

Burgos Today

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Reconocimiento - No Comercial - Sin obras derivadas - Genérica



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TRAFFIC CONGESTION

As a dreaded and seemingly unavoidable corollary from “whoever pollutes pays” we’ve learned recently that motor tax will not be a fixed-rated one. It will rather escalate as the pollution coming from your car or van does. We won’t go into the merits of such fiscal move, whether it seeks to generate revenue or it’s truly after some drastic cut in pollution rates.

The truth is that car ownership keeps rising in Burgos, and cars take up space and tend to be noisy.... deafening and noisy.....

I’m standing in Avenida Cantabria at a spot where it meets the Roundabout.

The sight of bumper-to-bumper traffic moving at a crawl, pedestrians moving along these endless lines of cars releasing choking fumes, motorists who have been sitting in this gridlock swearing at each other viciously. This would be a nightmare were it not a reality.

Have a listen

This is a particularly sensitive spot, black spot, when it comes to traffic management. This 6-lane road takes lots of traffic, through traffic. Most of this is made up of heavy goods vehicles and trucks and tankers carrying listed hazardous materials. But it also takes traffic out and into the city, coming from and heading for home. The small satellite towns that serve as dormitory zones for Burgos commuters are on the increase: Villatoro, Cogollos, Sotopalacios, ... Overpriced flats are driving first-time buyers outside Burgos within a radius of 20 to 25 km. Exit roads like these have been overused and brought to an almost gridlock.

(Siren)

That’s an ambulance caught up in this deadly slow sea of cars and lorries. The driver is nudging his way through aided by compassionate and willing drivers ... It got away.

Delays for lorry drivers in delivering their supplies are appalling, the frustration of parents wanting to get back home and mind their own kids is disgusting, but when lives might be at risk, that’s the ultimate line nobody should even consider stepping over.

We’ve moved to another hot spot in Burgos City. This is not far away from the one we just left. I’m in Plaza de España or Plaza de los Delfines as it is nicknamed because of the bronze dolphins which decorate the central fountain. Over there stands the headquarters of Cajacirculo, a landmark building in the area. Into this larger-than-average roundabout converge major roads such as Avenida del Cid, Reyes Católicos and Avenida de la Paz: three major arteries. One would expect well-timed, cleverly-managed traffic so that it moved fast and uneventfully. Nothing further from the truth.

The scene here does not differ much from Avenida Cantabria. A traffic bottleneck as three major roads as we said flow into this roundabout. And all this traffic has to squeeze through a one-way narrow San Lesmes Street. The cars trapped inside the roundabout queue up and in doing so block cars from Avenida del Cid and those coming out from the underground car park wanting to make their way round the roundabout.

Any given car can take 25 minutes to get from Plaza España onto Vitoria Road down San Lesmes Street. Simply unacceptable.

That was a most telling audio clip. Now back in the studio we should say that some traffic and urban planning officials from Burgos City Council seem to have advanced some solutions which, by the way, are tied up with the proposed upgrading of the nearby Plaza San Juan and the monastery standing in it.

Both proposals seem to be revolving around the need to get round the obstacle that the River Vena constitutes. The first proposal suggests closing up the stretch of the river that flows by San Lesmes by a colossal seven metres wide and 800 metres long concrete ceiling, allowing more traffic down San Lesmes Street. Gigantic as this may sound to sound it really is a Mickey Mouse undertaking if compared with the second proposal which would involve altering the course of the river: a real test for our local engineering.

Whether one or the other, they should bear in mind the whole area and its needs. For example, it may not be a bad idea to consider this major undertaking alongside the infrastructure that the Human Evolution Museum and Complex may need just across the River Arlanzón. I can see the gigantic structure above the trees from here. That infrastructure may need another bridge which could take the traffic that visitors and staff could generate.

A last of word of confidence and personal conviction for all those who might be still doubtful as to whether this major upgrade work will be ever be carried out. Can anybody now doubt that this Council have the funding and the political will to be bring to completion? That is for you to answer.

For the time being all we can give you is a nice tip. Try and avoid Plaza España roundabout if you can and try and get onto Vitoria Road further up so that you take advantage of the nice timing of the traffic lights.

NOTICEBOARD OF CULTURAL EVENTS

- **New Building for La Casa de la Cultura**

A showcase of culture, literally, for Burgos. The exterior of the building which will house the central government-owned library located at Plaza San Juan will look like a true showcase thanks to its glass panel design. It will allow then curious looks into some areas of this three-storey building, complete with basement and an attic with no partitions in it. 5,700 square metres altogether entirely devoted, it seems, to a whole new concept of library.

Voice-over (...)

That was Rogelio Blanco, a chief official from the Book, Libraries Section within the Ministry of Culture, holding his head high as he emphatically announced that the San Juan library will no longer be just for book storage. It will comprise dynamic learning spaces for culture and knowledge that in present times are passed on in a wide range of formats.

By the way, the building this time has not been designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning Swiss duo of Herzog & de Meuron, one of the world's most reputable and prestigious architectural firms. The architect will be less of a financial burden. His name is Angel Ceris and, believe it or not, he is a native of Burgos.

- **Visual Artists go pro**

Spurred by the lead taken by other regions some artists have managed to convince many other fellow visual artists into establishing a Castilla y León-based body for professional visual artists. The red carpet was rolled out at the Teatro Principal for the launch of this organization.

Voice-over (...)

What do they seek?

A code of good practice. They also want the organization to provide services, facilities and resources for artists. These could take the form of training programmes and workshops for Professional Development of visual artists. It will also seek to collaborate on projects. First because it can assist in the delivery of a project, which might otherwise not be feasible. Secondly it also provides the opportunity for Visual Artists Castilla y León to actively engage with artists and other organisations. This engagement helps us to build new relationships and

networks and understand the changing interests and concerns of artists.

Finally it wants to act as an advocate on behalf of individual artists, representing them and lobbying cultural regional agencies.

Voice-over (...)

- **New Stage returns**

The second edition of *Teatraciones*, a Theater Festival which wants to look at alternative stage productions, got underway in Burgos at *Espacio Tangente*. It aims at reinforcing the role that experimental and risky theatre can play in a city where this format has not had much say.

Voice-over (...)

They claim and complain that alternative stage approaches have been long neglected in Burgos due to a conformist, middle-of-the-road mentality, in favour of much more conservative drama productions in line with old school criteria.

Voice-over (...)

- **A new emblem for a new approach in Caja Burgos**

We witnessed to the unveiling of the new logo for la Casa del Cordón, a change not for the sake of change, as someone may have concluded, but one that hopes to revitalize and consolidate the great momentum in the promotion of the arts and culture on the part of Caja Burgos.

Voice-over (...)

This move has coincided with the refurbishing of the conference room at Casa del Cordón. The upgrade work has included stage lighting and a maximum quality sound system. This facility has been greatly modified into a performance venue so that it can showcase theatre, musical and dance performances, concerts, films, etc, many of which are already scheduled.

Voice-over (...)