

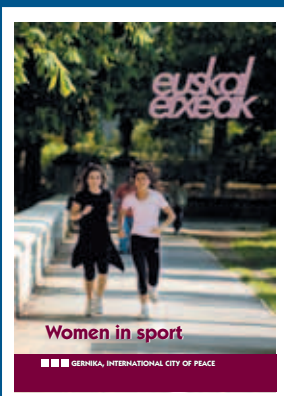
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Women in sport

■ ■ ■ GERNIKA, INTERNATIONAL CITY OF PEACE



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JOSU LEGARRETA



Director of Relations with Basque Communities

From spectators to athletes

As women have become more visible in the public arena, the workplace and in politics, their leadership in sports has also become more widespread and accepted. In very little time women have gone from being passive spectators to active players. Today nobody is shocked or surprised at seeing a woman playing rugby, basketball or soccer, all of which until fairly recently were considered "rather unfeminine."

In Euskadi 27,288 women over the age of 14 are members of a sports federation, accounting for 18.5% of total federation membership. But there are also countless numbers of women who know that sport contributes to healthy living and who dedicate a certain amount of time every day to physical activity, whether individually or as a group. They put on their sweat suits and go out for

a run, or a nice long walk; they take advantage of their community sport center, sign up at a private gym, or go for a bike ride. Proof of this can be seen in the large numbers of women who use the "bide-gorris" or bike paths that have been constructed in towns across Euskadi. And the number of girls and women who are regulars at the municipal swimming pools confirms that swimming has no age limits.

With the creation of subsidies for high-level athletes, the Basque Government has contributed, to a certain extent, to increasing the number of young people who make sport their profession. In 2006, 34 women benefited from the subsidies, accounting for 57% of the total recipients of the government-sponsored aid program.

The number of elite Basque sportswomen has been on the rise. The first Olympic appearance for

Basque women took place in Seoul during the 1988 summer games, where Blanca Lacambra and Maite Zúñiga competed in Athletics. Ainhoa Ibarra later competed in the winter games held in Calgary. We should also mention that 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, two Basque women from Baiona competed with the French rowing team: Helene Ledoux and Lydie Dubedat.

Also worthy of praise is the fact that two of the Basque sportswomen have taken part in four Olympic Games, which is no less than remarkable. These women are Ainhoa Ibarra in skiing and Mainer Tellería in field hockey. So far, women have participated in thirteen Olympic sports events, with field hockey being the most outstanding in terms of both participation and results.



Women in sport: what does it all mean?

[Clara URDANGARIN LIEBAERT]*

Not even in his wildest dreams could Pierre de Coubertin have imagined how important the Olympic Games would one day become around the world. Men and women of different races, religious beliefs and social statuses vie for the honor of being among the world's best. And the fans that follow the events are as varied as the competitors themselves. Watching Nadia Comaneci, Joane Somarriba, Gemma Mengual, the Williams sisters and a long list of other extraordinary athletes on our television screens has been a major step forward in balancing the scales between men and women in sports. Long gone are the days of the role played by women, as described by the man who conceived the modern Olympics: simple spectators who watched and applauded, enthralled by the prowess of the young male athletes.

However, we shouldn't forget that what seems so obvious today is the culmination of long, hard work and dedication by specific groups of women. We may have come a long way, but the road today is anything but smooth; we are still having to overcome many hurdles. First of all, we have to have confidence in ourselves to meet the challenge. We need to conquer greater appreciation from society from the male

**Azken boladan gure
gizartean gertatu diren
aldaketak gorabehera, kirol
praktika, oraindik ere,
gizonezkoen barruti ia
esklusiboa da.**

dominated fiefdom of sport, an elitist club with restricted admission. In spite of the changes that have taken place in our society in recent decades, sport is still a man's realm, a place where – let's face it – women still play the role of entourage.

In saying this, by no means do I want to underestimate the efforts we've made in the world of women's sport, nor shatter our illusions. Quite the contrary: I just feel we need to say it like it is, and face the cold, hard truth of the matter. Women today still stand in the shadow of a male dominated world of sport. It is hard for women to compete with men in the same sports and categories, and the sports in which we do traditionally excel, such as synchronized swimming or rhythmic gymnastics, are few in number and carry less prestige.

Our problems in gaining full access to the world of sport cover a broad range, most of which are rooted in society. If we take a look at the types of things our grandmothers did for fun when they were young, we find that most of them were limited to cooperative activities, mainly circle games and dances. The reasons they practiced these particular activities were closely associated with their place in society as *etxekoandre* or housewife. The women were in charge



of organizing and managing the cooperative entity known as the family, and their job began at an early age. They seldom went out into the public arena to negotiate or compete with their equals, as those tasks were set aside exclusively for their male counterparts. The men were the ones in charge of defending the honor of their houses and families, by engaging in sports-related challenges and representing the family interests in economic and social affairs.

**Gizartearen bilakaerak
eta emakumeen funtzio
berriek beste eremu
batzuk ireki dizkigute;
gizonen esparrua
inguratzen zuten
harresiak deseginez
joan dira.**

Society has evolved, as has the role of women, both of which have opened up new spaces. The walls that once surrounded the spaces set aside for men have gradually crumbled, making way for a new lifestyle and new roles and responsibilities for both genders. Today, the younger generations of boys and girls not only play at home with their younger brothers and sisters or with groups of friends. They also learn to play with and against one another in public places, whether it be the fronton, the town square, or even the soccer stadium. Most of the forays into this territory are made on a small scale, usually in local competitions and with limited coverage. But under these conditions we are seeing a continuous rise in the number of top-notch athletes. Here is where women are making a name for themselves in society, their presence becoming increasingly competitive in a variety of sports.

The more intimate nature of sports has not been lost among women. Instead, it has taken other more varied shapes and forms, keeping abreast with the fashions and lifestyles of today. Aerobics,

powerwalking, hiking, bodybuilding and belly dancing are just some of the activities taking the place of yesteryear's entertainment. These types of physical activities are closely linked to aesthetics and health. They are little more than reinventions of earlier more traditional models, fashions that are difficult to escape and with which we feel close cultural ties. At the same time, women are showing a keen interest in co-ed activities and sports played alongside men. Who hasn't hiked to the top of the mountain with the rest of the gang,

or hopped on her bike to enjoy the beautiful Basque countryside, far from the world of competition or social pressure inherent in mass-media sports? Many women still clearly prefer to laugh and play in their free time, and to take part in physical activities where they can relax and enjoy other people's company.

But ... let's give some thought to women and sport. The world of physical activity need not follow the same guidelines that have been defined by men. In fact, when competitiveness as a universal value is called into question, when the effects of these actions simply reinforce the divisions among people and create new hierarchies of dominion, then why impose and highlight these principles? The verb **to compete** is conceived in masculine terms. I think the verb **to share** is more our style. Wouldn't it be better for both men and women if we got rid of the old sport dictum "Since we cannot be eternal, let us have glory"?

*Professor at the Department of Physical Education and Sport, University of the Basque Country

Getxo Women's Rugby Club: 28 players show their conviction

Taldean jokatzeko diren kiroletatik, errugbia da, beharbada, jarraitzaile gutxien dituenetakoa eta, beraz, komunikabideetan isladatu txikienetakoa duena eta baliabide ekonomiko apalenetakoak dituena. Horri erantzen badiogu nesken taldea dela, are larriagoa da arazoa. Hala ere, Getxo Rugbyko neskek ez dira kikiltzen eta duten gogo eta kemen guttia ipintzen dute ahalik eta sari eta txapelketa gehien irabazteko.

It takes great courage in your own convictions to take up a such a little known sport. In fact, other than Biarritz Olympique, there aren't even any prominent men's rugby teams in the Basque Country. In the 2006-07 season, players from the Getxo Women's Rugby Club have won the 10s tournament held in October 2006 and came second in the Basque League behind Gaztedi from Vitoria-Gasteiz. The previous

season, the same two teams took the top two spots, but swapped places so they will compete nationally for the Copa de la Reina (Queen's Cup).

The Getxo rugby team is made up of 28 players, mainly from the province of Bizkaia with varied professional backgrounds such as medicine, pharmacy, psychology, secretaries or, for the time being, simply students. Their ages range from 17 to 35 years old.

Over the last seventeen years, around fifty Getxo girls have passed through the women's team, working their way up through the reserves. A vast number of players from this women's team have gone on to play for the Basque Country regional team. Some of them have also been called up to play in competitions as part of the Absolute Women's team and six of their players have played internationally with the Spanish Team.

Looking to the future, the Getxo Women's Rugby Club has set up a women's school for lower categories, they aim to promote women's rugby in the surrounding area



and consolidate their position as one of the top four teams in the country, working towards a better level of competitiveness.

At the moment, Getxo is trying to tackle a series of problems. First and foremost, a lack of players. This means they can only play in one category and have to use players whose ages span a wide age range, with all the physical differences that entails. Then there's the lack of competitiveness in the Basque Country and the meager economic resources available for trips to other parts Spain.

So the club has two major weak points: competition and training. This highlights the need for greater attention from the media, more financial resources and greater implication from public institutions.



Their impressive track record boasts winning the Basque League eleven times over the past twelve years. The 2000-2001 season was awash with success: they won the Spanish Championship, the Copa de la Reina and they were also awarded the Emakunde award (from the Basque Women's Institute).

MAITANE MENDIGUREN *captain*

“Rugby isn't such a hard sport, it's just a contact sport.”

Graduate in History with a post-graduate degree in Documentation and Heritage Preservation, Maitane Mendiguren, joint team captain for the past year with Alba Estanyol, began playing for Getxo at 16. “Before that I did rhythmic gymnastics, but when I finished the schools' section I needed to join a federation to continue and as I wasn't good enough.... We used to train at the Fadura sports centre, which is where I discovered rugby. We met the Getxo players and they encouraged us to join the team. There are just the two of us left now.”

Maitane Mendiguren solidly rejects people describing rugby as a rough or hard sport. “It isn't purposely violent; it's just a contact sport. The objective is to throw the ball behind the line at the other end of the field; you have to get there somehow.” You could think that it's

all about force but I can assure you as captain that it isn't actually necessary; there are many different positions within the team and it's also important to be a good runner in this sport. “There's a position to match every body shape and size; forwards are stronger and the others have to run.”

She admits that she was thrilled to have been made captain, because she was voted in and so it “shows what your team thinks about you.” Her role is not clearly defined and “depends on each person's personality. Alba and I are very different.” However, some things are crystal clear: “We have to create a group, because rugby requires a strong team spirit; it's as though it was a game between friends and we try to boost this spirit, complementing the trainer's work.”

But the captain pines for

competitiveness in a League with too few teams, suffering from lack of public support and almost no coverage in the press. These complaints come up time and again in most women's sports except when they reach elite level. “There are six teams in the Basque League and we play every couple of weeks. The top two teams compete in the national League and in this case that's Gaztedi from Vitoria-Gasteiz and us. So really it's normal that there's no fan base and we don't have many spectators. It's generally our family, boyfriends and some friends, except when we play in the semi-finals, when more people come and watch from town because they've seen the posters we put up. When we won the Copa de la Reina, we got a four line mention in the press, although our players compete regularly for the Spanish team.”

TATI GARMENDIA

coach for the Akaba Bera Bera handball team

“Some people make a good living at this, some get by and others barely survive”

Lehiaketa ofizialetan parte hartzen duten emakume taldeen artean, pribilegiatuak direla esan daiteke: babesleak ez ezik, erakundeen laguntza gero eta handiagoa, soldata eta gizarte segurantza dituzte. Estatuko Ligan lehiatzen dira eta 2006/2007 denboraldian Erreginaren Kopa irabazi dute. Ahalegina aitortu zaie eta Juan Jose Ibarretxe lehendakariak harrera egin die Ajuria Enean.

She lives for handball. Sometimes she has to fill in for others and play herself, in addition to training and seeing to assorted jobs at the club's offices. But she always looks happy. Tati Garmendia began playing for Bera Bera at the age of 16. At 33 she is now the Bera Bera coach, a team that has always been among the best in women's handball in Spain, and has even competed in European meets. She managed to pull the team up to the highest category and keep it there.



Compared to soccer or rugby, handball is a sport that is generally played at school, which has made it easier to promote and develop. “Yes, since nowadays both boys and girls do multi-sports programs at school, so they have to do a play of everything. Before that, kids only played handball or in some cases, basketball. In my case, I had a teacher who was a handball coach, and I also had girlfriends who played, so that's how I got involved in the sport,” said Garmendia, the Bera Bera coach who in her first year at the job led the team to win the Copa de la Reina (Queen's Cup).



This is your first year as coach. How do you feel about it?

It's been a difficult season. Naming me coach was really circumstantial. I'm not even certified. The coach we had before left and since there was no time, I was presented as an option. First I said no, but eventually I accepted. And because of different circumstances and a few injuries, I've also had to play.

What's it like having to be player and coach?

It's hard. Things always look much better from the sidelines. Since you're not physically tired, you can think better and see things more clearly. In the end, it's all turned out all right.

This season has been very good for Bera Bera...

Yeah, this year we took the Queen's Cup, we're pushing for fifth place, and next year we'll be playing in a European competition. But the team is not a recent thing. Bera Bera has been around for a long time. It's a project that got started thirty years ago when a group of women began the task of carving out a place for themselves in handball and making sure their efforts were recognized so they could play professionally. I think that on all levels, but particularly in terms of the quality of the game, the team has been achieving goals.

The Bera Bera players are now professional and actually earn a salary.

It's a full-time job. In the same week you might have to go to Valencia or Germany to play a game. Some people make a good living at this, some get by and others barely survive. Every



The Lehendakari and Minister for Culture Miren Azkarate welcome Bera Bera players.

©Basque Government Archive

player has a different measuring stick and everything depends on the club's solvency. This year we're a little better off and the club is trying to adjust the salary. It's a short career, we get paid ten months a year, there aren't any bonuses ...

How well does Bera Bera do in European competitions?

Pretty well, but there are a lot of good teams in Europe with twice or three times our budget. There are also some good teams in Spain. The best we've

done so far is fourth place. To be on top you have to have a competitive team. The ideal situation would be to have 16 players on the payroll, but that would mean a much larger budget. There are 14 of us now and we manage to get by.

Does Bera Bera have many fans?

I think we have a pretty good turnout, especially for the more important games. The same sport played by men is a lot more popular, so obviously their games draw much bigger crowds.

AMAIA RAMÍREZ *Psychologist*

Dignifying women in sport

With a Ph.D. in Psychology and a Masters in Clinical and Sports Psychology, Amaia Ramírez has been working for Akaba Bera Bera for three years, although she's been involved in handball since she was 12 years old. Competitive by nature, always wanting to play with the best teams, her role in handball has been "more vindicating than sporting, defending women's rights and aiming to dignify their role in sport." This project originated back

when she was just 18, sharing this outlook with Reyes Carrere (trainer of the best team in the country, Astroc Sagunto) and Ane Carrere (Bera Bera technical director) – and has come to fruition at 37, whilst her professional and sporting life have developed in parallel.

Now, in her role as psychologist, she considers her work necessary although it represents "just a drop in the ocean of physical, technical, biomedical and

psychological preparation." She goes on to explain that it shapes the overall work method. "Psychology affects a player" she explains, "affects a player when they are under the most pressure or calmest to be able to play at a higher level. It is a matter of optimizing resources to get better individual and group performance. Each player must be true to the team's objectives and distance themselves from circumstances which can affect their performance."



The girls from Athletic, four-time champions

Itxaropen guztiak gainditu dituzte eta emakumeen futboleko konfiantza handirik ez zuen futbolzale bat baino gehiago isilarazi dute. Athleticetako neskek, lanean eta sakrifizioan oinarriturik, lau Superliga ez ezik, jarraitzaile zuri-gorrien baldintzarik gabeko babesa lortu dute.

Since the girls from Athletic started up this team as part of the Bilbao club in the 2002-03 season, women's soccer has completely turned around in Euskadi. They were capable of congregating 35,000 fans at one of their matches in the San Mamés stadium and they have won four Superleagues in the five years that the competition has been running. These young women's effort and enthusiasm, channeled by the no less enthusiastic Iñigo Juaristi, have been rewarded by support from

club's 'red&white' fans and the press who give their successes fervent coverage.

Mid fielder, Itziar Gurrutxaga, is their captain. She joined the team when it started and has played more than one hundred games with them. She has lost count of the number of goals she's scored for them, although her official tally says 25. Born in the Gipuzkoa village of Elgoibar, where she still lives, she travels to Lezama for training four days a week. A Business Studies graduate and newly married to a soccer fan who shares her passion for this sport, Itziar Gurrutxaga has also been a regular player on the Spanish Women's Soccer Team for the last six years.

Like her 21 teammates, she does what she can to combine her job with her sport. "For the last three years, I worked as a secretary in a company in Trapagaran, but I spent the whole day on the road

and I've had to take some time off to rest. Now I'm looking for something closer to home so I can combine my working hours with training and leave me a little time for myself." It's far from easy and affects the whole Athletic "squad" who, for the time being, only get expenses for traveling with the team. "None of us can work in a well-paid job because we prioritize other things, such as flexible working hours, or part time work or a job where we can build up time off and use those days to play soccer.

Part of the girls' success on the soccer field is owed to Iñigo Juaristi, who Itziar qualifies as "a serious coach, very hard working, very professional and demanding." She admits that they've worked well thanks to these qualities and the players' dedication. "We have a tough time, training after work, from seven to nine everyday except Tuesday and Friday, never getting any holidays, almost no private life, but in this sport it's the only way we'll get anywhere." Juaristi expands this idea and adds that "everyone is asked to make a big sacrifice." However, he adds that "as it is a relatively new sport, we have to lead the way. We also have to think that they are there because they enjoy it. I'd love them to be professionals but right now we have to take what we can. Soccer generates vast amounts of money which is why first division players earn such succulent salaries. If they reach that level one day, things will change. For the time being, we have to concentrate on being pioneers, getting to a good level and being a competitive team. Then there are other factors which come into play in the financial aspect. It depends on the clubs, on the competition attracting more spectators, more press, more sponsors, everything is linked.

Both Itziar and Iñigo admire their red&white fans' behavior. "In this respect," says Iñigo, "Athletic is



There was a new celebration in the "Cathedral" on May 6th when nearly 30,000 spectators turned out to cheer on their team.



better off than other teams. It means a lot to attract an average of 2,000 spectators to normal games in women's soccer." Itziar adds that the Bilbao fans were "impressive, from the very first game. You could put it down to the novelty factor, but people have kept coming and supporting us for all five seasons."

They got a record turnout for the last match in the first Superleague played in the San Mamés stadium, when 35,000 people filled the stadium to applaud their champions and these fans just don't give up because on 6th May this year, almost 30,000 spectators filled their "Cathedral" for yet another celebration. Nobody wanted to miss seeing the Athletic girls taking their fourth Superleague. The Eva, Gurpegi Uriagareka and Orueta fan clubs, created to support the team, play an essential role in motivating players.

Their press coverage is also exemplary. Specialized press, newspapers, local radio and TV stations make the effort to report on their soccer skills.

A firefighter by trade, Iñigo has been training women's teams for 18 years and says that it would be wrong to compare men's soccer with women's soccer because this would belittle the women's game: "Men and women have different physiques, their speed and power is not the same, but it is possible to enjoy both games. It's like comparing heavyweight and featherweight boxing."



The women's team during their official reception.

©Basque Gov. Archive

WOMEN AMONG OLYMP

Edurne Pasaban mountaineer

Elurte eta izotz jausien artean, Edurne Pasabanek Annapurnaren gailurrera heltzeko ahaleaginean jarraitzen du, horixe baita tolosarrak 2007rako aukeratu duen "zortzi milakoa" (8.091 m-ko garaiera du). Hamalau "zortzi milakoak" egiteko asmoa du eta Annapurna da hori osatzeko geratzen zaizkion sei tontorretatik lehena. Euskal Etxea aldizkariaren ale hau ixtera gindoazela, Pasaban 4. kanpalekua instalatzen ari zen.

Tackling Annapurna, her eighth "eight thousander"

Edurne Pasaban is currently the woman with the most "eight thousanders" under her belt, thanks to her perseverance and hard work to meet her own goals. Great discipline, tenacity and never giving up are determining factors which Edurne has to call on time and again to achieve her targets. These qualities have rewarded her with a meteoritic career as an elite sportswoman, launching her in a sport such as climbing which seemed to be essentially reserved for men. The extreme conditions which she has to face and the difficulty of the expeditions has not been enough to slow Edurne down.

"Unstable snow has brought us to a halt, so we've made the most of it to rest at Base Camp. It's been a long week's wait and we're running out of food: there's no meat left and I think we're going to finish the expedition eating rice and pasta," writes the mountaineer in the last entry in her electronic diary, dated 6th May. In the next few days, she and the team were waiting for good weather to come and let them set off early and make directly to Camp 2. It would take a long slog to reach Camp 3 representing "a difficult section for us mentally. I hope that the mountain continues behaves itself and that nothing goes wrong," she writes expectantly. She intends to spend five days up on the mountain, set up Camp 3 and study the route to reach Camp 4. "We hope it won't be too difficult and we can get the job done", writes Edurne Pasaban as she signs off."

The team accompanying her on this new attempt is made up of five mountaineers although according to her,



Annapurna is the tenth highest summit in the world and the highest peak in a 55 km range in the Nepalese Himalayas. Its name in Sanskrit can be translated as "Goddess of the Harvests." In Hinduism it represents the goddess of fertility and agriculture. It is also known by the name of Morshiadi. It was the first "eight thousander" in history to be scaled by man, conquered by a French expedition led by Herzog and Lachenal in 1950. It is well known for being particularly dangerous and so it is also the least climbed "eight thousander," claiming the highest percentage of lives per ascent.

it is more important that they are "good friends". They are: Asier Izagirre, her climbing partner for many years and one of the people who got her addicted to mountains; the Ecuadorian Iván Vallejo, with whom she has also spent many years climbing in the Himalayas; Ferrán Latorre, a great friend and television cameraman who knows Annapurna very well; and the Colombian Fernando Alonso, who she has worked with on many expeditions, alongside the other members of the outdoor adventure TV program "Al filo de lo imposible," produced by Televisión Española.

During her latest visit to Katmandu, whilst the last preparations were made prior to the ascent, Edurne relaxed before going up to base camp at 4,200 meters, arriving by helicopter due to the massive snowfall in Nepal this year. After climbing to Camp 2 at 5,500 meters and before they could finish setting up camp 3, she had to return to base case until the snow had settled.

IC BASQUE WOMEN



Mikele Irazusta Tennis player

Lehen postuan dago Argentinako 14 urtez azpikoen mailan, banaka eta binaka, eta Hego Amerikako hamar onenen artean dago. Bahía Blancako euskal komunitatekoa da eta Euskal Etxeko dantzari taldeko kidea da. Mikele Irazustaren 2007rako helburua da Argentinako Tennis Elkarteak Hego Amerikako Sarirako hauta dezala lortzea eta ahalegin guztiak egiten ari da horretarako.

Number one in the Under 14 Argentinean ranking

Born in May 1993, Mikele Irazusta started playing tennis when she was small with her maternal grandfather, Roaldo Fernández, a prestigious tennis coach, supported by her mother Patricia, a well-known national and international tennis player. She is also the granddaughter of Basque community members Andoni Irazusta and Karmentxu de Aguirre, and daughter of Mikel Irazusta, director of the Bahía Blanca Basque Center.

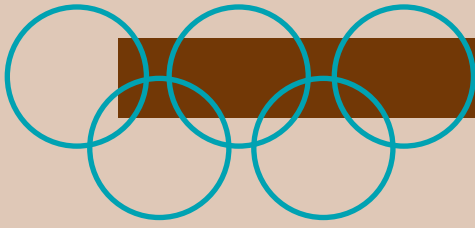
In 2004, Mikele won the team competition at the South American championships and scaled the heights of the under 12s category, singled out as the best tennis player from Bahía Blanca. In 2005, she was also the first woman from Bahía to win two Grade 1 tournaments in the same season. Now, Mikele is no longer the girl who reached the top of the Argentinean national Under 12s category and has become one of the best Argentinean players at Under 14 level. She has been demonstrating this in 2006-2007, ranked number 1 in Argentina and she currently appears in the top 10 female players in South America.

As her second season in Under 14s, this year is very important for the tennis player because it represents the halfway house in her career. It's turning out to be a very competitive season nationally because there are a lot of great players, including Cata Pella, her cousin.

Internationally, as part of the official Asociación Argentina team, her results are also quite good. She made her doubles debut with her cousin in the Uruguay Bowl, the eighth stage of the international tour organized by the South American Tennis Confederation.

She is praised for keeping a clear head and making confident decisions. They also say that "first she studies you and then she liquidates you, she takes no pity on her rivals." Meanwhile, Mikele continues to collect points, her career in Europe is just around the corner and she's dreaming about the World Championships: "I hope we (referring to Cata Pella and Diego Maronna) can do our country proud. We're trying to just grab one of the spots for the World Championship although we'll do everything we can to win the title. Personally, I'm at a good level and I'm confident after winning the last Grade 2 in the Under 16 category. I think our toughest rival would have to be Brazil, but even so, I think that we'd be in with a fight."

Despite having to travel all over throughout the whole year, Mikele passed eighth grade at the Don Bosco school without too many difficulties. In her opinion, she does "OK" at school and was lucky not to fail anything. "This allows me to dedicate my time exclusively to tennis and prepare myself for different tournaments." And, among the subjects she studies, she prefers math to history.



Oraindik goiz da hurrengo Pekingo Olinpiar Jokoetan zer kirolarik parte hartuko duten jakiteko, baina hainbat kirolari buru-belarri prestatzen ari da munduko onenekin lehiatzeko. Naroa Agirre pertika jauzilariak, Leire Olaberria txirrindulariak eta María López de Aguilar hockey jokalariek amets hori nola bizi duten kontatu dute.

Just over a year to go before the next Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, we still don't have a definitive list of sportsmen and women participating in these games which measure strength and prowess on a worldwide scale. Numerous competitions and the finals of some classifying championships still have to be held, but the top level sportsmen and women who are thought to be in with a chance of competing have been training hard for a while now.

There are about thirty elite Basque sportsmen and women, covering a variety of disciplines. 60% are women and 40% male.

14 Basque sportswomen attended the last Olympic Games held in Athens in 2004. Some of them competed in team sports such as the road cyclists Eneritz Iturriaga and the veteran Joane Somarriba, who has now retired from competition. Almudena Cid in rhythmic gymnastics: Eva Mirones in rowing, and grass hockey players Erdoitza Goikoetxea, Rocío Ybarra, Maider Luengo, Bárbara Malda and Maider Tellería. Others took part in sports prioritizing individual performance such as Naroa Agirre in the pole vault, Ainhoa Murua in the triathlon, María Quintanal for Olympic shooting or Arantxa Ramos in swimming.

Three years later, some of these sportswomen continue in the saddle and they have been joined by new up and coming sportswomen hoping to bring home a Basque medal.

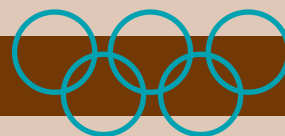
BASQUE WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN ATHENS 2004

Athletics	Aguirre Camio, Naroa
Handball	Fraile Celaya, Susana
Road cycling	Iturriaga Etxebarria, Eneritz
Road cycling	Somarriba Arrola, Joane
Rhythmic gymnastics	Cid Tostado, Almudena
Hockey	Goikoetxea Zornoza, Erdoitza
Hockey	Ybarra Solaun, Rocío
Hockey	Luengo Lasa, Maider
Hockey	Malda Salinas, Barbara
Hockey	Tellería Goñi, Maider
Swimming	Ramos Plasencia, Arantxa
Rowing	Mirones Sola, Eva
Olympic shooting	Quintanal Zubizarreta, Maria
Triathlon	Murua Zubizarreta, Ainhoa

NAROA AGIRRE has a good chance of going to the next Olympics in Beijing because she has already jumped six centimeters higher than the 4.5 meter qualification level required by the International Athletics Federation for the pole vault. Her record of 4.56 meters endorses her performance, although she must ratify it in one of the competitions held next year to be 100% sure of being able to compete with the best athletes in the world in the Chinese capital.

The San Sebastian athlete, who came sixth in her discipline in the Olympic Games in Athens, is calm and ensures that she's not obsessed by records. Concentrating fully on training run by her husband, Jon Karla Lizeaga, she chalks up milestones whilst the day of the big test approaches. "For me, going to the final in Athens, as one of the twelve best, was marvelous and the final result was better than I had expected," confesses Naroa.

ASQUE WOMEN



Ever since the Basque pole-vaulter has been going from strength to strength and at the start of 2007, she beat her own record four times in less than two months: on January 4th she jumped 4.51 meters in San Sebastian; sixteen days later she cleared 4.53 in Zaragoza; on January 28th she reached 4.55 in Valladolid and finished with 4.56 in Seville on February 24th.

The Beijing challenge does not stress her out, as far as she says. "Every year I enter a European or World Championship, which means I don't let my guard down and at the end of the day, all competitions are the same, not in what they are worth or emotionally but in terms of organization and because you always meet the same competitors".

She is a member of the San Sebastian Athletics Club which is part of the Gipuzkoa Federation, in turn part of the Basque Federation and also the Spanish Athletics Federation which will send her to the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Her training sessions vary widely. "I spend three or four hours a day training, five days a week, we don't jump everyday and I don't even pick up my pole in every training session," explains Naroa. This season she has been working on the acrobatic style of great current pole-vaulters, trying to improve the aerial part of the jump, the flexibility when she rises through the air once the pole has struck. Long gone are the training sessions centered on achieving maximum height by dominating the first phase of the exercise, meaning the run, the strike and the hardness of the poles.

We mustn't forget that the best pole-vaulter in the world, the Russian Yelena Isinbayeva, was an international gymnast at 12 and displays enviable flexibility. "There's no doubt that she's number one," confesses Naroa, "and I wish it was just her, but there are others who are also good." "At the start, when you compete against the best, you're a bit overwhelmed, but as you notch up more competitions, you concentrate on what you've got to do on the track and you do it the best you can and forget about the stars."

This Olympic sportswoman apparently leads a very normal life. "I look after myself, I don't eat fried food and I try to eat well but I don't follow a special diet. I eat nearly everything and homemade food which my mom makes." She prefers to talk about what athletics has given

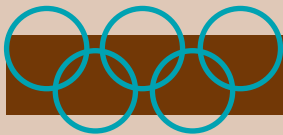


her rather than stop and think about the sacrifices she's had to make. "I think I've got a lot out of the pole vault: I've traveled, I've met a lot of people, I've learnt to be disciplined and I consider that sport is a great learning process for life. You learn to suffer, eat well, be consistent and set your sights on new goals."

She believes that she took up the pole vault late, just five years ago, because she started off with the long jump. She was Junior Spanish long jump Champion in 1997 and got the record of 6.31 meters. "When you start athletics, in my case at school, you try all types, which is great to see what you're best at or what you like most. The long jump and the pole vault are not incompatible, although I only train for the pole vault now. However, when I compete in the league with my club I have to do both to get more points so then I do long jump and pole vault."

There is no contest between the events - she'd choose the pole vault every time. Even over the ETB series "Goenkale," where she has been appearing for more than two years. "As I train in the afternoon and Goenkale is recorded in the morning, I can do both. They called me for one or two episodes, for a small part, and although I'd never acted, I liked the idea, I said yes and I'm still there after two and a bit years."

She wouldn't like to say if her future is in acting. For the time being, at 28 years old, she hopes to extend her professional sporting life as long as possible, loaded down with fiberglass poles and not too many worries about future records.



At 30 years old, **LEIRE OLABERRIA** is training enthusiastically on her bike prior the classifying rounds for Beijing. She has actually only been in this sport for three years because moving over from Athletics. Her boyfriend, who is also a cyclist, convinced her to pick up this new sport because he thought she showed promise and what started off as a test "without thinking about competing" has become her profession. She has become so good at the tough track cycling discipline that in the last world championships held in March, she came fifth in the scratch race and got the Spanish record in pursuit. In 2005, she was the most successful cyclist at the Spanish Women's Track Championships. She won the 500 meters, sprint and Keirin and got silver in scratch and points. Over the last three years, this sportswoman from Ikaztegieta has also found out the meaning of suffering. Two broken ribs during the trials for the World Cup in 2005 are her most serious war wounds so far. Leire is part of the Spanish Team who she represents at the World Championships and more than likely her first Olympic Games in Beijing. She is also a member of Cespa-Eustrak, the first Basque professional track cycling team.

After obtaining her Tourism and Teaching diploma, she worked for five years at the San Sebastian ice rink on reception and as a skating teacher, but she now lives exclusively from and for cycling. "I'd rather do what I love most than earn a massive salary. In any case, you can live from cycling, not too luxuriously, but you can get by." When she is preparing for an international event or

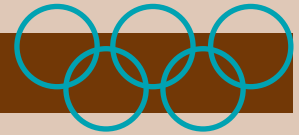
a championship she will dedicate three hours a day to road training and work intensely on the track for another two. She follows a normal diet: "I eat everything, I don't have any weight problems and the only thing I'm more careful with is sweets." She doesn't find it hard to lead a more disciplined life than other girls her age: "I've always been sporty since I was little, I like going to bed early and getting up early. The secret is to accept your choices with all their consequences. Over the years, you learn to do things at the right time."

She admits that cycling is "a man's world, but little by little we're cutting ourselves a path." "What I admire," she adds, "is that their training system is more productive, working at a stronger and harder level, it makes you work harder when you train with men." She and Joane Somarriba have not competed together: "When Joane decided to leave competition, I was practically starting out in cycling and she was also a road specialist whilst I race on the track. But I have to add that the world of women's cycling owes a lot to Joane and the media, both in the Basque Country and nationally, people started talking about this sport following her success."

She declares that she's not star struck: "I admire people who train hard even though they don't win medals and I don't feel in awe of the stars. I don't have any idols."

Basque women's cycling has a real chance in Beijing. Leire Olaberria on the track and Eneritz Iturriaga on the road are our best shot.

BASQUE WOMEN



If the Spanish Women's Hockey Team finishes in the top three in the European Championships which will be held in August in Manchester, **MARÍA LÓPEZ DE EGUÍLAZ**, Barbara Malda and Rocío Ibarra, the three Basque girls in the team, could be on their way to Beijing. For the time being, it seems that they have a good chance because they came fourth in the World Championships in 2006, which was played between the top 12 teams in the world, behind Holland, Australia and Argentina. The latter two teams will obviously not be in the European Championships.

This will be the second time for Bárbara and Rocío as they were both in Athens but María, from Getxo, would be on her way to her first Olympics. She is optimistic and trusts in their hard training regime as their recipe for success. At 22, this top level sportswoman lives off a grant from the Residencia Blume, for high performance sportsmen and women, allowing her to study Geology at the Complutense University in Madrid. Every weekend she travels with her team, Real, from San Sebastian. During the summer she lends her full attention to preparing for the national squad's tournaments which require year-round training sessions.

"How do I do it? Good planning and sacrificing a few hobbies. I take two years to for every academic year; it's the only way I'll graduate." Lack of time obliges her to narrow her circle of friends to sportsmen and women such as herself. "Since I've

been at university, I've made other friends with whom I can chat about things other than sport and I make a little time to read and write, which are my other two hobbies."

Her position as goalkeeper does not keep her awake at night and she claims that she receives "just the right amount of pressure" before a game. "As it's a team sport, it is easier to bear the load than if it were an individual sport. There are 16 players in the squad, although only 11 play on the field, who share the responsibilities." Both her father and her mother, who have become her most enthusiastic supporters, were also hockey goalkeepers, although they did not influence María to choose this hobby which she started playing when she was seven. "I chose a sport every week in school until I was made a forward in hockey, then I changed to play in goal and that's where I stayed. It was only much later that I discovered that my parents played the same sport." She started off playing for Jolaseta in Bizkaia until she joined Real "which was a team I liked and I've been there for two years now." She knows she can't make a living playing hockey. For the time being, it has opened doors for her to find a professional future outside the sport and since she was 16 when she started studying away from home, it has let her live independently and travel constantly, "visiting pitches and airports", she adds humorously, because when traveling with either team, "I get one afternoon off if I'm lucky."

ANA URQUIJO

President of Athletic Club de Bilbao



Ausarta, negoziatzailea, uste sendoetakoa eta joera nagusien kontra ibiltzen ohitutakoa da Ana Urquijo. Kluba une gogorrek igarotzen ari zenean, onartu egin zuen bere bihotzeko Athletic taldeko lehendakari izateko erronka, bere egitekoa hori zela iruditzen zitzaiolako. Hala, 108 urtetan gizonen gobernaturiko erakundeko lehen emakumezko presidentea bihurtu zen. Abokatutza eta higiezinetakoko agente lanak gauzatu zituen kemen berarekin ari da lanean. Eremu hauetan ere aitzindari izan zen gainera, Bizkaiko Abokatuen Elkargoko Batzordean sartu zen lehenengo emakumea baitugu.

Soccer is no longer a man's game

For Ana Urquijo, lawyer and estate agent by trade, it has not been easy to take charge of this position of responsibility in tempestuous times for her beloved Athletic. Her incursion in this man's world, however, was not something she considered lightly. When she was 12, her father bought her a season ticket for Athletic and together they watched an infinite number of matches, at home in San Mamés and away. From the stands, she has been able to appreciate the growing number of female spectators and football fans over the years and in the last five seasons she has witnessed the women's soccer phenomenon emerging in her own club.

What has changed in soccer for the presidency of Athletic to fall to a woman, after 108 years of being held exclusively by men?

A lot of things have changed, women participate in all lines of work and this should be reflected in positions of responsibility. Soccer is a reflection of the change which has occurred in these 108 years of club history.

In 1990 she was the first woman to join the Club's Board of Directors, a male haven until then, and in

her professional life she found herself a place on the Board of the Bizkaia Lawyers' Association. Did these experiences help her make herself heard and for her decisions as president to be accepted by other members of the Board of Directors?

I have been with the club for some time and I have lived through a series of experiences which have meant that I deal constantly with men. I can see that men have also evolved and have learnt to live alongside women in government teams. You learn to be in a management team and contribute, from your position as a woman, what is necessary for the decisions which are made to consider all points of view.

Do you have to rule with an iron fist to be the president of a first division club or is it better to use a velvet touch?

I don't believe that either iron or velvet gloves are necessary to be president. You have to know how to make decisions at all times and I don't think that this feature is specific to men or women. It is a matter of keeping a cool and analytical head at crucial moments to make the right decisions for your institution or

company. If at any time this has to be done from a firm position, then that's how it's done although sometimes you need to use a little tact without losing any forcefulness.

I suppose you enjoy soccer because your father taught you to appreciate it. What would you say to women who hate this sport because they associate it with tedious Sunday afternoons when their husbands and boyfriends go to the match and come home either euphoric or depressed depending on their team's result?

My father taught me to appreciate soccer, but what your father tries to teach you doesn't always have the same effect. You become a fan or you don't and I can't say anything to women or men to change their minds, although it's true that more and more women are going to matches. Women need getting a taste for soccer, but never in terms having it imposed on them, because that doesn't work.

You've had a season ticket since you were very young. Have you seen a big increase in female members since then? What percentage of the 34,373 season ticket holders are women?

Approximately 13% of members are women, but I hope that with the new pitch, when we'll be able to offer more season tickets, more women will join as there is already high demand.

A few years ago, it was unthinkable that Athletic would have a women's team and that they would win four Superleagues. Do you believe that women's soccer is sufficiently valued by their own clubs, society or the press?

We have just celebrated the women's team winning a new title and in the last few years we have seen that this has increasing repercussion on society and it's reflected in the press, which is logical as it is a new sport and can only get better.

Do you like defensive or attacking soccer?

I like soccer, including attacking and defending as the match dictates. In any case, when you see a great show with a lot of goals I admit that it is more fun to watch, although football is a compendium of attacking and defending.

Do you collect players' autographs or were you not the type to accost them to get a signature? Who were you a fan of and who is your favorite current player, even if they don't play for Athletic?



You have to learn to make decisions all the time and I don't think this is a particularly male or female characteristic.

You have to have a cold and analytical mind to make the best decisions for your institution or company.

I still keep some photos from when I was young of some players that I liked back then. In current soccer, I'm not going to mention anyone because I like everyone in Athletic, they are all great players and I admire them all. If I had to pick out a player from another team, I love Messi, from Barcelona; he's a great player who's still got a long way to go because he's still young. I also like Rooney, from Manchester, who demonstrates all the characteristics I like, a compelling technical player.

As President, you have had to lead complicated projects such as constructing the new playing field. Will people talk about the Ana Urquijo era? Will there be a 'before' and 'after' for your presidency?

I've taken over the presidency at a complicated time, although it's true that I've had to deal with difficult and delicate situations. I'd really like my time at Athletic to be remembered as someone who came with the intention of working constantly for Athletic and put Athletic above everything else.

Have you still not been in the players' dressing room?

Yes, I really don't think it's my place. I usually go in after the matches when they're already dressed.

MICHELLE ALZOLA

Idahon jaio zen, familia euskaldun batean, eta azken hamar urteotan Algortan bizi da, senarrarekin eta bi seme-alabekin. Ondorengoei bi kulturak transmititzen saiatzen da, bakoitzetik onena aukera dezaten.

Daughter of Basques born in the United States, Michelle Alzola was raised in Idaho and has lived in Algorta, the town of her paternal grandmother, for the past 10 years with her husband, Jose Luis Egiluz. Her children, Ander and Ane, were born here but she still feels a sense of uprootedness from time to time the same way that her grandparents did in the United States. So that history doesn't repeat itself, Michelle has hopes that her kids will never have to choose between two cultures but rather to simply enjoy the best from each of them.

An Idahoan, Michelle was born in Gooding and raised in Mountain Home. She feels fortunate having been surrounded by horses and cattle and getting to grow up on the Alzola Brothers' Ranch in Owyhee County. Accustomed to wide open spaces, her first impression of the Basque Country was of surprise about "how close by everything felt: the ocean, the mountains ... and being able to walk just about everywhere." In her family, English was the dominant language although Basque and Spanish could be heard. She admits that she typically answered everything in English and would later make up for it by studying languages at the University of Idaho and in the Basque Country.

Basque was her maternal grandparents' common language. Her Grandfather was from Irurita, Navarra and her Grandmother, although born in Nevada, came from an Aldudes family, on the French side. Her father's family, both sides from Bizkaia, came from Ispaster and Algorta.

Two generations ago, gatherings and celebrations in the large U.S. Basque community made a perfect setting for strengthening ties and getting together to remember the homeland. "My grandparents had to have missed their old way of life but never made it back to stay," Michelle remembers. She began contact with Basque cultural events through the Basque Center in Boise, where she joined the Oinkari Basque Dancers expanding her activities until serving on the Euskaldunak board of directors. She



«Enjoying two cultures is a privilege»

stays active with the Boise Basque community and collaborates all that she can on projects. "I met my husband, José Luis, there when he was sent to help the Biotzetik Basque Choir in its formative years." She studied Telecommunications and Spanish at the University of Idaho and enjoyed her job as a training specialist with Ore-Ida Foods, Inc. in Boise. "Our team developed training programs on topics like quality and safety and delivered them companywide, requiring contact with a diverse mix of people." She had to give up her job to move to the Basque Country.

In Bilbao, Michelle taught business English in companies and furthered her studies in Spanish and Basque. "From my first experiences in the Basque Country I remember how the street life and the spontaneous social life caught my attention, going out for a walk and running into friends without having to set it up. That and the attention of the small specialty shops and fish markets are all simple luxuries that make daily life natural and easy." Many things made an impact on Michelle, especially finally being able to put into context the sketches that she had heard and imagined during her childhood: songs, stories, gestures, expressions and mannerisms which when she landed in the Basque Country, gained their true meaning. But what left the biggest impression on her was when she met her family from the Baztan Valley for the first time. The Zelayetas, her Mother's

cousins, shared an astonishing resemblance to her family both physically and amazingly in personalities and character traits as well although they were born on different continents. "Knowing where my grandparents were born and lived when they were young and trying to imagine how tough the times were when they were brave enough to leave their country, families and friends behind to begin a new life, knowing that they might never make it back home all forms a part of me now. I have an immense appreciation for what they did."

Now that her son, Ander, is approaching adolescence, what worries Michelle the most is the couldn't-care-less attitude of many young people. "I really try to avoid making comparisons but I think that here young people lack a little creative spirit and energy. It may be because there are less work possibilities than in the U.S., but I notice that many young people stay at home with their families for an extended time and they don't pitch in and help out like you would expect."

Michelle is convinced that in order for her kids to avoid adopting these kinds of attitudes they'll need to receive other stimuli. "I try to expose them to as much of both cultures as possible and hope that they will take the best of each." Each year at the end of the school year the whole family heads to Boise for the summer. "There they get to spend time with all kinds of different kids and learn from new experiences."

RUTH GUIMERÀ

Bilbon jaio zen duela 26 urte eta, artisten familiakoa ez izan arren, txikitatik erakarri zuten arte eszenikoek. Gaur New Yorken bizi da, ametsak gauzatzeko ahaleginetan, eta esan behar da, neurri batean behintzat, lortu duela amets horiek egia bihurtzea, John Strasbergen alboan ari baita lanean, hain zuzen ere, Actor's Studio sortu zuen gizonaren semearekin. Ikastegi ezagun hartan hainbat izar ospetsuk ikasi zuten: Marilyn Monroek, Robert De Nirok, Al Pacinok...



«The work with Strasberg is unique, hard and exciting»

"I have grown up voluntarily connected to art," confesses Ruth Guimerà. After a few appearances as a child, whilst she was studying drama in the now closed Basauriko Antzerki Eskola, she was lucky enough to work for ABAO on three opera seasons and participate actively in *performances* and meetings with Mina Espazio. "I was very lucky because it is exceptional to have the chance to get on the stage so young. A combination of intense desire, work and luck caused it to happen," the same qualities which led her to be awarded a grant by the Basque Government to choreograph and interpret a dance solo called "The corset ... this second skin."

Then she was offered the role of Marejada in "Feromona Feroz", a pseudo-musical with a taste of the Rocky Horror Picture Show created and directed by Asier Etxeandia: "It was a revelation, the confirmation that the actress I'd been dreaming of was living somewhere inside me." But dreams don't last forever and when they don't come true, as Ruth herself says, "they become nightmares; I was dying to know if

my dreams would come true, whatever happened." Moments of crisis were overcome thanks to a grant from the Provincial Government of Bizkaia sending her to New York where she was selected as a student by John Strasberg, who she speaks of with boundless enthusiasm: "Working with Strasberg is unique. It's difficult to describe. Looking for truth on stage, dreaming about the character's world and being in contact with their real life are strong concepts in the creative process. With Strasberg, each actor starts out on an individual path and he guides us, sharing his life and stage experience with us. It is very hard and emotional but the results are surprising."

They say that anything is possible in New York and Ruth confirms this: "It has a special energy. It's a city for doing things. They work hard in all aspects. Its lights blind you and its roughness makes you strong. It's a place to learn everything you want."

She lived in the Bronx, in Harlem, she was left with nowhere to live ... and she also felt a moment of romanticism and missed her own

country. "I went to a dinner in the Eusko Etxea in Brooklyn and it was very emotional. It was almost a trip back through time. The Basque-Americans gave me a very warm welcome. From that day we have not lost touch. It's in my heart."

When she returned to Bilbao last Christmas, Fran Lasuen offered her the role of "Ipuin Iberiarrak" alongside the actor Kandido Uranga, a play based on five short stories by José Saramago, Quim Monzó, Manuel Rivas, Julio Llamazares and Bernardo Atxaga with folk music composed especially for the occasion. "It's an attempt to give a voice to the peculiarities of the different corners of the Iberian Peninsula." It played in Zornotza and Durango, but Ruth will come back in the summer because there are more shows awaiting her.

Meanwhile, she can see that her dreams are progressing little by little: "Everyday I feel that anything is possible and that the distance separating Bilbao and New York is nothing more than an idea. I'm happy with the path I've chosen. It's like it's always springtime."



Rafael Kutz named Basque Government delegate in Venezuela

This past April 17th Rafael Kutz Garaizabal was named Basque Government delegate in Venezuela. The newly created office joins the list of Basque offices already in place in Brussels, Madrid, Chile, Argentina, the United States and Mexico.

Between May 2004 and March of this year, Rafael Kutz had been on the staff of the Basque Office in Chile, overseeing bilateral relations, Basque Government programs for Basque communities abroad, cooperation and development and culture.

His relationship with Chile began in March 2002 when the Basque Government awarded him a UNESCO grant to work at the Basque-Chilean Foundation for Development in Santiago de Chile. There he served as a technical adjunct in the area of commerce, cooperation and official relations between the Basque and Chilean governments.

Born in Donostia, 32-year-old Rafael Kutz earned his Bachelor's degree in Humanities and Business Studies from the University of Deusto.



Xabier Santxotena, holding the model of the sculpture, beside his wife, Teresa Lafragua. In the background, the Euskal Etxea of Bogotá.

Sculpting Human Rights in Colombia

Navarra-born sculptor Xabier Santxotena is the author of a sculpture dedicated to universal human rights, which will soon preside over Gernika park next to the Euskal Etxea in Bogotá. The sculpture, two intertwined arms reaching to the sky, pleading for justice, is a tribute to the figure of Jesús de Galíndez, who disappeared fifty years ago. The three-meter-high sculpture, donated by the artist to the Basque center of Bogotá, is expected to be unveiled during the week-long Basque-Colombian festival held in September. In March the author, accompanied by the Director of Relations with Basque Communities Josu Legarreta, traveled to the Colombian capital to supervise the work on the site where

the three-dimensional corten steel sculpture will stand.

"I owe the inspiration and creation of the piece to Oteiza. He was my teacher," said Santxotena. "He wasn't able to finish the sculpture, so I did. It's there to remind us that human rights are universal." The idea of bringing a sculpture by the Navarra artist to Bogotá was suggested by the members of the city's first Basque center. Although the euskal etxea opened its doors only a year ago, it already has nearly 200 members. The news of the Santxotena sculpture was fantastic for all the members, who hope that the artwork will contribute to making Gernika park a lasting symbol for human rights.

Chilean Minister of SERNAM, Laura Alborno, visits Euskadi

Laura Alborno, Minister of Chile's National Women's Service (SERNAM), visited Euskadi in April, where she held three meetings, one with Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe, another with the Speaker of the Basque Parliament, Izaskun Bilbao, and the third with the Director of Emakunde, Izaskun Moyua. Joining her during her visit were her Chief of Staff, Patricio Reinoso, and Amalia Palma, Head of International Relations. The Lehendakari received the Chilean delegation at the Office of the President on April 4th. Alborno expressed interest in equality issues, since the Quotas Act is currently being debated in her country. Of the 38 seats in the Senate, only two are held today by women, and in the 120-seat Lower House, women occupy only 15. The minister was told about the Equality Act currently in force in Euskadi, and

about the implementation of a number of pioneer programs aimed at protecting female victims of domestic violence whose lives are at risk. The Lehendakari also explained some of the measures that have been adopted

to crack down on the problem, including a GPS system to keep track of victims and their aggressors, or permanent bodyguards in cases of extreme risk.

Laura Alborno feels she has political responsibility and accountability to all of the people in her country, and half of them are being excluded from elected positions of responsibility.



Lecture by David Lasagabaster at the Buenos Aires Book Fair

Basque culture played an important role in the 33rd edition of the Buenos Aires International Book Fair held from April 16th through May 7th under the motto "Books without Borders." In previous years the Basque stand had been run by the Buenos Aires Basque-Argentinian Foundation Juan de Garay, but in 2007 efforts were stepped up when the Basque Government and the Federation of Argentinian-Basque Entities (FEVA) joined the project.

As part of the fair, University of the Basque Country Vice-rector for International Relations, David Lasagabaster, offered a lecture

entitled "Maintaining the different languages and cultures of the diaspora: mission (im)possible?" Lasagabaster spoke to the audience about the Basque language and culture in the Americas. Although the Basque diaspora is a worldwide phenomenon, its presence is particularly significant in this part of the world. He then went on to give a brief historical review of the reasons why so many people emigrated to the Americas, with particular emphasis on the waves of emigrants who settled in the Western United States. Using data collected from surveys and questionnaires conducted in

California, Idaho and Nevada (the states that account for the greatest presence of Basque immigrants), Lasagabaster analyzed the attitudes of Basque-Americans towards their different languages. He also spoke about their relationships with their culture and origins, and assessed the instruments they use to maintain these ties.

The Buenos Aires International Book Fair is on its way to becoming the most important event of its kind in Latin America. The fairgrounds cover a total of 45,000 square meters and last year brought in over 1,200,000 visitors.



A government delegation from the province of Buenos Aires visits Euskadi and is received by the el Lehendakari

Vice-Governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Graciela Giannettasio, headed a delegation of six senators on an official visit to the Basque Country. The group visit port and industrial instalations, research centers and technology parks, and

held meetings with members of parliament and staff from the Basque Government departments of Labour, Social Security, Economy, Environment, Education and Science, and Technology. The Argentinian delegation was received

by Lehendakari Ibarretxe and by the Speaker of the Basque Parliament, Izaskun Bilbao. Six Buenos Aires senators, two from each political block, formed part of the group: Juan José Amondarain and Osvaldo Goicoechea from the Front for Victory (Frente para la Victoria); Eduardo Amalvy and Manuel Lozano from the Justicialist Party (Partido Justicialista); and Jesús Porrúa and Alfredo Irigoin from the Radical Civic Union (Unión Cívica Radical).

On her first day of the official visit, the Speaker of the Buenos Aires Senate met with the General Deputy of Bizkaia, Josu Bergara, and visited the Bilbao Superport, the Technology Park of Zamudio and the Tecnalia Technology Corporation. On the second day of the visit, the Argentinian delegation were received by Lehendakari Ibarretxe and by the Speaker of the Basque Parliament, Izaskun Bilbao.



The city of Villa Mercedes in Argentina and Ordizia, Gipuzkoa, sign cooperation agreements

A delegation from Villa Mercedes in the province of San Luis, Argentina, visited a number of training centers based in the Goierri region of Gipuzkoa, as well as the University of Mondragón, local businesses and promotion centers, and the weekly market in Ordizia. They were also interested in how local government and businesses took part in cultural and training activities and how they promoted local products.

The delegation, headed by local authorities from Villa Mercedes and by Julio Esnaola, president of the Villa Mercedes Euskal Etxea,



The delegation from Villa Mercedes and authorities from Ordizia pose after signing the cooperation agreement.

signed a series of agreements with the Ordizia town council aimed at promoting collaboration and fraternity between the two cities. The agreements were the result of

the efforts made last year by the Villa Mercedes Euskal Etxea, when the club invited the Santa Ana Choir and the Ordizia Txistulari Band to travel to Argentina to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Basque center. One of the main instigators behind the trip was the president of the Euskal Etxea, Julio Esnaola, whose family roots are precisely in the town of Ordizia and who maintains close ties with his relatives in Gipuzkoa. The Santa Ana Choir and the Ordizia Txistulari Band served as hosts and tour guides for the Argentineans.

The President of Lower Silesia praises the model of industrial reconversion in Euskadi

During the visit by the President of Lower Silesia, Andrzej Łós, to Euskadi, Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe highlighted the high level of collaboration enjoyed in recent years between the Polish region and Euskadi. The Lehendakari said that the Basque people consider Lower Silesia a friend and partner, emphasizing the different activities and areas in which the two governments are collaborating, including research and development, universities and relations between the two administrations. He also focused attention on the large number of Basque companies located in Lower Silesia and their high degree of involvement with the country. "When Basque businesspeople go out into the world, they want to share in the future and stay, not only do business," he added.

The President of Lower Silesia said Euskadi was an exemplary model of industrial reconversion and expressed his desire to see his country reach the "same level as you have attained, because in terms of industry, we are two very similar countries." He also made a point of the role played by Basque companies in his region, saying that they have "added that extra breath of fresh air which has helped to accelerate development in Lower Silesia, making it the second most important region in Poland after Warsaw." The President said he hoped to see the relationship between Euskadi and Lower Silesia become "another building block" in the construction of a new Europe".

A delegation from the Committee of the Regions of Europe visits Euskadi

At a meeting at the Office of the President in Vitoria-Gasteiz with a delegation from the Committee of the Regions of Europe (CoR), Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe defended resolving "once and for all the only political conflict that still exists in Europe today." The European delegation visited Euskadi, headed by Committee President Michel Delebarre.

Ibarretxe appreciated the visit by the members of the Committee of the Regions, saying that it came at a particularly delicate time in the peace process." He also thanked them for the help the European institution was offering "so that we can achieve a definitive peace." Any help and encouragement from European Union institutions is always welcomed and appreciated by the Basque people," added the Lehendakari.

CoR President, Michel Delebarre, explained that the visit to Euskadi arose out of the concern for the situation in the Basque Country. This concern materialized into a commitment made in April 2006 to send a delegation of regional and local political representatives to explore ways to support the peace process and defend democracy.



GERNIKA 1937-2007



Gernika, international city of peace, on the 70th anniversary of the bombardment

On April 26th, Gernika became the "international city of peace," marking the 70th anniversary of the Nazi bombardment, an event that was commemorated around the world. The Gernika town council organized a special memorial event kicked off with a reading by Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe of the first lines of the "Gernika for Peace" Declaration. The text was then passed on to representatives from the cities of Volgograd, Warsaw and Pforzheim, all seated in the General Assembly chamber beside the Tree of Gernika, and then to Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. The declaration was simultaneously read in cities around the world, including Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, Mar de Plata, Bahía Blanca, Montevideo, Boise, Sydney, Nueva York and Madrid. The document was signed by some fifty delegations from countries

that have suffered the ravages of war, by the Basque Government in full and by members of parliament and representatives from other institutions. The declaration seeks a commitment to end all forms of violence as an "ethical peace project, the most important and human of all projects." The text urged support for "unconditional diplomatic dialogue based on human dignity, human rights and pluralism."

After observing a minute of silence for the victims of the atrocity at Gernika, a documentary entitled "Gernika, el bombardeo" (Gernika, the bombardment), with images of the destruction of the town and civilian population, was shown in the General Assembly Hall. Written and directed by Alberto Rojo, the documentary is slated to be broadcast shortly by ETB and by television stations in 12 countries across Europe. Luis Iriondo

Asurtenetxea, a survivor of the attack, lit the "Flame of Peace," which will burn perpetually in memory of all victims.

The day before the anniversary, the Lehendakari welcomed the international delegations that participated in the commemorative event. The guests included Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace; Janusz Marszalek, Mayor of Oswiecim, Poland; Julius Goldstein, honorary President of the International Auschwitz Committee; and Miguel Ángel Aranazy, Mayor of Gernika. After the event, honored guest Nobel prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, declared that Gernika was "a symbol of unity, peace and dialogue."

The release of Bernardo Atxaga's book "Markak, Gernika 1937" helped to further enhance the event. In the book the author uses



GERNIKA 1937-2007

Gernika as a backdrop to reflect on how we are marked and influenced by life's traumas. Other events revolving around the 70th anniversary commemoration included a series of anti-war films; the 7th International Convention on Culture and Peace, organized by Gernika Gogoratuz; the annual survivors meeting; and the Gernika Peace Prize awards ceremony. Now in its third year, the awards went to Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and the survivors of the bombardment.

Around the world

Gernika was in the hearts and thoughts of thousands of people around the globe. The Basques of the diaspora remembered those painful moments in history from afar, and the delegations of the Basque Government organized a variety of commemorative events.

In New York, Ground Zero was aptly chosen as the ceremonial venue. The event got under way with a rendition of "Agur Jaunak" sung by Donostia soprano Amaia Arberas. Next, Aitor Sotes, the new Basque Government delegate in the United States, Itziar Albisu, the President of the New York Eusko Etxea, and Josu Iriondo, the Auxiliary Bishop of New York, read the declaration in Euskara, English and Spanish. After singing "Gernikako Arbola," the participants observed a minute of silence before going to the shore of the Hudson River, where they laid a wreath to the memory of all of the victims.

A number of Basques and local Basque-Americans were present, including Julen Abio, Ana Morales, Xanti Mendieta, Luis Foncillas, Luis and Conchi Amesti, Emilia Doyaga, Ana Mari Aguirre, Enrique Arana and Justin Doyaga. Also attending the event were Jaime Domínguez Macaya, Director of Patrimony and Procurement of the Department of Internal Revenue, Mikel Burzako and Andoni Gamboa, Director and Secretary General for Foreign Action of the Basque Government.



The New York event pictured left. Below, Brussels and Santiago de Chile.



At the Basque Office in Brussels, the event began with a reading of the Declaration by the Basque Government delegate in Brussels, Ibon Mendibelzua in five languages: Euskara, Spanish, Dutch, French and English. After observing a minute of silence, a concert was offered by the Bakea string quartet from the Brussels Conservatory of Music. A number of people from the Basque community in Brussels showed up for the event, as did several representatives of the Regions of Europe in Brussels. The Basque Director of European Affairs, Mikel Antón, and representatives from different regions in Poland, Belgium, Germany and other autonomous regions shared a half hour in remembrance of the victims.

On April 12th, a few days prior to the event, representatives of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels from the Dutch cities of Huy and Ieper, two places that had also been victims of bomb raids, were welcomed by Miguel Ángel Aranaz, the Mayor of Gernika, at the Basque Office in Brussels, where Aranaz presented the program of events planned for April 26th.

The Federation of Argentinean-

Basque Entities – Eusko Argentinian Bazkun Alkartasuna – endorsed the "Gernika for Peace" Declaration. As part of the 33rd annual Buenos Aires International Book Fair the Declaration was read out loud at the stand sponsored by FEVA and the Basque-Argentinian Foundation Juan de Garay, in collaboration with the Basque Government. In Buenos Aires the French Basque Center hosted a lecture given by Juan Carlos Ibarrola on the subject of Gernika, followed by the documentary "Gernika. The Spirit of The Tree," directed by Laurence Boulting.

In Santiago de Chile the event was commemorated at Gernika square, where flowers were laid beside the shoot of the Tree of Gernika. The Declaration was read by Jon Erdozia, followed by a memorial Mass officiated by Basque priest, Martín Gondra.

At 12 o'clock noon the Declaration was also read beside another shoot of the Tree of Gernika located between Cicerón and Moliere streets in Mexico City. To mark the event a photograph exhibition on the Basque Country was opened to the public at the Basque Office in the Mexican capital.

Basque Studies Consortium forges its future

Deputy Minister for Linguistic Policy, Patxi Baztarrika, and Lorea Bilbao, head of the Basque culture and language assistantship program in universities around the world, took part in the International Conference of Basque Studies hosted last April in Boise, Idaho. The conference featured speakers such as Northern Ireland priest, Father Alec Reid, who discussed the Basque peace process, and Ibon Mendibelzua, Basque Government delegate in Brussels.

Patxi Baztarrika gave a talk on the situation and international presence of Euskera today. He and Lorea Bilbao took part in a meeting between the people behind the future Basque Studies Consortium, a collective whose mission is to promote the creation of Basque Studies programs in North American universities. Present at the first meeting were university representatives, who expressed an interest in including Basque studies in their curricula or putting new life into the programs already offered. Together the participants laid the foundations for the Consortium and shared ideas for the future. Some of the organizations represented at the meeting already offer courses of this type, such as the Center for Basque Studies in Reno, Nevada, as well as Basque centers and institutions attached to universities in the states of Idaho, California and Oregon.

The Basque Parliament gives the green light to the Etxepare Institute

The Basque Parliament has unanimously passed a law authorizing the creation of the Etxepare Institute. The purpose of the Institute is to promote Basque culture abroad, whether in Spanish or Basque, although particular emphasis will be placed on Euskara.

The organization, named after sixteenth-century Basque writer, Bernart Etxepare, will have its headquarters in Donostia-San Sebastian. All of the Basque Government programs relating to Basque culture and language will be brought under one roof. The Institute will also promote programs designed to teach and study Euskara in foreign countries and to strengthen cultural bonds with Basque-speaking communities around the world.

In her speech before the plenary session, Minister for Culture Miren

Azkarate explained the goals of the Institute, saying that it "will put Basque culture and Euskara on the world map," adding that "Euskadi must not be isolated." She insisted that both the Spanish and Basque languages form part of Euskal Herria's heritage, although she pointed out that the two languages do not enjoy the same opportunities to spread and grow.

The Etxepare Basque Institute has the mission of fomenting the Basque language and culture worldwide, based on a motto coined by sixteenth-century writer Bernart Etxepare, for whom the institution was named: "Jalgi hadi mundura!" (Open up to the world!). This new public organization, with its own legal status, will not be starting from scratch. Instead, it will take on different programs already set into motion by the Department of Culture, to which it will be directly answerable.

"Zubigintzan" chosen as motto for 4th World Congress of Basque Communities to be hosted in Bilbao

Under the motto "Zubigintzan" representatives of the Basque diaspora will come together to celebrate the Fourth World Congress of Basque Communities, organized by the Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities. The event, hosted in Bilbao for the first time, will take place this July from the 9th through the 13th.

As laid down in Act 8/1994, every four years a congress is held to promote contact and build alliances between the Basque Clubs and Communities and Basque Government institutions. Three delegates with full voting rights from each of the Basque center federations will attend the Congress, in addition to three delegates from each of the countries without federations. Thirty Gaztemundu program

participants from Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and the United States will also be attending the Congress.

The idea behind the motto for the 4th World Congress is to promote new channels of communication between people, associations and governments. "Zubigintzan" captures the spirit of building bridges in different directions to shorten the distance between the Euskal Herria and its diaspora.

The discussions and deliberations during the Congress will be used to draw up a document containing conclusions. The document will then be submitted to the Advisory Council for Relations with Basque Communities to be used in writing up the final 2008-2011 Four Year Institutional Action Plan.



Pilar Manjón and Adrián Celaya receive the Manuel de Irujo Award

Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe and Minister for Justice, Joseba Azkarraga, were in charge of announcing the Manuel de Irujo Award, granted each year by the Basque Department of Justice. This year's the award was shared *ex aequo* by Pilar Manjón, President of the Association of March 11th Victims, and jurist Adrián Celaya. In both cases the jury's decision was based on the award-winners' personal and professional lives dedicated to the cause and values of justice.

In his speech, the Lehendakari said that "Pilar Manjón has taught us that we can be more humble and that asking for forgiveness or saying I'm sorry aggrandizes us rather than making us smaller."

After calling for a "public space" for victims, "so that you can

publicly demonstrate your feelings," Ibarretxe insisted that "the road to reconciliation cannot be built on hard and fast laws," and defended the need to carry out a "critical revision" of the past.

With regard to Adrián Celaya,

the Lehendakari emphasized the numerous studies on law the prestigious jurist has carried out over his fruitful lifetime and agreed with the award-winner that the driving force behind political agreement already exists. "It is none other than our Historical Rights, the authentic Constitution of the Basque People," he added.



The Lehendakari applauds the award-winners

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Aurelia Arkotxa, named full member of Euskaltzaindia

On March 30th, Aurelia Arkotxa was named full member of Euskaltzaindia by absolute majority, as required by the by-laws of the Royal Academy of the Basque Language. Arkotxa is now the third woman to become a full member of the Academy.

Aurelia Arkotxa was born in Baigorri (Nafarroa Beherea) in 1953, but moved at an early age to Hendaia. Although she earned her Bachelor's degree in Hispanic Philology, Arkotxa later did her graduated studies in Basque Philology. This appointment recognizes her lifetime achievements. Arkotxa wrote her thesis on Gabriel Aresti, based entirely on the poem "Maldan behera." She currently teaches classes in Literature and Theory of Literature at the Universities of Bordeaux and Baiona.



She was one of the founders of the magazine "Maiatz" and is director of the scientific journal "Lapurdum." She has also contributed articles to "Berria", "Argia" and "Sautrela." Her most noteworthy books include "Atari ahantziak" and "Imaginaire et poésie dans Maldan behera de Gabriel Aresti (1933-1975)," both published in 1993. Aurelia Arkotxa was named honorary member of the Academy in 2003 and is currently a member of the Euskaltzaindia literary research committee.

Enrique Zuazua takes Basque Research Award

Enrique Zuazua, mathematician born in Eibar, Gipuzkoa, was presented with the Basque Research Award by the Lehendakari in recognition of his "relevant contributions to the Partial Differential Equations Theory and to the Control Theory, as well as his Applications to Optimal Shape Design in Aeronautics." After thanking Zuazua for his work, Ibarretxe announced that in July the Basque Government would give the go ahead for the creation of the Basque Council on Research. He added that the Basque Government is aware of the importance of research and that it expects to invest nearly 1.7 billion euros over the next four years.

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Bitor Arginzoniz

Restaurante Etxebarri

Axpe-Atxondo

Bitor Arginzoniz was named chef of the year at eighth edition of The Best in Gastronomy Congress held in Donostia-San Sebastián. Arginzoniz heads up the kitchen at Restaurant Etxebarri, located near the town of Durango in Axpe-Atxondo, and famed for its cuisine fresh from the grill. It's not only succulent steaks and fresh fish that sizzle over the grill at Etxebarri, but also excellent rice dishes, mushrooms, eggs and even elvers and oysters. This issue of Euskal Etxeak offers readers a recipe for oysters.

OYSTERS

GETTING READY:

Open and shuck oysters. Remove the hairs and leave the shell clean.

Strain the juice and put in a spray bottle.

Soak the seaweed in fresh water to remove salt. Drain. Remove the leaves from the stem and cut into 3 cm strips.

PREPARATION:

Pan-fry the seaweed over the coals for around 3 minutes and set aside.

Place the oysters on a grill and moisten with the oyster juice.

Cook slowly over the coals for 2 minutes on both sides. Remove and spray again with oyster juice.

PRESENTATION:

Make three separate beds of seaweed on a plate and place the oysters on top of the seaweed.

INGREDIENTS

3 oysters

Seaweed





My grandfather and grandmother, Arsenio Isasmendi and María Cleofa González, in Vitoria.

Guillermo Isasmendi

DO YOU HAVE A PICTURE TO ADD TO THE ALBUM?

If you do, and would like to see it published here, send it by e-mail to: euskaletxeak@ej-gv.es

EUSKO JAURLARITZA



GOBIERNO VASCO

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PRESIDENCIA