

Welcome. The city now can safely put the local elections and the elections to regional parliaments behind and look ahead, and so should we.

Time to concentrate on the real issues. On the issue of double parking our on-line poll indicates that our listeners consistently claim that ... Yes it is high time local police got tougher on double parking.

Let's now move away from polls, nobody trusts them anyway, and see whether we can learn from others' mistakes. There are many lives, human lives at stake.

Breath tests

The pressure is on. It is actually mounting and probably increasingly resented by motorists who feel can go about their driving as they usually do despite some drinks.

Over on the other side stand government officials intent on combating drink-driving.

Officers from both, Local Police and Guardia Civil, have fined 20 motorists over the last weekend for failing breath tests. They conducted almost 900 random breath tests at checkpoints set up both inside Burgos city and on nearby national roads.

22 out of the 836 tests carried out on national roads, that is a 2.6%, showed an alcohol content in excess of the statutory level, which is 0,25miligrams per litre, and a stricter 0,15miligrams per litre for professional lorry drivers and learner drives.

In Burgos city itself, local police set up there checkpoints in Avenida del Arlanzón, Santa Casilda and Plaza España. Mind you, don't conclude you can avoid these roads and consequently be safe, as you probably know that they are in favour of random, unexpected, unpredictable testing. Why? random testing can guarantee to achieve, they claim, a culture of awareness that the driver might be subjected to testing – and thereby ensuring people drink responsibly.

I'm sure that you must be very anxious to know the results of those tests in our city, 9 out of those 34 motorists pulled over, almost one third, had consumed more alcohol than allowed. Interestingly, and unfortunately for those stopped, the police officers identified 16 other minor traffic offences with regard to production of mandatory documents, and issued them with penalty notices of various amounts. Nine motorists did not have their driving licence, four did not have their mandatory insurance certificate, one was not wearing his seat belt and two produced expired National Car Test forms.

And you listener, what do you make of all this?

Have you suddenly been reminded that you have to make an appointment for a car test at your nearest National Car Test Centre?

Have you checked if you have renewed your driving licence?

Will you become more submissive now and comply with seat belt usage regulations?

I hope that I have helped you in any way. For the time being I would like to move on to our weekly gathering. We have a respected panel of experts and the issue today is random tests, random breath tests, whether it is appropriate to conduct them randomly or if they have to be prompted by erratic, reckless or suspicious behaviour or driving. I am sure that you will have plenty of arguments in favour and against. So we can start by those in favour of random tests and their benefits.. Eva, what would find in favour of having breath tests?

Doing random tests can increase a culture of awareness inside the society and perhaps people they can know the effects of drink driving.

Do you think that most drivers would advocate having them random?

Yeah, most of them.

You agree with this?

No, I disagree. Because I think that only suspicious people should be tested for the sake of efficiency. We need to get police officers to pursue those who are suspicious.

On the other hand, if it is not tackled successfully, drink driving will keep causing deaths and permanent damage to people so I think you need them even if you needed more officers to tackle people.

Is this measure really effective? Of course drink driving is wrong, but is it proportionate to the goal? In some countries they have seen no real fall in drink driving figures. Maybe advertising and awareness campaigns might be more effective than random breath tests.

Right that definitely did carry lost of weight. How about people claiming that there is an invasion of privacy?

I think that these random tests could constitute an invasion of privacy and a violation of basic principles in our democratic and liberal state, that the state should not interfere unless there is complete certainty there is something wrong.

I think you exaggerate a bit. I think it is only about blowing into a tube and many lives could be saved.

We should draw a line. We can start with these random tests and continue with other types of invasion of privacy.

I know but if I think that it was you Eva that said that at the workplace, within the context of the workplace, there is some random breath tests

being carried out and apparently with no much criticism, at train companies...

They are professional drivers and perhaps that has been implied when they sign their job contracts.

But the point basically is that random tests are being conducted, so what's all the fuss?

We cannot compare a professional with a man driving his car. A professional like a plane pilot has a lot of lives in his hands but if you drive your car you may have just yours.

Right, it's just lives that you want to save. Fernando and Merche, are these devices, these breath test kits, are they accurate?

They are supposed to be but their efficiency is not proven so .. maybe they are accurate but you can only have a general idea about the quantity of alcohol in your blood. It doesn't mean that, for example if we drink the same amount of alcohol you may have one figure and I may have a different one because of our metabolism and how our body works.

Let's see if I can get this right. If I drank the same amount of alcohol as you may, will our readings be the same?

Perhaps in the body the quantity of alcohol is different.

Can we just leave it up to individuals to decide whether they have drunk responsibly and then, consequently, to decide to drive or not.

There seems to be no effective measure. I think in the end the state have to take care of some people.

So we cannot appeal to people's responsibility, Margarita?

I think that as it is still legal to have a drink and drive, it should up to the individual to judge if they are OK or not to drive.

I think that peer pressure should play a role in all this. Within a group of friends we do not let others drink if they are going to take us home, and it works.

Eva, would you leave it up to individuals to decide?

No

Or should the government or the state get in the way?

I think that the government has to do something. I think that it is more or less like the speed limit.

Bilingual Project at Comuneros Secondary School

We live in a time when languages seem to take so much credit not only for professional advancement but for personal development too. Language acquisition has long been considered an insurmountable task, within the reach of only those best fitted.

Nothing further from the truth. Some schools, privately-owned or state-run, are implementing quite successfully bilingual projects which aim at helping students, from a very early age, gain a great command on both their mother tongue and a foreign language.

To find out about what a bilingual project is really all about we have reached out and asked those who are on a daily basis at the helm of them. Today it's the turn for Jueces de Castilla and Comuneros Secondary School. In the next programmes we'll be knocking on other doors.

(The actual interviews have not been transcribed)

BURGOS 2016



Burgos's bid to become European Capital of Culture has taken new and momentous steps. To start with, we have chosen, by a popular vote, the image, the logotype, which will advertise our city in Europe, and most probably the world over.

How can we describe the design chosen and cash rewarded? On the background there is our most precious treasure and iconic image: the Cathedral, but with all ornamental details and architectural features erased, just a solid grey silhouette of it. On it some red strokes tapering to the right and indicating the century we are in: XXI, twenty first. And below the unavoidable reference to the name of the city and the year we hope Burgos will be designated Capital of Culture for.

From now on merchandizing advertising Burgos's bid, council vehicles, facilities and official documents will bear this logo, therefore prepare not to get tired of it.

But you may ask yourself what's behind this European City of Culture project, sponsored and financed by the European Union. Yes, financed because you should know that the city chosen as worthy of hosting the event is awarded a sizeable grant by the European Commission.

The European City of Culture project was conceived as a means of bringing citizens of European Union closer together. It was launched on June 13, 1985 by the Council of Ministers on the initiative of the Greek Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri. So now you know.

More specifically, the European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union for a period of one year during which it is given a chance to showcase its cultural life and cultural development. A number of European cities have used the Capital of Culture year to transform their cultural base and, in doing so, the way in which they are viewed internationally.

That's interesting. I wonder how we are, Burgos and its people, viewed internationally. Will they be able to point at us in the map? I'd rather not even give it a guess.

Are we the only one competing in this long-distance race? Of course not.

A system of rotation between the European countries was introduced. Every year a different country can propose its applicant cities and the 2016 slot fell on our side. The national authorities, that is, Spain, processes applications and decides on the names to submit to the European Commission. And which names were those?

It's such a long list that I fear I might miss some of them, 13 altogether: Alcalá de Henares, Cáceres, Córdoba, Cuenca, Gerona, Málaga, Pamplona, Segovia, Tarragona, Valencia, Tenerife, Zaragoza, and last but not least, Burgos. Plenty of competitors but Burgos 2016 officials remain focused and positive. And we are grateful for that.

The city selected commits itself to, among other duties, to enhance the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city. We now can look around and see if the city council has done some of its homework. If polls are to be taken seriously, and I think they should, we may have a qualified answer to that. We have run two polls so far on our website burgostoday.com, and the outcome has been as follows:

In the first one we asked Burgaleses if they agreed that the Human Evolution Museum and Research Complex will become a magnet for tourists. 40% of those polled said it would have a mild appeal and 39% opted for acceptable figures. So almost 80% looked to Burgos flagship project with mild optimism.

In the second poll, we conceded that many areas in Burgos have been a major facelift, had been upgraded. What we were after was whether Burgaleses were confident this upgrade work will have a positive impact on their daily lives. The outcome? A massive 44% were convinced it would bring greater accessibility and convenience, although in all fairness, we should add that that figure contrasted sharply with those almost 48% who were unimpressed.

The designated city should also ensure the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population. This is a task I would find most unappealing. We are all far too fast to find faults with others' performance and equally fast to look the other way when help is required. However, I still trust Burgaleses to make a great effort when it comes to it, if it ever does.