

The culture that unites us...the folklore

Not so long ago, when we talked about Basque culture we were only referring to our culture and ourselves. It was as if we were putting our txapela over what was closest to us, reducing something as wide and rich as Basque culture to ethnography and forgetting the technical, scientific, linguistic, economic aspects. But times change and the mentality of the people evolves even faster. The new mentality understands with increasing clarity that in the *global village* those things which are particular can only be understood when shared with all the others. This is where our culture reaches its best universal dimension. It is broadcast to all Basques scattered all over the world, who mixing the culture of the place where they live with their original cultural roots, produce a rich exchange. In this new path we are undertaking, the new technologies offer every opportunity to communicate with the rest of the world at the speed that these times demand. Online routes are the new vessels taking the Basque presence all over the world. There are many associations working in the field of Basque culture; we provide a list –without any intention of excluding anybody–, some examples of the expression of our culture outside our frontiers.

◆ **EUSKO IKASKUNTZA** online

Eusko Ikaskuntza-Sociedad de Estudios Vascos is a society dedicated to research and cultural studies in Euskal Herria.

They organize courses, seminars, they collaborate with different universities such as the University of Nevada, EHU/UPV, and Deusto University among others. They also work with commerce chambers, companies, county councils, city councils... They convoke aids and prizes always trying to give international relevance to Basque achievements in the field of knowledge.

Eusko Ikaskuntza has organized in collaboration with the UNED- Open University, a virtual course on Basque culture *jakinet*, with the participation of eighty university teachers from six Spanish universities. The course will last from

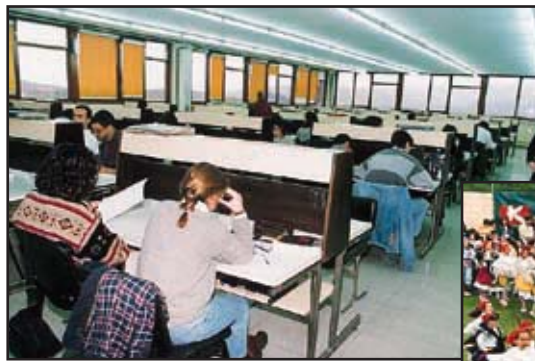
October 2000 to June 2001. The purpose of the course is to train specialists in Basque culture. The subjects will be varied: Science, Environment, Eco-systems, Archives and Libraries,

Anthropology and Folklore... The course offers 250 hours with 190 compulsory ones and 60 optional ones. In order to reach the web page each pupil will have his or her own personal key. Pre-inscriptions must be done before September 30th and inscriptions before October 15th.

◆ **UPV/EHU online, University on the net**

Basque culture in every field of knowledge is now on the net, open to the world.

The Basque virtual campus [<http://cv.ehu.es/campus>] with a modest budget of 40 million a year,



has been working for 12 months and has at present 26 teachers. These are some of the subjects which can be studied in the Internet: Television Studies, Introduction to Law, Applied Statistics, Cardiovascular Health, Multimedia Electronic Journalism... The UPV/EHU will launch a whole period of studies completely *online* next year. There are already 360 inscriptions for the courses.



◆ **Other courses on the net**

Part of the 1999/2000 Ikastaroak Courses offered by the University of Deusto share the same line with the purpose of making Basque culture known abroad. We must underline the course taught by the present president of the General Assembly of Bizkaia, Professor Aitor Esteban, under the title «**History of Basque Institutions**». The course is developed entirely online and it is addressed specifically to the emigrants and descendants of Basque communities in America.

The course includes electronic debates «notes on html» and «interactive tests», where Aitor Esteban will answer his students' questions by e-mail, and with the final qualifications also given through the net.

The Elkano team, formed by professors Andoni Eguiluz, Aitor Esteban, J. Antonio Ferandes, Mónica Salgueiro and Borja Sotomayor, is full of excitement at the idea of traveling around the world of knowledge in a voyage which is only starting. Although it is late now for new inscriptions, information is available in [<http://elkano.deusto.es>]

Eusko Ikaskuntza

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that makes us brothers and sisters

We are used here to see *aurrekus* danced to honor personalities in official receptions, *ezpatadanzas* or *arin-arins* during the festivities of every village in Euskal Herria, therefore it is understandable that we Basques living in the Basque Country do not value the expressions of our folklore as highly as those who watch them for afar and long for them as a sign of self-identification. Certainly one of the most pleasant surprises waiting for the visitors from Euskal Herria in the Basque centers, is to sense the love, devotion and dedication to the recovery, promotion and expansion of Basque folklore in their area. Sometimes they have even kept in their social and popular environ-



ment ethnographic traits of the folklore which can only be found here in organized dance groups. This is why a special issue dedicated to the youth must open the communication with an aspect of our culture which is a sign of identity for the Basques.

Ricardo Bilbao, Director of Cultural Creation and Diffusion of the Basque Government states very clearly that *«it is vital to keep the cultural links with the Euskal Etxeak»*

The courses on Basque culture organized in his Department are specifically addressed to young Basques, both to those living in Euskal Herria and to those who wish to know more about our culture. The courses are organized mainly for the young *«because the courses offered in Euskadi now a days have a variety of subjects included*

in the Basque cultural world: scenic arts, audiovisuals, traditional and contemporary dance... These subjects interest mostly young boys and girls from inside and outside the Basque Country, who are attracted to all these matters sometimes with the intention of getting professional training», he points out.

Ricardo Bilbao admits that his Department covers all aspects of Basque culture, ranging from traditional dances, arts in general but, *«mainly –he explains– we focus on the application of all that, even Euskera, to the new technologies»*.

In his opinion the courses on the different artistic branches offered in Euskadi will be very useful for the young Basques living abroad who want to know more about our culture *«which will probably be very different from what they can imagine in the distance»*, he explains. He is determined to keep encouraging the relations with the Basque centers in the world; relations based mainly in our culture. *«It is vital for all of us. For them because that way they keep their links with their original motherland, and for Euskadi because*

we absolutely need these embassies which can spread internationally the message of our «difference», based on our culture, language and our longing for freedom in all areas», as he passionately declares.

Ricardo Bilbao encourages every boy and girl of Basque descent or not, to get a better knowledge through these courses on Basque culture, of the present situation of this people which, as any other people does, evolves every day, because he is certain that they will be pleasantly

surprised, *«among other reasons because they will find a high level of quality and maturity in the courses on different fields.*

The course will also give them the opportunity to train in any sector of culture. There are courses for amateurs and also for professionals. Finally they will also be pleased to discover that the Basque people welcome visitors and are proud to show their sights».

The Director of Cultural Creation and diffusion of Euskadi also talked about the important cultural transformation undergone in Euskadi during the last few years. With the creation of infrastructures and new spaces to develop cultural activities, culture has become a strategic sector, not only for the spreading of our traditions and image, but also for the creation of riches, jobs, and for the generation of a new industry. *«This is an important moment for Euskadi because of all those reasons, from the point of view of culture it is almost transcendent, and that is why we wish to encourage, from the Direction of Cultural Creation and Diffusion of the Basque Government, all those Diaspora members who are interested. The moment we are living is going to bring about such transformations that it is a privilege to be able to experience it».*

«It is vital for Euskadi to keep the cultural links with the Euskal Etxeak»

For more information about cultural activities, dance/festivals/courses/concerts.... please contact

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A very interesting web page on Basque culture in [www.argia.com]