

Yes! Our Meeting Point, Asturias



Gobierno del
Principado de Asturias



IDEPA

Instituto de Desarrollo Económico
del Principado de Asturias



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Asturias in a Nutshell (2008)

Surface Area & Climate

Surface Area: 10,604 Km² (4,094 sq. miles)

Average Temperature: Maximum: 17.2 °C (62.96 °F) Minimum: 9 °C (48.2 °F)

Absolute Temperature: Maximum: 29.8 °C (85.64 °F) Minimum: -1 °C (30.2 °F)

Total Rainfall: 1,248.5 mm (49.15 inches)

Population & Human Resources

Population: 1,080,138 inhabitants

Active Population: 491,800 (4th Quarter 2008)

Employed Population: 442,800 (4th Quarter 2008)

Unemployment Rate: 9.95% (4th Quarter 2008)

Economic Information

GDP market prices 2000: € 23,877 m

GDP per capita: € 22,559

GDP percentage rise: 1.24%

Distribution of regional GVA: Primary Sector: 1.78%

Industrial Sector: 22.37%

Construction: 14.02%

Services Sector: 61.83%

Foreign Trade: € 7,973.74 m

Exports: € 3,187.14 m

Imports: € 4,786.60 m

Coverage Rate: 66.58%

Infrastructures

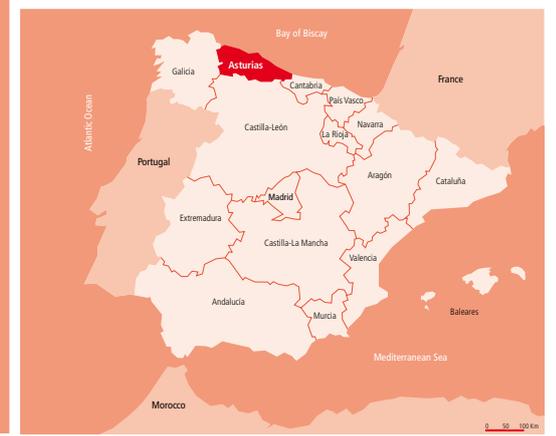
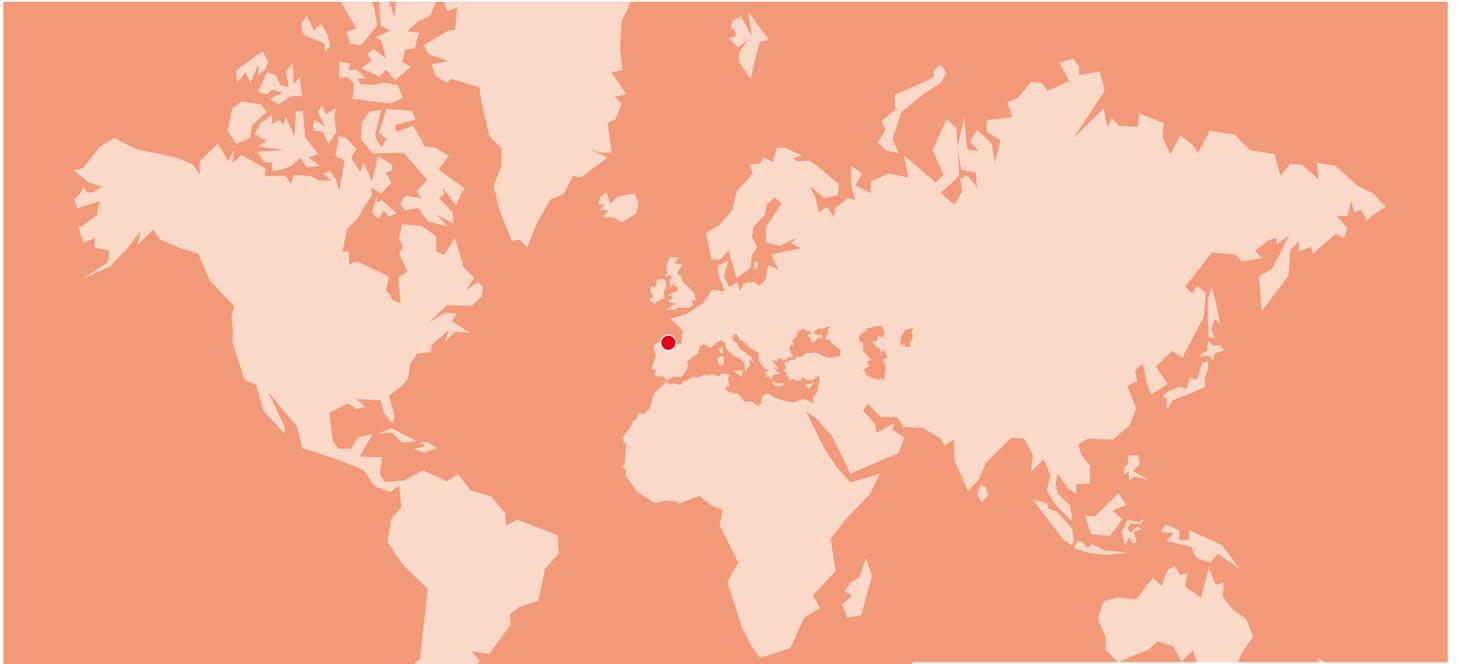
Highways, Motorways and Freeways: 5,000 km

International Airport: 1,529,462 passengers

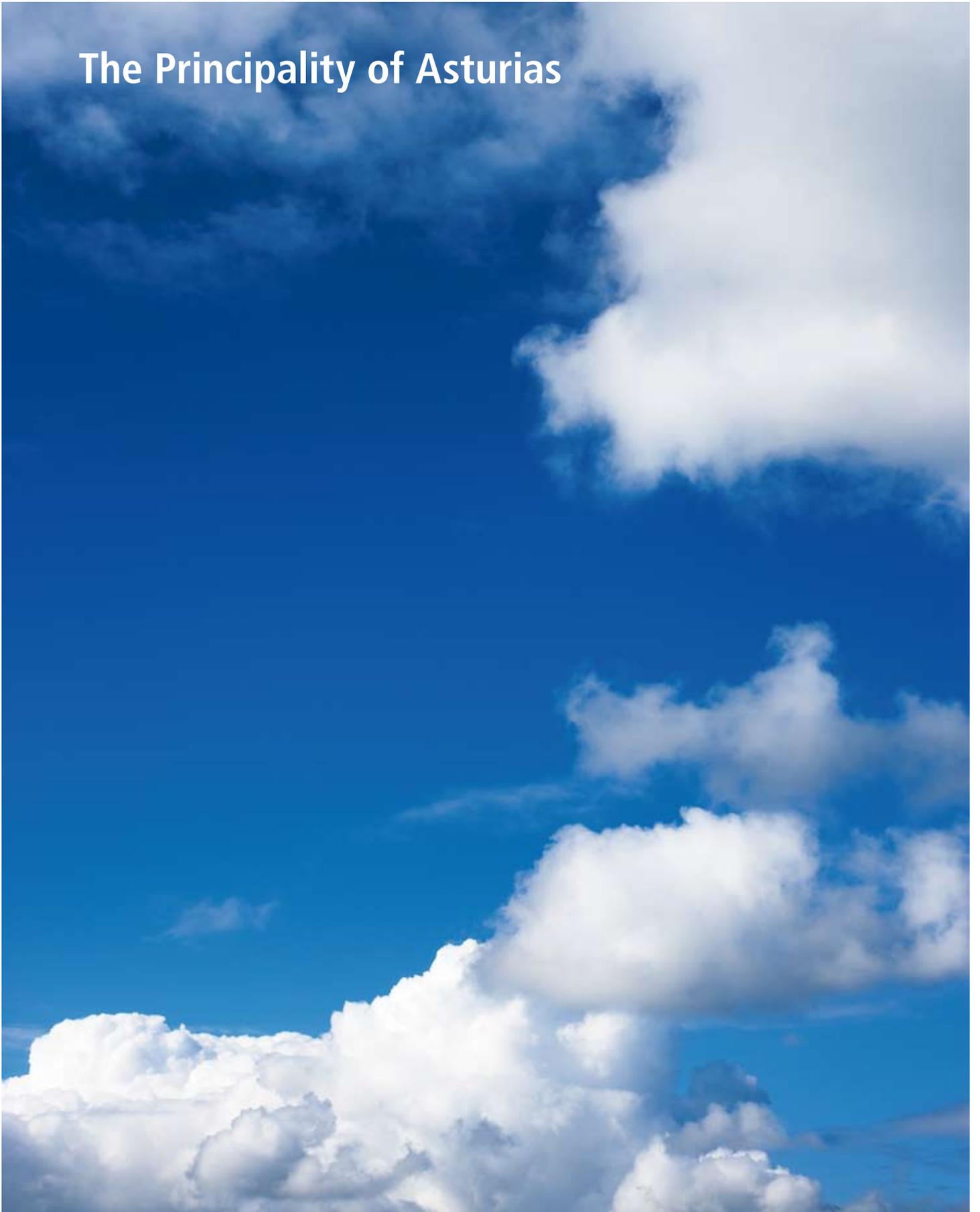
High-Speed Rail Line Madrid-Asturias under construction

Industrial Ports: Gijón and Avilés

Broadband Network throughout the region



The Principality of Asturias



«I vividly recall when I arrived for the first time and will always be thankful to the Asturian people for receiving me with open arms. I return every year because the five years I spent in Asturias were the fullest and most enjoyable of my life»

2006, WILLIAM OMAR WALKER, Director of DuPont in Asturias until 1995 (United States)

A Natural Paradise in the North of Spain

Located in the north of Spain, the Principality of Asturias covers an area of 10,604 km², with a 400 km coastline along the Bay of Biscay. Asturias is separated from Castilla and León to the south by the Cordillera Cantábrica mountain range, and is flanked by Galicia and Cantabria, the neighbouring Autonomous Regions to the west and east respectively.

A privileged climate with mild temperatures and ample, regular rainfall means that water is a conspicuous feature and inexhaustible source of assets in Asturias. The mountains, dominated by the Peaks of Europe, the inland valleys with their strong-flowing rivers, and the coastline of steep cliffs and tranquil beaches and coves, are what characterize the Asturian landscape and make it a Natural Paradise.

Population

The Principality of Asturias has 1,080,138 inhabitants, of which 52% are female and 48% male. The region has an average population density of 101.9 inhabitants per km². The central metropolitan area accounts for 80% of the population with the largest cities and towns (Oviedo, Gijón, Avilés, Mieres and Langreo), whilst rural and tourist activity predominates in the western and eastern areas.

Administrative Organization

The Principality of Asturias is one of the 17 Autonomous Regions of Spain. The Statute of Autonomy, passed in December 1981, confers self-governing competences in numerous areas.



[...] water is a conspicuous feature and inexhaustible source of assets in Asturias

Left: General Assembly of the Principality of Asturias.

Right: View of waterfall.

The Junta General (General Assembly), the legislative body of the Region, possesses powers to guide and control the Governing Council, which in turn is the executive, administrative and governing body responsible for regional policies. Its members are elected every four years by universal suffrage and elect the President of the Principality of Asturias.

The Town Councils of the 78 municipalities into which the Principality of Asturias is organized are the administrative bodies closest to the inhabitants.

GVA - GDP

One of the main characteristics of the economic structure of Asturias is the importance of the industrial sector for Gross Value Added, a percentage that in 2008 reached 22.37%, well above the country average of 17.3%. Services represent the main component of the region's GVA with about 61.83%. Construction accounts for 14.02% and the primary sector 1.78%.

The GDP of Asturias in 2008 reached a figure of € 23,877 million, 2.18% of the national total. Regional GDP per capita was € 22,559.

Employment

The availability of skilled personnel for industry and industrial support services and the importance given to occupational training enable the region to offer a plentiful, skilled workforce for future investments.

[...] the region can offer a plentiful, skilled workforce for future investments



With 1,080,138 inhabitants, Asturias had in December 2008 an active population of 491,800, of which 442,800 were employed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 9.95%.

The services sector accounts for the highest levels of employment (71.6% in 2008), in contrast to the primary sector, that has seen a gradual drop-off in employment down to 4%. The industrial sector accounts for 15% of employment, and the building industry 9.5%.

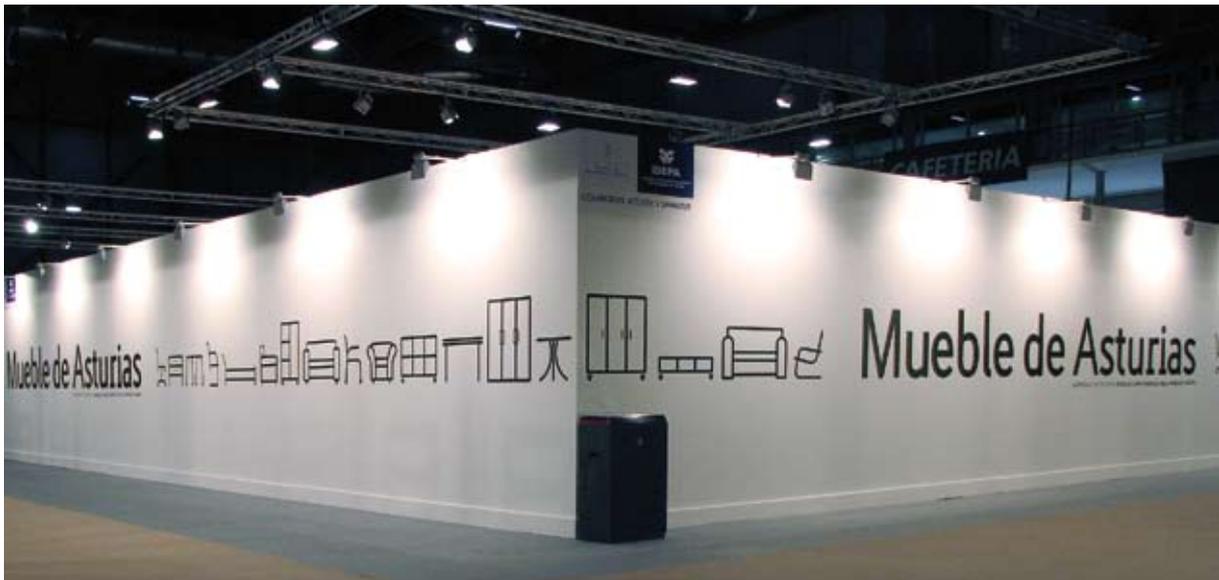
Foreign Trade

Asturias's foreign trade in 2008 reached a figure of € 7,973.74 million. Exports were worth € 3,187.14 million and imports € 4,786.6 m, which represents a coverage rate of 66.58%.

Asturian exports have traditionally been characterized by a strong focus on metal products (iron, steel and zinc) in accordance with the weight of the iron and steel industry in the region's economy. Thus, in 2008, 34.6% of exports were from the sector of steel products, zinc and alloys. Imports, while more diversified, are dominated by fuels and lubricants with 34% of the total, followed by iron and steel products, zinc and their alloys.

Asturian foreign trade is mainly centred on the European Union, especially exports, at 72% of the total in 2008.

Asturian foreign trade is mainly centred on the European Union



International Furniture Fair.

Foreign Investments

Overseas companies play a leading role in Asturias. The many advantages the region offers, as well as the possibility of non-repayable subsidies of up to 30%, make Asturias a highly attractive location for the installation of new business projects.

U.S. companies such as DuPont (chemicals and biotechnology), Alcoa (aluminium) and Fluor Corporation (engineering); German firms such as Bayer (chemicals) and ThyssenKrupp (capital goods); Indian companies such as ArcelorMittal (steel); French companies such as Saint-Gobain (glass), Imerys (refractories) or Danone (dairy products), or the British groups Linpac (plastics) and Hanson (cement) are just some of the multinationals that have already discovered the advantages of investing in Asturias.

Main Companies with Foreign Capital Installed in Asturias

Country	Mother Company	Company Name in Asturias	Activity
Argentina	Editorial Losada	Editorial Losada	Publishing
	Laboratorios Fidex	Tecsolpar	Pharmaceutical sector
Austria	RHI	RHI Refractories España	Refractories
	Plansee Holding	PMG Asturias Powder Metal	Automotive components
Belgium	Rioglass	Rioglass Astur	Glass for automotive industry
		Rioglass Solar	Parabolic mirrors for thermosolar power plants
France	Air Liquide	Air Liquide España	Industrial & medical gases
	Atos Origin	Atos Origin España	ICT
	Bongrain	Mantequerías Arias	Dairy products
	Capgemini	Capgemini España	ICT
	CLE, Compagnie Laitière Européenne	Corporación Alimentaria Peñasanta (CAPSA)	Dairy products
	Danone Group	Danone	Dairy products
	Imerys	Calderys Ibérica Refractarios	Refractories
	Compagnie Saint-Gobain	Saint-Gobain Cristalería	Glass for building & automotive industries
Germany	Bayer	Química Farmacéutica Bayer	Chemicals
	Deutsche Telekom	T-Systems	ICT
	Elektrophenix	Phoenix Contact	Electrical Material
	Obo Bettermann	Obo Bettermann	Electrical Material
	Software AG	Software AG España	ICT

	ThyssenKrupp	ThyssenKrupp Norte	Mechanical stairways
		ThyssenKrupp Airport Systems	Airport walkways
		ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center	R&D Center
India	Mittal Steel	ArcelorMittal	Steel
Italy	ENI Group	Agip España	Petroleum products
	Perfetti Group	Chupa Chups	Sweets & candies
	L.P.	Delfín Tubes	Finned & studded tubes
	STB	STB Astur	Metallic Manufacturing
Japan	Suzuki Motor Co.	Suzuki Motor España	Motorcycles
	Mitsubishi Materials Co.	PMG Asturias Powder Metal	Automotive components
Mexico	Vitro Group	Vitro Cristalglass Asturias	Glass
Portugal	EDP, Electricidade de Portugal	HC Energía	Power, gas & telecommunication
	Sonae Group	Parque Principado	Shopping Centre & Leisure
Switzerland	Nestlé	Nestlé España	Dairy products
	Xstrata Zinc	Asturiana de Zinc (AZSA)	Zinc
United Kingdom	Cookson Group	Vesuvius Ibérica Refractarios	Refractories
	Hanson Group	Hanson Hispania	Cement
	Linpac Plastics	Linpac Packaging Pravia	Plastics
	National Express Group	Alsa Grupo	Transport
U.S.A.	Air Products & Chemicals	Soc. Española Carburos Metálicos	Chemicals
	Alcoa	Alcoa Inespal	Aluminium
	BD, Becton Dickinson	Agar de Asturias	Chemicals
	CSC, Computer Sciences Co.	Computer Sciences España	ICT
	DuPont	DuPont Asturias	Chemicals
	Fluor Corporation	Fluor	Engineering
	General Dynamics Co.	Santa Bárbara Sistemas	Defence
	Praxair	Praxair Ibérica	Chemicals
	Specialized Technology Resources	STR España	Plastics
	Tenneco Automotive	Tenneco Automotive Ibérica	Automotive components
	W3C	W3C	ICT



Business Environment

Asturias is characterized by a diversified business environment in which numerous projects exist side by side that have been carried out in the last decade in the fields of information and communication technology, chemicals, renewable energy and glass; these have channelled the expansion of the economy into new areas of activity in which modern technologies and opening up to the outside world play a fundamental role.

A concern for quality, the environment and innovation is the hallmark of the more than 70,000 companies in Asturias. More than 2,000 companies have ISO 9001 certification. Likewise, the desire to be more competitive and demanding in their management has led Asturias, with 46 EFQM Seals recognized in 2008, to be ranked among the Spanish regions with the greatest number of certified companies. In order to raise awareness of the advantages of business quality, the Asturian Quality Club was created in 1995 as a forum for meeting, training and information with the aim of promoting competitive leadership at management level in Asturian companies as a way of achieving Business Excellence.

The concern of business with respect to the impact of its activities on the environment and to the coexistence of industrial development and the maintenance of the region's quality of life has increased in recent years. For this reason, more and more companies in Asturias are obtaining certification for their environmental management systems in accordance with ISO 14001 (over 500 companies at the end of 2008). As regards companies with ISO 27001 certification for data security management systems, there were some thirty at the end of 2008.

For its part, the Asturian Innovation Club, a permanent meeting place for business, the University and the Administration, also seeks to further technological innovation. The Club has led the implementation and certification of Management Systems for R&D+i in Asturias, with the result that at the present time Asturian companies certified in R&D+i make up 17% of all certified Spanish companies.

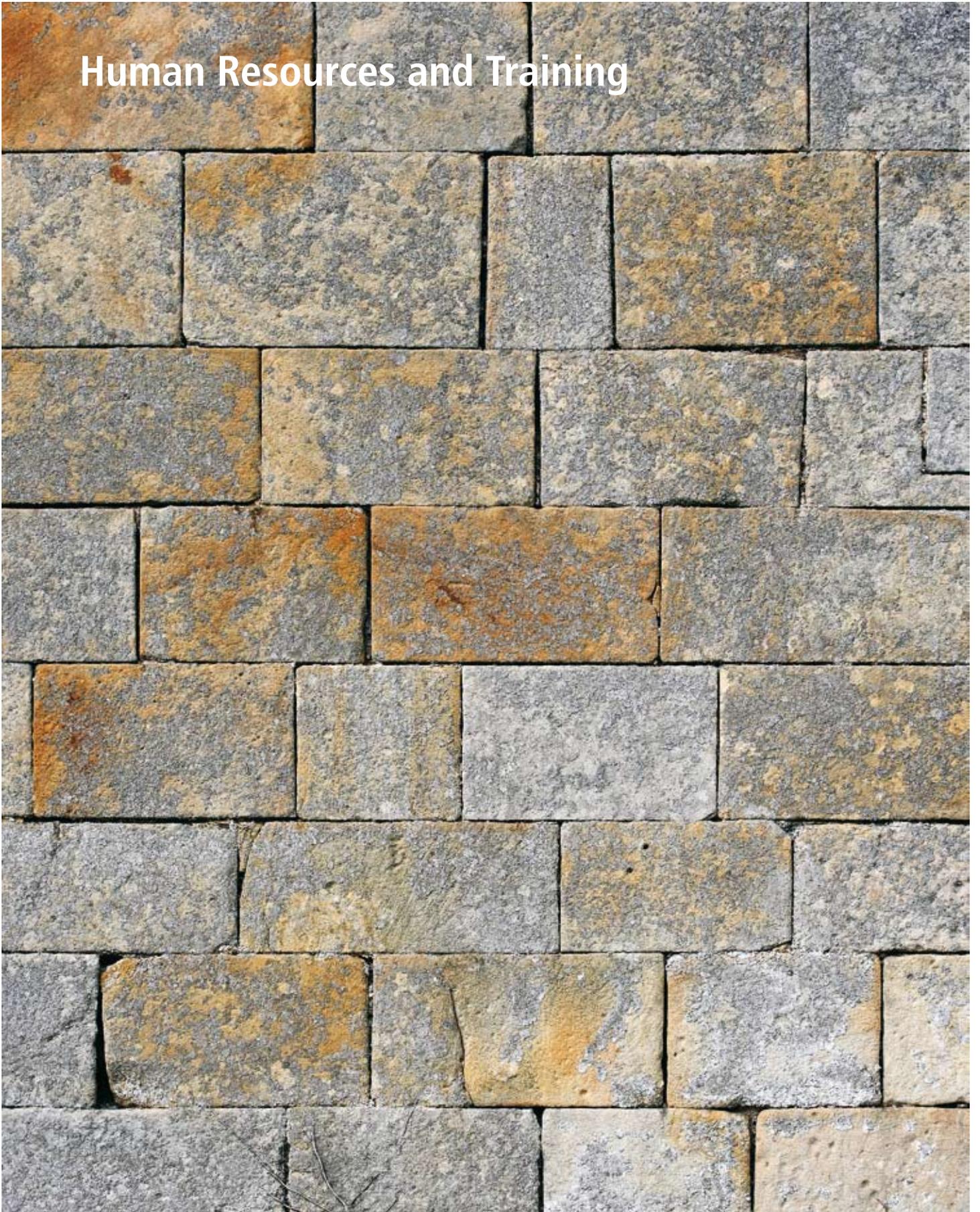
Stability and Social Concord

The fluid dialogue between Administration, business and unions ensures a good social and work climate which is reflected in the Agreement for Competitiveness, Employment and Wellbeing in Asturias (ACEBA) 2008-2011, the main lines of action of which are centred on active policies for economic promotion, employment, training, the knowledge society, health and safety at work, public investment and social cohesion.

**A fluid dialogue between Administration,
business and unions ensures a good social
and work climate**

Steel Technology Centre.

Human Resources and Training



«One of the factors that most attracted us was the availability of suitable personnel. In Asturias we will have access to skilled professionals with a high degree of motivation. The University of Oviedo is an excellent source of human resources»

2005, ERIC MORGAN, CEO of Capgemini for Spain and Portugal (France)

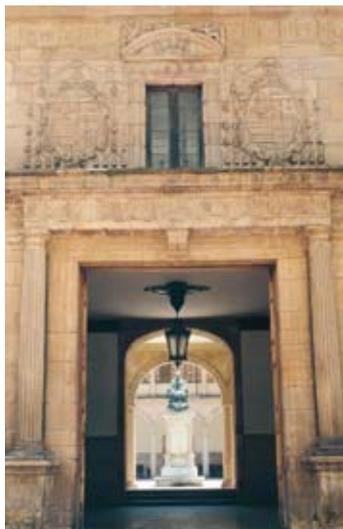
One of the major assets noted by foreign enterprises established in the region is the existence of highly qualified human resources to suit all the personnel needs of the investor.

University Education

Number of students enrolled University of Oviedo Academic Year 2008/2009	
Social & Juridical Sciences (Economics, Business Studies, Teacher Training, Psychology...)	4,668
Licentiate Degree in Business Administration & Management	2,059
Licentiate Degree in Law	1,809
Humanities (Languages, Philosophy, Geography, History)	2,352
Technical Engineering (IT, Mining, Telecommunications, Industrial Engineering, Surveying & Forestry)	4,965
Engineering (IT, Mining, Telecommunications, Industrial & Chemical Engineering, Geology)	3,029
Experimental Sciences (Biology, Physics, Geology, Mathematics & Chemistry)	2,596
Health Sciences	2,309
Others	3,872
Total	27,659

Founded in 1608, the University of Oviedo offers degrees that cover most areas of knowledge. Technical courses, experimental and health sciences, social and juridical sciences and humanities are some of the subjects offered. Almost one third of students take technical courses such as computer engineering, mining engineering, telecommunications, chemical and industrial engineering, geology...

Almost one third of students take technical courses



Left: Historic Building, University of Oviedo. Right: Science & Technology Centre (El Cristo Campus). Oviedo.



The University of Oviedo also offers a wide variety of postgraduate studies (Masters and Doctorates); among the University Masters programmes mention can be made of Business Administration & Management (MBA), Food Biotechnology, Web Engineering, Information & Communication Technologies in Mobile Networks, Mechatronics, etc.

It is in its human resources that the Asturian University possesses its greatest credentials both in Spain and in the international context. Pioneering and prestigious research groups in different areas are joined by outstanding students in multiple fields, as proven by the numerous end-of-course National Prizes won by students of the University.

The University of Oviedo is the only Spanish higher education institution that carries out research tasks with the .Net platform source code (SSCLI, also known as Rotor), financed by Microsoft Research. It has also won four research awards in the three editions run by Microsoft for carrying out research projects on this platform (Microsoft Research SSCLI RFP Awards).

It is in its human resources that the Asturian University possesses its greatest credentials



Left: Viesques Campus, Gijón. Above: El Coto Municipal Library, Gijón.

In Asturias there also exist other educational facilities of an international nature, such as the Asturias Business School (Fundación Escuela de Negocios de Asturias). The ABS-FENA is a private educational institution that offers postgraduate programmes and training for companies and executives, as well as international postgraduate programmes in collaboration with universities in the USA, Mexico and China. IDEPA works actively with ABS-FENA in the design, promotion and financing of different training projects leading to qualifications, such as the Master's Degree in Chinese Language, Culture and Negotiation, the School of Commercial Development for Technologists, and the Doctors for Enterprise Programme.

Occupational Training

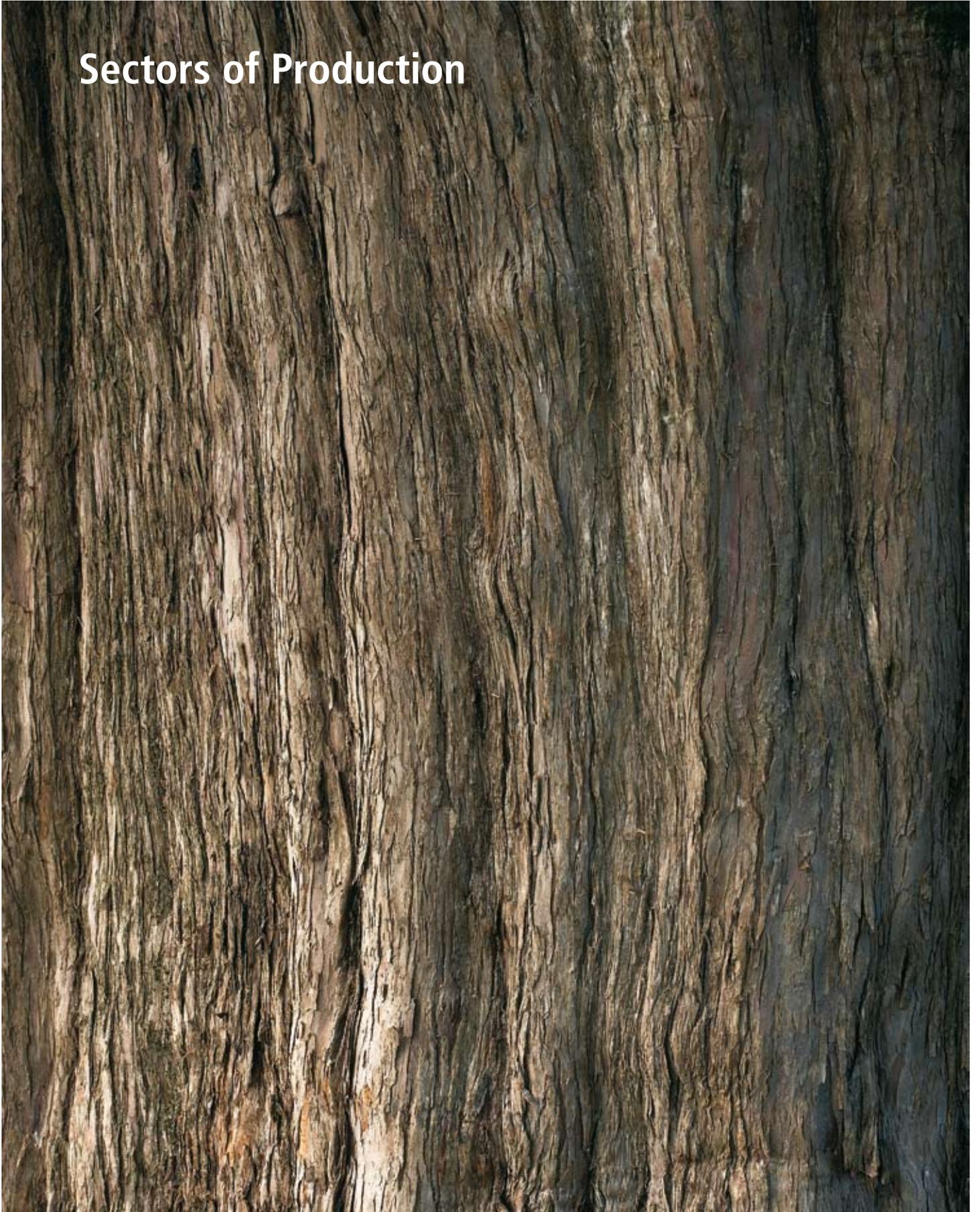
Officially authorized occupational training, with some 11,452 students in the 2008-2009 academic year, completes the technical qualifications of the future Asturian workforce, combining theoretical training with practical work experience in companies. Numerous vocational training centres throughout the region offer a wide range of specializations, such as International Commerce, Office Administration, Computer Systems Administration, Computer Applications Development, Welding and Boiler-making, Electro-technical Installations, Industrial Equipment Maintenance, Metal Construction, Mechanized Production, etc.

Numerous vocational training centres throughout the region offer a wide range of specializations



Wood & furniture workshops at La Laboral Integrated Occupational Training Centre.

Sectors of Production



«The people in Asturias realize their best option is to be prepared for international business, which includes developing important language and communication skills as well as high technology education that makes them more attractive for foreign investment»

2004, ROBERT S. YORGENSEN, President and COO of Specialized Technology Resources España (United States)

PRIMARY SECTOR

Agriculture, livestock and fishing, major activities of the Asturian economy for centuries, have gradually lost prominence in the evolution towards a tertiary economy and in 2008 accounted for 1.78% of regional GVA and 4% of employment.

The primary sector in Asturias has undergone in recent decades a considerable transformation marked by the quality of food production. The region boasts twelve products with Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication: five types of cheese (Cabrales, Afuega'l Pitu, Casín, Gamonedo and Los Beyos), the Asturian Bean, Asturian Beef, Tineo Chosco (cured and smoked pork sausage), Asturian Cider, Cangas Wine, Escanda Bread, and products with the approval of the Regulatory Board for Ecological Agriculture.

The productive structure of agriculture is dominated by small-sized family farms located mostly in mountainous areas. Livestock is of great importance in the primary sector, accounting for over three quarters of final agricultural production, due to production of milk and meat for the food industry. Meanwhile, with a fleet of some 403 boats, mostly non-industrial, fishing is spread over the 18 ports in the region.

Asturias has 451,116 hectares of forest, which make up 59% of the total wooded areas of the region, which gives an idea of this sector's potential. Species such as oak, holm oak, chestnut, beech or conifers are to be found in Asturian forests together with eucalyptus. The latter species is of great importance in the final output of the forestry sector. Empresa Nacional de Celulosa, ENCE, which produces 500,000 MT yearly of paper pulp from high quality ECF (Elemental Chlorine Free) eucalyptus cellulose, is the second most important company in the world ranking for this product. ENCE also produces 550,000 MWh/year of electric power from renewable sources.



The region boasts twelve products with Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication



The estuary at Avilés.

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Three sub-sectors in Asturias account for more than 80% of turnover in the industrial sector and 74% of industrial employment: in 2007 the metal-mechanical sector represented almost 54.1% of turnover and 49.1% of employment, followed by the extractive industries, energy and water with 15.5% of turnover and 11.6% of employment, and thirdly the agro-alimentary sector, with 11.7% of turnover and 13.5% of employment.

Agro-alimentary Industry

The agro-alimentary industry, one of the sectors with greatest weight in the Asturian economy, in 2007 accounted for 11.7% of the turnover of the industrial sector and 13.5% of employment, being the branch of activity that generates the third greatest amount of employment and turnover in industry. The dairy industries, with a solid position in the home market, together with meat processing and beverages, are the main activities in this sector.

Dairy Industry

The substantial specialization of the Asturian farming sector in milk production, which reached 568 million litres in 2008, has led to the implantation and development of a large number of dairy industries in Asturias, some of which are market leaders. Corporación Alimentaria Peñasanta, CAPSA, mainly owned by Central Lechera Asturiana, (CLAS), and by the French multinational Bongrain, and Industrias Lácteas Asturianas, ILAS (Reny Picot), a multinational with wholly Asturian capital, are the most outstanding. The remaining large dairy companies that have facilities in Asturias belong mostly to groups with foreign capital, such as Danone, Nestlé or Mantequeras Arias.

The agro-alimentary industry [...] in 2007 accounted for 11.7% of the turnover of the industrial sector



CAPSA & Reny Picot.



The main products manufactured in Asturias are liquid and powdered milk, followed at some distance by other traditional dairy products. In recent years companies in this sector, with the support of regional research centres, have invested boldly in diversification of production and development of new processes in order to market innovative products, amongst which functional foods may be mentioned such as Omega 3 or soy enriched milks; yoghurts and milk-based desserts such as bifidus or fermented milk products.

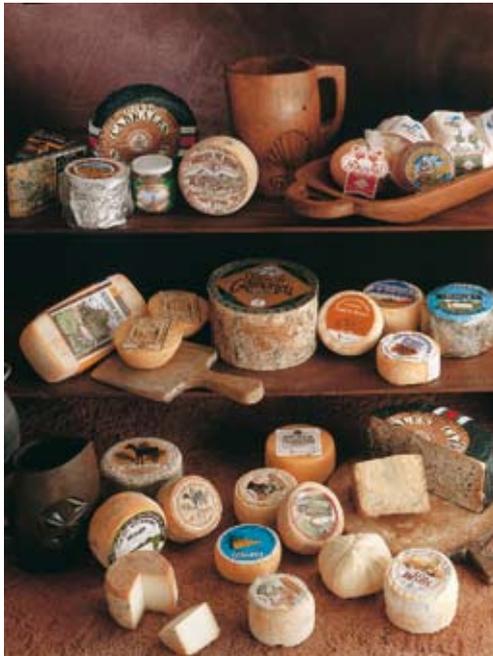
Asturias also has a wide variety of handmade products, notably forty varieties of cheese which make Asturias one of the most important cheese-producing areas of Europe. Four of these cheeses, Cabrales, Afuega'l Pitu, Casín and Gamonedo, enjoy European Union Protected Designation of Origin status.

Meat, Pre-cooked Dishes and Preserves

All phases of meat processing can be carried out in Asturias, from supply of raw materials, slaughter and butchering of animals, meat preservation and processing, to treatment of side products and production of fats.

Butchered meats are the most important product, with 34,035.87 tons in 2008, 56.5% of the total. Pre-cooked dishes account for 24.6% of production and are growing in importance, being one of the main product lines of the largest meat processing companies. They are followed by cured products (chorizo, ham, bacon), with 14.5% of production, cooked products and cold meats.

The preserves and semi-preserves sector, including vegetables, legumes and fruit, as well as meat and fish, is going through a period of expansion with new projects starting up that have meant



In recent years companies [...] have invested boldly in diversification of production



*Still life of Asturian cheeses.
Plate of cheese, jelly and nuts, a typical dessert.*

a large increase in the number of canning companies. The common denominator of these new companies is an emphasis on the high quality local or regional *gourmet* type product, for example sea-urchin caviar, tuna fish in cider, glacé chestnuts or pickled partridge.

Beverages, Sweets and Coffee

Cider, a traditional drink deeply rooted in Asturian culture, comes in different varieties such as sparkling cider, marketed by various companies of which perhaps the best-known is Valle, Ballina y Fernández (“El Gaitero”), natural cider, produced in over a hundred cider cellars, and “new expression cider” or table cider, a new product aimed opening up new markets. Cider is recognized by the European Union with the Protected Designation of origin “Sidra de Asturias” (Cider of Asturias).

Mineral water companies such as Aguas de Fuensanta which make use of the many natural springs in Asturias, have seen constant growth during the last decade and are well positioned in an expanding market.

Asturias is also home to a substantial sweets industry, with leading sweets and candy producers such as Chupa Chups (Perfetti Van Melle Group). The coffee industry, involved in the production of coffee, tea and infusions, completes this overview of the region’s agro-alimentary sector.

Cider is recognized by the European Union with the Protected Designation of origin «Sidra de Asturias» (Cider of Asturias)



Metal Industry

Steel production, manufacture of metal products, manufacture of capital goods and transport materials employed 49.12% of the active workforce in the region's industry, and accounted in 2007 for 54.14% of the sector's turnover, these figures being well above the average for Spain (38.1 and 36.6% respectively).

Iron & Steel Industry

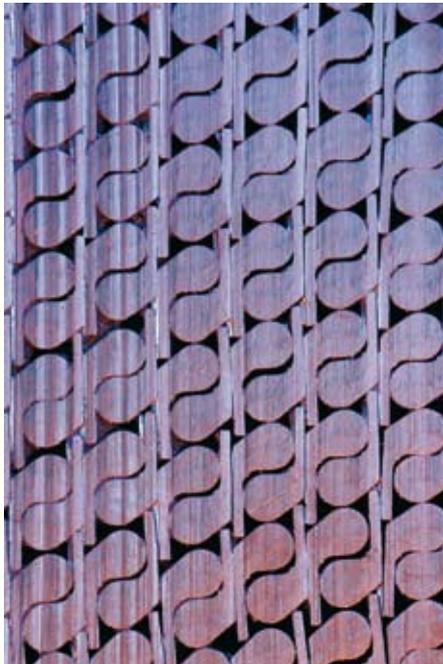
The iron and steel industry, which has long existed in Asturias, constitutes, along with mining, one of the identifying features of a region that began its rise in the nineteenth century in the vanguard of Spanish industry.

The ArcelorMittal group has three plants in Asturias. It is the leading steel manufacturer in Spain, the leading supplier for the automobile sector at national level, and the only Spanish manufacturer of tin plate (used for the packaging of foods or drinks) and of heavy plate (for shipbuilding, capital goods, tanks and large containers).

ArcelorMittal is also the leading producer world-wide of flat and long products, a world leader in stainless steel production, and ranks among the leading European companies in the sector of distribution, transformation and trading.

Metallurgical Industry

Aluminium and zinc manufacture are the most representative activities in the metallurgical industry in Asturias. The American multinational Alcoa (the world's main producer of primary aluminium, manufactured aluminium and alumina) has made the Asturian plant its nerve centre for the whole of Europe. Alcoa is active in the main sectors of industry: aerospace, automobile, packaging, building and construction, commercial and industrial transport.



The iron and steel industry constitutes one of the identifying features of the region

*Left: Indusla.
Right: Delfin Tubes.*



Asturiana de Zinc, AZSA, produces electrolytic zinc, zinc alloys for casting and galvanization, laminated zinc, zinc oxide, sulphuric acid, oleum, liquid sulphur dioxide, germanium oxide and mercury. AZSA, with a production capacity of over 500,000 tons annually, produces 20% of zinc at European level and 6.4% worldwide, which confirms its position as the largest zinc production plant in the world.

Capital Goods Industry

The mining and steel industries in Asturias have led to the creation of capital goods manufacturing companies, which absorb a directly employed workforce of some 20,000 workers. This sector includes both large manufacturing groups such as Duro Felguera, with some 2,000 staff and almost 150 years' experience, specialized in carrying out turnkey projects for the power and industrial sectors, and also a large group of small companies that are leaders at national and international level in the manufacture of capital goods for mining, construction, defence, transport or the environment.

300 subcontractors for casting, machining, stamping and die-pressing, boilermaking or metal structures, 100 for engineering, assembly and maintenance and a wide range of advanced service companies in the fields of industrial, civil, IT, electrical or environmental engineering, place Asturias at the forefront of the metal sector in Spain.

The existence of a skilled workforce in metalworking specialities has been, without doubt, a decisive factor for the implantation of new industrial activity in the region, for example Thyssen Group setting up in the 90s. This group initiated its activity by setting up the Thyssen Norte company, making mechanical stairways. Later on the group undertook major expansion projects in Asturias among which the most important are the manufacture of airport walkways (ThyssenKrupp Airport Systems) and the recent installation in Gijón of the ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center, the world centre for R&D+I of ThyssenKrupp Elevator ES/PBB.

Shipbuilding

Shipbuilding has traditionally been an important industry in Asturias, with major shipyards with capacity for the construction of cargo, fishing and special vessels (refrigerated, oil-tankers, chemicals) of up to 40,000 tons, aimed mainly at the international market. The remaining yards, chief among which are Astilleros Armón and Astilleros Gondán, are mainly involved in the construction of modern recreational and sports vessels, fishing boats, hospital ships, frigates and others of considerable added value.

Automobile Sector

In Asturias a considerable part of the region's industry is related to the automobile sector, either through production of basic materials like steel (ArcelorMittal), zinc for galvanization (Asturiana de Zinc) and aluminium (Alcoa Inespal), or supply of components such as bodywork (Carrocerías Ferqui), windcreens and windows (Saint-Gobain Cristalera; Rioglass Astur), shock absorbers

The mining and steel industries in Asturias have led to the creation of capital goods manufacturing companies

ArcelorMittal. SIDERGAS cogeneration power plant.

(Tenneco Automotive Ibérica), or sinterized products for gearboxes (PMG Asturias Powder Metal). In the automotive sector the manufacture of scooters, low cylinder capacity motorcycles, spares and components by the Japanese company Suzuki Motor España also stands out.

Chemical Industry

The chemical sector in Asturias includes the activities of the carbo-chemical industries, fertilizers, pharmaceutical products and synthetic fibres, especially as concerns those products specific to DuPont, and is made up of 54 companies employing some 2,708 workers.

The US multinational DuPont has a 100-hectare complex in Asturias that is home to its plants for production of Nomex© (high temperature resistant Aramid fibre), Sontara© (non-woven fabrics) and Agro© (crop protection products). These have been joined recently by the plant for production of Isophthaloyl Chloride (ICL) (one of the raw materials for manufacture of Nomex©) and components for Kevlar©, another of the company's brands.

The Asturian multinational Industrial Química del Nalón, IQN, has two lines of business activity: carbo-chemical products and high-grade coke. It is the largest private tar distiller in southern Europe and one of the main producers of smelting coke.

The company with German capital Química Farmacéutica Bayer is prominent in the pharmaceutical industry. Its Asturian plant consolidated its position in the late 90s as production centre for salicylic and acetylsalicylic acid, antimycotic products and active ingredients for veterinary use, mainly for export.

The US multinational DuPont has a 100-hectare complex in Asturias



DuPont.

Mining Industry

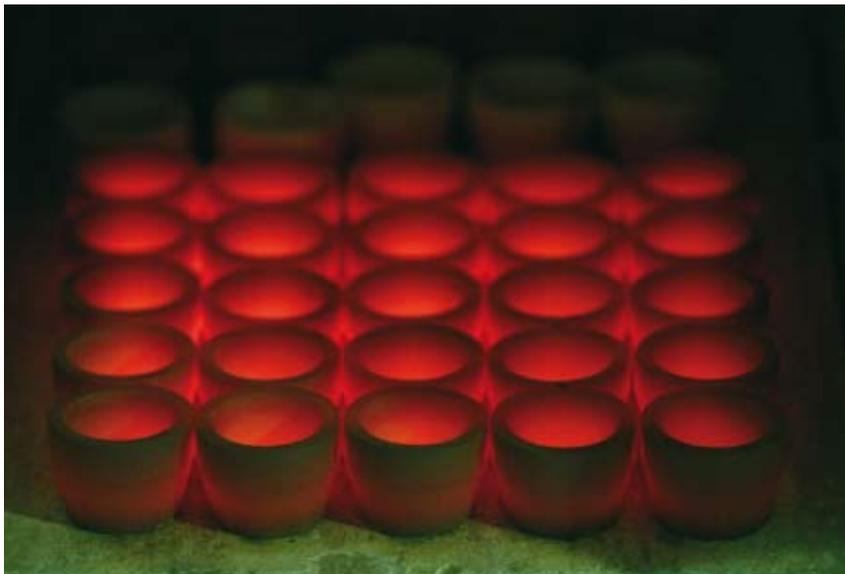
Practically all the production of energy mining, concentrated in the valleys of the Rivers Nalón and Caudal, is sold to the thermal power stations of the region for production of electric power. Hulleras del Norte, HUNOSA, is the largest coal company, with around 2,500 workers. The valuable experience gathered by Hunosa is now being put to use to ease the transition from coal mining towards other sectors, with the aim of diversifying industry in the mining areas.

The Asturian subsoil is rich in raw materials such as kaolin, marble, slate, limestone, dolomite or quartzite, the main elements in non-energy mining, from which high added value products can be obtained such as fertilizers, glass, ceramics, glass fibre, semiconductors or bonding ceramics.

Other Industrial Sectors

The **cement sector** also produces clinker, concrete and prefabricated products. The Tudela Veguín company, owned by the Asturian Masaveu group, has two cement plants in the region that in 2008 produced 1,747,306 tons of grey cement and 147,193 tons of white cement.

The **refractory products industry** is well established in Asturias and enjoys a favourable competitive position with highly specialized companies due to their close relationship with the development of the steel industry in the region. RHI Refractories España, Cookson-Vesuvius Ibérica Refractorios, Calderys Ibérica Refractorios, Pasek España, Arcillas Refractorias and Cerámica del Nalón are some of the most notable companies.



The refractory products industry is well established in Asturias

Refractory Products.

The **glass industry** operates in both the plate glass and hollow glass segments and has seen strong growth with the installation of companies like Rioglass, dedicated to the manufacture of automotive glass (Rioglass Astur) and precision parabolic mirrors for thermosolar electric power production (Rioglass Solar). Saint-Gobain Cristalería, with French capital, is the sector leader by sales volume and employment, producing plate glass mainly for the automobile and building sectors.

The **plastics industry** has 54 companies and covers a wide range of sectors and services. Some of the most representative are Linpac Packaging Pravia and Extrusión de Resinas Vinílicas, ERVISA, producers of packaging for the food industry. The US company Specialized Technology Resources (STR) has recently set up in Asturias, making ethylene vinyl acetate laminates used in the photovoltaic cells of solar panels.

The **wood sector** embraces manufacture of carpentry for building and the furniture industry, including household, kitchen and bathroom or office furniture manufacturers, and also manufacturers of advanced designs such as, for example, ergonomic furniture for the old or disabled and hospital furniture.

The **textile industry**, with around 290 companies and 1,439 employees, covers work clothing, protective clothing for work and hospital and surgical wear, as also modern ready to wear items, bridal dresses and sportswear. The **consumer goods sector** includes manufacturers of fashion accessories (handbags, umbrellas), household goods and items of decoration (glassware, crockery, porcelain), toys, jewellery, etc.

The glass industry operates in both the plate glass and hollow glass segments and has seen strong growth



Rioglass Astur.

ADVANCED BUSINESS SERVICES

ICT and Business Intelligence

The information and communications technology sector has seen strong growth in recent years, as regards both the number of companies and jobs created. At the present time there are in Asturias 575 companies employing 5,209 people, which in 2007 generated a turnover of €692m.

Asturias is one of the EU regions where broadband is most widespread and has greatest penetration. Together with the high level of professional expertise to be found in Asturias, the region's excellent infrastructures in telecommunications and the regional government's firm support for development in this sector, this has led to the creation of new companies and the installation of leading companies such as the multinationals Computer Sciences Corporation and Capgemini, or the Spanish companies Indra, Grupo Konecna, Telecyl, Satec and IECISA (Informática El Corte Inglés).

The creation in Asturias of the Agrupación Empresarial Innovadora del Conocimiento (Association of Innovative Knowledge Businesses) brings together around 70 companies. Moreover, the Centro Tecnológico de la Información y las Telecomunicaciones CTIC (Information & Telecommunications Technology Centre) is especially active as a driving force for the sector through its dissemination, consulting, technology transfer and management activities and through the technological projects it carries out. CTIC is also home to the Spanish office of the W3C (World Wide Web) consortium, the most important international body for internet standardization.



Headquarters of the W3C Consortium (World Wide Web Consortium), the most important international internet standardisation body.

Asturias is one of the EU regions where broadband is most widespread and has greatest penetration

Other Services

Together with traditional services, amply covered in Asturias, investors wishing to establish themselves in the region will find a wide range of advanced services companies involved in new information technologies and modern management techniques, the most significant being as follows:

- Civil, agrarian, electrical, and industrial engineering, etc.
- Applied scientific and technical research and technological innovation.
- Technical consultancy in quality and environmental management systems, power saving, etc.
- Computer science and new information technologies, implantation of computer systems and advanced communications, process and database systems, development of specific software, etc.
- Consultancy and advanced business management: business organization, strategic planning, project evaluation and viability studies, market studies, internationalization, building and logistics consultancy.
- Human resources, personnel selection and training, health and safety at work.
- Graphic and industrial design, advertising and media.
- Outsourcing of different services.

Investors [...] will find a wide range of advanced services companies involved in new information technologies



Espacio Blimea, facilities of Informática El Corte Inglés, IECISA.

Infrastructures



«In order for Delfin Tubes to grow in the future, a port connected to the world is an absolute necessity. Asturias has undeniable advantages in its communications by motorway, rail and the Port of El Musel»

2003, DARIO ROMITO, Managing Director, Delfin Tubes (Italy)

Transport Infrastructures

Land Transport

The Principality of Asturias has 5,000 Km. of roads, of which 350 are dual carriageways and motorways, practically all toll-free. The Autopista de La Plata (Silver Motorway) communicates Asturias with the centre of the peninsula and the Autovía del Cantábrico (Cantabrian Highway) with Galicia to the west and Cantabria to the east. Oviedo, Gijón and Avilés are also linked by motorway. The network is completed with the so-called "Autovía Minera" (Mining District Freeway) connecting Gijón, Langreo and Mieres, and the AS-II joining the cities of Gijón and Oviedo.

Two rail networks cover the main routes of communication in the region: from north to south, across the Central Plateau, with a conventional gauge railway (RENFE), and in a transversal direction with a narrow gauge network (FEVE), which runs along the edge of the Cantabrian mountain range from the Basque Country to Galicia. A high-speed rail link is currently under construction between Madrid and Asturias, which will allow passenger and goods transport capacity to be considerably increased.

Maritime Transport

Asturias possesses two large industrial ports in Gijón and Avilés, close to each other with complementary facilities and docks specialized in steel and power-related traffic, solid bulk handling and general merchandise.

The Principality of Asturias has 5,000 Km. of roads, of which 300 are dual carriageways and motorways, practically all toll-free



Grases Intersection.

The Port of Gijón (El Musel) is undergoing an ambitious extension and improvement project that will be finalized in 2011, with increased draught that will allow simultaneous unloading of three 230,000-ton bulk-carriers. The extension project is also scheduled to include the installation of a regasification plant.

This extension, together with the start of the Motorway of the Sea between the port of El Musel and the French port of Nantes-Saint Nazaire at the end of 2009, will make it possible to diversify and increase traffic through the port, making Asturias a region with great capacity for intermodal transport.

El Musel offers wide-ranging specific facilities, such as terminals for solid and liquid bulk, steel-related products, cement and general goods; additionally it offers regular container traffic links to over 250 destinations in 100 countries with several shipping companies. Some of the main destinations are leading ports in Europe, such as Rotterdam, Felixstowe, Thamesport, Gothenburg and Lisbon, and ports in the Americas and Asia such as Veracruz, Havana, New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore or Yokohama. Movement of goods in 2008 reached 19.3 million MT.

The Port of Gijón (El Musel) is undergoing an ambitious extension and improvement project



Aerial view of El Musel, the Port of Gijón.

The Port of Avilés possesses specific facilities for direct unloading and stockage of tar, asphalt products, ammonia, fuel-oil, alumina, sulphuric acid and cement. Various regular container traffic lines sail from Avilés to the Canary Islands. In 2008 the port moved 5.5 million MT of cargo.

Air Transport

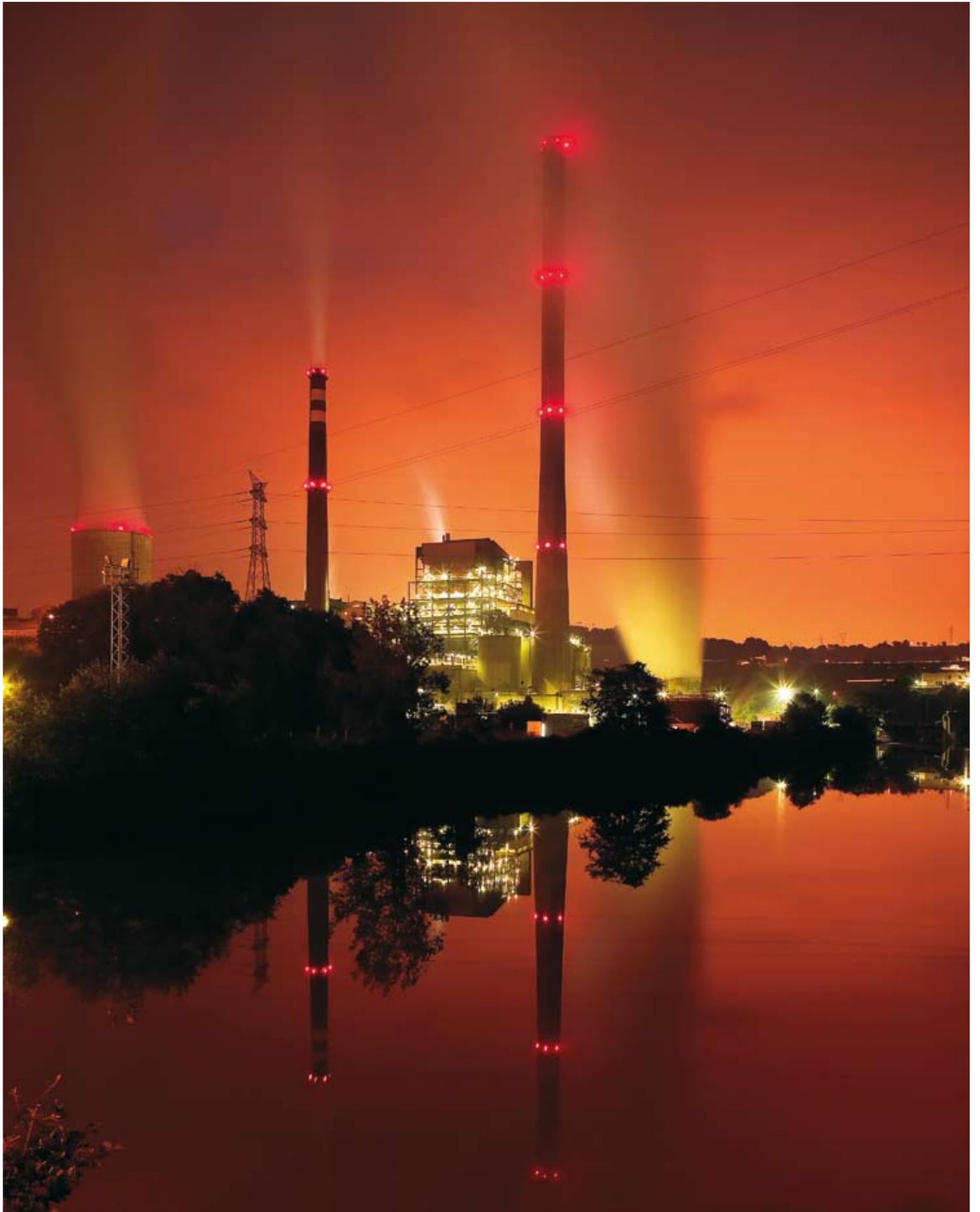
Asturias Airport is linked by motorway with the regional capital and main cities, and connects the Principality with the main regional capitals in Spain and Europe. There are 9 daily flights to Madrid and four to Barcelona, as well as regular direct flights to London, Lisbon, Geneva, Paris and Brussels. Passenger movement reached 1,529,462 passengers in 2008.

Energy Infrastructures

Asturias is one of the regions with the greatest electrical power generation capacity in Spain. The energy sector accounted for 4.46% of regional GVA in 2008, and takes second place in the industrial sector after iron and steel.



There are [...] regular direct flights to London, Lisbon, Geneva, Paris and Brussels



Water

Water represents a fundamental strategic factor not only for life but also for industrial production processes. In this respect the Principality of Asturias possesses a quantity and quality of water far above the Spanish average, both for human consumption and industrial use.

The wealth of water resources in Asturias is not limited to surface water, but also includes underground water representing 7.5% of the total underground water in Spain. Regular rainfall spread uniformly throughout the year and the numerous rivers supply the 22 reservoirs in the region.

Electricity

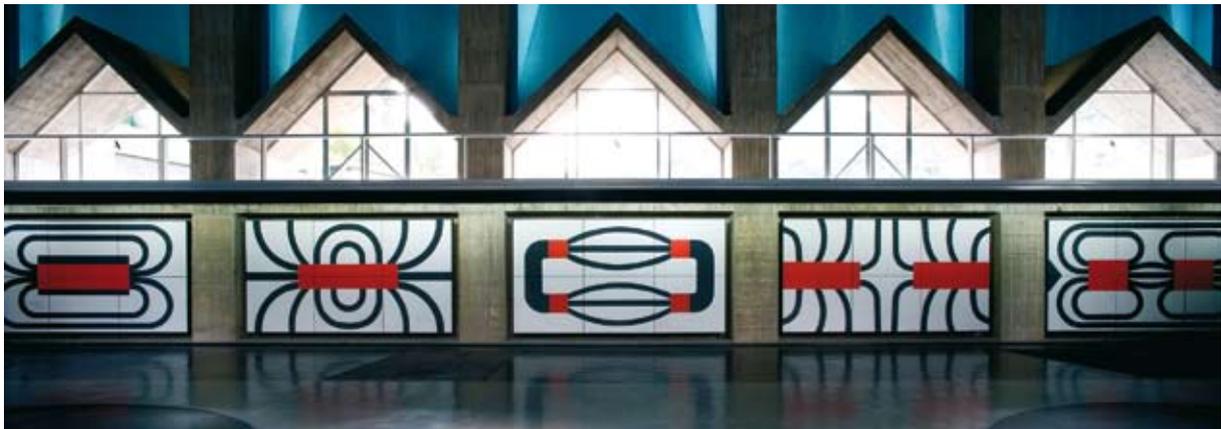
The supply and production of electricity are guaranteed in Asturias. Existing hydroelectric and thermal power stations, run by companies such as Hidroeléctrica del Cantábrico, Unión Fenosa, Iberdrola or EnelViesgo, produce far in excess of regional electricity consumption (53% more in 2008), the excess being exported to the national grid.

Production in 2008 reached 14,465 Gwh., of which 12,331 Gwh. came from thermal power stations, 1,653 Gwh. from hydroelectric power stations and 481 Gwh. from windfarms. Regional consumption reached 7,713 Gwh., 80% of which was for industrial use.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is the energy source that has shown the greatest increase in consumption in recent years. The numerous projects existing in the sector, from the regasification plant in the Port of El Musel to the combined cycle plants planned for the coming years, are indicative of the increasing importance of this energy source for the region's future power supply.

The supply and production of electricity are guaranteed in Asturias



Left: Soto de Ribera thermal power station. Above: Proaza power plant (both belonging to Hidrocantábrico).

Environmental Management

In a region with the rich natural resources that Asturias enjoys, awareness of the need for conservation of the environment and sustainable development has deep roots in society. The Administration has made this concern one of its major priorities and this is reflected in an ambitious environmental policy.

Waste Treatment

Treatment of non-harmful waste (urban, vegetable, construction and industrial), of hospital waste and hazardous waste is under the management of the Consorcio para la Gestión de los Residuos Sólidos de Asturias, COGERSA, (Consortium for Solid Waste Management of Asturias). The Consortium was established in 1982 and is currently constituted by the Asturian Government and the 78 town councils in the region. The formula created in Asturias to provide a centralized solution for waste management was a pioneering concept in the 1980s and served as an example for other Spanish regions; this model continues to be fully valid today.

Water Purification

The Principality of Asturias has a modern network of Waste Water Treatment Plants (EDAR) which safeguards the quality of river and land water and guarantees that waste water returns to the natural environment in good condition. The treatment plants purify urban sewage by means of biological processes based on breakdown of matter by microorganisms.

Awareness of the need for conservation of the environment and sustainable development has deep roots in society



*Fancy dress competition gala
"The Recycling Carnival", orga-
nized by COGERSA.*

Industrial Land

The availability of a sufficient number of industrial sites is a decisive factor for the installation of companies. For this reason in the last decade the Asturian Government has given concrete shape to this strategy in successive plans and programmes that have created new areas geared to the needs of investment projects.

At the present time the Programme for Industrial Land in the Principality of Asturias 2009-2012 offers new locations, outstanding among which, due to their surface area and good links to means of communication, are the business parks of Lloreda (Gijón) and Bobes (Siero), each of these with a surface area of around 100 hectares divided into different sized plots in order to suit the varying demands of business.

These two developments are complemented by a network of new medium-sized business parks distributed throughout Asturias, making a total of 70 new land developments involving 1,240 hectares, with the necessary facilities and provision of services on site. This also includes the public promotion of singular buildings to meet the demands of medium-sized technology companies, as well as business centres, offices and start-up units with flexible pricing.

Besides conventional industrial areas, Asturias has two sites with a high quality layout, environment and facilities, offering specific services for the establishment of innovative business projects with a substantial technological component: the Asturias Technology Park (Parque Tecnológico de Asturias) and the Gijón Science & Technology Park (Parque Científico Tecnológico de Gijón).

- The Asturias Technology Park, located in Llanera and linked by motorway with the region's three main cities, covers 44 Ha. Among the companies established there are advanced services, especially engineering, IT and environmental consultancy companies, etc.



The Asturias
Technology Park
[...] covers 44 Ha.

*Technology Park of
Asturias.*

- The Gijón Science & Technology Park, covering a total of almost 22 Ha, is located close to the campus of the University Industrial Engineering and Computer Engineering Schools of Gijón, with which it actively co-operates.

Furthermore, the regional Administration, in collaboration with the city councils and Port Authorities of Gijón and Avilés, is developing an important logistics site: the Zona de Actividades Logísticas e Industriales de Asturias (ZALIA). With a gross surface area of more than four million m², a location close to both Asturian ports, and direct access to railway lines and the A-66 motorway, the main trunk road of the region, the ZALIA is an excellent location for the development of business projects.

Telecommunications

Asturias is characterized by high broadband penetration. Asturias is positioned 2.4 points over the national average with 89.8% of households connected to Internet via broadband in 2008 (percentage of total households with Internet connection). Moreover, the deployment of Telecable, a regional telecom operator, has meant that Asturias has become the first Spanish region in terms of access to broadband Internet via cable network, with 42.1% of households, a number which far exceeds the national average, which stands at 15.1%. In addition, Asturias is the first Spanish Autonomous Region in terms of number of services that can be managed via Internet with 91% versus 67% national average.

Likewise, the e-Asturias 2012 strategic plan for development of the Information Society in the Principality of Asturias, passed in 2008, has as one of its six major objectives the development of telecommunications infrastructures in the region. Another of the strategic aims focuses on support for the development of the technological sector in the Principality of Asturias by means of a firm commitment to innovation and high added-value specialization in the region's ICT companies.



The ZALIA is an excellent location for the development of business projects



Science & Technology Park of Gijón.

Research, Development & Innovation

Scientific research, technological development and innovation, crucial variables that influence competitiveness and job creation, are a priority for the Government of the Principality. The regional research plans implemented in recent years have contributed to the training of technicians and researchers, support of projects and to an increase in the quality and quantity of services offered to Asturian society.

The Plan de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (PCTI) 2006 - 2009 (Science, Technology & Innovation Plan 2006-2009) aims to improve the system of R+D+i, in order to increase the competitiveness of the productive environment in Asturias. The estimate for resources to be put in motion by the Asturias PCTI 2006 - 2009 is 515 million euros.

Scientific research in the Principality of Asturias is based essentially on the University of Oviedo, which covers the majority of scientific disciplines and whose activity is complemented by the existence of Research Centres. In 2008 it carried out 675 research projects and contracts for a total value of 27 million euros. The experimental science and technical studies departments were those that carried out most of the research.

Technology and innovation are mainly linked to carrying out research and technological development, above all in technology transfer, performance of technological supervision work, technical consultation and dissemination.



Scientific research in the Principality of Asturias is based essentially on the University of Oviedo

Information & Communications Technology Centre.

Scientific & Technological Environment in the Principality of Asturias

Centre

Sector

University Institutions

University Industrial Technology Institute	Industrial Technology
University Oncology Institute	Oncology
University Biotechnology Institute	Biotechnology
Natural Resources and Land Management Institute (INDUROT)	Natural Resources
Regional Cooperation and Development Centre (CECODET)	Regional Development
Artificial Intelligence Centre	Artificial Intelligence
Education Sciences Institute	Education Sciences
"Enrique Moles" Organo-Metallic Chemistry Institute	Organo-Metallic Chemistry
Feijoo Institute for 18th Century Studies	18th Century Studies
University Business Institute	Business Sector

Research Centres

Oceanographic Centre of Gijón	Oceanography
Dairy Products Institute (IPLA)	Dairy Products
National Coal Institute (INCAR)	Coal
Nanomaterials & Nanotechnology Research Centre of Asturias (CINN)	Nanotechnology
Regional Agroalimentary Research and Development Service (SERIDA)	Agro-alimentary Sector
European Centre for Soft Computing	ICTs

Technology Centres

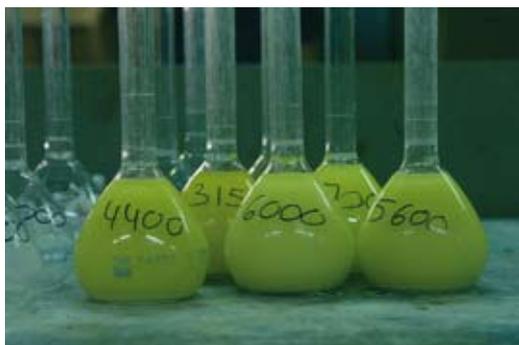
Non-Metallic Materials Technology Institute	Non-Metallic Materials
Steel and Metallic Materials Technology Centre (CEAMET)	Steel and Metallic Materials
Forestry & Wood Technology Centre	Forestry Research
Technology Centre for Design and Industrial Production (PRODINTEC)	Design and Industrial Production
Information and Communications Technology Centre (CTIC)	ICTs

Technological Services Providers

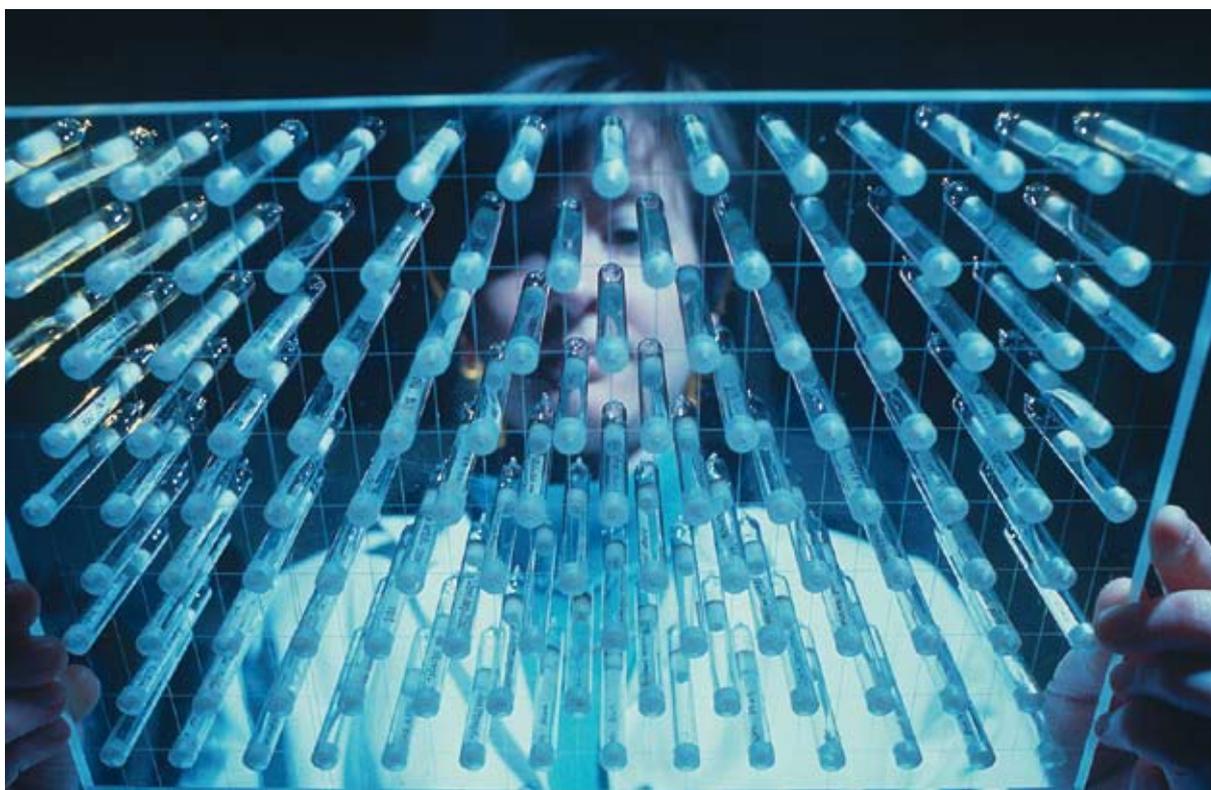
Experimentation Centre for Fishing	Fishing
Technological Competence Centre for Milk	Dairy Products
Interprofessional Milk Laboratory (LILA)	Dairy Products
Laboratory of the Meat Industry Research Association	Meat Products
Laboratory of the Geology and Materials Service	Geology
Barredo Foundation	Mining Industries and Underground Activities

Top-class scientific and research personnel in Asturias have enabled companies established in the region to have their own research centres and carry out projects for the whole company group, for instance the Technological Development Centre of ArcelorMittal, the Avilés Research & Development Centre of Saint-Gobain Glass (AR&DC), the Research Centre of Empresa Nacional de Celulosa (National Cellulose Company) in Navia, and recently the ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center, world research centre of ThyssenKrupp Elevator.

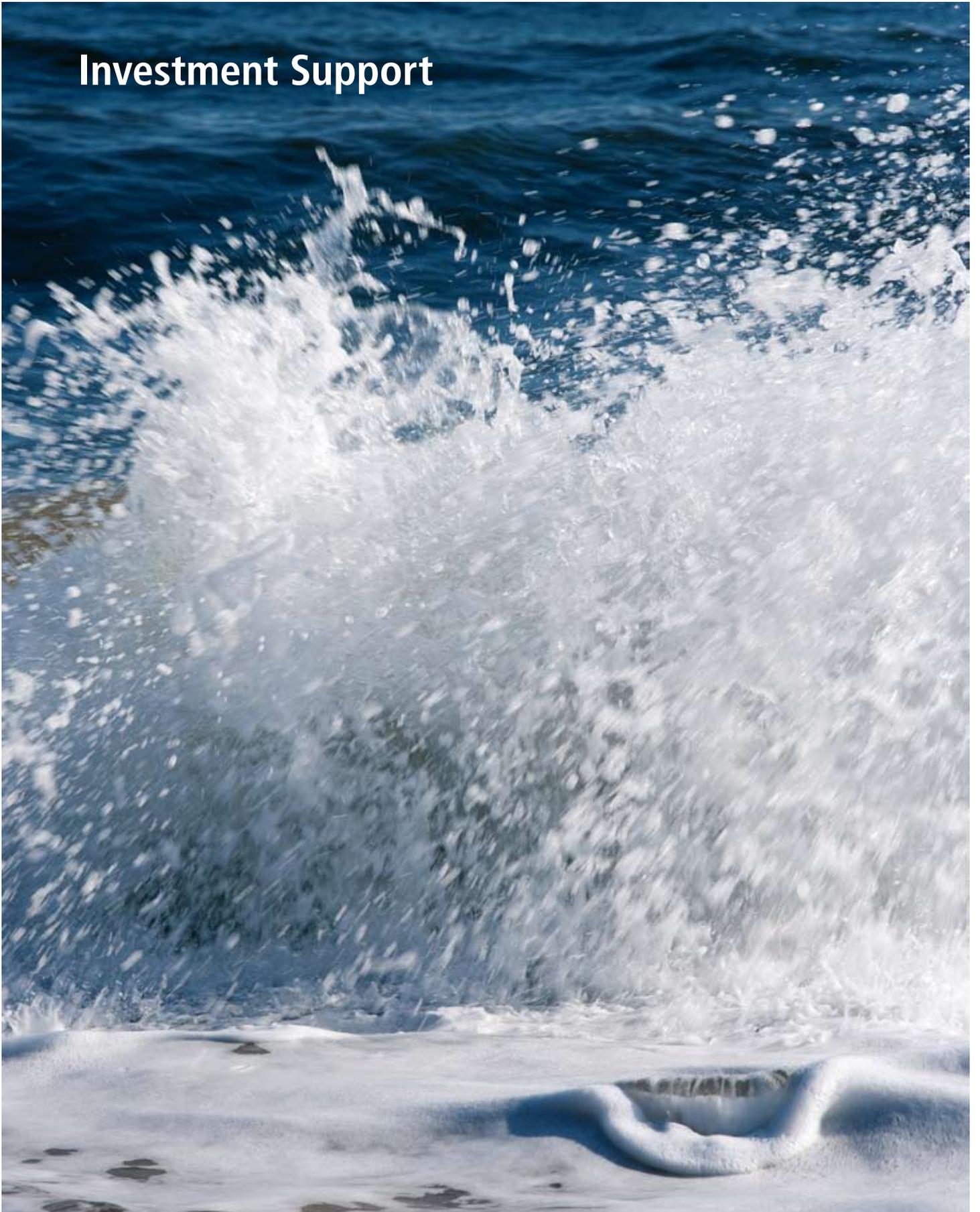
The body responsible in Asturias for promoting relations between university and business is FICYT (Foundation for Promotion in Asturias of Applied Scientific Research & Technology). This body also collaborates in the organization and coordination of scientific and research potential in Asturias and in the management of R&D+i Plan of the Principality of Asturias.



Top-class scientific and research personnel in Asturias have enabled companies established in the region to have their own research centres



Investment Support



«For our implantation in Asturias the affection shown by public administrations, that attitude of 'we are here for whatever you want', was decisive»

2002, JOSÉ MARÍA VILLANUEVA, President and CEO, Rioglass Astur (Belgium)

The Economic Development Agency of the Principality of Asturias - IDEPA

The Economic Development Agency of the Principality of Asturias (Instituto de Desarrollo Económico del Principado de Asturias, IDEPA) is the reference for business promotion in Asturias. Since its creation in 1983 IDEPA has integrated the commitment of the regional Government and social and economic agents with the sustainable development of Asturias. It is the hub of a complete infrastructure of instruments for promotion that aims at both the improvement of competitiveness of Asturian companies and also the recruitment of new investments to revitalize, create wealth and introduce new activities in the regional business environment.

IDEPA leads and manages the main strategic economic development plans approved by the regional government, such as the Programme for Promotion of Industrial Land 2009-2012 (creation of publicly promoted industrial land) and the Programme for Internationalization of Companies in the Principality of Asturias 2009-2012 (support for business internationalization). Moreover, IDEPA plays a leading role in the Enterprise Culture Development Programme and in the Regional Science, Technology and Innovation Plan, as promoter of support programmes for business innovation, and in promoting innovative technology-based enterprises.

From offices in Asturias, Madrid and Brussels, IDEPA promotes the benefits of Asturias as a place to invest. In addition, IDEPA is the first contact for businesses wishing to set up in the region and provides specialized services to new investors who wish to set up in Asturias during every phase of the project:

IDEPA leads and manages the main strategic economic development plans approved by the regional government.



Headquarters of IDEPA in the Technology Park of Asturias.



Initial study phase:

- General information about the region and the area of interest.
- Specific information for the project: industrial land, potential partners, human resources, training, financing and grants, suppliers and subcontractors, etc.
- Assistance to investors during their visits to the region.

Implementation phase:

- Help with administrative procedures.
- Help with applications for grants and subsidies.
- Contacts with service companies and industry.
- Preparation and financing of specific training programmes.

The IDEPA Group also includes other promotional bodies such as the Sociedad Regional de Promoción, SRP (venture capital), the Sociedad de Garantía Recíproca de Asturias, ASTURGAR (guarantees and preferential financing), the European Business and Innovation Centre, CEEI (promotion of innovative companies), and the Asturias Foreign Trade Promotion Agency (Sociedad de Promoción Exterior Principado de Asturias, ASTUREX - international promotion of companies).

The IDEPA Group also includes other promotional bodies



Opposite page: European Business & Innovation Centre (CEEI). In the background, IDEPA.
Above: The Principality of Asturias Building in Brussels, home to IDEPA's offices in this city.

Financial Aid

Asturias has a comprehensive and varied range of investment aid. IDEPA is responsible for managing the various funding mechanisms for business investment projects, which can be classified as follows:

Non-repayable subsidies

In Asturias companies can access different non-repayable subsidy programmes of up to 30% of the subsidizable amount for business projects involving investment or employment. The amount may be greater if the investment aims to improve management (technological innovation, quality, design, internationalization etc.). Companies can also take advantage of subsidies in the framework of plans for employment and training of workers with short-term or indefinite contracts and subsidies for training plans of up to 100%.

Subsidies with soft interest rates and loans

The regional Government has established a series of collaboration agreements with banking organizations so that companies with investment projects can access loans in more advantageous conditions than offered by the market and benefit from subsidies towards interest rates. In addition, there also exist specific lines of interest-free loans for the development of innovation or technological development projects.

Venture Capital

For companies installed in Asturias, venture capital is a support mechanism through participation in their share capital for investments in new business projects. In general participation is by means of a minority shareholding, so that the entrepreneur retains control of the company, and is temporary, with a view to disinvestment in the medium or long term once the project has been consolidated.

Guarantees

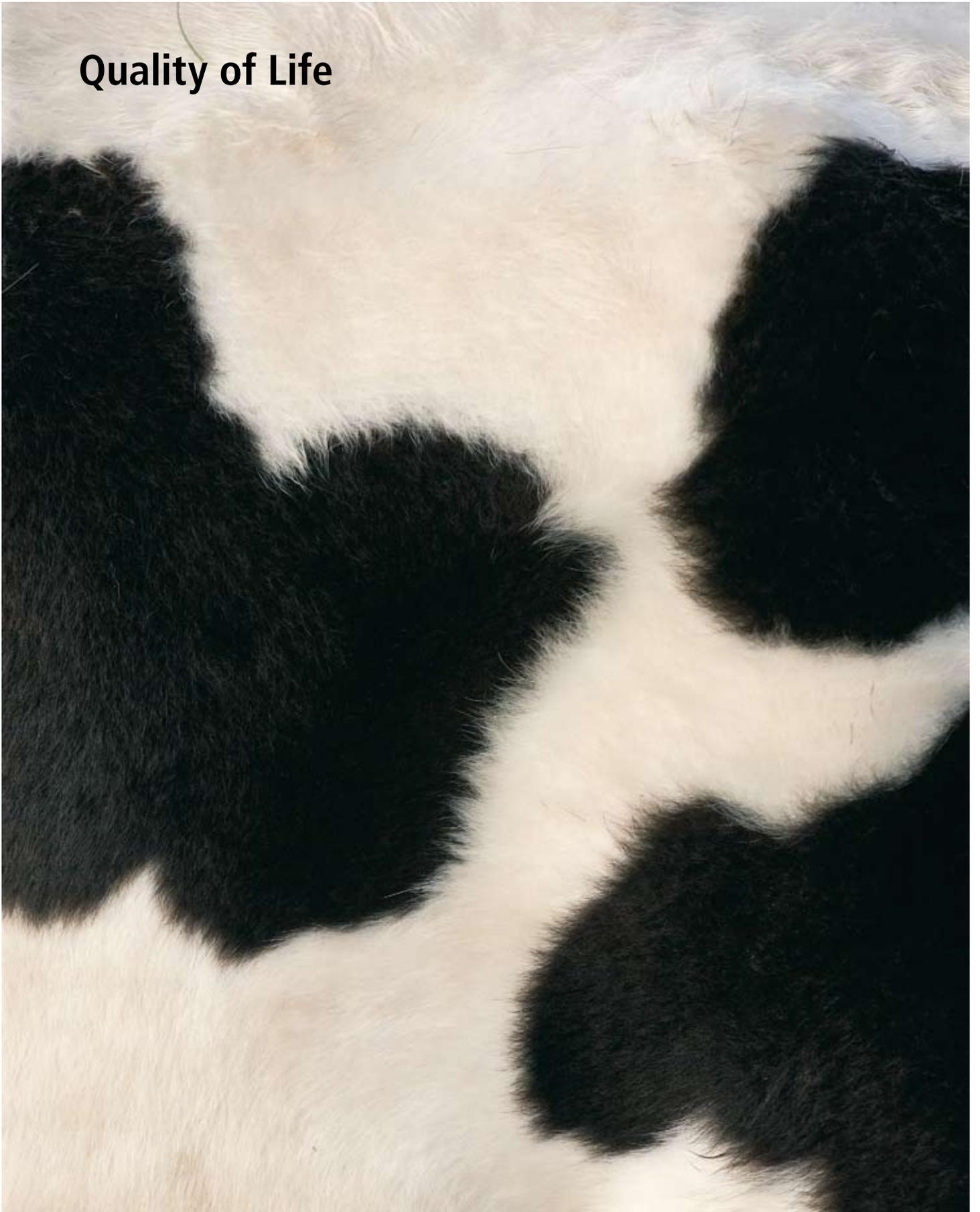
Small and medium Asturian enterprises also have at their disposal means to obtain guarantees for their financial or commercial operations.

Asturias has a comprehensive and varied range of investment aid



The Principality of Asturias Building in Madrid, home to IDEPA's offices in this city.

Quality of Life



«I come from an enormous, gigantic city, with crowds, noise... and I arrive here where everything is old, clean and pleasant ... as if it were not of this world, exotic. When I leave I will feel I have been living a fairy tale»

2002, WOODY ALLEN, film director and actor, winner of the Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts in 2002

Asturias, a Natural Paradise

If anything characterizes the Principality of Asturias it is the wealth of its nature, which Asturians have managed to balance with industrial activity. The regional government strongly encourages environmental care and is active in the protection of areas of special environmental and ecological interest.

The Somiedo Nature Park, the Integrated Nature Reserve of Muniellos Forest, the Redes Nature Park, the Picos de Europa National Park, and the River Eo and Oscos are the 5 Asturian UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserves. There is also in Asturias an extensive network of Protected Natural Areas aimed at the conservation of species of flora and fauna and the protection of unique natural areas.

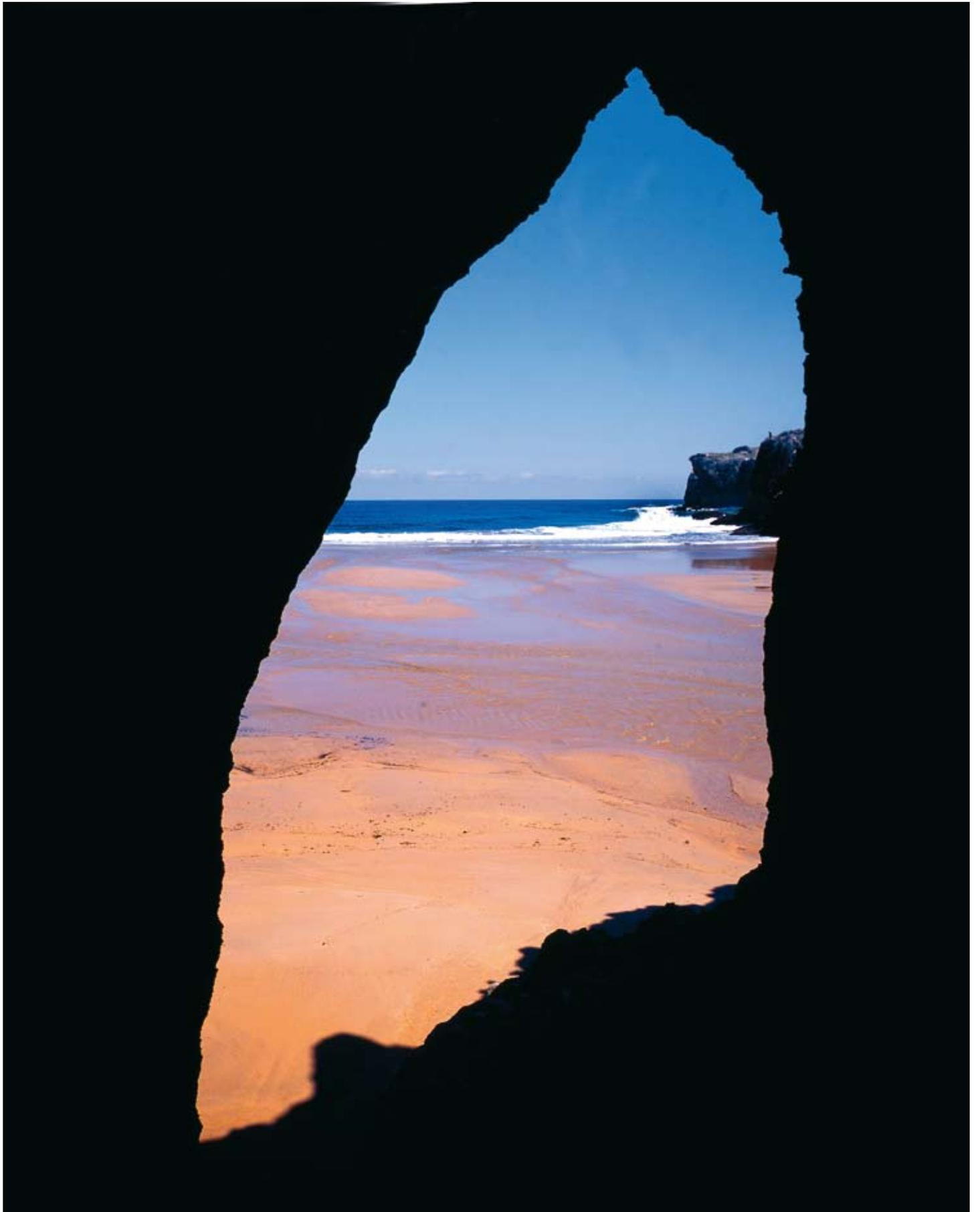
The Picos de Europa National Park, with peaks over 2,600 m, possesses a very varied fauna including the wildcat, otter and numerous animals of prey. The Somiedo Nature Park, in the southwest of Asturias, contains numerous forests of beech, oak, birch, chestnut and holm oak. The Integrated Nature Reserve of Muniellos Forest, with more than 50 km², is the largest oak forest in the peninsula and is where the European continent's last brown bears are to be found. Also noteworthy are the nature reserves of Barayo, the Villaviciosa estuary, and the Caves of Lloviu, Rosa, El Sidrón and Las Caldas, the Nature Parks of Las Ubiñas and Ponga, and the protected areas of Cabo Peñas, the caves of the Esva River and the Sueve, Cuera and Aramo mountain ranges.

The Asturian coast has over 200 beaches, from small coves hidden away in settings of great beauty and difficult to reach, to open town beaches like that of Gijón. Because of the quality of their water, many of them receive each year the Blue Flag, the eco-label awarded by the European Union through the European Foundation for Environmental Education.



If anything characterizes the Principality of Asturias it is the wealth of its nature, which Asturians have managed to balance with industrial activity

*Left: Redes Nature Park.
Above: Cabo Vidio.*



Nature & Sport

A region that combines great natural beauty, numerous rivers, 400 km of coast and a high altitude mountain range very close to the sea, offers opportunities for a wide range of sports and active tourism throughout the year (angling, golf, canoeing, sailing, skiing, surfing, climbing, scuba diving, caving, canyoning, equestrian tourism, trekking, hang-gliding, etc.).

Golf

In Asturias there are fourteen golf courses located in countryside of extraordinary natural beauty. Numerous investment projects already under way for the construction of luxury tourist complexes will raise this figure in the next few years.

Angling

The Principality of Asturias is a privileged region for angling due to the rich variety and numbers of fish in its rivers, of which salmon and trout stand out as the most representative species. In Asturias there are six salmon rivers (Sella, Deva-Cares, Narcea, Navia, Canero, Eo), with 63 preserves open to the public. There are also 44 trout preserves.

Hunting

There are 59 Regional Hunting Preserves of Asturias that cover over 700,000 Ha. and 11 Regional Hunting Reserves that total over 211,000 Ha. The mountains of Somiedo, Cabrales, Ponga, Piloña, Caso or Cangas del Narcea are populated with species much appreciated by game hunters, such as chamois goat, roe deer, fallow deer, deer and wild boar that coexist with other protected species like the capercaillie, otter, bear, griffon vulture or golden eagle.



A region that combines great natural beauty [...] offers opportunities for a wide range of sports

*Opposite page: Guadamía Beach.
Left: Paragliding in Pajares. Right: Horses on Salinas beach.*

Sailing

Numerous marinas are to be found along the Asturian coast: from the most modest for small boats to the most sophisticated, like the Gijón Yacht Marina, perfectly integrated within the centre of the town and making an ideal starting point for all kinds of sporting and tourist activities. Asturian waters are the setting for events such as the “Gascopego” Regatta, between Piriac-sur-Mer and Gijón, the Royan-Gijón Regatta and the Asturgasconne Regatta between La Rochelle and Gijón.

Food with Character

The well-earned fame of Asturias as a paradise of fine food is in large part due to the exceptional quality of its raw materials and the expertise of its restaurateurs. Moreover, a veritable revolution has taken place in recent years in Asturian cuisine which now stands out in the Spanish gourmet scene due to the 7 Michelin Guide starred restaurants and the widespread recognition of many other restaurants. Restaurateurs have been able to preserve traditional recipes while at the same time giving them a new, imaginative touch, in such a way that traditional cooking exists naturally side by side with designer cuisine.

The dish par excellence in Asturian cuisine is ‘fabada’, bean stew prepared with white beans (‘fabes’) accompanied by chorizo, fatty salt pork and black pudding. Asturias is a true natural larder stocked with top quality fish, shellfish, meats, green vegetables, fruit and cheeses. Typical regional desserts that deserve recognition are rice pudding, pancakes and “casadielles” (ground almond pastries); and last but not least, cider (natural, dry and flat) already mentioned by Strabo in the first century B.C. as the drink of the ‘astures’, the ancient inhabitants of Asturias.

The importance of Asturian cuisine can be seen clearly from the fact that over 100 food festivals are held each year throughout the region.

[...] traditional cooking exists naturally side by side with designer cuisine



Hotel Villa Rosario, in Ribadesella.

Tourist Resources

The wealth of the natural surroundings and culture of the region makes the Principality of Asturias a top class tourist destination. Asturias offers the visitor quality tourism that is not mass tourism, with important assets like the climate, the landscape, food and culture, in addition to the open, cheerful character of the Asturian people. For all these reasons, the slogan "Asturias, a Natural Paradise" has for years been the region's brand name for tourism promotion.

Asturias had in 2008 a total of 2,974 hotel establishments (2 Paradores Nacionales, 7 five star hotels, 51 four star hotels and 159 three star hotels) and had 76,365 places, of which 29,050 correspond to hotels, 14,316 to rural tourism accommodation, 24,589 to camp-sites and 8,410 to other types of accommodation.

Rural tourism, with around 1,500 establishments, caters more for the traveller than the tourist and above everything else respects the surroundings. This sector offers houses (Village Houses and Rural Tourism Centres) and enchanting, small hotels (Asturian Country House Quality Club) of excellent quality and blending traditional architecture with maximum comfort and top class service.

Every year there is an increase in the number of visitors who also come to Asturias to participate in the numerous international congresses that are held in the region. The facilities that exist for this purpose, like the Prince of Asturias Auditorium in Oviedo or the Palace of Congresses in Gijón, have been joined by the new Palace of Congresses in the capital, built by the prestigious architect Santiago Calatrava, and the Laboral Theatre as a result of the restoration of the old theatre of the Universidad Laboral of Gijón.

Asturias has an ample network of museums, such as the Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Archaeology, the Steel Museum, the Cider Museum, the Bagpipe Museum, the MUMI (Museum



*Left: The Cubes of Memory, in Llanes, by Agustín Ibarrola.
Above: fireworks display in Gijón, with the sculpture In Praise of the Horizon, by Eduardo Chillida.*

Asturias offers the visitor quality tourism that is not mass tourism

of Mining and Industry), the Prehistory Park and the Jurassic Museum, in addition to numerous local ethnographic museums which preserve the region's traditions and past. Art is not only reserved for the museums; in the cities and towns of Asturias the passer-by can enjoy numerous works by artists of international fame such as Botero, Chillida, Ibarrola, Úrculo...

Urban Environments

Concentration of 80% of the population in the central area of the region has driven the urban development of the five most populated cities and towns (Oviedo, Gijón, Avilés, Mieres and Langreo) and the creation of quality residential areas with a varied supply of all types of housing. There also exist in Asturias numerous busy small towns, with a population of under 10,000 inhabitants, well communicated with the main urban centres of the region. Foreigners settling in Asturias easily find a residence adapted to their needs as well as international schools for their children.

Asturias has a large number of shopping centres and department stores, such as the shopping and leisure centre Parque Principado, in Siero, the largest in the region, and the Espacio Buena-vista located in the heart of Oviedo in a singular building designed by the prestigious architect Santiago Calatrava.

Health Services

Asturias is one of the best-equipped regions in Spain as regards distribution of hospital and medical attention, with 14 hospitals throughout the region.

The Principality of Asturias is a national reference in certain health related fields



*Left: Atmosphere at the El Fontán market.
Right: Health Centre.
Oviedo.*



The Central University Hospital of Asturias (HUCA), an ambitious project initiated by the regional government, will open its doors in 2010 and will include both the health complex and research and training in Health Sciences. It will have a 365,000 m² surface area, 1,039 beds and 33 operating theatres.

The Principality of Asturias is a national reference in certain health related fields, such as the National Institute of Silicosis for work related respiratory diseases, and the Fernández-Vega Ophthalmology Institute.

Art and Culture

The rich artistic patrimony of the region has its main reference in Asturian Pre-Romanesque Art, architecture and gold-work that are unique in the world and symbolize the birth and development of the Asturian Monarchy, the first Christian kingdom of the Iberian Peninsula. This style is present in fourteen architectural gems, constructed between the 8th and 10th centuries, some of which, like Santa Maria del Naranco, San Miguel de Lillo or San Julián de los Prados, have been declared World Heritage sites by UNESCO.

Cultural life is very intense with shows throughout the year among which music has a special place, with the Opera Season, the International Piano Cycle, the Gospel Festival, the International Music and Dance Festival, the Jazz Festival, the Zarzuela (Spanish Operetta) Season etc. Theatres such as the Campoamor and the Filarmónica in Oviedo, the Jovellanos and the Laboral in Gijón or the Palacio Valdés in Avilés, and the Prince Felipe Auditorium in the Asturian capital, among others, offer an ample variety of events and performances ranging from regional ensembles like the Symphony Orchestra of the Principality of Asturias to the most outstanding international artists.



*Left: Santa Cristina de Lena, Asturian Pre-Romanesque.
Right: Jurassic Museum of Asturias.*

Cultural life is very intense with shows throughout the year

Theatre, cinema, literature and popular festivals also play an important role in cultural life. Examples are the Gijón Black Week, dedicated to the crime novel, the Gijón International Film Festival, the Theatre Days of Avilés, and Laboral Escena in the Laboral Theatre.

Since 2007 Asturias has been in possession of a cultural complex that is an international reference. The Government of the Principality of Asturias has transformed a building of more than 130,000 m² built 50 years ago into a cultural and educational facility unique in Spain: Laboral, Ciudad de la Cultura (City of Culture). The Ciudad de la Cultura, located in Gijón, is home to the Public Radio & Television Broadcasting Services of the Principality of Asturias (RTPA); LABoral, an Art & Industrial Design Centre; the Laboral Theatre; the School of Drama; a Music Conservatory; a centre with courses leading to University of Oviedo qualifications; a large Occupational Training Centre; a church converted into a space for concerts and shows; a future residence for students and artists, and in the near future a 5-star hotel.

2010 will see the opening of the Oscar Niemeyer International Cultural Centre, a project designed by the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, one of the greatest artists of the 20th Century. The complex will consist of four buildings and will be the iconic landmark of the Island of Innovation located in the surroundings of the Avilés estuary.

Since 2007 Asturias has been in possession of a cultural complex that is an international reference [...]: Laboral Ciudad de la Cultura (Laboral City of Culture)



Laboral City of Culture.

The Prince of Asturias Awards

Oviedo is the seat of the Prince of Asturias Foundation, which since 1981 and with increasing international prestige has awarded the annual “Prince of Asturias Awards”, in recognition of the scientific, technical, cultural, social and human achievements at international level of individuals, joint teams and institutions. The Awards are conferred in eight categories: Communication and Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts, Letters, Scientific and Technical Research, International Cooperation, Concord and Sports. Among those who have been honoured with Awards in the different categories are heads of state such as Nelson Mandela, King Hussein of Jordan or Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva; artists like Bob Dylan, Woody Allen or Mstislav Rostropovich; writers like Paul Auster or Camilo José Cela; scientists like Stephen Hawking or Jane Goodall; and sports personalities and events such as Michael Schumacher, Steffi Graf, Fernando Alonso or the Tour de France.

The Awards ceremony, held in Oviedo and presided over by His Royal Highness the Prince of Asturias, brings together a large number of celebrities and media personalities, thus turning the Principality of Asturias into a focus of international attention. 2005 saw the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the Prince of Asturias Awards. To mark this anniversary, UNESCO decided in a special declaration to recognize the “exceptional contribution of the Prince of Asturias Awards to the Cultural Heritage of Humanity” and offered its auspices for the commemorative acts of the 25th anniversary with the aim of making Asturias “World Capital of Culture” during the celebration of this anniversary. In addition to that of UNESCO, this commemoration enjoys the official endorsement of the governments of Spain and of the Principality of Asturias.

2005 saw the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the Prince of Asturias Awards



Fernando Alonso with H.R.H. the Prince of Asturias, and Woody Allen, Prince of Asturias Awards Winners for Sport (2005) and the Arts (2002) respectively. Following page: Santa María del Naranco, Asturian Pre-Romanesque.



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