2013)

GHG emissions (year): 19 million tons (2013)

Specific Actions and Commitments:

I. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** In order to establish the mitigation targets in the Basque Country, a “Greenhouse Gas Scenarios to 2050” exercise has been performed jointly between different Ministries of the Basque Government and aligning them with the environmental, demographic, energy and economic scenarios. Based on this work, and using Europe as a permanent benchmark, the Basque Country has defined in this Strategy, the reduction target for 2030 of at least 40% of their GHG emissions, and for 2050 the target is to reduce them by at least 80%, all in respect to 2005.

II. **Goals in Climate Change and main lines of action:**

G1. Commitment to a low-carbon energy model.	1. Improving energy efficiency and managing energy demand. 2. Giving impetus to renewable energies. 3. Fostering energy efficiency criteria and renewable energies in the urban environment towards "zero-emissions building"
G2. Moving towards zero-emissions transport.	4. Fostering intermodality and means of transport with lower GHG emissions. 5. Replacing the use of oil derivatives. 6. Integrating vulnerability criteria and adaptation criteria into transport infrastructures.
G3. Increasing the efficiency and resilience of the territory.	7. Driving an urban structure that is resilient to climate change, compact and with a mix of uses. 8. Integrating vulnerability analysis and adaptation to climate change in territorial planning.
G4. Making the natural environment more resilient.	9. Fostering the multifunctionality of ecosystems as regulators of geological and biological processes, restoring species and vulnerable habitats. 10. Integrating the climate change variable in the management of coastal zones
G5. Making the primary sector more resilient and cutting its emissions.	11. Fostering local, organic and integrated agricultural production and with lower GHG emissions. 12. Increasing the potential as Basque Country carbon sink. 13. Adapting the practices and managing the primary sector (farming and fishing) to the new climate conditions
G6. Reducing the amount of municipal solid waste generated and zero untreated waste dumping	14. Reducing the generation of municipal solid waste. 15. Increasing the selective collection and sorting ratios and their subsequent reuse, recycling and recovery.
G7. Anticipating the risks.	16. Guaranteeing the long-term water supply for different uses. 17. Ensuring the resilience of the built environment and of the critical infrastructures (energy, water, food, health and ICTs) to extreme events
G8. Driving innovation, improvement and knowledge transfer.	18. Promoting innovation, improving and transferring scientific knowledge. 19. Implementing a system to monitor and follow the effects of climate change.
G9. Exemplary and responsible Basque public administration and which is a benchmark in climate change.	20. Organising training measures to acquire skills and expertise regarding climate change. 21. Awareness-raising, training and informing the general public about climate change. 22. Zero emissions public administration. 23. Consolidating inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for climate action. 24. Positioning the Basque Country on the international stage regarding climate change

III. **Energy and industry:** The implementation of the lines of action set and the achieving of the goals indicated will allow the industrial and energy sectors to achieve reductions in their emissions of between 50% and 60% in 2050 with respect to the 2005 levels, thanks to the development of renewable energies and the spread of energy efficiency technologies.

IV. **Mobility:** It will in turn undergo an important transformation. First, there will be a gradual change from petroleum derivatives to alternative fuels, combined with giving impetus to intermodality, by promoting means of transport with lower GHG emissions and encouraging pedestrians in urban centres. Subsequently, in the recent decades of the period, where the mobility needs will have been reduced thanks to the new urban and territorial planning, means such as rail and the electric vehicle will be consolidated, linked to forms of electricity generation with lower GHG emissions. This transformation will allow reductions to be achieved in the transport over 80% in 2050.

- V. **Services and Residential sectors:** Even though the contribution of the services and residential sectors to the annual GHG inventory is lower, they show a reduction potential linked to savings and energy efficiency. Following the guidelines set at the European level, the commitment in this case will be aimed at buildings with lower energy needs, which will be replaced by means of renewable energies. This will enable them to achieve reductions of over 90% of the GHG emissions by 2050. Finally, the reduction in the generation of municipal solid waste, linked to the optimisation of its management will allow zero dumping without prior treatment, which will mean reductions of near to 80% by 2050 in the emissions of the sector.