**THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH UN ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND ECODESIGN**

**Basque Government is the first regional government in the world to join this initiative, which aims to create a global knowledge network on Life Cycle Assessment of products to reduce their environmental impact.**

**The Head of the Consumption and Production Unit – UN Environment, Elisa Tonda, will speak during the institutional opening of the Basque Ecodesign Meeting 2020, tomorrow, Wednesday 26th.**

**After the opening ceremony, César Santos, from the European Commission, will explain the European New Green Deal, and the analyst Marc Vidal, an expert in digitalization and Industry 4.0, will give the keynote speech.**

*Bilbao, 25 February 2020*

The Bilbao Euskalduna Conference Centre will be the venue for one of Europe’s leading events on the circular economy and ecodesign, the Basque Ecodesign Meeting (BEM 2020), from tomorrow (Wednesday). The first of the three days will be noted for the signing of the agreement between UN Environment and the Basque Government’s Ministry for the Environment, Territorial Planning and Housing, through its environmental management agency Ihobe, which is organising the meeting along with the Basque Ecodesign Center.

With this agreement, the Basque Country becomes the first regional government to join the Life Cycle Initiative, an international strategy promoted by the United Nations Environment Programme to share expert knowledge, of which the governments of Argentina, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the United States, as well as the European Commission, are already members.

The aim of the initiative is to create a global network on product life cycle analysis, called GLAD (Global Life Cycle Assessment Data Access), which seeks to achieve better data accessibility and interoperability. The network will be comprised of independently-operated LCA databases (nodes), providing users with an interface to find and access life cycle inventory datasets from different providers. GLAD will thus support life cycle assessment through easier access to data sources around the world.

The initiative delves further into the life cycle concept to improve private and public decisions regarding products, technologies, life styles and the economy in general. This way of rethinking production and consumption seeks to analyse the economic, social and environmental impacts of a product throughout its life cycle, from its design to its reuse or destruction. Its ultimate aim is to guarantee sustainability.

This life cycle initiative, to which the Basque Government has signed up, aspires to apply this approach in 15 countries and 30 companies by 2022, train 2,500 policy makers in the public and private sectors, and facilitate access to that expertise for everyone, by generating standards and consensus around it.

It affects specific decisions: being aware that our preferences are not isolated, but rather form part of a wider system; taking decisions in the long-term and considering all the relevant social and environmental issues; and improving whole systems instead of part of them in order to avoid decisions that solve one environmental problem but cause another.

The initiative comes under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Paris Agreement, “to join forces and advance more rapidly and more effectively”, as stressed by the representatives of both institutions, the Head of the Consumption and Production Unit – UN Environment, Elisa Tonda, and the Basque Government’s Minister for the Environment, Territorial Planning and Housing, Iñaki Arriola.

**Around thirty experts in three days**

Tonda herself will speak, along with Minister Arriola, during the BEM 2020 opening ceremony, and they will be followed by César Santos, from the European Commission, who will spell out the implications of the European New Green Deal.

The keynote speech will be given by Marc Vival, a digital consultant and expert in Industry 4.0, who will speak on “The Era of Humanity”. Several roundtables will then round off the discussions on the first day. They will cover ecodesign as a tool to make businesses more competitive, the new ecodesign requirements in the circular economy or the priority materials in it, redesigning the business, and environmental information for the consumers. All of the roundtables will be led by Ihobe members and will include companies and institutions of the ilk of the French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management, the Spanish Ministry of Industry or the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. Janez Potocnik, the former EU Commissioner for the Environment, will speak by video.

Over 700 professionals from organisations and sectors such as food, ICT, furniture and renewable energies, have already been accredited to attend this important event on ecodesign and the circular economy, discuss recent trends and learn about changes to legislation.

**Further information:** <https://www.basqueecodesignmeeting2020.eus>

**Press accreditation:**  <https://www.basqueecodesignmeeting2020.eus/es/prensa/>

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