

# 14.8 MILLION EUROS TO STIMULATE TOURISM IN THE BASQUE REGION



The government of the Basque region plans to allocate 14.8 million euros for the stimulation and modernization of the tourism sector in “Euskadi” for the fiscal year of 2017, which represents 40.9% of the yearly budget for the Department of Commerce, Consumption and Tourism.

Alfredo Retortillo from the department, outlined the budget plan for 2017 in Parliament earlier - totaling 36.2 million euros, the lowest allocation to any department by the Basque Government, but which still represents a 3.7% increase when compared to the budget for 2016.

**Retortillo explained that the Trade Directorate will receive 37.6% of the allocated funds - 13.6 million euros** - whereas the Consumption Directorate, which includes KontsumoBIDE, has been allocated 5.6 million, which represents 15.5% of the department's total budget.

The Director reiterated his commitment to “increasing resources” in order to “maximize” tourism in the Basque region as well as the commerce potential in the context of an economic recovery. He also announced that he will be seeking other means of achieving this goal by involving the private and financial sectors in making certain decisions such as hosting tour operators and journalists from specialized publications in order to promote tourism in the Basque region.

He explained that the cost of accommodating these visitors can already be covered by preexisting public programs which were put in place for that purpose, but he specified that his Department is attempting to convince the local establishments which will be hosting these visitors to share the costs of accommodating them, as doing so will achieve the long-term goal of attracting more tourists to the region.

**“This is not a question of privatizing the public sector, but it does require getting the private sector involved in the process,”** explained Retortillo, who is also a proponent of the need for a debate on fiscal policy as well as on how to increase revenues.

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