

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **National Meeting of Commercial Climbing Gyms – Neko Escalada brings the sector together on February 6 with the participation of Kath Hipwell, President of the Association of British Climbing Walls (UK) – Invitation-only event**

Logroño, Spain — 28/11/2025

On February 6, Neko Escalada will host in Logroño the first National Meeting of Commercial Climbing Gyms, a pioneering sector event in Spain that will bring together managers, decision-makers and key agents in the growth of indoor climbing in the country.

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#### **A rapidly growing sector that is beginning to organise itself**

Indoor climbing in Spain is experiencing sustained growth driven by the popularisation of the sport, the opening of new commercial facilities and the arrival of a broad general audience. A very significant proportion of current climbing gym users are people who had never climbed before, a sign of the democratisation process underway and of the role of gyms as a gateway to new sporting habits.

Despite this rapid growth, the Spanish sector still lacks stable frameworks for coordination, shared standards and spaces in which to analyse common challenges: safety, regulation, professionalisation of teams, sustainability and management models. This meeting was created to respond to that need.

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#### **The Neko experience as a reflection of the new indoor climbing paradigm**

Neko Escalada represents a new generation of commercial gyms that are driving the transformation of the sector. Since the opening of its space in Logroño, more than 80% of visitors have come to discover climbing for the first time, an indicator of the sector's potential to attract new audiences and of the key role that these facilities play in the democratisation of the sport. Its purpose, summed up in the slogan "Discover climbing", reflects this mission.

The Neko model is based on building community, offering an accessible and safe experience, and professionalising all internal processes: customer service, staff training, session design and operational protocols. This methodology, already validated in Logroño and now expanding to new cities such as Vitoria, aims to consolidate a replicable standard and contribute to the creation of a more cohesive, modern sector that is better prepared for future challenges.

The organisation of this first National Meeting of Commercial Climbing Gyms stems from that collaborative vision: bringing together operators from across the country to share learnings, analyse risks, improve safety culture and move towards a stronger and more sustainable common ecosystem.

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## **The exceptional presence of Kath Hipwell, President of the ABC (UK)**

One of the key moments of the day will be the presentation by Kath Hipwell, President of the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC), the benchmark organisation for commercial climbing gyms in the United Kingdom.

With more than a decade of experience developing standards, certifications and best practices in one of Europe's most mature markets, Hipwell will share:

- The evolution of the indoor climbing industry in the UK
- Lessons that can be transferred to the Spanish context
- The value of sector associations and shared quality frameworks

She will also present the ABC's Incident Research Database, a key tool for the analysis and prevention of incidents in commercial gyms that is used internationally.

Her participation is a milestone for the Spanish ecosystem and underlines the growing international interest in the fast development of the national market.

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## **Objectives of the meeting**

The event will bring together representatives of commercial climbing gyms from all over Spain with the aim of:

- Identifying common needs in the sector
- Promoting professional and constructive dialogue
- Exploring collaboration frameworks
- Sharing experiences, operational challenges and lessons learned
- Drawing inspiration from consolidated models such as the British one

In addition, an overview of the current growth of commercial gyms will be presented, and a discussion space will be opened on the future, sustainability and professionalisation of the sector.

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