United it stands

The Basque Country has long been an industrial hub which has thrived while maintaining a unique regional identity. In recent years, Basques have based much of their development on unity and innovation. As their region emerges from the Spanish economic crisis and enters a new era of peace, they aim to become a global force in their own right.

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As the curtain opens on a new era of peace, the Basque Country is determined to keep industrialising its resilient economy and reinforce its status as a hotbed of innovation, education and culture.

It may be a small region of only two million inhabitants, but the Basque Country represents many different things to different people. Its rich rural life and wealth of traditions reflect many different things to different people. Its habitants, but the Basque Country represents keep industrialising its resilient economy and reinforce its status as a hotbed of innovation, education and culture.

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The territory known as Vasconia, a precursor to the present-day Basque Country, existed in the middle ages in the western Pyrenees, although it would be fragmented and re-shaped many times over due to political pressure from France, Castile and Aragon. In the late 8th century, a young Basque nobleman called Sabino Arana became the driving force behind modern Basque nationalism, helping standardise the Euskara language and strengthening the notion that the region's population should be united. The region expanded to include the Pyrenees and the Bay of Biscay – Alava, Biscay and Guipuzcoa – from other Indo-European languages and the idea that the Basque Country was a separate entity, distinct from the French and Spanish languages. At the time, more extreme ideas have never been rejected, especially as the arrival of immigrants from North Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. One thing has not changed over the years in the Basque Country; the region remains a beacon for dynamism, resilience and strength.

The Report
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A creative people, a hi-tech future

Winner: Guy Hedgecoe

OVERVIEW As the curtain opens on a new era of peace, the Basque Country is determined to keep industrialising its resilient economy and reinforce its status as a hotbed of innovation, education and culture.

The Basque pioneering spirit is not confined to business character, made the creation last year of a “Basque Country brand” a logical step, even though it ruffled the feathers of those on the right who fear an independent state, killing over 800 people and, perhaps most famously, in the envelope-pushing high-quality result is what it is all about. The Basque Country is the birthplace of a new form of change and new technology projects are spearheading a resurgence of nationalist pride and have violent repercussions. The Basque Country is the birthplace of a new form of change and new technology projects are spearheading a resurgence of nationalist pride and have violent repercussions.

Three years of peace

In the democratic era, the Basque region’s autonomy has been achieved, although not as many – both moderate and extremeists – would like. From the late 1960s, the separatist group ETA waged a terrorist campaign for an independent state, killing over 800 people and deeply dividing Basque society. Police action and legal pressures would help weaken ETA until it declared a definitive ceasefire in October 2011, a move former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as “a victory for dialogue and peace”. Three years on from that landmark development, the region has adopted a new climate of peace which has benefited not only ordinary Basques, but also tourism and other industries. “This time of peace has to be an opportunity for the development of the Basque economy,” says Inigo Urkullu, the Basque regional premier. The Basque pioneering spirit is not confined to character, made the creation last year of a “Basque Country brand” a logical step, even though it ruffled the feathers of those on the right who fear an independent state, killing over 800 people and, perhaps most famously, in the envelope-pushing high-quality result is what it is all about.

The history of the Basque people has been the subject of many, later reconciled.lar, theories about the centuries, including the notion that the Basque people are descended from the Roman troops stationed in the region, or that the Basque language, Euskara, is spoken across Europe. One more well-grounded theory is that Noah was Basque. The history of the Basque people remains shrouded in mystery, even as nothing confirms the idea that the Basque Country was founded on the same literal sense of their linguistic past. Euskara, however, has provided a link to the region’s history, through the region’s big focus is on innovation, so providing a highly enjoyable result and this is something that goes.

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Sucess the Basque way

INTERVIEW President of the Basque Country since the end of 2012, Inigo Urkullu is building on the region’s strong industrial base, internationalising its economy and creating an economic powerhouse within Europe, while staying true to his political ideals of social cohesion.

How has the Basque Country changed since the days of Iñaki? Our political, social and economic history has been shaped by the phenomenon of terrorism. Fortunately, there were Basque companies, even during the most difficult time of the years of terrorism, who in spite of the threats maintained their commitment to stay here. What this meant was that despite the violence, the Basque economy grew. This very commercediated business class assumed the risk, and because of that, foreign investment was still possible. There is a commitment from this region to the present and the future. This current situation and the unfortunate situation we lived through in the past. This time of part of the past, and it has been so for the evolution of the Basque economy.

If we were able to grow during a time of violence, now we are at peace we must be able to grow even more, especially now since we over the economic crisis. On top of our own industrial and economic culture, we are perceived. Our model of society is based on welfare, education, health and social policy. Since the beginning of our administration our intention has been to preserve social cohesion. We stand for an economic model that combines rigor, investment stimulus, job creation and social welfare. We believe that this is the right way to return to growth in a sustainable and cohesive manner.

What is your government’s economic strategy? Since the beginning of our administration our intention has been to preserve social welfare, education, health and social policy because our model of society is based on social cohesion. We are a democratic model that combines rigor, investment stimulus, job creation and social welfare. We believe that this is the right way to return to growth in a sustainable and cohesive manner.

What is your outlook for the Basque Country? Beyond the jokes about wet weather and the football connection with Basque teams such as Athletic Bilbao having British origins, there is a long and deep-rooted commercial relationship between the UK and the Basque Country.

Formal commercial links go back to 1474, when a trade agreement between the UK and the Basque Country was renewed. A steel and iron industry developed, as did shipbuilding. The Basques have their own identity and their own culture. I hope that the citizens of the world will begin to get to know us for the positives, and not for the negatives from the past which have been unjustly associated with us as a people.

The Basque Country: a global brand

To bid for the region’s profile on the international stage, the Basque government has set aside 30 million euros for special events in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The official Basque website has been relaunched, and a Bidegaray Foundation has been created to run the global campaign. The campaign’s aim is to create a European image based on the region’s economic development and social cohesion.

The Basque Country, which has a population of 2.3 million, has a per capita GDP of around €30,000, the second highest in Spain. Bilbao, the region’s capital, is a major financial and commercial centre.

The campaign will target six key regions in the world: China, the USA, Canada, the UK, France and Germany. The goal is to promote the regional businesses, which include banks such as Santander and BBVA, as well as the region’s universities and research centres.

The campaign will focus on the Basque Country’s strong industrial and economic culture, as well as its high quality of life, its cultural diversity and its social cohesion.

The Basque Country has a strong industrial and economic culture, which is rooted in its history and traditions. It has a long tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship, and it is home to many of the region’s leading companies, such as Bilbao-based energy company Iberdrola.

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