

# Science as a part of Culture

**In the year 2000, not so long ago, the only building hosting research in physics and chemistry in the Ibaeta Campus of University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) was the UPV/EHU Chemistry Faculty.**

Animated by a group of young, brilliant, and enthusiastic scientists, which were starting from scratch, the Faculty soon became one of the best scientific spots of UPV/EHU. The explosion of scientific activity and, in particular, the potential foreseen for developing competitive research lines and projects in physics asked for a necessary growth of resources.

It is in this context that two centers were designed and created within a thoughtful strategy: the Centro de Física de Materiales (CFM), a joint center between UPV/EHU and Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), and Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC). Together with Unidad de Biofísica (UPV/EHU-CSIC, in Leioa), they were the very first research centers launched in the Basque Country and paved the way for later institutional initiatives. The strategy was set up with a twofold goal: first, to attract and retain scientists that could develop world-class research, offering them the necessary stability to launch their scientific careers; second, to create an international and dynamical environment in which the interaction with top scientists from foreign institutions could be customary. The development of this plan would also catalyze the scientific activity in its close environment, putting Ibaeta Campus on the map of physics. Public institutions as well as some private companies rapidly adhere to the visionary scheme in an uncommon joint effort that showed the strategic weight of the proposal.

Not even the most optimistic predictions anticipated the success of the plot. This report on DIPC's activity in 2015 is living proof of that. Sixteen years after its opening, DIPC researchers have published more than 2,750 scientific articles which have received more than



**Ricardo Díez Muiño**  
Director

70,000 citations; 10,700 of them in the year 2015. More than 100 workshops and 750 seminars have been organized and 2,500 researchers have visited DIPC to extend the frontiers of science. The numbers are indeed impressive but they do not tell the whole story. Actually, they do not tell even a bit of the story. The real success of DIPC has been to become a singular and flexible institution, a pole of attraction for scientists from all over the world that find in its facilities the creative and intellectually stimulating environment required to perform research at its highest level.

Back in 2000, when DIPC was opened, one of the most repeated statements, front-paged in many media, was the wish to transform Donostia/San Sebastián into a city of science, a place known not only for its beautiful landscape and welcoming gastronomy but also for its scientific activity. In 2016 we can say this dream is becoming a reality and at DIPC we are proud to have contributed to accomplishing this.

## Donostia/San Sebastián, a city of science, but also science in the city.

This has been a motto for DIPC for many years. Science is not only for scientists. Science has to be owned and enjoyed by society as a whole. Science education is necessary to better understand and evaluate the advantages and risks of scientific and technological progress. For this reason, DIPC always looks for opportunities to bring science to the citizens. DIPC programs, such as *Kutxa Lectures*, *OnZientzia*, *top@DIPC*, and the *Passion for Knowledge Festivals*, among others, are developed to share the excitement of science with different social groups, especially with the youngest.



**Pedro Miguel Echenique**  
President

**Science is the most effective way to acquire new knowledge** about the surrounding world and constantly reshapes our intellectual perspective. It is therefore an integral part of human culture. DIPC's activities in the city of Donostia/San Sebastián for 2016 are thus particularly relevant this year in which Donostia/San Sebastián has been designated European Capital of Culture. The 2016 Passion for Knowledge Festival, for instance, will be integrated into the official program of the initiative. The achievements of the scientists that develop their work in the different universities and research centers of Donostia/San Sebastián are splendid grounds to proudly display the title of European Capital of Culture. ■