

1st event at the Bilbao Exhibition Centre  
under the partnership with MesseKöln

## **18TH FERROFORMA/PRACTICAL WORLD FAIR CLOSES WITH SATISFACTORY RESULTS & MORE INTERNATIONAL PROFILE**

The presence of trade specialists from 69 countries at the Bilbao Exhibition Centre this week confirms Ferroforma/Practical World 2009 as the most important hardware, DIY and industrial supplies fair in Europe this year. In all, 15,172 people visited the exhibition centre. José Miguel Corres, CEO of BEC, described this figure as "satisfactory and indicative of the high level of development of the event, which has featured contacts, operations, activities, etc. and has brought together the whole sector".

Another of the strong points of the event was the high level of foreign participation, with a total of 1237 foreign visitors. This is one of the clearest consequences of the agreement signed with MesseKöln in Cologne. This year's Ferroforma was the first event to be staged under that agreement. As a result, its international profile event was heightened to the point where 65% of the exhibiting firms were foreign, with 19% taking part for the first time.

Portugal, France, Germany, Italy and the UK -- all front-line European Union states -- sent large numbers of trade visitors to the event, which was also attended by specialists from countries further afield, such as Australia, New Zealand, Yemen and Suriname, among others.

On the domestic front, almost 5000 professionals attended from outside the Basque Autonomous Community. Their presence, together with large numbers of foreign visitors, was highly noticeable in and around Bilbao during the event. Occupancy rates at hotels, restaurants and leisure establishments in general were high.

The records kept by the organisers of Ferroforma/Practical World and the data provided by exhibitors themselves reveal a majority of high-profile visitors, including mainly market-makers, heads of purchasing and company managers. The sectors in which the participants expressed the greatest interest were hand tools, power tools, industrial supplies and locksmithery.

In short, this 18th Ferroforma fair can be seen as a whole as having been a success, with results exceeding initial expectations. The presence of leading players consolidates the event as a major meeting point and the biggest draw in Spain in its sector.

As from Wednesday, March 25, Ferroforma/Practical World 2009 brought together a total of 776 firms from 27 countries in exhibition halls 1, 3 and 5 at the Bilbao Exhibition Centre. The main areas covered by the event were industrial supplies, construction and protection at work (24%), hand tools (23%), hard work and home equipment (16%), locksmithery and fittings (11%), decoration, lighting, equipment and gardening (10%), fixings (7%), woodworking and portable electric machinery (7%) and services (2%).