

## Aitziber López-Cortajarena corresponding academician of the Royal Academy of Sciences

CIC biomaGUNE's scientific director and Ikerbasque professor Aitziber López-Cortajarena has been nominated corresponding member of the academy's physics and chemistry section

This appointment means that CIC biomaGUNE now has four academicians in the Spanish Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences

**Donostia-San Sebastian (Basque Country), 11 May, 2023.** Aitziber López-Cortajarena, scientific director and Ikerbasque professor at the CIC biomaGUNE Cooperative Research Center, has been appointed [corresponding academician](#) in the physics and chemistry section of the Spanish Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences (RAC). The mission of the RAC is to promote study and research in the Mathematical, Physical, Chemical, Geological and Biological Sciences and their applications, as well as to disseminate scientific culture. One of its main functions is to advise the government on matters within its competence, particularly those related to scientific policy that may have a bearing on the country's scientific and technological development.

Professor Cortajarena is delighted: "To have been elected to join such an important institution is a great recognition for me, one of the greatest that can be achieved on a national level. It's a huge honor and a significant professional achievement." Membership of the Academy provides an opportunity to contribute first-hand to the Academy's mission and to help promote the research and development of science in the country. "For me it is very important to make an impact beyond the science we do in our lab. Membership also provides an opportunity to work on these areas with some of the most outstanding people in the country's research and to learn from all of them, as well as to exchange knowledge among the different scientific fields covered by the Academy".

This recognition is awarded by researchers with a wealth of experience and outstanding careers, since it is the academicians themselves who propose and vote on the new additions to the Academy. "A source of great pride is the fact that they have considered my career and the research developed by my group to be a reference in my field, in which we use approaches from chemistry and physics to understand and design biological systems with specific properties and their application in biomedicine and technology," she added.

The Ikerbasque research professor would like to thank "all the people who have supported me throughout my career, both professionally and personally, enabling me to secure these achievements and awards. This is the result of the work of many people, especially my mentors,

the people who have worked in my research teams over the years, as well as all the collaborators I have had the opportunity to work with”.

#### Four RAC members at CIC biomaGUNE

CIC biomaGUNE highlights the fact that, in addition to Professor Cortajarena, there are three other researchers at the center who are academicians of the Royal Academy of Sciences. They are: Ikerbasque professor [Luis Liz-Marzán](#) (full academician); general director of CIC biomaGUNE [José María Mato](#) (corresponding academician in the natural sciences section); and Ikerbasque professor and AXA chair [Maurizio Prato](#) (foreign corresponding academician in the chemical and physical sciences section). In this respect, the research center is delighted with the new addition of Professor Cortajarena to the RAC: "For someone to be appointed as an academician, he or she must enjoy internationally recognized scientific prestige. The fact that 27% of the group leaders of CIC biomaGUNE are academicians of the RAC is an honor and at the same time a privilege, since it not only recognizes their great research work, but also contributes toward promoting and enhancing the Science, Technology and Innovation System."

#### About Aitziber López-Cortajarena

Professor Cortajarena leads the [Biomolecular Nanotechnology](#) lab at CIC biomaGUNE, where she is also the center's scientific director. She has a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of the Basque Country-UPV/EHU (2002), and worked as an associate scientist in protein design at Yale University until 2009. In 2010 she started her independent research in nanobiotechnology at the IMDEA Institute of Nanoscience until 2016, when she joined CIC biomaGUNE. She is the author of over 100 scientific articles, which have been cited more than 2,900 times, 2 published books and 5 patents.

Her work has been recognized through the Horizon Award of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Research Excellence Award of the Spanish Royal Society of Chemistry and the Ikerbasque Award for Women's Track Records in Science. She has recently been distinguished in the Platform for Women Scientists and Innovators of the Ministry of Science and Innovation. She is Associate Editor of ACS Applied Biomaterials, ACS Publications, and Senior Editor at Protein Science, Wiley. She is vice-president of the Spanish Society of Biophysics and committee member of the International Protein Society.

The professor has obtained multiple European projects, including an ERC Consolidator Grant (ProNANO), two ERC-Proofs of Concept (NIMM; Nanomaging), an ERA-CoBioTech, four FET-Open projects (e-Prot, ARTIBLED, FairyLights, DeDNAed), and an EIC Pathfinder project (iSenseDNA). Cortajarena has a solid reputation in the field of protein engineering and her group is achieving worldwide recognition due to its key contributions to the design and development of protein-based hybrids with specific architectures and functionalities.

#### About CIC biomaGUNE

The Center for Cooperative Research in Biomaterials CIC biomaGUNE, member of the Basque Research and Technology Alliance ([BRTA](#)), conducts state-of-the-art research at the interface between Chemistry, Biology and Physics, devoting particular attention to studying the properties of biological nanostructures on a molecular scale and their biomedical applications. It was recognized in 2018 as a "María de Maeztu" Unit of Excellence for meeting requirements of

excellence, which are characterized by a high impact and level of competitiveness in its field of activity on the global scientific stage.