ASTURIAS IN A NUTSHELL (2008)

Surface Area & Climate:

Surface Area: 10,604 Km² (4,094 sq. miles)
Average Temperature: Maximum: 17.2 ºC (62.96 ºF)
                     Minimum: 9 ºC (48.2 ºF)
Absolute Temperature: Maximum: 29.8 ºC (85.64 ºF)
                     Minimum: -1 ºC (30.2 ºF)
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

MAP OF ASTURIAS
The Principality of Asturias

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 1,080,135 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.

The Asturias population has additionally the following features: high average age (22% over 65), spatial concentration (70% of population living in the central area which represents 12% of the territory and mainly linked to the localisation of economic activity) and low importance of immigration (2.5% of the total population).

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.

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%.

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.

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.

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.
Human resources & Training

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 and geology. The University of Oviedo also offers a wide variety of postgraduate studies (Masters and Doctorates).

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 many fields, as proven by the numerous end-of-course National Prizes won by students of the University.

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.

IDEPA, partner in CREATOR

Healthy ageing is a keystone for a sustainable European society. In this sense, Asturias is actively seeking opportunities and is learning from the experience in other regions within CREATOR while implementing policies to achieve sustainable population development across many policy fields.

The Economic Development Agency of the Principality of 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, through its Business Innovation Department, aims to encourage the changeover from traditional activities, with low added value, to others making intensive use of advanced technologies. Within this framework, it would be essential for Asturias to take forward investment focusing on new leading markets where services and products for elderly people occupy a major place.