

PRESS RELEASE

Science meets citizens again at Passion for Knowledge 2026

- The Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC) is organising a new edition of the Passion for Knowledge (P4K) science festival, which will take place from 28 September to 3 October.
- The festival will bring together six Nobel Prize winners and other prominent international figures in the fields of science, literature, mathematics and other areas of knowledge.
- The programme includes activities for all audiences: talks, encounters with students, ‘bertsos’ (sung pieces of composition in Basque), Naukas sessions, children’s workshops, dialogues, interviews and presentations.
- Registration will open on Monday on the festival’s website p4k.dipc.org

Passion for Knowledge (P4K), the international science festival organised by the Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC), will celebrate its sixth edition **from 28 September to 3 October 2026** in Donostia-San Sebastián and Bilbao. The festival will bring together **six Nobel Prize winners, five Princess of Asturias Award winners** and other prominent international figures, in a free and open programme that seeks to bring knowledge closer to society, fostering dialogue, critical thinking and curiosity, and championing science as an essential part of our culture.

“P4K is based on a fundamental idea: that science is culture. As with any other expression of culture, science helps us to understand the world, to ask questions and to expand the way we perceive reality. For this, the festival proposes an open encounter between knowledge creators and society, with activities designed for a wide range of audiences and from different perspectives and languages”, says Pedro Miguel Etxenike, president of the DIPC.

The minister for Science, Universities and Innovation of the Basque Government, Juan Ignacio Pérez Iglesias, pointed out that “Passion for Knowledge is a unique event, given its approach, ambition and diversity of formats. It is a leading cultural festival; a celebration of knowledge; a vehicle for the social outreach of large-scale science; a showcase for science and its achievements; a public affirmation of the value of knowledge. But above all, it is a source of prestige and social legitimacy, essential for its progress.”

One of the festival's main attractions are the **plenary lectures** which will take place each evening at the Victoria Eugenia Theatre, with the participation of Nobel Prize winners and other renowned international figures. Prominent figures this year include: **Anne L'Huillier**, winner of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physics and one of the pioneers of attosecond science, a field that has enabled the movement of electrons inside atoms to be observed for the first time; **Brian Schmidt**, winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics, an astrophysicist renowned for his discovery of the accelerated expansion of the universe; **Siri Hustvedt**, winner of the 2019 Princess of Asturias Award for Literature, a writer whose work explores the connections between literature, neuroscience, philosophy and psychology; **Wolfgang Ketterle**, winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physics, who first observed Bose-Einstein condensation in a gas, thus revealing a new state of matter; **Marcus du Sautoy**, one of the world's most renowned science communicators, who explored how mathematics shapes everything from art and music to artificial intelligence and human creativity; and **Ana Zubiaga**, president of Jakiunde.

In **interview** format, **Jean-Marie Lehn**, winner of a Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and **Pedro Miguel Etxenike**, will discuss the values of the Enlightenment and the importance of critical thinking. They will trace the evolution of science and, in particular, chemistry and its influence on the way we understand the world. The conversation will focus on the current crisis of values and the need to question what we take for granted.

The Victoria Eugenia Theatre will also host the **Bertso Passion** performance, which will bring together renowned 'bertsolaris' such as **Maialen Lujanbio**, **Andoni Egaña**, **Amets Arzallus**, **Aitor Mendiluze** and **Nerea Ibarzabal**; and the now-familiar **Naukas Passion** sessions, with the participation of various figures in science communication and outreach at state level.

Another regular feature of the festival are the highly popular **Zientziarekin solasean!**, encounters between secondary and upper secondary school students and leading researchers, including Nobel Prize winners, which will be held in Donostia-San Sebastián and Bilbao. These encounters seek to awaken young people's curiosity in science and to inspire them to pursue a career in science.

The programme also includes **Scientific Discovery in the Era of AI**, a workshop for PhD students from the Basque Country, which is organised jointly with **Euskampus Fundazioa** at Palacio Miramar. The session will look at how artificial intelligence is transforming scientific discovery and will combine a discussion between participants with an open dialogue with two invited guests at Passion for Knowledge.

This year the festival is launching a new space, **New Voices**, in which contemporary figures in science and communication will offer new perspectives on the major challenges and advances of our time. Palaeontologist **María Martín-Torres**, theoretical physicist **Román Orús** and mathematician and science communicator **Eduardo Sáenz de Cabezón** will participate in this new section which will include dialogues, interviews and presentations.

As a new addition to the programme, and in collaboration with **Emakumeak Zientzian**, the festival will host a conference dedicated to reflecting on mental health and wellbeing in the field of research, with a special focus on the inequalities and challenges faced by women throughout their scientific career. Psychiatrist and mental health communicator **Rosa Molina** will give a talk on the topic, which will be followed by a round table discussion with the participation of Molina and researchers **María Vallet-Regí** and **Susana Carregal**, who will share their experiences and perspectives from different generations and career paths.

As is now tradition, ***Passion Txiki*** will bring science to families at the weekend, with a programme designed to awaken children's curiosity through play, experimentation and imagination. Workshops, storytelling, experiments and other activities will invite them to discover that science can be an exciting adventure. This year the programme extends its offer with sessions on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning at the Sala Club of Victoria Eugenia Theatre, and new workshops on Sunday morning at Tabakalera.

Passion for Knowledge 2026 has the specific support of the Basque Government, —in addition to the ongoing support of the DIPC Board of Trustees—, comprised of the Department of Science, Universities and Innovation and the Department of Industry, Energy Transition and Sustainability, the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa, Donostia-San Sebastián City Council, the University of the Basque Country (EHU), Kutxa Fundazioa, EDP Foundation, Telefónica, CAF, IBM and Kutxabank. The festival also has the collaboration of numerous institutions and entities that help make this new edition possible.

Ricardo Díez Muiño, director of the DIPC, wished to highlight that “the success of the previous editions of Passion for Knowledge reflects the scientific maturity of our society and its interest in knowledge. It is also the result of years of a collective commitment to science and first-rate research carried out in our environment.” Passion for Knowledge is our way of celebrating knowledge and sharing it with all of society. It is an excellent festival where we can converse with and learn from extraordinary people who are changing our world and the way we understand it. Therefore, “I encourage all citizens to participate and enjoy the festival's activities. I am sure that anyone who is interested in culture and has a curiosity about the world will find an exciting encounter or session at Passion for Knowledge”, he added.

Pedro Miguel Etxenike wished to close the presentation by highlighting the importance of critical thinking “given that science teaches us the importance of rational thinking and freedom of thought, which is especially necessary in the current climate to avoid, when faced with increasingly complex problems, people turning to easy answers and targeted slogans.”

The Victoria Eugenia Theatre of San Sebastián will again serve as the main venue, while Bilbao will also host a selection of programmed activities. All programmed activities during the festival will be free. An interpretation service into Basque, Spanish and English will be available. To participate in the various activities you must register and reserve a place via the festival's website: p4k.dipc.org. Registration will open on Monday.

Further information can be found in the attached press kit.