



INTERNATIONAL WEEK SAN SEBASTIAN - BILBAO

INNOVATION THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL, REGIONAL
AND CULTURAL CLUSTERING

APRIL 13 – 17, 2026 (Earliest return trip possible on April 18, 2026)



The program features interactive seminars on cutting-edge topics, presented by leading experts, academics, and business executives. The focus of the week is on regional and organizational innovation culture, the typically Basque cooperative movements, and building clusters. Other topics include digitalization and business model innovation as well as managing from an intercultural and leadership perspective.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We are putting together a program with classes and accompanying company visits where we also spend a day in Bilbao. There are also cultural and culinary activities which are an integral part of the program, as well as optional sports activities such as surfing, yoga and jogging on the coast.

The program will be sent to you a few weeks before the start of the International Week.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the program participants will be able to

- Outline the requirements for a regional and organizational innovation culture,
- Know the reasons for investing in clusters and collaboration for innovation,
- Understand the possibilities of digitalization in combination with business model innovation,
- Demonstrate cultural and leadership awareness as applicable to an innovation culture,
- Internalize the Basque way of life and understand the roots of innovation

CREDITS

Seminar participants will earn 3 ECTS credits after the successful completion of the week and assignments.

ABOUT THE BASQUE COUNTRY

The Basque Autonomous Community is a region well-known for its high standard of living and for the upgrading of its economic sector during the last 30 years.

Historically, people in the area have been very entrepreneurial and many important Spanish companies were founded here. Some global companies also have their headquarters in the Basque Autonomous Community.

The region has been repeatedly ranked first in terms of per capita income, investment in R&D, as well as for having the lowest rate of unemployment in the Kingdom of Spain for many years. Moreover, it is considered the most innovative "region" within Europe.

Impacts of this successful development can be seen in Bilbao, i.e. with the Guggenheim Museum, and overall in the Basque Country. Also of interest, San Sebastian, with its people known for longevity, has the highest number of bars per square mile and the highest concentration of Michelin-rated restaurants in the whole world! Truly, this has to be a place of extraordinary innovation and culture!

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

GETTING TO SAN SEBASTIAN

San Sebastian is in Northern Spain in close proximity to the French border (Biarritz).

Teaming up with your colleagues is recommended in terms of travelling together or sharing a room if wished.

In order to travel there in spring, there are the following available options:

- Fly with Swiss/Lufthansa/Vueling, etc. from Zurich, Basel or Geneva to Bilbao and from there with the bus (approximately 1.5 hours) to San Sebastian.
As the next bus connections may be sold out upon arrival, we recommend reserving your bus ticket in advance to avoid waiting times. Of course, making an advance reservation also involves a certain amount of risk, as you don't know for sure whether your flight will be delayed or not. Tickets can be booked via this [page](#). (Origin = Aeropuerto Bilbao / Destination = Donostia-San Sebastian)
- Fly with Easy Jet from Basel to Bordeaux and then travel by train to San Sebastian (approximately 5 hours), by bus (approx. 3.45 – 4.35 hours) or rental car (approximately 3 hours) to San Sebastian. Note that car parking in the city costs about 30 Euros per day and is very limited in San Sebastian.
- By train: Lucerne – Basle – Paris Gare de Lyon (change train station to) / Paris-Montparnasse – Biarritz – San Sebastian. The travel time is approximately 13 – 15 hours.

WHERE TO STAY

We strongly recommend choosing a hotel or hostel in the Old Town (Parte Vieja) of San Sebastian.

We can highly recommend the [Hotel Catalonia Donosti](#) (The lessons will also take place at this hotel). The price for one night will be approximately 205 Euro (Single room) / 225 Euro (Double room) per night, inc. buffet breakfast and VAT.

Other good options are: [Hotel Atari](#), [Sansebay Hotel](#), or in a nearby area such as the very nice [Hotel Niza](#). For budget-oriented participants, hostels are a nice option starting from 50 Euros per night – or AirBnB is an additional option for groups.

Staying close to the old town and, therefore, to the beach makes sense because the evening as well as sports activities usually start and end there. Also, the good restaurants are located in the old town where one usually enjoys dinner. Aside from being one of the nicest places in the area, the walk along the Urumea River to the university in the morning is lovely.

We recommend that you book neither your flight nor your hotel until you have received confirmation from us that the international week will be conducted! Further, be aware that all types of insurance coverage are the responsibility of the participant.

PROGRAM OUTLINES

Compulsory/Not compulsory:

Every program point except the sport activities and the Pintxo-Tour on Monday evening.

Locations:

The lessons will take place at the [Hotel Catalonia Donostia](#), and the sports activities start and finish on the beach.

HOW WE WORK

You should bring a laptop and writing utensils. You will be given reading assignments prior to the start of the week that you are expected to have read before the week starts. The exam on the last day will include questions from these assignments. In addition, all participants are required to submit a two-page reflection report on what you have learned during the study week. The reading assignments and information about the assignments will also be sent out a few weeks before the start of International Week. For DBA participants, an additional assignment is defined in order to acquire the required 5 ECTS credits.

OTHER PRACTICAL INFORMATION

As a Swiss citizen, no visa is required. If you hold any other citizenship, please check the regulations for entering Spain. Please note, however, that participants are responsible for checking the entry requirements themselves. The Basque Country is the most expensive place in Spain to live. However, costs are about half those in Switzerland and this offers you the opportunity to eat in the best restaurants in the world, at prices which are barely a fourth of Swiss prices.

BEHAVIOUR / DRESSCODE

The Basque Country belongs to Spain, but is not Spanish in many ways. Be aware of the differences and try to avoid mentioning that you are in Spain, since local people do not always think so. The Basque start work early, as the Swiss do, and they are also punctual compared to the rest of Spain. Some delays do still happen on a regular basis though.

Regarding your attire: The Basque dress very elegantly, so please come dressed in "Casual Friday - Business Casual". Nice trousers, a shirt and nice shoes are suitable. Please do not wear jeans or sweatshirts. For sports, just bring jogging clothes and jogging shoes; the rest will be provided.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Our aim in providing the information in this booklet is to enable you to plan your trip. For additional and up-to-date information about your travels, please consult the information provided by government agencies and travel resources, i.e. regarding visa requirements, up-to-date health recommendations, travel advice, etc.

Contacts / Emergency

Medical Emergency: Call 112

City Police: Call 092 943 450 00