

# The Navarra Declaration on Talent

*The war for talent is over. Talent won.*

## PREAMBLE

At the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world is facing stark choices – choices which will determine future well-being and generational equity, choices which will lay the ground for long-term sustainability and human development. In the middle of the deepest economic downturn since World War II, and confronted with formidable and uncharted challenges, such as global warming and demographic change, it will be human ingenuity, collective innovation and the ability to re-direct our economic and social systems to meet these modern challenges that will lead the way back to prosperity and security for all.

To be sure, the current crisis is as much a crisis of values and a crisis of ethics as it is a crisis of financial markets. It can only be overcome with a new ethical compass, which will change behaviour and ultimately our societies by creating a modern, contemporary foundation for talent – talent that is dedicated to ethics, sustainability and shared value creation. Against this backdrop, we call on the world in general and Europe in particular to see the current crisis as an historic opportunity to place human development – and the fostering of an ethical, responsible and talented workforce – at the centre of economic and social policy making.

We call on governments, businesses, institutions of learning and individuals to commit to developing and nurturing talent – their own talent and the talent of others – as an urgent priority. We – supporters of *Ágora Talentia*, The World Forum on Talent in the Knowledge Age, which convened in Pamplona, Spain on 11-12 February 2009 – pledge to be inspirational role models, dedicated mentors and forceful advocates for greater, more consistent and more inclusive

investment in human capital, ethical development, talent and skills. And we call on European leaders – who will gather in Brussels for the European Council summit on 19-20 March 2009 – to hear our appeal and take decisive measures to make Europe a global centre for world-class talent and a role model for human development, sustainability, innovation and creativity.

## **THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

We welcome important and timely European initiatives that have been taken to mark the onset – and support the development – of this new era of knowledge and talent. First and foremost, the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation*, under whose auspices Ágora Talentia convenes, is a crucial milestone for raising popular awareness and celebrating diversity and ingenuity, openness and tolerance towards new ideas and individual dynamism. Moreover, policy initiatives, such as the European Commission's recently enacted *New Skills for New Jobs* programme, have the potential to turn abstract goals into concrete deliverables, placing investment in individual talent at the forefront of political objectives and societal values, demonstrating that active social policy is not only beneficial to the individual in question, but to society at large. And finally, the recently launched reflection on the *Post-2010 Lisbon Agenda*, Europe's growth and jobs programme, could not come at a more crucial moment. Now is the time to shift the political emphasis to the citizens of Europe, and increase investment in their talent and potential. The convening of Ágora Talentia is a concrete step the region of Navarra has taken to contribute to the advancement of these important EU initiatives. The outcomes of our gathering, such as the Navarra Declaration you are reading, and the concomitant commitment by its signatories, will feed into these Europe-wide policy processes, helping to generate broad buy-in, interest and support.

## A DEFINITION OF TALENT

The growing complexity of our society and economy requires a holistic and nuanced definition of what constitutes “talent”. Not only being determined by the formal education an individual receives, a talent base is made up of a multitude of personal characteristics that determine success, adaptability and contentment. And while specialization and subject matter expertise are as important as ever, they are no longer enough. A well-rounded individual and professional needs to have:

- **Technical talent**, such as numerical and linguistic intelligence and problem-solving abilities.
- **Innovative talent**, such as creative and collaborative abilities
- **Entrepreneurial talent**, such as the propensity to assume and manage risk.
- **Civic and ethical talent**, such as espousing humanistic values and being tolerant of other cultures.
- **Social and humanistic talent**, such as possessing the ability to integrate into society and interact and socialise with fellow citizens.
- **Emotional talent**, such as the ability to manage personal emotions and those of fellow human beings, while maintaining appropriate behaviour that respects the rule of law.

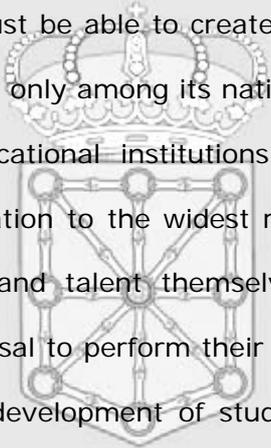
Perhaps most important, the ultimate talent of the future is the ability to “learn how to learn”, meaning that individuals will need to acquire new talents and skills throughout their lifetimes. Talent and skills acquisition is not static and can never be considered completed. It is a holistic, enduring and virtuous circle driven and empowered by stakeholders across the spectrum, from the individual and family, to educational institutions and businesses, to governments and policy makers.

## **THE 'FOUR DELIVERABLES' OF TALENT**

We believe there are four goals around which all stakeholders must unite if we want to foster and promote a talent-driven society. We call these goals “the four deliverables” for a talent-based society. It is vital that countries, regions and cities not only make progress in one or two of these areas, but that they do so in all four of them. Success in only three of the four areas is a recipe for failure; success in all four is a roadmap for success.

The four deliverables for a talent-based society are:

### ***1) CREATE AND IDENTIFY IT***



A successful society must be able to create and develop enough talent to meet its needs, and not only among its native population. This means first and foremost, its educational institutions must be strong; they must provide excellent education to the widest range of people; they must be centres of excellence and talent themselves; they must have enough resources at their disposal to perform their core educational mission; they should guarantee the development of students' basic competences as a base for permanent learning; and they must be open to more than just students who fit the traditional education-age cohort, for example through world-class programmes of lifelong learning.

### ***2) ATTRACT IT***

Countries, regions, cities – not to mention companies and academic institutions – must be able to attract the best and brightest from all over the world. This involves multiple steps – ranging from a progressive migration and immigration policy (with education and opportunity available to all) – to educational, administrative and business institutions that reward talent through meritocracy-based hiring and merit-based

promotion. Nothing is more discouraging to a talented person than an unlevel playing field, where opportunity has been blocked through protectionism, corruption or cronyism. To attract talent, we need policies in our institutions that promote fair competition, meritocracy and a level playing field for all. This is as true for companies and public administrations as it is for educational institutions.

### **3) RETAIN IT**

Talent is attracted by a multitude of factors in addition to excellent educational institutions. To be sure, educational institutions of excellence are an important part of the talent profile of any region or city. But to put it simply, it is not enough just to train talented people; a successful region, city or company must also be able to *keep* the talent it develops. This means several things: first and foremost, regions, cities and countries must have a strong economy with plenty of good, well-paying jobs for the people they educate. And companies must reward talent with opportunity, remuneration and merit-based promotion for similar reasons. Failure to retain talent inevitably leads to a dangerous brain drain from which it is difficult to recover.

### **4) ACTIVATE IT**

It is not enough to have a pool of talent; one must also be able to activate that talent pool and deploy it in productive ways. In that light, the scourge of high unemployment – a social tragedy for too many around the globe – is an even worse, more nefarious curse on many countries than is often realised. Extensive academic research has demonstrated that the vast majority of people learn most of their skills on the job. In other words, a person without a job is a person who is probably not learning new skills, leading to a vicious spiral where persistent lack of new skill acquisition

leads to continued unemployment. This has important implications – not just for the long-term unemployed, but also for so-called “mature workers” [people over the age of 45] whose vital contribution will become more and more important as the European population ages. Effective immediately, we must commit ourselves to a policy of full employment for people of all ages and eliminate incentives that discriminate against so-called mature workers.

We believe the challenges we face today hold open the prospect of a much brighter tomorrow – especially if the world seizes the current crisis as an opportunity to redouble our investment in human development and talent. But this will require commitment from all of us: national and regional governments, companies, educational institutions and individuals.

### **OUR COMMITMENT**

We, supporters of *Ágora Talentia*, believe that Europe and the world are on the cusp of a new era – an era marked by the transition from an economy based on land, labour and capital to a global, networked, inter-connected and fast-moving knowledge-based society. To be sure, such a profound transition requires above all new talent and new skills. It calls for a holistic approach that promotes the integration of family, education, employers and markets. And it necessitates an urgent stock-taking of personal and societal values, which will subsequently allow us to adapt our institutions and organizations to the new challenges and opportunities we face. Now is a time for leadership; a time for creating the fruitful framework conditions which allow talent to flow and prosper in our organisations and communities; a time to celebrate our cultural diversity and to optimise and elevate our existing talent base through a greater commitment to human-capital development.

Against this backdrop, we commit to foster and develop talent in our families, communities and organizations. We call on governments, institutions, companies and other stakeholders to help create ethical, entrepreneurial, social and innovative talent capable of generating the sustainable prosperity we seek and need. We are prepared to do our share as

- **Individuals and Families**

We are prepared to take on a higher level of personal responsibility for our own training and education than ever before. Rather than exclusively relying on formal, organised means of education, we will seek out new, innovative ways of aligning our skills base with the demands of the future.

- **Institutions of Learning**

We are prepared to move towards a system that treats education as a continuous process of development that lasts a lifetime, rather than a series of discrete and often misaligned processes that end when someone leaves the formal education system. Towards that end, we understand that as the world changes, we as educational institutions must change and not only adapt to new realities but also pro-actively advance innovation and creativity. We are committed to ensuring accessibility of education to all, as well as fostering talent and capabilities so that everyone has the opportunity to make the utmost of their potential.

- **Corporations**

We as business have a significant role to play in moving towards a demand-led system of talent development, whereby skills requirements are clearly articulated and education and training programmes re-oriented to fit with that demand. Developing comprehensive systems for developing and nurturing talent allow us to optimise the use of existing human capital

and achieve improved performance and greater competitiveness. Our management models must encourage an environment that fosters creativity, commitment, relationships and innovation, allowing talent to develop and thrive at every organisational level.

- **Governments and Policy Makers**

We as leaders of government realise that policy has a key role to play in supporting and stimulating the transition to a knowledge- and talent-based society. As much as we can, we will use policy to incentivise sustained investment in creating and fostering talent, particularly in the areas of research and technology. After all, it is talent that creates and applies technology. And technology itself is only a means, a tool at the service of humanity. As the global economy emerges from the crisis with a revamped system based on more solid ethical foundations, we will require new talent to help bring about new behaviour and new control systems that guarantee transparency in the market. That is why we will proactively promote new talent profiles, which will be necessary to develop a sustainable societal model, one that is creative, intellectual and social. And we will do our best to ensure that this talent policy will be stable and durable, built on a broad consensus, and not subject to changes in politics or government.

Going forward, nothing will be more important than the fruitful and seamless collaboration of all agents in articulating and implementing cooperative policies and concrete actions, strengthening our innovation systems and providing the tools for talent to develop.

Every human being deserves to develop and nurture his or her talent, throughout his or her life and irrespective of socio-economic background, and to make the utmost of the opportunities life has to offer.

That is why we as stakeholders pledge our commitment to help every individual become all that she or he can be, in the aspiration to create a stronger, more prosperous and more socially cohesive society, where all talent is appreciated and empowered.

### **THE ROAD AHEAD**

The road ahead is one of recovery and renewal, a road of sacrifice and solidarity. Globalisation requires a new ethic, a new approach to dealing with this new era of challenges that are so unprecedented in their scope and sophistication. Talent is the ultimate solution and the “raw material” society will use to build a new prosperity, based perhaps on less individualism but on more support – and greater respect – for individuals and citizens themselves.

We, the undersigned, are committed to reigning in a new era of talent, a new era of responsibility, a new era of sustainable development. That is why we will hold ourselves accountable to our own pledges and will keep track of our own progress. We will live the values we espouse. Specifically, we advocate a decentralised, coordinated approach involving European, national and regional institutions, companies, educational institutions, social partners and civil society. We vow to reach the commitments undertaken here actively and publicly. And we will reconvene at the *Ágora Talentia* 2011 to share our milestones and our experiences, to demonstrate how we made a difference since the signing of this Declaration, and to showcase best practices and celebrate role models. Together, we can and will make a difference.

### **ENDS**

This Declaration was issued at *Ágora Talentia*, the World Forum on Talent in the Knowledge Age, which convened in Pamplona, Spain on 11-12 February 2009.

For further information, please visit [www.agoratalentia.es](http://www.agoratalentia.es).