



BILBAO APPROVES A 15-MILLION-EURO PLAN FOR SOCIAL COHESION AND ECONOMIC, EMPLOYMENT AND CULTURE REACTIVATION WITH MORE THAN 50 MEASURES OF AN EXCEPTIONAL NATURE

Bilbao City Council approved on May 8th #BILBAO AURRERA, a Plan of Urgent Measures for Social Cohesion, Economic, Employment and Culture Reactivation in the City, given the situation generated by COVID-19.

This ambitious Plan has a budget of **15 million euro**, deploying around more than **50 Exceptional Measures that will be placed into effect this year**.

The document, signed by all the Bilbao City Council political parties and agreed by the most-affected sectors, aims to pay special attention **to the PEOPLE and Companies of the City, especially small local businesses and hotel and restaurant businesses, tourism and the cultural and creative industries**.

KEYS TO THE PLAN

With a total budget of 15 million euro allocated directly by the City Council, will address three specific areas: **Social Cohesion with more than 2.2 million, Economy and Employment with more than 11.4 million and Culture with more than 1.3 million**.

These exceptional and temporary action measures will be applied during the 2020 financial year, considered the period with the highest impact.

All of these measures will also be implemented **in coordination** and to complement measures implemented by other administrations.

The Plan will focus on the sectors where the **greatest impact is expected, such as small local businesses, hotels and restaurants, tourism and the cultural and creative industries**.

All of these actions are being implemented under the principles of flexibility and adaptability; the search for the areas where resources will have the greatest impact; the balance between investment and spending attending to the needs of the people but without losing the strength of the strategic investments for the city; increasing digital outreach internally and externally, strengthening collaboration and participation with other institutions and cities (public/public and public/private) and maintaining the percentage of aid to the Development Cooperation for 2020.

In parallel, the objective is to continue working on other strategic lines and approaches in the medium and long term that help to overcome the current situation.

BREAKDOWN OF MEASURES

Social Cohesion Measures: People

These measures aim to serve as a “social shield” for people who are particularly affected due to the coronavirus situation and who require specific care in the time after confinement. This area covers four types of actions:

- Absence of income.
- Older people in vulnerable situations.
- People in exclusion.
- Family and children.

In cases of **ABSENCE OF INCOME**: The Social Emergency Aid (in Spanish, AES) is reinforced with an additional allocation to the aid granted by the Basque Regional Government to meet basic

food and household maintenance needs. An extraordinary Special Non-Periodic Municipal Aid programme has also been created (with €625,000). This is a 100% municipal funding programme to serve those who have had no income or whose income decreased due to the coronavirus situation, but who do not meet the AES requirements. Work will also be undertaken to reduce the digital gap (€100,000) by expanding the free Bilbao Wi-Fi network in suburbs with less coverage.

Regarding **older people in VULNERABILITY** situations: the municipal support programme's financial allocation for older people (in Basque, "Urrats bat gehiago") (€150,000), has been expanded and a Community Housing Fund (€560,000) will be created for those who need alternative accommodation. Its purpose is to prevent situations of isolation and transit to dependency.

For people in **EXCLUSION**: A special fund is included to house homeless people. This is a fund in collaboration with other institutions in order to guarantee temporary accommodation and meals that enables competent administrations to generate specific social resources appropriate to the diversity of profiles diagnosed as a result of the coronavirus confinement situation. Allocation: €1,000,000 (Inter-institutional) and €375,000 (Bilbao City Council).

In the case of the measures directed to **FAMILY AND CHILDREN**: The aim is to guarantee care (€360,000). Strengthen and adapt existing programmes to detect and attend to situations of lack of protection and intra-family conflicts aggravated by confinement and requiring intervention.

Also to guarantee access to economic resources to all **women victims of gender violence** and their dependents (€50,000). Strengthen and adapt, if necessary, existing programmes to women victims of gender violence, in coordination with institutions, to detect and attend to situations of lack of protection and intra-family conflicts aggravated by confinement and requiring psychosocial or socio-educational intervention.

Advance the amount and facilitate the financial aid formalities and procedures to all the women in shelter homes.

Cultural Sector Measures

- Culture bonus: €500,000.
- Promote activities in the public space linked to the Cultural and Creative Industries that generate life and dynamism in the suburbs - €300,000.
- Promote local cultural trade through small-scale indoor activities - €100,000.
- 'Artists against coronavirus' project - €100,000.
- Support the audio-visual production sector by creating a promotional audio-visual fund for the city - €100,000.
- Special fund for cultural projects - €200,000.
- Extraordinary support for the Harrobia Stage Production Innovation Centre - €28,000.
- Maintain subsidies from the Culture Area to the cultural associations of the city.
- Re-schedule suspended activities that affect local cultural agents.
- Commitment from municipal cultural facilities to local cultural agents and Basque cultural production.

Economic and Employment Measures

In this chapter, the *#Bilbao Aurrera* Plan includes a wide range of **impact measures for economic and employment reactivation** with the aim that local entities can implement it as quickly as possible.

They include:

TAX INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESSES. Extraordinary reductions and discounts in taxes and fees, which entails €3 million less income.

- Reductions are included in: Tax on constructions, installations and works; works licence fees. Fee for the provision of services for activities and facilities and opening and establishing premises.
- Payments: Fee for private use and special use of the municipal public domain related to the use of tables, nightstands, chairs, marquees, pot plants, parasols and similar installations. Fee for private use and special use of the municipal public domain for showcase installations, displays, decorative entryways, awnings and canopies. Garbage collection fee. Auto taxi license fee: Total exclusion of this fee during the financial year 2020.
- Postponement without interest of companies' tax debts as long as they are paid during the financial year 2020.
- In addition to these specific measures, it must be remembered that Bilbao has the advantage of the Pago a la Carta (split payments) facility, which offers total flexibility in the payment period.

The #Bilbao Aurrera Plan approved today also proposes about **thirty ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT REACTIVATION measures**. They include:

- Special or extraordinary services for competitiveness recovery and improvement for businesses, micro-SMEs, self-employed people and entrepreneurs. (580,000 euro).
- Direct financial aid for businesses, micro-SMEs and the self-employed in the most-affected economic sectors for necessary investments due to the health protocols established by the competent authorities (€500,000). This includes concepts such as isolating zones, separations, distances, etc.
- Incentives for direct consumption in Bilbao, with specific payments for commerce, hospitality and catering and tourism. (Budget: €2,650,000).
- Extraordinary actions to promote tourism in the city (actions in local markets such as the Basque Country, State and Southwest France; reverse promotion actions with tour operators and prescribers, reinforced digital outreach, etc.) €450,000.
- Extraordinary actions to boost commercial activity in suburbs: Technical and economic aid to the Bilbao area associations and other sectoral economic agents, for their support, management and promotion (€350,000). Provide financial support to the merchant associations in the different areas of Bilbao with a 100% increase in the nominal subsidy granted to them annually and with extra technical support offered.
- Modify the resolution of the night hours in the hospitality industry, so that the days not enjoyed during the alarm/confinement state can be re-scheduled.
- EMPLOYMENT: 2020/21 General Employment Plans. 2020/21 Youth Employment Plans and Unique Employment Plans (municipal budget €2,250,000).
- Exemptions and discounts on rental fees in commercial premises of Bilbao Municipal Homes (lower income €340,000)
- Special aid programme for small housing restoration works (€500,000).

- Exemptions and reductions in fees for economic activities undertaken through municipal concessions (lower income €50,000).
- Facilitate access to public procurement for local companies - €682,000. Through measures such as the contract reservation in public procurement for social solidarity companies, progress in the inclusion of social clauses in public procurement and specific training for local SMEs in public tender processes.
- Increase on the limit for the immediate payment of pending invoices and certifications for SMEs and self-employed people by the City Council and its dependent entities. Increase the current limit on immediate invoice payment (€1,203) to €3,000.
- Exemptions and reductions in fees and maintenance expenses for the economic activities carried out in municipal markets that have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic during the State of Alarm (€100,000). 100% exemption from payment for up to six months for activities that were forced to close and 50% reduction for affected activities that were not forced to close.
- Relaxation of the criteria for expanding public space occupation in outdoor catering areas, in order to maintain employment and ensure social distancing.