

BILBAO'S COMMITMENT TO THE EUROPEAN PILLAR FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS

The Bilbao City Council promoted the *Pact for Social Policies in 2018*, an agreement that reaffirms its commitment to social cohesion and equality among all citizens, through the elaboration of policies where the values of solidarity, dignity and human growth prevail, all in line with the European Pillar for Social Rights: moving ahead without leaving anyone aside, focusing efforts on ensuring that all people can do it at similar speeds, and giving access to all goods and services that allow them to lead an optimal quality of life.

Bilbao works specifically for a city model that cares for and protects the youngest and also for a friendly city with the elderly; two axes on which many of the city's social policies focus on, and which correspond to *Principles 11 (childcare and support to children) and 18 (long-term care)*, are: 1) the construction of a city that promotes and enables active ageing; and 2) the promotion of family and childhood policies, taking into account their different types.

Regarding *Principle 11*, focused on the childcare and support to children, more than 50,000 girls, boys and adolescents reside in Bilbao, which together represent 14.5% of the population. **Its modest weight over the total population is closely related to the population ageing and the low birth rate. That is why Bilbao considers it is essential to be a key actor in the personal growth and social progress of these individuals, providing everyone with the same opportunities and offering them a universal service of care, education and social services.**

It is estimated that 7.74% of the child and adolescent population currently residing in the municipality is of foreign origin, a figure that grows year after year, and therefore very important for the future of the city. As a symbol of the city's commitment, it is worth highlighting the recognition of the UNICEF Child Friendly City in 2018, which recognized the application of the principles derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), by the Bilbao City Council. To achieve this, Bilbao designed a **Plan for the Child and Adolescence for the period 2018-2021 with the purpose of collecting and organizing a set of municipal actions aimed at people under 18, and establishing a common work and management structure that would help to guarantee compliance with the rights of this group and their participation.** As a result of this work, the creation of the Municipal Council for Child and Adolescence, a permanent body for the participation and representation of children and adolescents in the municipality, stands out. The elaboration of this plan and its implementation required an interdepartmental collaboration in which more than 14 municipal areas and entities were involved. It has an approximate budget of 78 million euros for the 2018-2021 four-year period, which is equivalent to 19.5 million per year; and it is about a holistic plan that involves actions in the areas of health and consumption, culture, or sport, among many other. But above all it is based on a strong commitment to social action, offering a wide range of socio-educational and psychosocial programmes and services to underage and families, both individually and at the community level in the field of prevention and protection (Socio-educational and community intervention programme with minors and their families; Psychosocial intervention programme with minors and their families; School absenteeism programme; Socio-educational intervention programme with people from the gypsy community and their families) and two day centres for intensive socio-educational intervention support for minors and families at unprotected risk. Likewise, the city makes available several public spaces (*Haurgunes, Kidegunes and Gaztegunes*) to parents and organized field trips with neighbourhood entities that are mentored by specialists, where children and young people play

among equals and with values such as work in team, solidarity or cooperativism. Lastly, regarding this Principle 11, we are also working with two subsidy lines focused on childhood to enhance positive parenting and hygiene awareness and vigilance in schools located in the Municipality of Bilbao through professionals in charge of attending to minors with hygiene deficits.

Regarding **Principle 18**, *long-term care*, the unusual demographic ageing that we face in the city of Bilbao, where the population over 65 years of age amounts to 27% of the total, makes essential to consider a social model for the city that helps and promote active ageing and pays special attention to long-term care. To work on this commitment, Bilbao has been part of the **Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities** since 2012, a project promoted by the WHO that was born as a response to two trends in the contemporary western world population: demographic ageing and the process of urbanization. **Bilbao Age-friendly City** encourages active ageing, social participation and safety, in order to improve the quality of its people as they age. This municipal initiative is based on a set of actions from different areas such as accessibility, personal autonomy, culture, active leisure or housing: maintenance and equipping senior centres; promoting and supporting elderly associations; drawing up and developing programmes for accompaniment, through volunteering; training meetings for the Boards of Directors of associations; strengthening the associationism and the grouping and exchange between associations; and the consolidation of the work team of elderly in the Municipal Council of Social Welfare of Bilbao.

The Municipality has the Home Help Service, technical support and adaptations of the home, Nursing Home Center, the Accompaniment Service (*Urrats Bat Gehiago*) and the highly valued Telecare. Moreover, it is worth mentioning the day care and accommodation service through economic benefits for admission to *Day Centres, Community Homes, Sheltered Homes* and *Shared Homes*. In addition to the above, the Bilbao City Council has the **Mirada Activa** programme which aims to cover the basic needs of those elderly people who live alone and who do not have social and family support networks. This network currently has the collaboration of 53 Bilbao pensioner associations, as an active network for detecting situations of loneliness and that carries out “social antenna” tasks. There are also programmes to support caregivers to care for their family member and themselves (*ZAINZEA Municipal Centre*).

Finally, regarding this principle, it should be noted that Bilbao in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Bizkaia, will host the *Nagusi Intelligence Center* in 2022, a centre that will be dedicated to biomedical research and innovation in the field of ageing, which has an expected investment of 20 million euros and which aims to be an international benchmark in the approach to ageing. It also aims to turn the challenge of the population ageing into an **opportunity to develop a new sector of activity and employment, the Silver Economy**, which responds to the needs of elderly population.



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