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Basque centres throughout the world

The foreign action of the Basque Government

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IÑAKI AGUIRRE ARIZMENDI



Opening letter

Kanpo Harremanetarako Idazkari Nagusia

The evolution of the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st were conditioned by two factors of major import in the international arena: European integration and globalisation. There can be no doubt that the last two decades have witnessed a growing movement in international trade and a clear trend towards globalisation in several orders, albeit particularly in the world of economics, culture and communications, and macro-regional political structures such as the European Union, MERCOSUR or NAFTA, to name but some. In turn, the desire to build this new international order with other peoples and cultures requires new alliances and instruments to bring such objectives to fruition.

This evolution converges with the changes which generally speaking are determining the configuration of international society as interdependent and transnational, where classic state structures are being questioned and the State is no longer the exclusive figurehead in international relations. On the one hand, the contribution of supranational structures with strong decision-making powers and a major influence in States' foreign and domestic policies, and on the other the emergence of very decentralised structures with broad powers, show that the concepts of authority and

power are becoming increasingly more disperse, and call for a redefinition of sovereignty.

Within this trend towards progressive globalisation, the local and the singular does not only manifest its relevant vitality through an attitude of self-defence, but also claims participation in the structuring of a new international order, demanding that the personality of peoples, Stateless Nations and substate organisations be respected and also recognised by suprastate echelons.

In this context, Euskadi is showing a special international dynamism which is evident if we consider that at the moment all the Departments of the Basque Government, as well as the economic and social partners, are engaged in some type of activity abroad. Being a small country allows us to be flexible and adaptable to

different and changing circumstances. But at the same time, this same dimension renders us more vulnerable to such international changes, thus requiring a coordinated and proactive action consolidating our pre-emptive capacity in order to push on towards an integral Basque foreign policy.

However, Euskadi's international vocation is no overnight thing. In the midst of the Civil War, the Basque Government had already begun to

develop its own foreign relations policy. The driving principles were the first Ministerial Declaration of October 7, 1936, which may be summarised in the following points: to establish "good relations" with countries that respected "the sovereignty and the rights" of the Republic and Euskadi; to establish links with "the Peoples" that uphold "democratic forms of government"; and particularly with countries where there were "Basque Communities". From the outset of its mandate, the Aguirre Government showed a clear commitment to projecting Euskadi abroad. The following year, 1937, saw the opening of Centres abroad and appointments of delegates, prioritising relations with everything that represented institutional or decision-making power in Europe and America. The management of international activities fell to the cabinet overall, although the Lehendakari played a decisive role.

The foreign action of the Basque Government

The creation of Basque Government Centres abroad made it possible to articulate a compact network of contacts and relations at different levels, which proved very useful during the war and post-war years, likewise promoting the international projection of the Basque people on a hitherto unheard-of scale. In this regard, mention must be made of the Centres in Paris, London and Brussels and, albeit with different characteristics, the representations in New York and Boise, the Geneva project, which fell through, and the Centres in Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Cuba, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Peru. In the Spanish State, Centres were opened in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Alicante.

These were the historic beginnings of the foreign relations maintained by this first Basque Government in the war era. In the reference to its activities, collected in the Report "The Foreign Action of the Basque Country 1980-2003"* , mention is made, among others, to contacts with the Diplomatic Corps, particularly of the United Kingdom, France, the USSR, the Vatican, the United States and Argentina; negotiations between the Basque Government and the Spanish Francoist Government for the exchange of prisoners; relations with governments, and more specifically with regard to the sending of reports to European and American cabinets; the acquisition of products for supplies, international airlines and the creation of companies in other countries; control of maritime borders, migration services; asylum by the Basque Centres in the Spanish

State for Spanish and foreign citizens; visits to the Basque Country by diplomats, journalists, work on foreign exposure, the publication of books and magazines/journals, the organisation of cultural tours, the creation of the Basque Red Cross and the International League of Friends of the Basques, etc.

With this spate of activities, which greatly surpassed the powers awarded by the Statute of Autonomy, it is understandable why it was said more than once that the Basque Government of the time resembled a Foreign Office, led decisively by the Lehendakari Aguirre himself, although there was also a Secretariat for Foreign Affairs under Bruno Mendiguren. At that time, the Government acted "as an independent and sovereign power".

When the Government went into exile, it is clear that a great part of its activity targeted foreign affairs, simply because it could not deal with domestic issues. The collaboration with the Allies throughout the Second World War to fight the forces of the Axis was one of the essential parts of the foreign activity of the Basque Government. After the Second World War, the Basque Government in exile played a major role in the process of building Europe. This action was mainly led by the Lehendakari and Javier de Landaburu.

In 1945, the Lehendakari Aguirre made an unofficial visit to the Conference of San Francisco to prevent Francoist Spain from joining the United Nations. Similarly, on May 21, 1946, accompanied by Jesús Galíndez and Antón de Irala, he held

an interview with the first Secretary General of the United Nations, the Norwegian Trygve Halvdan Lie, to whom he delivered the "Memorandum from The Autonomous Basque Government to The Sub-Committee of The Security Council", which expounded aspects of Basque history, the creation of the Government of Euskadi and the political and social situation after the victory of the Francoist regime.

No less important was his work in disseminating Basque culture, his teamwork with Catalans and Galicians in the reformulation of a new State model, and his efforts for the Basque Government to be definitively recognised by the International Organisations.

Six decades on, local and international problems are totally different. But the trends towards internationalisation and globalisation mean that public and private institutions should coparticipate in the common destiny, while solving problems arising at local level at the same time.

This is the perspective from which the current Basque Government has decided to back a foreign affairs strategy - officially approved by the Cabinet of Ministers last March -, which addresses, among other elements, the opening of Centres outside Euskadi, defining priority geographical areas of activity.

In these pages we would like to explain what this strategy consists of in greater detail, and the role played by the current Basque Government Centres abroad.

*By CASTRO RUANO J. L. and UGALDE ZUBIRI, A. "The Foreign Action of the Basque Country (1980-2003)". IVAP. Basque Government. 2004.

MIKEL BURZAKO

Basque Director of Foreign Relations



«Foreign Action will promote the Official Centres of the Basque Government»

Eusko Jaurlaritzak, 2002an, Kanpoko Harremanetarako Idazkaritza Nagusiaren barnean Kanpo Harremanetarako Zuzendaritza sortu zuen. Hasieratik Mikel Burzakok eramaten du. Jada, duela ia hogeit hamar urte Bruselan ireki zenean Euskadiko Ordezkaritza, Europak Euskadin izango zuen eragina garrantzi handikoa zela ikusten zen. Gaur egun Bruselako Ordezkaritzan, batez ere, europar gaiak lantzen dira, baina gure taldeka beste helburu bat du, adibidez, Latino Amerikan Ordezkaritzak sortzea oso funtzeskoa dugu, eta bultzatzen ari garen ekintzak oso biziak eta era askotakoak dira. Burzazok gogorarazten digu, Agirre Lehendakariaren garaiko Euskadiko Ordezkarien proiektzioa zoragarria izan zela, eta gaur egun eredutzat dute, baina, noski, egungo beharrei erantzuna ematen.

In 2002, the Basque Government created the Directorate for Foreign Relations, within the General Secretariat of Foreign Action, led from the outset by Mikel Burzako. This young graduate in Economics and Business Administration, highly skilled in the different realities of other countries thanks to first-hand experience through the posts he has held as general manager of the Basque-Chilean Foundation for Development in Santiago de Chile and as director of Cooperation for Development, analyses the lines of action established abroad by the Basque Administration.

Long before the creation of this Secretariat, the Basque Government had opened its Official Centre in Brussels. What was the process of that pioneering experience like?

We were the first to open a Centre in this city to make sure that relations between Euskadi and the European community institutions would run more smoothly. At that time, the Basque Government had clearly realised the



Meeting with representatives from the Senegal Embassy.

importance of Europe in the future of Euskadi. After eight years of hard bargaining with the Madrid Government, the last sentence was favourable to what we had always asked for, and we set up the Euskadi Centre in Brussels. Next year we will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Currently, the Directorate for European Affairs, within the General Secretariat of Foreign Action and this Centre establishes Euskadi's relations with Europe.

But the role of this Secretariat in Europe does not end here. There is another level of activities that is managed permanently with regard to cross border and interregional affairs. Euskadi has historically maintained good relations with a series of regions, particularly those with greater power of decision in their respective states, as well as with those we are bound to more emotionally, such as Iparralde and Navarra.

What role does the Secretariat play in the Basque Communities, which are so numerous and scattered all over the world?

As a Government, since this Secretariat came into being, we have been particularly sensitive towards Basque Communities abroad. Relations are established through the Euskal Etxeak on the one hand, albeit also with Basque Communities that are not grouped within these centres. We take great care of this line of action, adapting to the current circumstances derived from the fact that these Basques are children or grandchildren of emigrants, and taking into account the reality of Euskadi and the type of demands, which are not what they were twenty years ago. There are Basque Communities in places as close as Valladolid, Andorra, Barcelona, Madrid and other countries in Europe, but basically they are in America. We realise that a large part of the history of the Basque people is abroad. There are many Basques that have contributed to the development of these countries, and who are still there,

and we would like to somehow tell them that we are here to try to foster closer relations with these countries.

How can this commitment be reinforced?

In the latest legislature we took a transcendental political decision: the extension of Euskadi Centres to other non-community areas. In the first phase, which we are now completing, we decided to open Centres in Latin America, in countries where historical relations are more important, or where there are large groups of Basques, such as Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Venezuela. And once again we were the first to establish Official Centres.

Do all the Centres do the same work?

From the Government's internal standpoint we are creating jurisprudence, in the sense that we are learning internally, since there was no model on how to set up this type of apparatus in Latin America. The Brussels Centre has been a reference in some regards, although not in others, because they are different realities that require different structures, and because each one has a specific profile. The Brussels Centre has a more community-driven, normative sphere of action, and our team there has a different profile. On the other hand, the Latin America Centres feature other components, such as programmes with our communities, cooperation for development; they also play the role of institutional relations in the country and provide support to certain sectors, such as industry, agriculture and fisheries or culture.

Finally, the Madrid Centre, officially opened in January 2003, has a rather intermediate profile: it establishes relationships with the other Autonomous Communities, with embassies, with community and supranational institutions, the mass media, it develops cultural activities

and acts as a hinge between the different departments of the Basque Government and the Ministries of the Spanish Government.

Was the economic-industrial factor decisive when choosing these four countries?

Obviously, before taking a decision as to where we open a Centre we study different variables, and the economic-industrial variable is one of the most important, although it is not the only one. Naturally in the case of Venezuela, peculiarities other than the purely economic-industrial aspect brought a major influence to bear. If we had only addressed this aspect then it would have made more sense to open a Centre in Brazil rather than Argentina. But we must take into account other factors such as the culture or the roots of the Basque Communities, historical relations, or those established more recently with the institutions of these countries, which were decisive in the choice of these four countries.

It is also true that the initial economic-industrial-type relations established with some countries permit the Department of Industry to open foreign offices of SPRI (Industrial Promotion Company), and if this type of relation begins to develop with regard to other interests over time, they may lead us to open Centres.

How would you assess this phase of foreign action focused on Latin America?

It is too soon to make assessments, but we may say that we are making a very important qualitative leap in terms of Centres in Latin America. Once these four Centres have been consolidated, the Latin America phase will have been covered and the programmes that we are planning through them can be rolled out.

Do you intend to extend the Official Centres in the near future?

The strategic document, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on March 15, which defines the Foreign Action road map for the next decade, establishes the terms of future activities. In this regard, one of the lines proposed is the development of Centres in Europe as a second sphere of activities. We have defined the preferred countries: Germany, Great Britain and France, initially. At the same time we will be intensifying relations with other European countries such as the Nordic nations, Italy and the Eastern countries.

All these projects are contained in the strategic document, which heralds a before and an after in terms of the activities of the General Secretariat of Foreign Action, since it is the first time that we will be integrating all the Departments of the Government in Foreign Action and because it is also the first time that following a deep strategic deliberation we have a "road map" that establishes the principles of our long-term action for the next two or three legislatures.

70 years on



Aguirre, together with the French politician Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of modern Europe. Berlin, March 23, 1956.

Mikel Burzako would be satisfied if Euskadi achieved half of the foreign projection that the government of the Lehendakari Aguirre enjoyed. He proudly states that that model is the reference, one which 70 years later, adapted to our current reality, is serving as a philosophical guide to the current General Secretariat of Foreign Action. "The Basque Government –he comments– has never surpassed the importance that it enjoyed abroad in 1936. Two Centres were opened in exile in the United States, twelve in Latin America, four in Spain and another four in Europe. The Government of the Lehendakari Aguirre was fundamental in the building of Europe and established totally privileged relations with multilateral organisations, such as the UNO. If we were able to reorganise that design of actions, in which practically everything the Basque Government did was geared towards Foreign Action, it would have been a major achievement. Some might think that working with a model designed 70 years ago may not bring anything new, but this is not true. It is one of our main models, which breathes a special sensitivity for foreign action, and which, applied to the current Basque reality, is still undoubtedly one of the best guides we could have.



José Antonio de Aguirre, accompanied by Antón Irala (Delegate of the Basque Government in New York) and Jesús de Galindez, present a report on the repression by Franco's government in Euskadi to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie. That same day, May 22, 1946, Aguirre also handed over a twelve-page document in the name of the Government of the Republic, whose preliminary project had been drafted in the Basque Centre in New York.

The foreign action of the Basque Government

[ALEXANDER UGALDE ZUBIRI]

Teacher of International Relations
(UPV/EHU)

One of the policies of the Basque Government consists of increasing its participation in international relations. It is a practice similar to that of other Non-Central Governmental actors or non-Central Governments (Federal states, regions, Länder...) which develop a foreign policy to achieve an international presence, for different reasons: functional (international projection), economic (insertion in the world economy and markets, adaptation to the new technologies), political (national identity, own language and culture), or through the convergence of all of them.

The organ for its planning and coordination is the General Secretariat of Foreign Action, framed within the Office of the President. Managed by the Secretary General for Foreign Action, it is comprised of the Commissioner of the Office of the President for Foreign Relations, the Directorate for Foreign Relations, the Directorate for European Affairs and the Directorate of Relations with Basque Communities. The Centres are attached to this Secretariat. The other governmental

Departments develop international activities in their own areas. The Interdepartmental Commission of Foreign Action complements coordination.

The work conducted hitherto will bring a qualitative leap as the plan envisaged in the Foreign Action Strategy of the Autonomous Community of Euskadi, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers (March 2005) gradually comes to fruition. It defines the objectives and lines of action; it provides for the adaptation of structures and resources and establishes the specific foreign and sector policies.

Foreign Action is embodied in the following activities:

Trips, visits received and promotional activities: An ensemble of jobs on which the rest are based, since knowing one other is basic for collaboration. Through them, the Government consolidates relations with Central and Non-Central Governments, International Organisations and other organisations; it promotes economic and commercial capacities and projects its

powers in different spheres. This is aided by the international links of autonomous organisations and public companies (SPRI, IHOBE, EVE...).

Foreign centres: Presence in other countries has been consolidated with the centres in Brussels, Mexico, Chile and Argentina, and the one scheduled in Venezuela. In the medium term, other centres will be opened in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Moreover, the SPRI has a network of Standing Offices in ten countries and a network of local agents in other points.

Foreign agreements: Signing agreements with foreign organisations makes it possible to formalise cooperation in questions of mutual interest. The instruments are subscribed with Non-Central Governments, Central Governments (Chilean, Argentinean, Cuban ministries...), International Organisations (UNESCO, ACNUR, UNITAR...) and other organisations (foundations, universities, NGOs...). The spheres of collaboration are the economy, trade, agriculture, fisheries, health, tourism, the environment, justice, interior, technology, infrastructures, education, culture, etc. One hundred and nine (109) instruments had been subscribed by the end of 2004, to which those closed in 2005 must be added.

Multilateral interregional cooperation and the formation of associations in Europe: These activities are for setting up exchanges, conducting joint actions and bringing demands to the attention of European States and institutions. The most prominent organisation is the Conference of the Regions with Legislative Powers (REG LEG). The Basque Country is a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Powers of Europe (CPLRE), the Assembly of the Regions of Europe (ARE), the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CRPM), Association of European Border Regions (ARFE) and European Multisectoral Association for Cooperation and Development of Mountain Territories (Euromontana), amongst others.

Cross border cooperation: Conducted with adjacent territories attempting to overcome state borders, which makes it possible to increase relations between the historic Basque territories of Euskal Herria belonging to different States. It is a bilateral cooperation between Aquitaine-Euskadi, through agreements and programmes to promote economic, social and cultural exchanges, to develop projects and promote links between organisations. In the multilateral plane, there is the Working Community of the Pyrenees (CTP) with Navarra, Aragon, Catalonia, Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées, Languedoc-Roussillon and Andorra, collaborating in the economic, social, tourist, cultural areas and in infrastructure questions.

Worldwide networks of Non-Central Governments: Association-forming is also articulated between territories of several continents. The Basque Country is part of the Network of Regional Government for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), Forum of Solidary Regional Governments (FGRS) and Network of Local Authorities for the Information Society (IT4ALL). The latter participates in the World Summits on the Information Society organised by the United Nations. Financial contributions are made to the Digital Solidarity Fund (FSD).

Attention to Basque communities abroad: One priority is to maintain contacts with the communities, euskal etxeak and federations. A key component is the Law on Relations with Basque Communities and Basque Centres Abroad and their development in terms of regulations, materialised in the World Congresses of Basque Communities and Quadrennial Plans of Institutional Action. Besides the subsidies of aid to the centres for infrastructure, equipment and activities, other specific programs have been set up for social aid, young people (the Gaztemundu Programme), training, research, publications, etc.

Cooperation for development with impoverished countries: It is another prominent action sustained by the Fund for Cooperation and Aid to Development (FOCAD), with a contribution of 0.7% from the annual operating budget. It is managed by the Directorate for Cooperation for Development of the Department of Housing and Social Affairs. The aid programmes are structured in several modalities, with the participation of NGOs and non-profit organisations, which is complemented with other programmes (Basque Youth Voluntary Workers, grants for voluntary workers and professionals...). Its approach will improve when the Basque Parliament adopts the Law of Cooperation for Development.

Participation in the European Union: By geographical location, context, incidence in matters of autonomous competence in community legislation, etc., it is essential to guarantee, and if possible increase, the channels for real participation in the EU. They are: multilateral agreements through the Conference for Affairs Related with the European Communities (CARCE); Bilateral Commission of Cooperation Administration of the State-Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country for Affairs Related with the European Communities; presence in the Committee of the Regions (CdR); appointment of experts to the Consultative Committees of the European Commission; and the incorporation of an autonomous minister in matters of their competence into the Spanish delegation at the meetings of some formations of the Council of the EU.

Brussels: in the heart of the European Union

The main activity of the Centre in Brussels concerns actions before the Belgian State and the institutions of the European Union, including the monitoring of the decision-making process with regard to the legislative initiatives of the EU affecting the statutory competences and other interests of the Basque Autonomous Community. The eleven experts and scholarship holders of the Centre work to identify topics, obtain information and prepare specific reports with the information generated by the community institutions or their organs. The socioeconomic, sectorial and professional interests of the BAC are also defended to the extent that community initiatives impact these interests.

The Centre also offers infrastructure to set up meetings or interviews between the socioeconomic partners and the Basque autonomous authorities with the institutions and organ of the EU, and generally speaking liaising and contacts between the Basque public institutions and the community administrations derived from the presentation of projects, participation in community programmes, participation in calls for proposals, etcetera.

Another task carried out by the Centre is technical assistance, as a logistics centre to support the public and private organisations of the Basque Autonomous Community with a view to acting at community level, together with information, training and dissemination of community issues through conferences, colloquia, seminars, courses or periodic publications. Last but not least, the Centre also works in the promotion of the Basque Autonomous Community abroad, as well as collaborating fluently and continuously with other offices of European regional organisations such as the Länder, Regions, Communities, counties, Municipalities and cities established in the capital of Europe.

Moreover, it also maintains a close relation with the Basques resident in Brussels, in Belgium or its area of influence, Benelux, and fluid professional contact with individuals who, in the different structures of the institutions and organs of the UE, always provide the best support in approaching these echelons before which the Autonomous Community is represented, and viceversa; also included are other calls to conferences offered by high-ranking Basque authorities on their specific topics.

«Bruselatik gure
interes
sozioekonomiko,
sektorial eta
profesionalak
defendatzen dira»



Ibon Mendibelzua, Basque Contry delegate in Brussels with Mikel Antón, Director of European Affairs.



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Mexico: the first official representation opened in Latin America

The Euskadi Centre in Mexico was officially opened in October 2003 by the Lehendakari Ibarretxe. It is the first Office of Official Representation opened in Latin America within the expansion strategy implemented by the General Secretariat of Foreign Action of the Basque Government.

The Centre is the fruit of several years of relations between Mexico and Euskadi, which date back to 1993 and the creation of the Basque-Mexican Institute of Development. This Institute was created as a Civil Association by Basque residents in Mexico, with the support of the Basque Government, and its objective was to open up new possibilities of cooperation and development between both countries.

The Centre is an organ of representation of the Autonomous Community of Euskadi in matters of Relations with Basque Communities, Cooperation for Development and Defence and the Promotion of Multi-Sectorial Interests in the sphere of competences that fall to the Autonomous Community of Euskadi.

In terms of the Basque community, the Centre's objective is to protect and defend the rights of Basque citizens abroad in the legal, occupational and health areas, as well as social aid and the new Diaspora. Although powers correspond to the Spanish State, the Centre provides information to any Basque on request on topics ranging from legal, occupational and health areas to social aid and the new Diaspora.

In the institutional section, the Centre strives to secure an active

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«Herrialde honek Latinoamerikan irekitako lehenengo ordezkari ofizial irekiari abegi egin zion. Ibarretxe Lehendakariak inauguratu zuen»

participation in the most relevant areas of common interest by means of interinstitutional cooperation, the exchange of experts, contributions by Basques to current issues in Mexico, dissemination of the reality of Euskadi and dealings with embassies and multilateral organisations.

As for culture, support is provided to the Basque Centre of Mexico in the annual organisation of a Basque culture week, as well as the presence of the Basque Channel in Mexico, acting as a link between programming proposals of the Diaspora and ETB.

It also collaborates with the University through academic exchanges (agreements between universities) in order to disseminate the Basque political, economic and administrative reality in the main universities of Mexico. Moreover, it promotes the creation of Basque language and culture courses in collaboration with HABE and the Department of Culture of the Basque Government.

With regard to tourism, it collaborates with the International Tourist Promotion Area of SPRI to promote Euskadi as a tourist destination for the Mexicans. With this objective in mind it participated in the World Exotic Fair held in Monterrey between November 27 and 30 this year, and provides wholesalers, tour-operators and travel agencies in Mexico with updated information on Euskadi.

In the realm of economic and business interests, the Centre develops all the aids provided by the Department of Industry to foster the internationalisation of Basque companies, and constant contact is maintained with Basque companies already established in Mexico in order to provide them with a better service.



Chile: different activities in different areas

The opening of the Centre in Chile, in June 2004, arose from a latent need for relations between both countries and with the Basque Diaspora. Its inauguration featured the presence of the Vice-lehendakari Idoia Zenarruzabeitia

Currently, this Centre operates in the institutional arena, cooperation for development, commerce-business, culture and relations with the Diaspora.

In the institutional area, memoranda of understanding have been signed with the Ministry of Economy, Agriculture, Health and Planning and



«Ordezkaritza honetan, erakunde arloko eginkizunak eskaintzen dira: garapen kooperazioa, komertzial- enpresariala kulturala, eta baita diasporarekin harremanak ere»

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Development. One example of the intensity of this bilateral cooperation was the holding of the 1st Mixed Euskadi-Chile Commission last October. With the Ministries, the Centre was the forerunner of the different Memoranda of Understanding, and today its function focuses on the design and development of the different programmes that afford these agreements contents.

The objective is to continue to promote this bilateral cooperation by developing, on the one hand, the memoranda already signed and on the other by exploring other areas of collaboration, such as vocational training and the new technologies. Moreover, in view of the development of Chile, lines of triangular Euskadi-Chile-third country cooperation are being studied.

Currently, the function of the Centre is fundamental for providing assessment to organisations that need to set up a program of cooperation and aid to development, with a large number of queries, and distributing the Decrees that regulate the funds.

In the commercial-business arena, the Centre performs a twofold function: to guide and support the business missions that visit the country, provide support to the internationalisation of companies and aid their implementation in the country (at the moment there are 28 Basque companies in Chile between sellers and manufacturers), as well as represent the interests of the BEC in Chile, being the catalyst for groups of companies that visit Euskadi, with the business and institutional promotion that this produces. Similarly, support is being provided to the constitution of an association of entrepreneurs of Basque origin, Emprebas.

Jointly with other Basque Institutions in Chile, the Centre is the driving force boosting cultural actions within the Basque setting; its contribution is indispensable in the definition of cultural exhibitions, shows or activities: local partners are sourced to stage



Koldo Atxutegi

the event, in order to gain structure, impact in the media and greatly reduce the costs that any cultural event involves. A clear example of this activity is the Basque Cinema Exhibition (three editions to date), as well as other different exhibitions.

One very relevant fact, thanks to the collaboration of the Centre and the Department of Culture, has been the achievement of providing Basque Language and Culture courses to some 140 learners in four Chilean universities.

Relations with the Diaspora

In Chile there are two recognised Basque Centres and a great amount of people who feel Basque, whereby the Centre's role with the Diaspora is basic.

On the one hand it covers the dissemination of the Basque Government's aid programmes for cases of extreme need, as well as for training. At the same time, and jointly with the Basque Centres, cultural activities and institutional visits are promoted.

This Institution also keeps the Basque community up to date on news and events by means of bulletins or circulars from Euskadi, as well as on the different activities staged in Chile.



The new Head Offices of the Basque Government in Argentina are located in Port Wood (Buenos Aires). On the left, Marieli Díaz de Mendibil Gómez de Segura.

Argentina: Marieli Díaz de Mendibil, newly appointed Delegate

The appointment of Marieli Díaz de Mendibil Gómez de Segura as Delegate of the Basque Government in Argentina last September heralded the start-up of the Basque Centre in that country one month later. Until the Centre becomes fully operational, she will be performing her functions at the Head Offices of the Basque-Argentinean Institute of Cooperation and Development (IVACD) located in the City of Buenos Aires."

Hailing from Vitoria-Gasteiz, Marieli Díaz de Mendibil was elected deputy member to the Juntas Generales de Araba, and later became a City Councillor in Vitoria-Gasteiz. In 2003, she was appointed Director of Consumer Affairs of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, a post she held until her current appointment to the Cabinet of Ministers at the proposal of the Lehendakari Ibarretxe.

The National Basque Week held in Necochea was the first official meeting of the Delegate and Argentinean Basques.

Madrid: the representation of the Government before the State institutions

The Centre of the Basque Government in Madrid was created in January 2003 and its main objective is the institutional representation of the Basque Government in Madrid and the dissemination of the Basque reality in this capital city.

Generally speaking the Centre is not a decision-making organisation. On the contrary, it acts as another political echelon for relations with the different decision-making and opinion centres. Therefore, and basically speaking, its main characteristic is its activity as an intermediation centre in Madrid.

Thus, it has the following characteristics:

It is a political and social information centre of Euskadi that acts vis-à-vis the State overall and any public and private, foreign or community institutions represented in the capital of Spain.

It is an observatory of the Spanish political reality, both of present and possible future trends.

It is a centre for the dissemination of the everyday facts and events of the Basque Government and which happen in Euskadi.

These signs of identity are embodied in the development of different functions and activities.

The Centre maintains regular and scheduled contacts with the different institutions of the State, the political parties with Parliamentary representation, as well as with the different embassies accredited in Madrid. In this same sphere of activity, it liaises with the state and foreign mass media at editorial and "opinion creating", or columnist, level.

It monitors all Parliamentary activity in Congress and in the Senate both with regard to plenaries, basically those pertaining to the control of the Government, as well as the different parliamentary commissions, drafting weekly reports which are forwarded to the Government of Vitoria-Gasteiz.

This Centre also attends to the development of the

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Peio Caballero Lasquibar

**«Ordezkaritzak Estatuaren
beste erakundeekin
kontaktuak, programatuak
eta aldirokoak, izaten ditu»**

policy of the European Union and the foreign policy of the State in matters affecting the interests of the Basque Country. Similarly, the Centre supports the Basque Government in developing its functions vis-à-vis the central Administration, preparing, supporting and monitoring the activities required of it by the different Departments and acting as a link with the different Ministries.

Another of its tasks consists of ensuring that the different embassies make official visits to the Basque Country. To do so, it deals with everything related to their commercial and industrial missions, which it schedules and coordinates. In this regard, it surveys the areas of common commercial or industrial interest or for cooperation to enable the Government to promote meetings

between the sectors in question.

Part of this activity includes the writing of different reports on the economic and industrial reality of the Basque Country which are sent to the different economic attaches of the Embassies and foreign press accredited in Madrid.

Attendance at the different cultural activities in Madrid with a political basis, basically in the different opinion forums, is another of the areas regarded as being of interest by this centre.

Basque Centres in the world

Some research work indicates that the first Euskal Etxea was founded in Montevideo at the end of the 19th Century, and that the Laurak of Buenos Aires the second.

A recent publication by a Cuban teacher informs of a previous one, albeit only a few years earlier, founded in Havana. In any event, in the three cases we are talking about a specific decade: the decade of the 70s of the 19th Century.

It was the great Basque-Peruvian journalist Paco Igartua who provided new data in this regard at the Congress of Basque Communities held in Vitoria- Gasteiz in 1995, expounding the text of the Articles of Association of the "Ilustre Hermandad Vascongada de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu" set up in Lima in 1612 by a group of Basques with the aim of mutual aid, according to its own articles of association: "Insomuch as the Congregation founded by the knights that reside in this City of the Kings of Peru hailing Biscay and the Province of Guipuzkoa, and descending from them, and the naturals of the province of Alava, Kingdom of Navarra...". And it continues: "...it is hereby ordered, to honour this Congregation, that anyone received in it hail from the aforementioned parts and places... to carry out work of mutual aid between each other and with those of their nation".

One century later, a new association was created in Mexico with the same objective, building the great Basque School for the education of girls from families of limited means. This school is still working very well to this day as an educational centre. Even today, it is an institution of great prestige, and is the only one that has been respected by all the Mexican governments.

At the end of the 19th Century the Basque association-forming movement spread to Cuba, Uruguay and Argentina, under a common name: LAURAK BAT (four in one).

Subsequently, as of the first decade of the 19th Century, and particularly as of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), there was greater intercommunication between the Basque Country and its emigrants thanks to the thousands of Basques that were welcomed in different countries in Europe and America. Consequently, the number of Basque Centres increased

From the philosophical standpoint, there can be no doubt that the Basque Centres are historic examples of the association-forming movement among Basques who



[JOSU LEGARRETA]

one day decided to emigrate or were obliged to do so. It has often been said that one of the traits of the Basque is their individualism. However, the history of Basque emigration shows quite the opposite: meetings in inns, hotels and guest houses gave rise, in a second phase, to the creation of associations at their own or rented venues, maintaining relations with the institutions of their native country and disseminating Basque culture.

In this regard, and despite being apolitical institutions, according to their statutes, the Euskal Etxeak have always evinced, one way or another, and from frequently different ideological perspectives, their interest in the political situation of their People. Their very names are proof of this: at the end of the 19th Century, before Basque nationalism, the name "laurak bat" was a reference to a foralista (autonomous) conception of the Basque Country. As of the first decade of the 19th Century, the founding partners agreed to baptise their institutions with names with a broader geographic and ideological significance, such as "Zazpirak Bat", "Euskal Erria", "Denak Bat", "Danak Anaiak", "Euzko Etxea", etc.

For the Basque Government in exile, led by the Lehendakari Aguirre, and after his death by the Lehendakari Jesús María Leizaola, they were true instruments of foreign action, both in political, cultural and economic aspects. Perhaps these relations fell away somewhat between 1975 and 1980, when the Basque political institutions focused mainly on the restoration of the democratic system. In 1982, an important congress of Basque Centres was held in Donostia, and since then others have been held, some in Argentina, in the cities of Bahia Blanca and Necochea, and others in Euskadi in 1995, 1999 and 2003.

Another important reference of these Basque Government/Basque Centres relations are the trips made annually to the Basque Centres by the Lehendakari, the Vice-lehendakari and/or some Ministers.

These relations are regulated by Law /8/1994, of 27 May, with a reference both to "Basque Communities" and to "Basque Centres". We now have 153 Euskal Etxeak recognised by the Basque Government and located in 20 countries: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, France, Italy, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

II World Summit in Bilbao



From left to right, Akiko Miyahara (representative of UNITAR); Elisabeth Gateau (secretary general of CGLU); José Ignacio Zudaire (Vice-minister of Industry of the Basque Government); Ana Agirre (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism); Joseph Sarr (coordinator of the Summit of Bilbao in Africa); and Karmelo Sainz De la Maza (chairman of Eudel).

Eusko Jaurlaritzak antolatuta, Bilboko Euskalduna Jauregian, Azaroaren 9, 10 eta 11an, bi mila aginte baino gehiago bildu ziren II. Hirien eta Agintari lokalen Informazioaren Gizarteari buruzko Munduko

Goi-bileran. ONUren babespean, ospatu ziren jardunaldi hauetan, "brecha digital" diotena eta txiroen eta aberatsen arteko diferentziak gutxitzeko Ekintza plana garatzeko eta deklarazio politikoa egin dute.

The local authorities seek to make access to the Internet universal

More than two thousand regional leaders met at the II World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society, sponsored by the UNO and organised with the collaboration of the Basque Government, held in the Palacio Euskalduna de Bilbao between 9 and 11 November to try to reduce the so-called "Digital Gap" that separates rich and poor in access to the new technologies. These working days culminated in the approval of a political declaration and the development of an action plan.

The commitments taken on in Bilbao were forwarded to the heads of State of the whole world that met one week

later at another summit held in Tunisia for the same purpose. In it they call for "recognition of the role of the local and regional authorities in developing the Information Society" and "the promotion of financial instruments that help to implement these programmes".

The action plan is materialised in four general principles. One of the solutions posed by the representatives is to multiply the participation of all institutions and of course to involve both the developing countries and the industrialised countries. Similarly, they deem it fundamental to establish a nexus between the local and the global, reinforce popular participation and afford priority to actions rather than to institutional development.

The political declaration approved in Bilbao particularly underlines the fact that the development of the Information Society should particularly benefit "the more underprivileged groups, people with disabilities and those who live in the more isolated areas".

ICT and sustainable development

In this regard priorities are established. At local and regional level they commit to using information and communication technologies (ICT) as an instrument "for sustainable development", to promoting free software and the implementation of local digital agendas, as well as to promoting collaboration between the local and regional authorities, something that could be done with the IT4ALL structure, the World Association comprised of 2,000 regions and cities.

Although the meeting reached a high degree of consensus and made it possible to "listen to the voice of the local authorities", according to the subsecretary general of the UNO and the CEO of Unitar, Marcel Boisard, there are still discrepancies between the representatives of the developed world and the underprivileged countries as to who will control the Internet.

Yoshio Utsumi, secretary of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and of the World Summit on Information (CSMI) of Tunisia, provided some data that reflect the inequality of opportunities for all the inhabitants of the planet in the 21st Century: 800,000 towns or villages in the world do not have a telephone and one thousand million people do not have access to the Internet; 80% of Internet users live in developed countries and a further 20% may consider themselves lucky to be able to use the benefits of the Information Society when people around them barely have enough to eat.

Utsumi drew attention to the importance of the International Solidarity Fund, created in March to take computing to everyone, with the participation of 17 governments in order to support businesses initiatives that develop new technologies. The money of the Fund is allocated to financial projects of the IT4ALL network, such as the one developed in Mauritania, where they have deployed a "teleconsultation" and "tediagnosis" plan to prevent people from having to travel long distances to see a doctor. In this country, the children of marginalised districts have learnt to use.

The Internet thanks to a public cyber-centre.

Initiatives like this one can be rolled out in the so-called "third world". In Bilbao, the role that technology companies and their R&D departments can play in this task was tabled, as was the case of the computing giant



Ana Agirre, with Viviane Reding, European commissioner for The Information Society.



**Bertako agintek
Interneterako sarbidea
Munduko mailakoa
izatea nahi dute.**

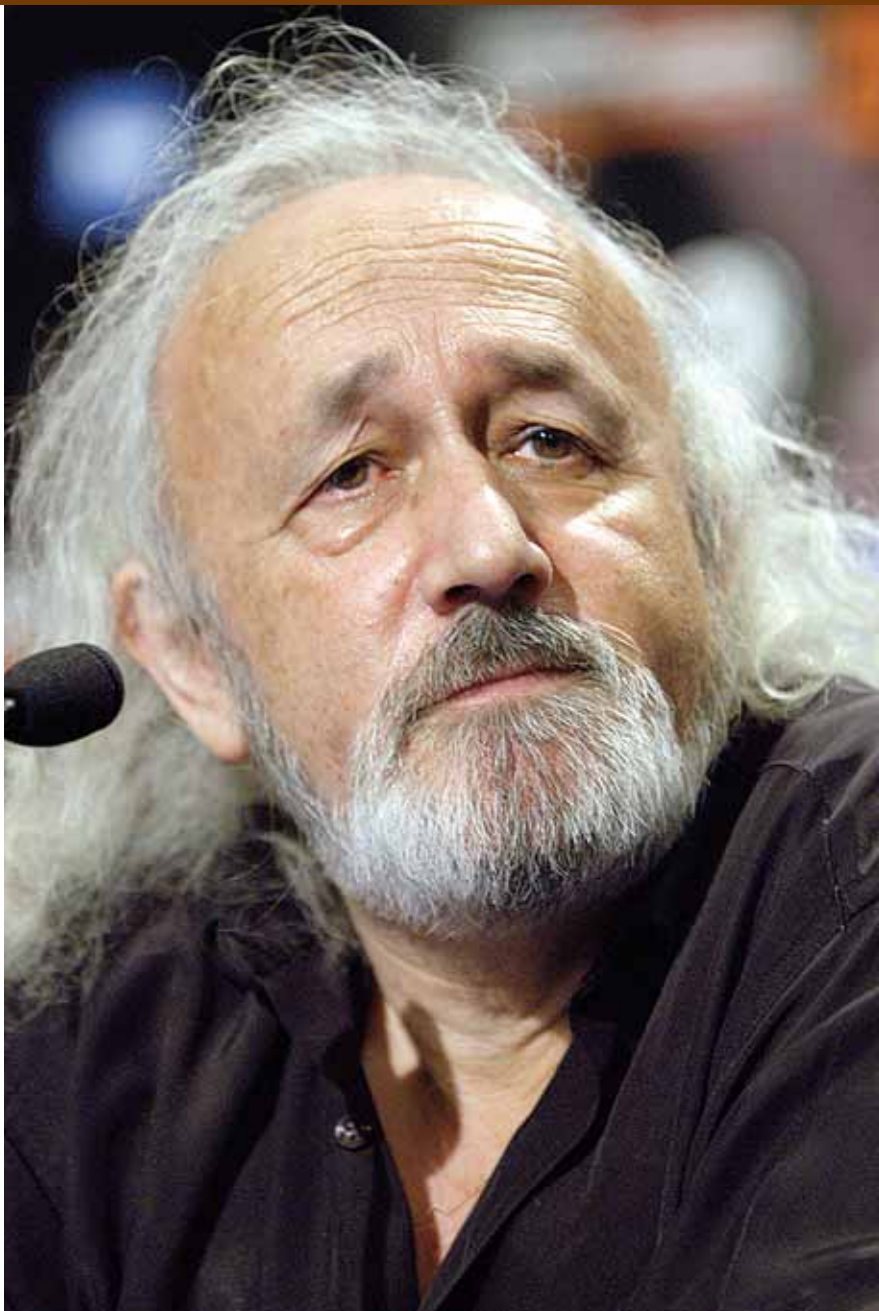
Microsoft, which has already announced two 2,000-million-dollar initiatives in five years to reduce the digital gap and to bring the poorer countries on line in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme.

Ángel Ros, chairman of the Commission of New Technologies of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and mayor of the city of Lleida (Catalonia) went even further and referred to the possibilities of the new technologies "being regarded as a public utility, just like water and light".

The UNO's stance of engaging regional governments and making them responsible in the fight to achieve the so-called "digital democracy" was made clear from the beginning of the Summit, when a video was shown with declarations by its secretary general Koffi Annan. In it he declared that the information technologies are fundamental tools for developing the objectives of the millennium. He recognised that there is still a gap in access to them between the rich and poor countries but also inside countries, in rural areas, "which is where the local authorities take on an important role. They must apply their base knowledge to design solutions and promote local business activity".

The Lehendakari Ibarretxe, who participated in the opening ceremony of the Summit, also expressed his promise that the Basque Country "will do its utmost to prevent information technologies from opening a gap of exclusion between some countries and others".

MONTXO ARMENDARIZ *cinema director*



EITZ GOROSTEGI



Bere laguna den Bernardo Atxagaren eleberraren zati batzuetan oinarritua "Obaba" pelikulak, Oscar sarietan ingeles ez den hizkuntzako filmen sailean Espainako Estatuak ordezkatzeko du. Nafar honek ez du lorik galduko berri honengatik, jada 1998an "Secretos del corazón" filmarengatik sari-izendapen bera jaso zuen eta. Nahiz eta bere lehentasunen artean Hollywooden lan egitea ez izan, Armendarizek, "jende gehiagok ikusteko" eta "gure zinematografia ahulari laguntzeko" izango dela dio.

«I don't lose sleep over the Oscars»

His film "Obaba", based on several of the stories by his friend, the writer Bernardo Atxaga, will represent Spain in the Oscars in the non-English-speaking films category. The news does not cause this man from Navarra, a veteran in similar experiences, to lose any sleep. In 1998 he already gleaned first-hand experience in the much sought-after awards when he was a finalist with his "Secrets of the heart", and although he states that working in Hollywood is not a main priority, he

admits that the nomination will help his film to be seen by more people and to "help such a weak cinema industry as ours".

"Obaba" was premiered at the last Festival de Cine de Donostia, although it received no award. Now this nomination will be the best possible commercial launch, for film and director alike. "The panels –states Armendariz– are like the viewers: some may like a film

ELI GOROSTEGI

which others may find terrible. The Academy chose this film because in its opinion it is the one that represents it best, whereas the jury of San Sebastián chose others that responded to cinema values according to its criteria".

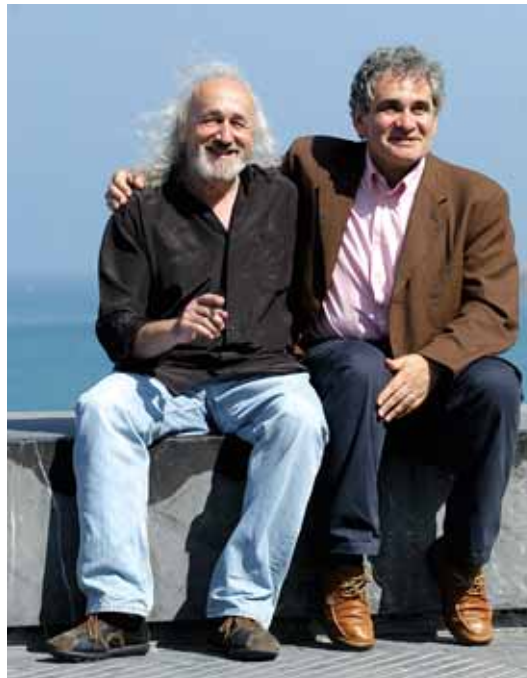
A nomination like this takes him to the international forefront.

Whether he wins the Oscar or not, this nomination will serve above all for the film to be seen by a lot more spectators. I also think that it may come as a push for such a weak cinema industry as ours, and what I personally like most is that it will allow me to choose the projects I really care about in the future. In 1998 I had a spell in Hollywood with "Secrets of the heart". That experience allowed me to meet people from the industry, make friends, see how they work... so I won't be losing any sleep thinking going back to the Oscars.

"Obaba" is based on the most read work by Bernardo Atxaga, which won the Critics' Award in 1989, and has been translated to twenty languages. Don't you worry about the conversion of such a literary thing into the language of the cinema?

When all is said and done, all films are adaptations. Some are easier because they are based on an original script that should be translated into images, and others are rather more complicated, since they are based on literary works and each reader has their own vision of the landscape and of the characters in their head. The risk involved in making these adaptations for the cinema is that these images that you have transferred to the screen are not what the reader has in mind. I really wanted to know Bernardo's ideas and what he thought of the film. When I saw him coming out of the session smiling I heaved a sigh of relief.

His films defend what is local and particular. He does that in this film, where the action unfolds in the small town of Obaba. Isn't there a risk of your



Armendariz with Bernardo Atxaga.



«This film talks about universal things such as human behaviour in the face of loneliness, love, violence, the loss of social and cultural roots, the passing of time and how it affects people»

stories being understood by a local target, not reaching everyone?

There could be nothing more local than a western and everyone understands them. "Obaba" has been seen abroad, there were no surprising readings, points of view which perhaps a spectator from Euskadi may not be able to provide as they are directly involved in the knowledge of this reality. This film talks about universal things such as human behaviour in the face of loneliness, love, violence, the loss of social and cultural roots, the passing of time and how it affects people. These questions know no borders, although the story takes place over the last fifty years and is limited to an isolated village.

In "Tasio", "Secrets of the heart" and to a lesser degree in "Obaba", the main characters are children: is there an explanation for this constant return to childhood?

The truth is that I don't know why there are so many children in my films, in fact I was not aware of it and I might need to see a psychoanalyst to answer

this one. The truth is that childhood is a fundamental part of life, and marks us forever. When you are older you remember the smells, the colours of your childhood very vividly. I keep them here, in my memory, and they remain there even although you have lived in other places and in other cultures. They are associated with our most intense and intimate experiences. In "Obaba", I wanted to show how people change over time so I took a look at the passage from childhood to adulthood.

What was the relationship between Atxaga and you like in this process?

He gave us his support from the outset. He was very generous as of the moment he read the first version of the script. He was so into the project that he gave us total freedom and told us we could count on him for anything. There was also a great degree of complicity between us because we live in a very similar universe, we have the same way of feeling and understanding life.

The delights and shadows of cesta punta

The City Council of Gernika has published the book "Historia de la cesta punta" written by Gonzalo Beaskoetxea, Olympic champion in this modality of pelota vasca in the Mexico 68 Games. The book's 245 pages take us through the almost 150 years of life of this sport which is not going through its best moments, but which has been played in the five continents. Spells of splendour have given way to hard times over this century and a half in which the Jai Alai courts generated a lot of money. Before the arrival of consumerism, China had two courts in Tientsin and in Shanghai. The latter employed a thousand people. The Miami Jai Alai had a capacity for 25,000 spectators. Due to different circumstances, including the two World Wars and the government's interest in controlling betting - explains this man from Gernika in his book - cesta punta was limited to the United States. In this country, according to the author, Al Capone once said that he had bribed judges, senators and policemen, but not the pelotaris, whom he defined as "Basque saints". The sport peaked between the 50s and the 80s, with some fifteen courts in Florida. However, in 1988 taxes on companies were increased and the pelotaris' wages fell as a result. The players' union called its members out on a strike that lasted three years, and over this period those who had been loyal to the sport eventually found other sports to bet on such as horse racing, and when the strike was called off the public simply did not return. This was the beginning of a crisis that also affected Euskadi and which has lasted to this day.



Aupa Etxebeste!
Asier Altuna
Telmo Esnal



The film «Aupa Etxebeste» captures the public interest

The film "Aupa Etxebeste" captures the public interest

The Basque comedy "Aupa Etxebeste" by Telmo Esnal and Asier Altuna has become one of this year's money spinners in Euskadi. It is the first film filmed totally in Basque since 'Kareletik' in 1987. Having received an award at the International Cinema Festival of San Sebastián, where it was shown with an imaginative deployment of actors and even with a Music Group, this satire on vanity won the Premio de la Juventud and the Premio Ibaia awarded by the Association of Independent Audiovisual Producers of the Basque Country as the riskiest production over the last twelve months.

Its main actors, Ramón Aguirre, Elena Irureta and Paco Sagarzazu, take the spectator to the Etxebeste family, which has just been ruined. The comical side of the situation arises when the members of the

family, totally broke, stay at home and pretend that they have gone on their summer holidays. All their miseries and lies will be patent 24 hours a day, although thanks to their sincerity and affection they will eventually have the best and most fun holidays of their life.

The success of this film has catapulted its new directors, who hitherto had worked on minor productions, into the limelight. Asier Altuna participated in workshops on direction, scripts and production in Caracas, Vitoria, San Sebastián and San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba). In 2002 he wrote, directed and produced the short film "Topeka", which won awards at several festivals. Telmo Esnal has worked as a cinema and television technician and collaborated with Altuna in the script and direction of the shorts "Txotx", which won the Premio de la Filmoteca Vasca award for the Best Short Film in 1997, and "40 ezetz".



Double performance by the Orfeón Donostiarra in Caracas

The Orfeón Donostiarra will travel to Caracas next January to offer two concerts conducted by Claudio Abbado with the Orquesta Simón Bolívar. The Teatro Teresa Carreño of the capital of Venezuela will be the scenario where both musical groups will perform Beethoven's Ninth on the 14th and 15th. This will be the third time that the choir - regarded

as one of the best in Europe, and with more than a century of experience - will cross the Atlantic to perform in the American continent. The reason for their not travelling outside Europe is because the Orfeón is an amateur choir, i.e., its members do not make a living from music but rather from their respective professions and it is difficult for them to

get holidays or special leave to attend international commitments that mean spending several days away from home.

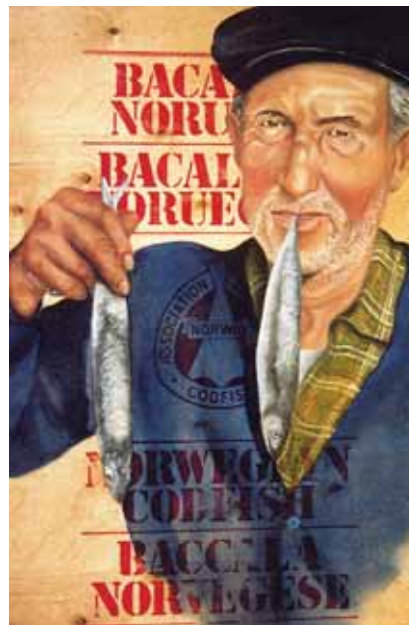
The Orfeón first performed in America in 1980. It was in the Robin Hood Theatre of the West of Philadelphia with Green's Requiem, conducted by Rafael Frühbeck of Burgos with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and in the Ground of the Capitol of Washington with the same maestro, the National Symphony, where it performed "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Mendelssohn and "Carmina Burana" by Carl Orff. The second occasion was in 2003, when the choir went to Mexico to perform in the Nezahualcoyotl of the Mexican capital and in the festival of the city of Morelia.

Moreover, this third trip to America coincides with the release of the "Latino" disc which the choir has recorded with the Symphony Orchestra of Euskadi on songs from the 40s that became very popular on the other side of the Atlantic

Lurdes Arrechea, playing with looks and recycled materials

Five years ago, the Mexican painter Lurdes Arrechea Indart decided to exhibit her work in the valley of Baztán, where her parents are from, and last summer she repeated the experience with an exhibition in Elizondo and another in Pamplona where she showcased her latest ideas based on the human look and expressions, playing with different recyclable materials. Married to a native of Baztán, her father was born in Elbetea and her mother in Mexico, although she also descended from people from Baztán, and her relationship with this valley goes back to her childhood, and her childhood memories are closely bound to the freedom of those summers when she would swim in the river, play in the street and ride her bike, which she could not do in Mexico City.

A Graduate in the History of Art



from the Universidad Iberoamericana, she studied plastic arts in the National School of Mexico, becoming familiar with different techniques and styles, and learnt the trade in the workshops of artists and delved into the secrets of figurative expressionism. In Baztán she was remembered for her water colour phase, although this time she has surprised her followers with something

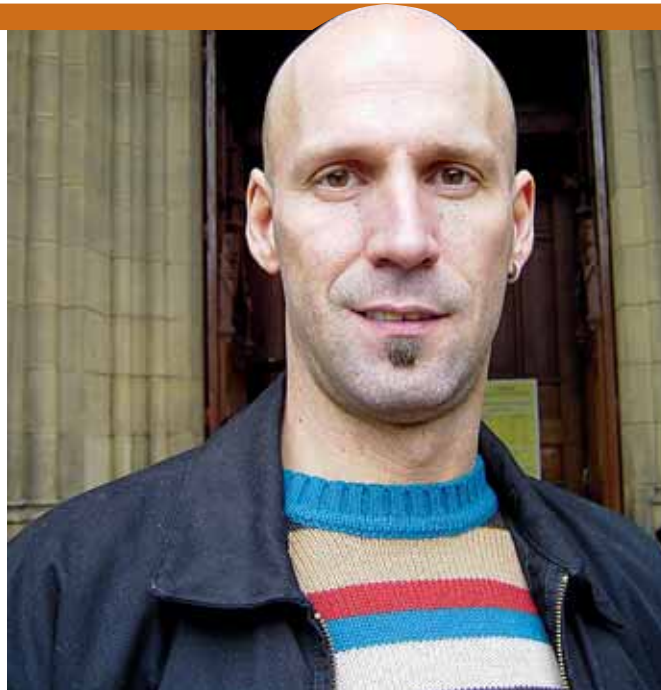
that has nothing to do with the landscapes and portraits painted some five years ago. Her latest work is made from recyclable objects because what she likes most is "experimenting with materials. I reuse pieces of wood from the boxes that have carried cod from Norway to Mexico or sheets from drums and I love to transform things that have been abandoned into art".

Culture advisor to the Bank of Mexico, she has been coordinating the cultural area in the Basque Centre of Mexico for five years now, where she has organised numerous exhibitions and gives wood engraving courses. Lurdes Arrechea has managed to earn a living from painting thanks to portraits commissioned to her, although even so she admits that sometimes her husband has to pay the bills when she cannot make ends meet. "The truth is that I never bet on a sure-fire winner, and I would rather experiment than sell paintings that I do not feel, even though what I do is less commercial". For the moment she is obsessed with capturing expressions and looks: "It is a fixation, and I don't know if there is a psychiatric explanation, but I would rather not know".

JAVIER BILBAO

Administrativo

Venezuela jaioterrian "el vasco" deitzen zioten eta, hemen, orain hiru urtetik dagoen arren, Donostian, ea kanarioa, andaluza, edo, modu despektibo batean, "sudaca" den galdetzen diote. Txikitatik bi herritartasun mantentzen dituen Javierri, beti atzerritarra sentitzeak, bere arbasoen kultura ezagutzeko grina eta bere erroei burizko jakinmina pizteko balio izan dio.



A Basque from Venezuela

In his native Venezuela, he was "the Basque", and in Donostia, where he has lived for three years now, some people ask him if he is from the Canary Islands, Andalusia, or in the worst case, he is dismissed as a "sudaca" (pejorative word for South American). For Javier, who has dual nationality, feeling foreign since he was small led him to take an interest in his roots and the culture of his ancestors.

"The history of the emigration of his family goes back to the fifties, in the post-war period. "My father and mother –recalls Javier– decided to go to Venezuela when they were single, although each one did so separately because they didn't know each other, although they were both from Ondarroa. They met in the Basque Centre of Caracas and it was love at first sight: they were engaged within weeks and married within six months". The couple had four children. First came Miren Guruzne, then Koldo, Begoña and finally Javier.

The Bilbao-Campos family has been closely linked to the Basque Community in Venezuela. "The Basque community that lived in the Venezuelan city of Valencia was

numerous and used to meet on the shooting range where my father worked as a concierge. Here they went hunting and fishing, his favourite pastimes, and this is where the idea of creating a Euskal Etxea took shape. It started with a small dance group and we eventually adapted to the culture of our parents. We used to play at pala every day after school"

His parents never lost contact with Ondarroa or Euskadi, which they have visited several times. These visits helped Javier to get to know the Basque Country better, which he had "rather idealised" from what he had been told. This is why he did not encounter any major surprises three years ago when he decided to apply for a grant on the Euskal Herrirantz programme sponsored by the Basque Government. "Obviously there is a change of culture and people are also different. I came from the Caribbean - where we are warmer - and here the people are very reserved, although at first sight you realise that they are very kind. I have also perceived a certain wariness of foreigners which in many cases disappears when I prove that I am equally or even more knowledgeable in everything that goes

on in Euskadi as any Basque". This barrier, explains Javier, is disappointing or even hurts when you are looking for a job or a flat to rent. "When they hear my accent they usually say they will have nothing to do with "sudacas". The situation is rather ironic, particularly because in Venezuela he was "the Basque". Over there, this adjective was used positively: "Basques have always been associated with honesty, it was a synonym of hardworking people. 80% of them prospered because they worked hard, they fought hard, they forged a future for themselves and also pre-empted the type of economic situation that Venezuela is being hit by now".

The two vocational training courses he has done in Donostia in Administration and Finances have helped him to complete his academic training, but the work experience he had in an automobile company did not lead to a job in administration, so he had had to turn to hotel and catering: "They prefer women, so I have been working as a waiter for a year and two months now, I had worked as a waiter for four years in the States and I like it a lot. My objective is to find a job in what I studied for because I think the Basque Government gave me a chance to work in a job which as yet does not exist".



AINHOA MENDIZABAL

Voluntary worker in Thika, Kenya

**«Beren hizkuntzan
mintzatzen saiatzen
zarenean, beren
kulturarekiko interesa
duzuela adierazten diezu,
eta, nahiz eta oso gaizki
egin, oso ondo hartzen
zaituzte»**

«I want to go back»

Ainhoa spent three months in Thika, in Kenya. It is a small city an hour away from Nairobi. She studied Environmental and Agricultural Biology, and then Technical Agricultural Engineering, specialising in Fruit and Vegetable Growing and Gardening. She went to University in Iruñea and collaborated with the Acción Verapaz Iruñea NGO in awareness-raising and other activities. "Since then— she states— I have been interested in the world of cooperation, although I felt that I needed experience, I wanted to know the protagonists, their thoughts and vision of life".

Thus, along with some friends from different young people's and community development organisations she started to mobilise the existing associations for promoting networking.

"In Kenya there is a powerful grass-roots movement that deals with activities related to community things such as employment, attention to people with AIDS – a veritable tragedy – the promotion of organic agriculture, developing centres for access to books, the Internet, training,

etcetera. The problem we see is that there is hardly any contact or circulation of information between these groups, which makes it difficult for them to coordinate or help each other. The problems are similar and what we seek is to share solutions so that the greatest possible number of people can benefit from all the efforts made".

She left her friends working in Thika and its surrounds and will send them different material such as computers and publications, describe how the networks operate, try to get people to collaborate... "We would like this network to bring everyone together and help us all to know each other better".

During her spell in Kenya she visited different groups of farmers in their towns and villages to see the activities they carried on. She also attended several courses on the transformation of raw materials in the field of agriculture, as well as the building of installations for livestock.

For Ainhoa, one of the most important factors was learning to talk Swahili, or at least attempting to. "If you cannot communicate, relationships

lack depth, and in Kenya there are 42 tribes, each one with its own language, some of which are similar, although others are not, although English and Swahili are the official languages. Trying to talk their language shows that you have taken an interest in their culture, and even if you speak it poorly they are surprised, they find it amusing and are grateful. I had to leave just when I was starting to get by in the language, it's a pity, but as I told them: Nataka kurundi tena kwasababu napenda healthy Kenya lakini sina pesa, i.e. I want to come back because I like the country a lot but right now I don't have any money".

She was not alone, although sometimes she felt so, "particularly when I couldn't see what good I was doing there. My command of English was not conducive to interesting conversations; I thought that other activities, and from Euskal Herria, might be more useful. Moreover, having to be back in the facilities of the NGO at nightfall, around 6 in the afternoon, for security reasons, depressed me. During those long moments of loneliness I remembered my family, and even Mari Jaia and Aste Nagusia... but it was worth it, because I am impressed by the work of the NGO and all the people I met there. They are people with a lot of initiative and are very hardworking. It is a predominantly agricultural country, and current market policies do more damage than we can imagine. I believe in them and I hope that we can do more to help them develop and learn from each other".



Seminar on the Basque Industrial and Technological Model in Colombia

**Lehendakari Ibarretxe:
 «The aim is to agree, compete and
 cooperate at the same time»**

Euskal Astearen barnean, eta Juan Jose Ibarretxe Lehendakariak Kolombian egindako bisitaldian, joan den Irailaren 27an, "El Nogal" elkartearen egoitzan, "Colombia Primero" Euskal Guneak eta "Cooperación Colombia" k antolaturik, Euskal Industria eta Teknologiko Ereduari buruzko mintegia egin zen. Ekonomiaren hainbat arlotako 300 enpresari inguru, biltzarkideak, alkateak, gremiotako elkarteen presidentek joan ziren, eta baita ere, deszentralizatutako institutoen zuzendariak, akademikoak eta ikasle batzuk.

The Seminar on the Basque Industrial and Technological Model featured the presence of the Lehendakari Ibarretxe and the participation of other outstanding speakers such as the ex-Vice-Chairman Jon Azua, Julián Sánchez Alegría, director of the Technological Park of Biscay, and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia, Jorge Humberto Botero

The Lehendakari disserted on the process of Industrial Reconversion and Technological Innovation in the Basque Country, highlighting the importance of education in this process and in all major transformations in general. "Social cohesion is fundamental – he stated-; we must make sure that we all advance together". He

also shared the perception of the Basque company on competition, drawing a distinction between the former and the same concept in

the neoliberal model, where there is a voracious race that ends in the ruthless elimination of all the competitors. "The idea is to agree, compete and cooperate at the same time, to innovate and bring in a human nuance to the whole process, since people drive development. The objective of competing is not to sell more, but rather to generate wellbeing in the society developing the economic activity", asserted the Lehendakari.

"Cooperation –he added- straddles several domains or dimensions; it should not be limited to the area of investment, but should go hand in and with the transfer of knowledge, information, technology, resources, cultural exchange, of students and professionals".

The relations between the Basque Country and the territory where Colombia is located today go back several years; in Colombia there has been considerable Basque migration, one example being Simón Bolívar the Liberator, who, with his Basque origin and entrepreneurial spirit, shaped the liberating army which brought these peoples their independence from Spain, symbolised in the sowing of a shoot from the tree Gernika on la Quinta de



Lehendakari planted a shot of the Tree of Gernika on la Quinta de Simón Bolívar.

Simón Bolívar in Bogotá during the visit by the Lehendakari to Colombia.

Jon Azua explained the strategy of clusters of companies and organisations that work in a defined economic sector, geographically concentrated, and which operate in an environment characterised by a high degree of specialisation, thus generating operating synergies.

Azua underscored the importance of including this process within the framework of a country strategy, contrary to what the neoliberals propose when they say that the best industrial policy is that which does not exist. "In the Basque case – he explained - the Competitiveness and Industrialisation Programme has been framed within a government policy and strategy that enjoyed the participation of the Ministries of Industry, Education, Economy and Finance,

Health and Agriculture, which made it possible to design an integral, and not a partial, policy, which is pivotal to the success of this model in this nation. We must see business cooperation as an instrument to make the economic sector more efficient and more competitive, thereby generating better comparative advantages and a better penetration in the international market".

Julián Sánchez Alegría, after travelling from Shanghai to Colombia, shared his experience as Director of the Technological Park of Biscay, highlighting the importance of networking to create synergies and value in the local business industry, which should also be connected to international networks. "Technological Parks – he said - conjugate several factors such as the location of companies of excellence, universities, centres for research and technology

The Basque economy in figures

The level of development of the economy of the Basque Country presents optimistic figures: a per capita income in 2004 of US 23,000 euros, 30% above the Spanish income. Its productivity is the third in Europe. These figures are even more significant if we take into account that two decades ago the Basque economy, to mention but one example, had an unemployment rate of 30%, whereas today it stands at 7.5%.

transfer together with sustainable environments of great environmental quality, configuring a suitable setting for the integration of science, technology and the company.

Cooperation Agreements

In Colombia they trust that the Basque development model, and in this particular case its industrial and technological model, will continue to be an example for Colombian entrepreneurs in the sectors where the cluster and technological parks model is applicable, adapted to the situation of Colombia. Progress has already been made in



Technological Parks, an example being the Technological Park of Antioquía which was implemented with resources from the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation as part of the Technological Parks and Centres Plan of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia. On the

same day as the Seminar, September 27, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Network of Technological Parks of the Basque Country and the SENA, the Colombian Institute of Education which had already signed an agreement for the provision of schools and virtual rooms of the Mondragón group.



Charles Sosa (Chairman of FEVA), Tito Gaillour, (ex-Chairman of FEVA), Josu Legarreta, Esther Larrañaga, Miren Azkarate, M^a Elisa Díez de Mendibil and Phillip Muguerza, Chairman of Euzko Etxea.

The National Basque Week in Necochea brought together thousands of Argentinean Basques who are proud of their origin

The coastal city of Necochea, Buenos Aires, became, between November 7 and 13, a meeting point for thousands of Argentinean Basques rising to the annual call, organised this year by the Euzko Etxea Basque-Necochea Centre together with FEVA, the Federation of Argentine Basque Organisations.

A Youth Congress preceded the general meeting, which was attended for the first time by the newly appointed Delegate of the Basque Government in Argentina, María Elisa Díaz de Mendibil. The traditional plenary meeting of FEVA, exhibitions of paintings and engravings, dancing, local Basque music activities, a concert by Kepa Junkera, the signing of several agreements between the Basque Government and the authorities of euskal etxeas and Argentinean

educational authorities, and different sector-specific meetings, configured a comprehensive programme with the obligatory inaugurations and an offer before the shoot of the Tree of Gernika, present since 1944 in Necochea, a city with a huge Basque influence, which is patent in its very name.

In the run-up to the Basque Week, an exhibition with the pictorial work of Zilda and Claudia Balsategui and Jorge Dabós was officially opened in the Pedro Arozarena room of the Cultural Centre of the City; wood cuttings by Juan Balsategui; and photographs by Juan Cruz Gutiérrez Balsategui, prominent artists and members of the local community. This cultural section made way for the Youth Congress, a three-day meeting conceived as a forum for young

people to make progress in the insertion and commitment of the new Basque-Argentinean generations in running their respective euskal etxeak.

The Congress was attended by young people from centres in Argentina and Uruguay, and featured talks by Josu Legarreta, director of Relations with the Basque Communities of the Basque Government; José Félix Azurmendi, veteran journalist and director of the Basque Channel, which broadcasts ETB for the American continent; and Gloria Totoricagüena, expert in the Diaspora and teacher of the Centre of Basque Studies of the University of Nevada in Reno, who provided data and overviews on the euskal etxeak in the world, the press and the mass media with regard to things Basque, and the Basque



«FEVA-ko ohizko eta osoko bileran honako jarduerak egin ziren: margo eta grabatu erakusketak, dantza erakustaldiak, bertako euskal musikari emanaldiak, Kepa Junkeraren kontzertua eta zenbait konbenioren sinadura»

identity in the world, respectively.

The pre-weekend events included the official opening, at a beauty spot next to the river Quequen, of the 'Paseo de los Robles', a green space of great beauty sponsored by the Local Basque Centre at the request of the Municipality of Necochea. The performance of the "Gernikako Arbola" concluded the event, which was presided by the mayor Daniel Molina.

Institutional presence

Euskal Herria was officially represented by Miren Azkarate, Minister of Culture and spokeswoman of the Basque Government. The Minister of the Environment and Territorial Planning, Esther Larrañaga, was also in attendance.

The concert by Kepa Junkera and the local otxote Osasuna in a local theatre kicked off an extraordinary week-end where the music and rhythms of the bilbotarra were repeated at almost every one of the events and in the minds of the thousands of Basques that filled the different scenarios of the Paris Theatre, the Cultural Centre of Necochea, the Danés Centre and the Euskal Etxeak. Along with the performance of the trikitilari duo Jon eta Idoia, who arrived from Legazpi, in Guipuzkoa, Friday night also witnessed the "euskaldun



Above, a photo from the concert by Kepa Junkera and the otxote Osasuna. Bottom, the offering of flowers at the shoot of the Tree of Gernika.

premiere" of the group from Arrecife Maral, who were a great surprise with the splendid voice of their singer Mariana Dominé Irigoyen, performing songs such as "Lau teilatu", "Aita semeak" or "Maider".

The different rooms of the Basque Centre and the House of Culture played host to the representatives of the euskal etxeak from the whole country at the FEVA plenary meeting, as well as the sector meetings of heads of libraries and directors. Miren Azkarate signed an agreement with FEVA, represented by its chairman Charles Sosa, and the new web site was also presented: www.fevaonline.org.ar.

Offering of flowers

The authorities made a floral offering before the shoot of the Tree

of Gernika, which has been present in a square in Necochea since 1944, and then attended mass in the Parish Church of Santa María del Carmen. Subsequently, dantzaris and dance groups from the provinces and rest of the country took part in a procession to the Colegio Danés, where the traditional artistic evening was held.

A mass-meal closed the Week in the sports centre of the Colegio Danés, in the course of which the prizes of the Love Letters Contest were announced and awarded, which had been convened by the Villegasko Euskaldunak Basque Centre of the town of General Villegas, Buenos Aires. The awards were made by Miren Azkarate, in an act that also featured the presence of Kinku Zinkunegi, from the HABE, who had been a member of the panel in Euskal Herria.

BASQUE CENTRES



Indigenous Language Seminar.

Basque language, a living language in Chile and Argentina

The extension of Basque language and Basque culture was one of the drivers of the visit to Chile and Argentina by the Minister of Culture, Miren Azkarate, one of the objectives being the promotion of university assistantships for Basque language and culture and formal classes in Basque language in different Euskal Etxeas in Chile and Argentina.

On the initiative of the Department of Culture of the Basque Government, and with a view to the future creation of the Instituto Euskadi, assistantships have been started up in different universities in Europe and America, the forerunners being the University of Chile and the Pontifical University of Chile which have

been providing Basque language and culture courses since 2004 at their four university campuses in Santiago and Valparaíso. Some three hundred learners from two cycles participate in the courses.

The assistantship programme is related to the "Euskara-eskolak munduan" programme developed by the HABE Institute for the development and harmonisation of Basque language courses for adults given outside Euskal Herria. This programme seeks to promote the Basque language courses given in different cities of the State (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Valladolid), Europe (Paris, London, Brussels, Berlin, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Warsaw, Posnan) and America, with special importance attached to the preparation or training of the teachers, who are given academic material that includes self-learning and distance teaching methods.

Miren Azkarate signed an agreement with the FEVA to start up a library on Basque topics which will in turn provide coverage to the increasingly more consolidated Basque language in classes being developed in the Argentinean Republic.

In that sense, we should remember that the aforementioned "Euskara-eskolak Munduan!" emerged in Argentina in 1990, under the



Exporural Meeting of Indigenous Women.



2004tik Santiago eta Valparaisoko lau Campus unibertsitarioetan, Euskal hizkuntza eta kultura ikastaroak ematen dituzte, ia 300 lagunek parte hartzen dutelarik.

name Argentina Euskaraz, from a proposal made by the FEVA a year before. Since then, and fruit of the collaboration with HABE, three programmes have been undertaken that have not only made it possible to teach Basque to Argentinians, but also the creation of Argentinian Basque language teachers and autonomous management of the project from Argentina. This programme also spread to Uruguay six years ago, and two years ago to Chile.

In the 2005-2006 academic year, Argentina has some 820 students of Basque language (42 local teachers and almost fifty from Euskal Etxeas), i.e., one out of every two students of this languages outside Euskal Herria is in Argentina. There is also a pilot project in the pipeline for new teacher training. Taught remotely from Euskadi using the new technologies, 40 Argentinian students are being trained by means of boarding schools, in situ and distance classes to become Basque language teachers in two years' time. This will almost double the number of teachers and will reach the objective of each Basque Centre having its own teacher.



An agreement has been signed with Chile in matters of bilingualism

The Department of Culture of the Basque Government signed a collaboration agreement in linguistic policy with the Ministry of Planning of Chile in the course of the visit made by the Minister of Culture, Miren Azkarate, to the Latin American country.

The agreement, signed by the Minister and Jaime Andrade, head of MIDEPLAN, was made within the framework of the First Seminar on Indigenous Languages held in Santiago de Chile on November 10 and 11 which in itself was the "avant lettre" fruit of the Basque-Chilean collaboration in the framework of bilingualism and normalisation of indigenous languages.

The Basque Government will provide its experience in the process of standardisation and normalisation of Basque language to the indigenous languages of Chile; this expertise is very suitable taking into account the process of revitalisation of the Basque language and its recent implementation in the world of teaching, both formal and adult, all of which is linked to the linguistic leap made between the Basque language and the languages it coexists with –Castilian and French-, very similar to that which exists between the Spanish spoken in Chile and the indigenous languages of Chile.

In the course of the visit to Chile, the Minister of Culture, Miren Azkarate, also held contacts on matters pertaining to the recovery of the cultural heritage with representatives of the MIDEPLAN, the Ministry of Planning of Chile which, together with the questions of indigenous development, is also in charge of heritage; and held a meeting with the Minister of Culture of Chile, José Weinstein, with whom she explored possible routes of collaboration in cultural matters, mainly related to audiovisual area.



An exhibition of photographs on Euskadi today opened the Basque Week in Venezuela

The Federation of Basque Centres of Venezuela and the Basque Centres of Caracas and Valencia organised, between November 19 and 28, a Basque Week that featured the participation of Josu Legarreta, Director of Relations with the Basque Communities, representing the Basque Government.

The activities kicked off in Caracas with the opening of an exhibition of photos of Euskadi, an auresku of honour and welcome greeting by the chairman of the Basque Centre, Itziar Rodriguez, the director of the Venezuelan Basque Institute of Cooperation Eguzki, Izaskun Etxearte and the photographer of the Basque Government, Mikel Arrazola.

The La Estancia de Caracas Art Centre offered its support, by keeping the exhibition on until the 27th, and on show at the same time in the Basque Centre of Valencia. The photographs convey the image of a modern Euskadi, affording visitors the pleasure of taking in the current Basque reality through the eyes of a great professional. The exhibition will travel to other culture venues of the city of Caracas.

The organisers of the Week wished to offer Venezuelan society two products to further their awareness of "things Basque". To this end, the Instituto Eguzki presented the publication of the book "Basque Surnames in Venezuela", with the technical assessment of the genealogist from Biscay Xabier Zamudio, and the reprint of the book "Basque Exile in Venezuela" by the journalist Koldo San Sebastián and the photographer Peru Ajuria.

Such a broad overview of Basque culture could hardly



Astearen barnean, "Euskal abizenak Venezuelan" eta "Euskal Erbestea Venezuelan" argitalpenak aurkeztu zituzten.

overlook the activities in the university campus. Thus, the Deputy Minister of Vocational Training, Iñaki Mujika, gave conferences in the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello of Caracas and in the University of Carabobo (Valencia) on "Vocational Training and the Company", while Luis María Álvarez Gerediaga, Coordinator of Projects of the Cooperativa de Mondragón, disserted on the cooperative movement in the Basque Country.

The General Secretariat of Foreign Action, which is currently managing the formalities for the opening of the Centre of the Basque Government, also paid homage to the Basque Community and to those who had been official or personal delegates. The event took place at a gala dinner prepared by four renowned chefs from the Leioa

School of Hotel and Catering, with entertainment provided by the well-known music group Los Cinco Bilbainos. Moreover, special mention must be made of the Kukai Dantza Konpainia folklore group from Guipuzcoa, as well as the demonstration of pelota and rural sport in the Casa Hogar de El Paraíso.

The Basque Week catered to Basque sports activities by organising performances by José Antonio Gisasola, José Ramón Iruretagoiena Elustondo, Jesús Guisásola and Kepa Atutxa Esparta, led by José Ignacio Isla Lombera and Luis Javier Fonseca Eraso, as well as the pelotaris Roberto Urtearte, Egoitz Amantegi and Gaizka López, in the hand modality, and Erkiaga, Madarieta, Urtasun and Korta, in cesta punta.

The same activities took place simultaneously in the city of Valencia between November 20 and 28. The 30th anniversary of the founding of its Basque Centre was commemorated on these dates. This Euskal Etxeak would like to congratulate its President, Javier Laso, its Governing Board and all its associates on such an important day: Zorionak!



OBITUARIES

Monsignor Garmendia, the first Basque bishop of New York, passed away

Monsignor Garmendia, the first Basque bishop of New York, passed away on November 16 after a long disease. Born in Lazkao, Guipuzkoa, 81 years ago, and after a stay in Argentina and Bolivia, he moved to New York in 1964, where he was appointed bishop in June 1977 by Pope Paul the 6th.

In 1986, Cardinal John O'Connor named him vicar of the South Bronx, a post he held until he retired in 2001, when he was replaced by the current assistant bishop, also Basque, Josu Iriondo.

From the Bronx, Monsignor Garmendia dedicated all his work to helping the Hispanic community. He funded la Línea de Esperanza del Vicariato of the South Bronx to serve the Honduran community and other Latin American immigrants.

Mario J. Paredes, director of investment for the Spanish market of Merrill Lynch, who knew Monsignor Garmendia well, said, in the pages of IBLNEWS, that "in all the activities he undertook, he always lived up to the gentlemanliness of the Basque people, and did so without the slightest trace of conceit or haughtiness, in total independence, never yielding or faltering, following only his conscience. It is difficult to find such authenticity and Christianity in our days".

Throughout his long stay in New York, Garmendia never forgot his roots and always kept in touch with the Basque community. The chairwoman of the euskal etxea in New York, Itziar Albisu, remembered him like this on Radio Euskadi: "For us he was Patxi;



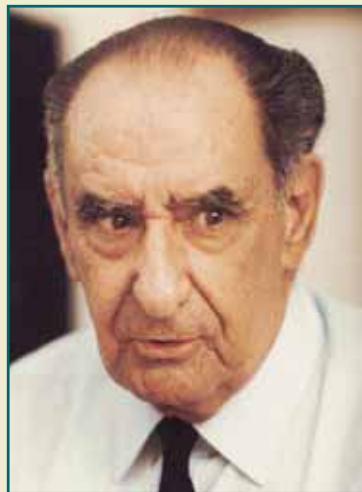
That was what many people called him in the Euskal Etxea where he was remembered as a very accessible man. Every year he said the Aberri Eguna mass and always liked to talk to everyone afterwards".

"In his later years", Albisu concludes, "he no longer came because he was ill, and the truth is



that we all deeply regret his death. He said a lot of masses for members of the Basque community who had passed away, and now we are now holding this mass in his memory", concluded Albisu.

The funeral for the soul of Francisco Garmendia in the cathedral of San Patricio was celebrated by the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Edward Egan.



Ricardo Maguregui

The former delegate of the Basque Government in Venezuela, Ricardo Maguregui from 1951 to 1955, also passed away in the month of October. Maguregui was honoured in the acts celebrated during the Basque Week organised by the General Secretariat of Foreign Action.

BASQUE CENTRES

PHOTO ALBUM



This is a photo in my first house in the city of San Lorenzo, in the province of Santa Fe (Argentina), with the present my father was waiting to give me on arriving from Spain with mum.

Inés de Castro Morejón

DO YOU HAVE ANY PICTURES TO ADD TO THE ALBUM?

If you do and would like to see it published in this section, e-mail it to us at the following address: euskaletxeak@ej-gv.es