

CONGRESS 2007 SPEECH BY JOSU LEGARRETA

Jaun-andreok:

Ongi etorriak izan zaitezte guztiok IV Euskal Gizataldeen Biltzarrera. Ongi etorriak eta eskerrik asko zeuon eginkizunak utzi eta hemen izateko egin duzuen ahaleginagaitik. Eskerrik asko bihotz-bihotzez.

As you know, Law 8/1994, dated 27th May, regulates relations with Basque communities and centres and in article 13, it defines the objective and the participation in the Congress.

Section 1 states: “Every four years the Basque Communities Congress will be held to promote meeting and collaboration between Basque Communities, Basque centres, federations and confederations of Basque centres and the Basque institutions.”

Section 2 defines who can participate: The following will attend as members in their full right:

- The components of the Advisory Council for relations with the Basque Communities
- Ex-lehendakaris from the Basque Government
- A member of each of the parliamentary groups with representation in the Basque parliament
- Three representatives from each of the federations
- Three representatives from the Basque centres from each of the countries where there is no federation.

Section 3 also indicates that the Congress can be attended by other personalities or representatives of institutions linked to the Basque Communities as ‘guests’ of the Basque Government Lehendakari.

We are also happy to welcome a group of young people from Basque centres who have participated in the Gaztemundu Programme.

And finally, section 4 states that “the deliberations from the Congress will be drawn up into a conclusions document, which will be transferred to the Advisory Council, for their consideration when writing the four-year plan.”

Congress slogan: Zubigintzan

Yes, Zubigintzan, building bridges. On the one hand it responds to the congress's objective: "promoting meeting and collaboration" in developing the four year plan, which will later be approved by the Advisory Council, in accordance with the functions assigned to the aforementioned law in article 12. On the other hand, it incarnates an integrated and active ideal for the worldwide Basque community, which is capable of facing the challenges it is set by a constantly changing globalised world. This is a Basque world which looks to the future without forgetting its rich tradition; a Basque world which wishes to build bridges between cultures, between generations and between sexes.

Programme definition

At this time, I would like to repeat my thanks for all your participation in defining the programme. In addition to the conversations and/or meetings held with 90% of the Euskal Etxeak and/or their federations, the Management drew up the reflection document, inviting all Euskal Etxeak to participate with their comments, criticism and/or proposals.

With this same objective, a survey was run among all the young people (almost 500) who have participated in the Gaztemundu Programme to date.

And finally, I would like to also thank university professors for their collaboration: Gloria Totoricaguena (Nevada), José Marcilese (Universidad del Sur de Bahía Blanca), Oskar Alvarez, Alberto Angulo and Alex Ugalde from EHU/UPV and Alfredo Asiáin from the Universidad Pública de Navarra.

Programme development:

First day: Programme evaluation

We will start the sessions with a lecture by technicians from this Board, Andoni Martín and Benan Oregi, who will analyse how well the objectives approved by the 3rd Congress, held in 2003, have been met.

The content of their speech will be endorsed by the encouraging agreement from the Basque Communities Advisory Council which assessed the previous four year plan's execution positively in its meeting on 27th June.

We will continue with a speech by the sociologists Miren Bilbao and Kontxi Kerexeta, assessing the Gaztemundu Programme and a paper by the lecturer Alex Ugalde analysing Congresses which have been held by the Basque centres and the policies which the Basque Government has developed regarding their conclusions. (In the afternoon, we will present, among other things, their research on these policies, with all the data from the first meeting until now).

We will finish the morning with a lecture/project on how to develop an immaterial heritage archive project for the Basque Communities by professor Alfredo Asiain.

In the afternoon, we will start off by presenting a major project to digitalise the information published on the Basques in the American press. Professors Alvarez and Angulo from EHU/UPV and Marcilese from the Universidad del Sur (Bahía Blanca) will present the work developed for this purpose over the past year.

The lectures will finish with the presentation of the research into the history of the Basque centres Euskal Erria in Montevideo and Eusko Etxea in Valparaiso and the Basque centre Federation in the United States, NABO, carried out by Alberto Irigoyen and Xabier Irujo, Rubia Araya and Argitxu Camus.

Along with these publications, we can present the result of the digitalisation of 134 Basque magazines, published over the last 100 years in America (recovery of a volume of around 180,000 pages) carried out by Adriana Patrón and Alberto Irigoyen.

Second day: diagnosis and future projection

We will base our work on evaluating the objectives set and the presentation of publications and document which can be used for new research.

From the second day, we will look at future projection: on the one hand, with papers presented by the Federations FEVA and NABO and contributions from representatives of Euskal Etxeak from other countries on image and communication.

In this future projection, we also wanted to include another three particularly relevant topics:

- 1.- The experience led by a group of Basque-Chilean businessmen, EmpreBask;
- 2.- The activity of the European Association of Emigration Institutions (AEMI) which the Basque Government will be a member of in the future.
- 3.- The 21st century challenge regarding equal opportunities between men and women.
4. The use of new technologies as enablers and multipliers of Basque presence and vitality on a world wide level. It is a matter of building bridges and synergies between the real and virtual worlds.

Third and fourth days:

In addition to the Culture Minister presenting the Etxepare Institute and signing the agreement between the Foreign Affairs General Secretary and the University of the Basque Country, we will dedicate our time to developing the project for the next four year plan, which must be approved by the Advisory Council.

Observations

1.- I would like to thank you once again for your collaboration to date but please may I make one more request? Please be as prompt as possible, following the timetable, for each of the events. I'd like to apologise right now for any strictness involved in keeping to timetable.

2.- All the members of the Board are at your disposition for any type of consultation which you wish to make. (And I'd like to make the most of this moment to also thank my co-workers for all the hard work that have put in to organising this congress).

Eskerrik asko, guztioi.