

PAPER OF MR. JOSU JON IMAZ, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY,
COMMERCE AND TOURISM

INTERNATIONALISATION AND PARA-DIPLOMACY



Jaun-andreok, adiskideok, egunon:

Lau urte baino gehiago dira Eusko Legebiltzarrak Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanetarakoari buruzko Legea onartu zuela. Legeak adierazten duenari jarraituz, hemen gara Euskal Gizataldeon Biltzar hau elkarrekin eratu nahirik. Atzo arratsaldean Ibarretxe Lehendakariak berak hasiera eman zien jardunaldiei eta gaur benetan pozarren naukazue zuen artean, nire aldetik ere hainbat gogoeta azaldu gurarik.

Lehenengo gogoeta, oinarri-oinarrikoa zera da, mundua izugarri txikitzen ari zaigula, distantziak erabat laburtzen, eta edozein plangintza egin ahal izateko gertatzen ari diren aldaketak kontutan hartu beharko direla.

Bigarrena, berriz, elkar komunikatzeko eta elkarren berri jakiteko bitartekoak gero eta azkarragoak eta hurbilagoak izan arren, euskal diaspora neurri handi batean geratua dela dagoneko eta euskal jatorriko belaunaldiak urtez urte urruntzen eta ahazten ari zaizkigula.

Hau da, teknologia berriei esker, atzerrian bizi diren euskal-jatorrikoak sekula baino hurbilago daude Euskal Herritik eraz eta moldez, baina, aldi berean, belaunaldi berriok inoiz baino urrutiago, behar bada, tajuz eta zentzuz.

Obviously society is in the midst of a process of opening-up, inter-relation and inter-connection which is having an ever-increasing effect on political, social, cultural, institutional and university environments.

For the Basque Country, the first consequence of this globalisation is that decisions taken in other parts of the planet have an increasingly obvious effect on our interests. The GATT treaty, the Mercosur Agreement, the free-trade agreement between the United States and Mexico, the development of a geo-economic space in the Mediterranean basin, EU and NATO enlargement to include central and east-European nations, the development of the situation of Quebec in Canada, etc. are just some examples of this. Borders are becoming more and more easy to cross and as a result the impact of these decisions on regional areas is increasing.

Globalisation at an economic level means that the economy no longer operates in an isolated, more or less self-sufficient, national or state system within well-defined borders. Globalisation implies a whole series of changes both at a company level and at a level of economic and industrial policy and, as a result the challenges that any group has to face up to acquires a world dimension that was unthinkable up until only very recently.

The second consequence is that of a homogenisation within international society that affects not only state identities but also national and regional ones. When facing this situation, we must make an effort to find a place for the Basque Country within this new international society. This effort should be directed, on the one hand towards the appropriate and best defence of the Basque Country's interests that are exposed to this global process and on the other towards the saving and developing of our own identity within this context. For these reasons we believe that a

fundamental action to take in the 21st century must be precisely the strengthening and projection of Basque identity within international society.

When thinking about this projection we must bear in mind the growing importance of para-diplomacy in international society. Para-diplomacy is a concept that underlines the importance, in the modern world (both as far as their presence and their influence goes) of networks of relationships outside strictly diplomatic channels. The rise of para-diplomacy is due to several factors, including:

- The development of communications, telecommunications and information transmission and access. Traditional, formal channels of international intercommunication and information are tending to disappear.
- The appearance on the international arena of new actors amongst which stateless nations and sub-state bodies are having a growing importance, as are interest groups such as business consortiums, sectorial networks, universities, political parties, trade unions and business organisations.

Basque society is a very dynamic society with a long history of an overseas presence. This tradition of a Basque presence overseas represents a piece of untapped wealth which is by no means to be sniffed at. It would be a good idea to make use of the potential of the awareness of all these Basque «agents», as well as the advantages that could be obtained from the combination of efforts in overseas action. Any Basque presence overseas should take into consideration institutional and economic fields as well as solidarity with the third world and relations with Basque communities overseas. For the moment, in this setting, I am only going to refer to relationships with Basque communities overseas.

Emigration and the presence of Basques in different continents around the world has deep historical roots and is traditionally due to economic, political, religious or simply personal reasons.

It was the will to maintain traditions, their own language, ideas of freedom and solidarity as well as ties with their country of origin that made Basques living overseas create, around the world, and most especially in Latin America, these associations which have come to be known as EUSKAL ETXEAK (Basque Centres). The first Basque Centre of this kind was founded in Montevideo on the 25th December 1876 and since then around two hundred Basque Centres have been set up throughout America, Europe and Oceania.

It is always difficult to give an exact reply to the question about the number of Basques living outside the Basque Country, since there are no figures on this, and obviously no official census data. However the majority of Basque communities living overseas do make estimates of the total population of Basque origin in the country where they live. It would be no means risky to say that the total population of a Basque origin living overseas is around 4,500,000 people.

Obviously, the Basque Centres and their members by no means represent all the population of a Basque origin. The Basque Centres are really places that congregate active minorities of people that are more aware of their Basque origins and try to maintain their ties with the Basque Country.

The situation of Basques throughout the world is difficult to compare from one country to another. Similarly, it is very difficult to compare Basque Centres in Europe with those in America, those in Argentina with those in the U.S., Venezuela or Mexico. Although it may seem contradictory, nowadays it is more difficult to maintain one's Basque identity overseas than in previous times. It is quite possible that a few years from now, a number of Basque Centres may disappear and others, that currently have very limited activity, are revitalised.

All said and done, there is no doubt that:

1. The Basques living overseas have a vital role to play in disseminating and spreading the Basque identity.
2. We, in the Basque Country want to keep up and strengthen the ties with our brothers living overseas, wherever they may be.

3. We believe that Basque communities have a fundamental role to play in our strategy of promoting our presence around the world at an institutional, economic, cultural and social level.

For all of this, it would be a good idea to get those institutions and entities working in this field to:

- Promote the role of the Basque Centres as a vital part of Basque activity overseas and as a place from where our identity irradiates.
- Maintain and promote Basque culture and the Basque language as factors that go together to make up our identity, especially at this time of globalisation and assimilation of a prevailing world culture.
- Strengthen and improve information and communication channels between the Basque Country and Basques living abroad.
- Concentrate on younger generations and make them see the reality of the Basque Country.
- Offer something new to youngsters so that they do not forget their tradition and folklore and can carry on with the work their parents carried out.
- Help them to visit the Basque Country, to travel here and stay in contact with this country which on many occasions has little to do with the picture their parents have given them of it. Enable them to study here, obtain work experience in Basque companies, etc.
- In short, make sure that they carry on being the Basque Country's overseas ambassadors.

To make all of this possible it is necessary to work in research, look at the market, providing training and somehow build an international lobby.

At a research and market examination level, we need to think openly about what is beginning to happen within international society.

In the field of training, we must aim our training at *leading figures*. In other words we have to train those who are relevant personalities in both the public and private sectors. We must also train *specialists* who will subsequently occupy posts in the international sections of the Administration or companies or who are going to work in the world of international relations (multinationals, international banking, international organisations, research teams in influential American and European universities, etc.).

The organisation of a Basque international lobby that aspires to including within its bosom all those Basques in international organisations, diplomatic services, multinationals or who have prominent jobs in overseas countries, etc.

If we are going to organise such a lobby we already have a large number of Basque professionals in such jobs but, apart from them, it is also necessary to prepare young professionals so that they can occupy jobs of this kind.

The Basque Country has traditionally sent many of its best overseas. In fact, the number of Basques who have entered the diplomatic corps is proof of that. It is necessary to build some link between these people and the youngsters now coming on to the international arena.

In any case, none of this can be done solely in the Basque Country, just by the administration. If there is one thing that Europe has to learn from America it is the relevance of the private sector and the strength of new generations. We can help and collaborate but the success of any programme requires the initiative, acceptance and personal commitment of second, third and fourth generations of Basques. I hope that this Congress helps us all go away to think about this and other matters.

*Zorionak, urteak joan eta urteak etorri euskal senari eusteagatik.
Eta eskerrik asko hemen, Biltzar honetan parte hartzeagatik*

PAPER OF MR. IÑAKI AGUIRRE, GENERAL SECRETARY OF FOREIGN ACTION

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL PLAN OF ACTION REGARDING BASQUE CENTRES



This report for the Advisory Board aims to evaluate the implementation of the Four-Year Institutional Plan of Action approved during the Congress on Overseas Basque Communities and Centres held in Vitoria-Gasteiz in November 1995. Three years have passed since the Plan was approved, and there is still another year to go before the next Congress, which is due to be held in November 1999.

Before carrying out a detailed, point by point analysis of the aforementioned Plan, we would like to bring a number of general considerations to the Board's attention. Considerations which, in the General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs' opinion, have characterised this three-year period and which go a long way to explaining the relative success/failure of the various initiatives.

Firstly, we should state that since the Basque Parliament passed the Act on relations with overseas Basque Communities and Centres in the spring of 1994 and the conclusion of the aforementioned Congress in 1995, relations between overseas Basques and the Basque Institutions have entered a new era, not only due to the increased dedication and interest demonstrated by the Institutions, but also as a result of the extremely positive response of the communities themselves, which are currently experiencing a general period of resurgence, especially in Latin America.

In response to the question posed by Professor William Douglass at the start of the Congress: «Nora goaz?» («Where are we going?»), we can now reply with a well-established model of fluid relations between overseas Basques and the Basque Government; a model made up of updated legal provisions, new programmes aimed at strengthening overseas Basque organisations, the involvement of outside specialists and a greater degree of professionalism in what has, until now, been a basically voluntary movement. Finally, a concerted effort has been made to improve communications with the Basque Centres, both by direct involvement in their activities and by the setting up of stable liaison channels.

The Four-Year Plan drawn up by the Congress Advisory Board covered a variety of areas from short-term programmes that can be implemented immediately, to long-term projects whose development and implementation require more time and patience. All initiatives, however, revolved around four central issues:

- The maintenance of the structure and infrastructure of Basque Centres.
- The promotion and maintenance of Basque identity, culture and language.
- The setting up of efficient information and communication channels with the Basque Country.
- The involvement of young generations in the day-to-day life and activities of the Basque Centres, and through them, with the Basque Country.

If we take a general look at the activities of the Office of Relations with Basque Communities over the last few years, it becomes clear that two of these issues (maintenance of the structure and infrastructure of the Basque Centres and the setting up of efficient information and communication channels with the Basque Country) have monopolised a large part of institutional activities. That is to say, the efforts of the Basque Centres have been especially directed towards consolidating and

strengthening their structural existence (we should not forget that these have been difficult years, from an economic point of view, for the majority of Latin-American countries in which the Centres are mainly concentrated).

Another phenomenon that has had an important influence on the development of the Plan has been the heterogeneous nature of the Basque diaspora and the consequently wide variety of Centres, each with its own individual composition, idiosyncrasies and interests. In certain cases, these idiosyncrasies have even forced us to modify established regulations, the most notorious example of this being, perhaps, the United States. The reservations held by various North American Centres with regard to complying with one of the recognition requirements, i.e. facilitating the identity and personal details of its registered members, obliged us to approve Decree 106/1996 dated 14 May, which modified the 1994 Decree and guaranteed to protect against unauthorised use of personal data. Even though this modification helped speed up the recognition process in some cases, NABO (North American Basque Organizations) has still not been officially recognised as some of its member centres have yet to provide the necessary details.

Sector-by-Sector Action Proposals

Having covered these global issues, we will now give a schematic outline of the tasks which have already been completed, and those which are scheduled for the coming year. We will summarise the Plan section by section, and then comment (in bold) on the degree of compliance with each stipulation.

MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR BASQUE CENTRES

Financial aid for the organisation of activities

The Basque Government, through the General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs, will earmark an increasing percent of its economic resources to *subsidise a part of the day-to-day activities of the Basque Centres, as well as* cultural, folkloric and linguistic events. These subsidies should be designated according to strict egalitarian precepts, each Basque Centre being treated equally regardless of size, strength or seniority. In all cases the principle of helping those who need it most should prevail. The subsidies will be annual, governed by Decree and open to all eligible applicants.

When the Four-Year Plan was approved, the number of Basque Centres applying to the Basque Government for financial aid for the organisation of programmes and activities totalled 61. The designated budget was 158 million pesetas. As a result of the World Congress on Basque Communities, this sum was increased by 50 million pesetas in order to improve the BG's activity in this area. Nevertheless, despite these significant financial increases, two external factors have come into play over recent years which have seriously undermined these efforts:

The dollar/peseta exchange rate has risen from 127 pesetas/dollar in 1995 to 158 pesetas/dollar in 1998. In 1995, our budget totalled \$1,240,000, whereas in 1998, despite an increase of 50 million pesetas (an almost 33 % increase over the original sum), the total budget in dollars was worth no more than \$1,316,000.

The creation of new, officially recognised and registered Basque Centres applying for BG grants rose from 61 in 1995 to 91 in July 1998. As a result of the sum of these two effects (\$/peseta exchange rate + increase in Basque Centres), the average subsidy granted per Basque Centre has fallen from \$20,328/Centre in 1995 to \$14,462/Centre in July 1998. On 10/11/98 there were a total of 108 officially recognised Centres, with another 30 in the process of registering. It is clear that the effectiveness of this initiative, which has involved a vast expenditure of effort on the part of the Basque Government, has been severely limited as a result of these two external factors.

Aid for maintenance and improvement of infrastructures

Part of the budget resources will also be set aside for the *maintenance and improvement of infrastructures*, as well as for the setting up of new Basque Centres. A special effort will be made to

provide the Basque Centres with communications and computer equipment in order to improve and speed up their communications both amongst themselves and with the Basque Country.

The Basque Government has also agreed to make enquiries among Basque banks and credit companies as to the possibility of extending preferential financial facilities to Basque Centres in order to aid them in their purchase of suitable premises or in extensive remodelling or refurbishment projects involving large sums of money.

At the end of 1995, an extraordinary sum of 40 million pesetas was set aside to provide all officially recognised Basque Centres with computer equipment which would enable them to communicate quickly, cheaply and efficiently with the BG as well as provide access via the Internet to all the information available on the WWW. There is currently a network of 100 totally equipped Basque Centres, in constant communication with the Basque Country and with each other via the Internet.

The 1998 budget has reserved 500 million pesetas to be used as guarantees for loans to Basque Centres in order to provide them with access to credit facilities at Basque market prices (MIBOR + 0.25 %) to aid the purchase or refurbishment of suitable premises.

Moreover, EITB is currently providing Basque Centres which are still unable to tune into its ETB SAT broadcasts with satellite dishes, decoders and image unscramblers.

These three areas of activity amply fulfil the Plan's requirements.

CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

Commitment to send library resources which deal with Basque issues and to aid the publishing of material produced in the Basque Centres

The Culture Department's Book Service, which is responsible for distributing books and publications to public libraries throughout the Basque Autonomous Community, will undertake to extend its service to the libraries of the Basque Centres in order to up-date their existing collections with the latest publications. The annual budget for this *plan to up-date Basque Centre libraries* will be 5,000,000 pesetas. The operation will take place once every year.

The Department of Culture has sent books and publications occasionally but not systematically (according to our information, only once). For its part, the GSOA has also contributed to the up-dating of Basque Centre libraries with an annual publications dispatch.

It should also collaborate in the publication of books, magazines and audio-visual projects produced by the Basque Centres. This collaboration should never exceed 50 % of the total costs.

No requests for collaboration of this nature have yet been received.

Basque language

The Culture Department will undertake to send publications (books, cassettes), Basque language teaching methods, teaching material and *Basque learning and advanced level methods*. The possible participation of overseas Basques in *intensive Basque language courses* at the various Basque language schools throughout the Basque Country, will be investigated along with the idea of *sending Basque teachers* to any Basque Centre interested in gaining first-hand experience and training. Given the complexity of this project, as regards both organisation and financing, its success will require a concerted effort on the part of all interested Basque Centres, the Department of Culture and the General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs.

Through HABE (Centre for Adult Literacy in Basque/Adult Basquisition), the Culture Department has responded immediately to all requests for material made by the Basque Centres. With the collaboration of the GSOA, the second phase (1995-2000) of the Argentinian Euskaraz programme, which aims to train 36 Basque language teachers (teacher training), has already been initiated. The total direct cost of this programme over the three-year period from 1995-1998, was more than 45 million pesetas.

In response to a unanimous demand expressed during the Congress, the Basque Government will work in collaboration with Euskaltzaindia, the Basque Language Academy, to decide upon to best way of celebrating «*The International Basque Language Day*».

The Deputy Ministry for Language Policy has recently sent its request to the Basque Language Academy and expects an answer by the end of November.

Sport

The Basque Government Department of Sports and the Basque Pelota Federation will continue to assume responsibility for attending to requests for *sports material*, improving the regularity and quality of this service. At first, the annual budget for this service will be limited to 2,000,000 pesetas. There are also plans to *send pelota instructors* to certain Basque Centres, much in the same way as Basque language teachers. These instructors would concentrate mainly on training future instructors, in order to ensure the continuity of the project. The promotion of traditional rural sports is another objective.

In order to foster these kinds of sporting events throughout the world, the Congress has expressed its desire to see the setting up of an «International Association of Basque Sports».

The GSOA has no records of activity in this area.

Youth

The Department of Youth will undertake to provide *overseas Basque youths with the opportunity of attending the working holidays* which it organises in the Basque Country. The Department of Youth will also study, in conjunction with the Basque Centres, other initiatives aimed at enabling Basque Centre youths to maintain links with the Basque Country and its Institutions, as well as to get to know the country first-hand.

An annual programme called GAZTEMUNDU, aimed at young members of American Basque Centres, was set up in 1996. The programme aims to provide information about all aspects of the current situation in the Basque Country, and to integrate new generations into the day-to-day life of the Centres. The initiative has met with considerable success among young members and includes 15-day visits to the Basque Country, during which participants take part in numerous institutional, economic and cultural activities with visits to the various different regions. Before being selected, the young members must carry out a study on one of various thematic blocks (Youth, Culture or Economic-Industrial Relations). These studies are later discussed and improved in groups. Experiences so far, and especially the 1998 programme, have been extremely positive. The chosen candidates have expressed their satisfaction and have gone on to form an active and dynamic part of the Centres' day-to-day life.

With regard to overseas Basque youths taking part in working holidays organised by the Department of Youth, the offer has yet to be extended.

Use of the cultural and youth infrastructure

The Basque Government and the Provincial Governments will make their cultural, sports and youth infrastructures available to members of the Basque Communities and Centres. The General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs, in agreement with the Provincial Governments and the Basque Centres, will decide on the information channels required to provide the Basque Centres with all the *hostel guidebooks, cultural campaigns and artistic, craft or specialised courses* which their members, and especially their youth members, may wish to take advantage of. As far as possible, a *system of fees and reservations* will be set up for this purpose.

We have not received requests of this nature, although it should be pointed out that no information campaigns have yet been conducted regarding this offer. The only times the hostels have been used has been within the framework of the Gaztemundu programme.

Folklore

The Basque Institutions will collaborate in the maintenance and improvement of musical and folkloric cultural events organised by the Basque Centres. This collaboration will take the same form as that described in the section on Basque language.

Every request of this nature has met with a prompt response. Among other activities, music groups, txistu players and in some cases Basque dancers, have visited various Basque Centres.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Rapid and reliable communications systems

The Basque Government will undertake to *increase substantially the flow of information about the Basque Country and its current* institutional, economic, cultural and social situation. To do so, within a six-month period it will define the *most adequate communications methods* for ensuring that overseas Basque Communities remain well informed about events in their country of origin. Written and computer-based methods seem to be the best options. Therefore, all efforts will be made to unite the Basque Centres with each other and with the Basque Institutions within a single communications and computer network.

As we have already mentioned in the section related to the improvement of infrastructure, all Basque Centres have been provided with computer equipment enabling reliable and rapid communications with the Basque Government and with each other through the use of electronic mail. Some Basque Centres or Federations have taken advantage of this new equipment to create their own websites. The equipment also enables them to access the wealth of information about Basque themes and other relevant subjects available on the World Wide Web. The content and presentation of the magazine «Euskal Etxeak» (Basque Centres) has also been improved. This magazine, which is delivered free of charge 5 times a year to 8,500 readers spread over 5 continents, is published in Spanish and English with texts in Basque in both versions. It is also available at the Basque Government's website. The Presidency also sends a monthly newsletter called Noticias de Euskadi (Basque News) to a more reduced and select group of readers. Basque News is published in Spanish, French and English and has a circulation of approximately 5,000 copies.

Satellite broadcasting of Basque Television and Radio

Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB), the Basque Television and Radio Company, will undertake, within 1-2 years, *to set up satellite broadcasts of one television channel and two radio stations*, which will cover, initially at least, South America, Mexico, Central America and the Southern United States. In the future, this coverage may be expanded to include the rest of the American continent and Europe. It is an extremely important project which will enable EITB to overcome its geographical limitations and broadcast its programmes to countries with important Basque populations or areas where there is interest in Basque-related topics.

EITB will *broadcast for various hours every day and should offer a varied and competitive programme* in keeping with its commitment to public service and the promotion of Basque language and culture. It will broadcast programmes in both Basque and Spanish, and its schedule should include news programmes, Basque television series, documentaries, informative programmes and sports coverage, especially of pelota and traditional rural sports, as well as football matches played by Basque teams.

Radio broadcasts will coincide, with regard to content and programming, with Radio Euskadi in Spanish and Euskadi Irratia in Basque, both broadcast in the Basque Country 24 hours a day.

Before the definitive launch of the project, EITB intends to conduct an advertising campaign aimed at potential viewers organised through the Basque Centre network. It is essential for EITB that this project be properly promoted in America and that the television channel gain access to the most important cable networks.

Towards the end of 1996, EITB started broadcasting via satellite. After a somewhat troubled initial stage of collaboration with Galician and Catalan television stations, it later went solo. Currently, ETB SAT broadcasts two different schedules, one for Spain and one for America. These schedules mainly consist of Basque-produced programmes that are broadcast on ETB 1 and ETB 2, although a few slots are dedicated to co-produced documentaries. ETB SAT broadcasts in both Spanish and Basque. It began broadcasting on 15 September 1997, with the initial aim of covering Spain via the Hispasat satellite within the DTH VIA DIGITAL package. Viewers can watch ETB SAT on channel 29 of Vía Digital and can also tune into EUSKADI IRRATIA radio programmes (in Basque) and RADIO EUSKADI programmes (in Spanish). On 28 October 1998, ETB SAT began to broadcast to over 1 million homes in America, via American cable networks and DTH. Overseas Basques in America can also tune into ETB SAT directly from the Hispasat satellite on channel 110 of the Digital Package. This satellite will shortly incorporate EUSKADI IRRATIA (in Basque) and RADIO EUSKADI (in Spanish) also.

«Experiences of the Diaspora» Award

The Congress considers the sharing of the experiences and personal histories of overseas Basques to be of the utmost importance. It therefore fully supports the organisation of a quadrennial award for the literary or audio-visual work which has made the most significant contribution to this theme.

The first award ceremony has yet to be held. It is scheduled for 1999 with the intention of coinciding with the forthcoming World Congress, thereby giving the award greater impetus.

EDUCATION

Exchanges in the education and university fields

The Basque Government, in collaboration with Basque Universities and other educational bodies, will establish means of organising *working visits and training in Basque universities for undergraduates, postgraduates, PhD students and teachers from the Basque Communities*. Teacher and student exchanges with various educational centres will also be promoted.

Agreements will be reached between Basque Centres and Basque catering schools to organise exchanges, courses and overseas advice to Basque chefs.

The GSOA has no record of activity in this field.

OVERSEAS ECONOMY AND COMMERCE

Economic missions

The interests of Basque Centres will be considered when designing and planning Basque commercial and economic projects in countries with an organised Basque Community. Furthermore, *representatives from these Centres will form part of official Basque delegations*. Any economic proposals presented by the Basque Centres with the objective of promoting bilateral relations between the Basque Country and their country of residence will be given serious consideration.

From the approval of the quadrennial plan to 30/06/1998, the GSOA has no record of the Department of Commerce and Tourism's activity in this area. Since that date, the Department has signed 4 agreements with the American Basque Institutes and has organised various business conferences in Mar del Plata with the collaboration of the Basque-Argentine Institute of Co-operation and Development and the Society for the Promotion of Industrial Restructuring (SPIR). With regard to the rest of the projects organised by the Presidency and the Department of Industry during various official visits, the participation and collaboration of the Basque Communities has always played an important role.

Setting up of companies in the Basque Country

All overseas Basques who wish to set up a business or enterprise in the Basque Country are *guaranteed technical and legal guidance* by the corresponding Institutions.

There has only been one request of this nature, to which the SPIR responded promptly and efficiently.

TOURISM AND GASTRONOMY

Organisation of Basque Weeks

The organisation of Basque Weeks with *gastronomic, artistic, cultural, sporting and cinematic events* in, or in collaboration with, the Basque Centres, will be promoted and encouraged.

Tourism Campaigns

The Basque Government will take Basque Centres into consideration when designing its tourism and image promotion campaigns. To this end, it will provide them with all the *tourism and advertising material* published regarding the Basque Country (posters, leaflets, etc.).

The Basque Government is to provide logistic aid to Basque Centres with the aim of facilitating visits by organised tourist groups from their respective countries.

From the approval of the quadrennial plan to 30/06/1998, the GSOA has no record of the Department of Commerce and Tourism's activity in this area.

Since this date, the Department has signed an agreement with FEVA (Federation of Basque-Argentine Entities) to promote collaboration between the two Institutions with the aim of providing FEVA with information and all kinds of tourist and advertising material about the Basque Country, promoting the organisation of Basque Weeks in FEVA Basque Centres, with gastronomic, artistic, cultural, sporting and cinematic events, and providing logistical aid for facilitating visits by organised tourist groups from this country.

For its part, since the approval of the four-year plan, the GSOA has responded to all requests regarding the promotion, organisation and subsidisation of gastronomic, cultural and sporting events (3 gastronomic and 1 cinematic week in Argentina, 1 gastronomic week and one forthcoming cinematic week in Mexico and 1 gastronomic week in Venezuela). It has also subsidised the attendance of Basque sportsmen and women, txistu players and music groups at various events such as festivals (Jaialdiak) or National Basque Weeks.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Social aid in situations of urgent need

An experimental system will be set up in collaboration with Basque Centres to help bring Basque aid to members of Basque Communities in situations of dire need and to cover the most glaring insufficiencies in the field of social services.

The GSOA has no record of activity in this field.

Establishment of support mechanisms to facilitate the definitive return of members of Basque Communities

The Basque Institutions will establish support mechanisms to defray the travel costs of those wishing to return definitively to the Basque Country.

The GSOA has no record of activity in this field.

Social benefits for returnees

Members of Basque Communities that return definitively to the Basque Country and fulfil the corresponding legal requirements (Act 8/1994, article 3, sections 1 and 2) and are eligible within the established parameters, can apply for social benefits in the same way as other Basque citizens. Areas of application will be: minimum income, non-contributive pensions, Social Welfare Fund pensions, Emergency Social Benefits (housing and basic necessities), Grassroots organisations and Home Help. With regard to senior citizens, the number of Homes, Clubs, Day Centres, Residences, Canteens and subsidised associations will be expanded.

These mechanisms have been available for two years and the GSOA has records of only two petitions (one from a Colombian Basque and the other from a citizen of the United States).

Setting up of a programme to organise visits to the Basque Country for senior Basque Community members

The Basque Government and the Provincial Government will undertake to study the best method and real demand within the Basque Communities for this programme of visits aimed at senior citizens of over 65 years of age. The user would assume a percentage of the costs in relation to their economic means.

The GSOA has no record of activity in this field.

HEALTH

Hospital admission and medical attention

The Basque Government, through the Health Department and Basque Health Service, guarantees members of Basque Communities medical assistance and hospital admission during their stay in the Basque Country, be it a temporary visit or a definitive repatriation.

Overseas Basque doctors

Doctors of Basque origin will have the right to practise medicine in both Basque hospitals and Public Health Clinics. The only requirements are a) doctors must be properly qualified in their corresponding field; and b) they must be a registered member of a recognised Basque Centre.

Medical assistance has been guaranteed for three years and only one case has been recorded by the GSOA (a participant in the 1995 World Congress). One request for permission to practise medicine was received (a young Basque-Venezuelan doctor who finally opted for a hospital in Catalonia).

HOUSING

Council housing

Members of Basque Communities that wish to return definitively to the Basque Country and fulfil the requirements stipulated in article 3, sections 1 and 2 as well as the application requisites, can apply for council housing without the need to demonstrate any kind of previous residence. The Basque Institutions will also modify the Housing Management Plan to include the mechanisms necessary to ensure the fulfilment of article 11, section 2, paragraph 2 of the Act on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres, which states that «when dealing with especially vulnerable people, the housing committee may establish the status of returnee as a positive factor in the evaluation of applications or to reserve a percentage of the said housing allocations for these groups».

As with social benefits, these services have been established for over two years and GSOA records show only one related request (Dominican Republic).

Vitoria-Gasteiz, July 1999

PAPER OF MR. IÑAKI ESNAL, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BASQUE CLUBS

EVALUATION OF THE 1995-1999 FOUR-YEAR PLAN BY THE BASQUE CENTRES



Ongi etorri

First of all, on behalf of all the Basque Centres I would like to extend a warm welcome to those countries and centres here today that were not represented in 1995. Ongi etorri. We are witnessing an intense proliferation of the Basque Centre movement throughout the world. On the one hand, through new additions to the number of Basque Centres officially recognised by the Basque Government (in the case of Centres already in existence), and on the other, through the foundation of new centres in areas in which the existing Basque communities were not organised.

In fact, the number of centres has risen from 129 in 1995 to 154 in 1999, 125 of these having been officially recognised by the Basque Government. The number of countries represented by the centres has risen from 14 in 1995 to 19 today, with a total of 17, 761 registered members.

Some details

It is not my intention in writing this report to bombard readers with a long list of data concerning membership numbers or estimations of the total Basque population. My aim is simply to outline the content of the reports submitted by 11 countries of the 18 which make up the Basque Centre movement.

Nevertheless, I would like to include some data regarding the evolution of centres in each country since 1995.

ARGENTINA

The number of FEVA member centres has risen from 61 to 78 since 1995. Of these 78, 52 have been officially recognised by the Basque Government, 21 do not hold legal status and 5 are currently being established.

Argentina has a Federation of Basque-Argentine Entities (FEVA) and a Basque-Argentine Institute of Co-operation and Development.

THE UNITED STATES

The United States of America has the second largest Basque Community. It currently has 37 Basque Centres, 32 of which have been officially recognised by the Basque Government and have joined together to form NABO: the North American Basque Foundation.

In the 25 years since its foundation, NABO's principal objective has been to unite all Basques everywhere.

Distribution according to States: California has 13 centres and Nevada has seven. There are 4 in Idaho, 3 in Florida, 2 each in New York, Oregon, Wyoming and Washington and finally, one each in Columbia and Utah.

URUGUAY

The number of centres in Uruguay has risen from 9 to 10 since 1995. The latest addition is the Federation of Basque-Uruguayan Institutions (FIVU) which is constituted by the 5 most recently established centres.

SPAIN

Spain has the next largest number of Basque centres: 9 at the latest count. It also has a Federation of Basque Centres, based in Madrid. The Malaga Basque Centre was the last to achieve official recognition by the Basque Government.

VENEZUELA

The number of Basque centres in Venezuela has not increased over the last four years. There are five in total, including the Federation of Venezuelan Centres and the Institute of Basque-Venezuelan Co-operation, Eguzki.

MEXICO

The two already existing centres (the Federal Capital and the Basque-Mexican Development Institute), have recently been joined by Sukalde, the association of chefs. There are high hopes for the success of this latest addition.

CHILE

Chile also has 3 centres, since Santiago and the Basque-Chilean Foundation for Development have been joined by the Valparaíso Basque Centre. Another three centres (Valdivia, Viña del Mar and Linares) are currently in the process of being established.

FRANCE

There are two highly active centres in France: one in Paris and one in Bordeaux.

AUSTRALIA

Australia also has two centres, since the Sydney Centre has recently been joined by one based in Melbourne.

The remaining countries (which take the total up to 19) all have one centre each. The Brazilian, Paraguayan, British and Dominican centres have all been officially recognised by the Basque Government in recent years. The Cuban centre (number 19) has just been granted legal status by the Cuban authorities and its petition for recognition by the Basque Government is currently being processed.

New migrations

There can be no doubt that the number of Basque centres is growing and will continue to grow in the future, but the question is: up to what point?

Data provided by the Department of Basque Communities supports the diagnostic made by Professor William Douglass in his speech during the opening ceremony of this Congress, namely that migratory movements have changed direction, and although Basque centres that are only now being recognised (because they have only recently achieved legal status, in most cases) are located all over the world, new Basque emigrants are tending to settle in two main areas: European countries and the Mediterranean Coast. The former is the choice of the younger generation who choose to move within an increasingly borderless Europe, and where, in addition to the recently created London Centre, initial contact is being made with other countries such as Holland, Ireland, etc. The second area, the Mediterranean Coast, is the chosen destination of the retired population. This area has a recently created centre in Malaga and growing communities in cities and towns in Alicante, such as Benidorm and Torrevieja.

EVALUATION OF THE 1995-1999 FOUR-YEAR PLAN: «AURRERA GOAZ»

On 29 March 1999, the current General Secretary for Overseas Affairs, Iñaki Aguirre, at that time the Office of Relations with Basque Communities, sent a circular to all the Basque centres throughout the world (as a «third communiqué from the Congress») in which he invited the Basque Centre Federations, where applicable, or the centres themselves, to submit a report.

11 countries responded to the aforementioned invitation.

The main objective of these reports was, on the one hand, to evaluate the Four-Year Plan from the point of view of the Basque Centres; and on the other, to gather new proposals which could be included in the Four-Year Plan to be submitted to the Advisory Board for Relations with Basque Communities after being discussed and deliberated by the 1999 Congress.

Without further ado, we will now comment on the different areas of activity in the same order as they appear in the March circular.

The first thing we should say is, of course, ESKERRIK ASKO.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Basque Government for all its efforts, and above all for the impetus created by Law 8, passed in 1994, the benefits of which have been felt by all. It is true that there is still much to do and many more goals to achieve, but we have come a long way over recent years, and our situation now is utterly different to what it was in 1995.

Programs such as Gaztemundu, EITB satellite broadcasts, the loan guarantee programme, Argentinan Euskaraz, etc. are initiatives which, in addition to the annual granting of subsidies, have met with notable success.

Nevertheless, we still need the Basque Government's aid, some of us, obviously, more than others. As well as continuing to work within fields established in the previous plan which have not yet reached their full potential, we should also set up new initiatives to cover specific areas of deficiency. There are also aspects which need correcting, and we are here to detect them.

Infrastructures

The annual granting of subsidies has not only contributed to the improved working of the centres through the organisation of activities, but has also, in conjunction with the loan guarantee system set up at the end of last year and which has already provided loans to 14 centres, been highly instrumental in providing new headquarters or refurbishing existing ones.

For a variety of reasons, some centres did not qualify for the benefits mentioned above. They have expressed their interest in participating in future initiatives.

Communication

The principal initiative carried out in this area, namely that of ensuring that all centres are provided with computer equipment, has been of enormous help in improving centre-to-centre and centre-to-Basque Government communications.

The EITB Hispasat satellite broadcasts are a great improvement over Galeusca, in which broadcasting time had to be shared with other Autonomous Communities. Cable access is still pending, and will bring with it important financial savings for private viewers, especially in Latin America, as well as significant geographical advantages, finally enabling EITB to broadcast to the west coast of the USA, an area which is home to the largest concentration of North American Basques.

Furthermore, the free distribution of the magazine *Euskal Etxeak* and informative newsletter *Basque News*, constitutes a constant source of information which is much appreciated.

With regard to the Experiences of the Diaspora Award referred to in the 1995-99 Four-Year-Plan, doubtless those writing the report that mentioned this initiative were unaware of the award ceremony held in July of this year. In fact, a proposal to hold the award on an annual basis is currently under consideration.

There are many appeals to intensify the flow of information, above all as regards political issues.

Youth

The *Gaztemundu* Program, set up in 1996 with the objective of offering 60 young people every year the opportunity of getting to know the Basque Country first-hand, has been highly successful. Support for its continuation is unanimous, although Anglo-Saxon countries (USA, Australia and Puerto Rico also) have suggested that an alternative programme be set up for them, due to differences in academic timetables (the university year in these countries starts at the beginning of September).

The final objective of the *Gaztemundu* Program is that on their return, the young people selected should participate in the management and organisation of the Basque centres. In the majority of cases this objective is not achieved.

There are even some countries which believe that 60 young people a year is not enough and question both the application requirements and the selection methods.

Other initiatives, such as working holidays or stays in hostels (to be organised by the Department of Youth of the Basque Government), have not yet been set up.

The fundamental objective for young people is to reinforce their identification with Basque culture. Any programme which aims to do this will be well received.

The Basque Language

The Argentinian *Euskaraz* Program, set up in 1990, was a pilot initiative aimed at producing fully qualified Basque language teachers in Argentina. The initiative has now spread to Uruguay. The programme will continue to develop in the future.

Apart from this pilot initiative, the Basque Government, in collaboration with HABE (Centre for Adult Literacy in Basque/Adult Basquisition), has lent its support to other Basque language teaching centres (Bordeaux, Brussels, Madrid and Barcelona, etc.) by sending material and technical aids. Nevertheless, this area requires tighter organisation and co-ordination.

Other initiatives have been set up independently of the Basque Government, such as the one co-ordinated by AEK (Adult Education and Basquisition Co-ordinator) in Uruguay.

Lastly, a number of countries have appealed for a Basque Language Day to be celebrated annually on 3 December.

Culture and sport

The dispatch of material (books and videos) to Basque centre libraries has been criticised for its lack of continuity: no material has been sent for two years, a matter which needs to be addressed.

As to sports, the Chilean report mentions that their proposal regarding the constitution of an «International Basque Sports Association» was not properly understood and that the Federation was never contacted in connection with this initiative.

Education

The initiative to offer undergraduates, postgraduates, PhD students and lecturers from Basque Communities the chance to study at Basque Universities, to which end a series of measures were to be established according to the Plan, was not mentioned in any of the reports.

Nevertheless, various countries have requested that the government send Basque University lecturers to share their knowledge of history, anthropology, culture, etc. with the overseas Basque Communities.

Some reports mentioned that they had presented certain projects (without specifying further details) which had not been answered.

Social welfare

With regard to social welfare, we should mention the lack of guidelines in this area. Further study of this area of activity is required (especially in connection with certain countries).

Health

Lack of information is an issue mentioned in one of the reports. This report states that members should be supplied with more detailed information about the health cover available for visitors to the Basque Country so that they can enjoy their stay with greater peace of mind.

Tourism and overseas commerce

Tourism was mentioned in the majority of reports, in the sense that Basque centres should also act as tourist information centres, to which end it is essential that they be supplied with the appropriate materials (leaflets, maps, etc).

The Uruguayan Federation proposed the signing a collaboration Agreement with the Department of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, to ensure that they be sent such material directly, following the example set by FEVA.

The North American Federation was delighted at receiving this type of material in English, although it says it was not aware of its existence until this year.

With regard to overseas commerce, the Uruguayan report contains the strongest criticism, affirming that the Basque centres were not taken into account in this field.

RELATIONS WITH THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT

In general, relations with the Basque Government have improved substantially over the last few years.

Nevertheless, some countries' evaluation of these relations are far from positive due to a series of factors that we will attempt to explain.

The lack of new migratory movements to countries which have a long tradition of welcoming Basque emigrants means that the population is growing steadily older, and it is mainly third, fourth and even fifth-generation Basques that are responsible for running the Basque centres.

On the other hand, there are certain countries which have much more recent settlements (consisting mainly of young people).

Given this situation, the two most important methods of communication with these communities are: electronic mail and human exchanges (through reciprocal visits).

Although article 2 of Law 8 defines Basque centres as «the preferred channel» of relations between members of Basque Communities and the Public Administration of the Basque Autonomous Community, various countries have complained that relations are in fact maintained by a much more indirect method, namely through the Institutes or through «intermediary structures».

With regard to relations between the Basque centres and the Basque Country, the Chilean report works on the basic premise that the Basque centres should recognise the Basque Government as being the principal Basque institution, despite the fact that it represents only 3 of the 7 Basque territories.

Secondly, all joint activities and agreements between the Basque centres or foundations and institutes should be set up through the General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs.

The Uruguayan report disagrees with regard to this last premise, and reserves the right to contact other Departments of the Basque Government directly «in order to avoid overloading the General Secretariat for Overseas Affairs».

Relations between the United States and the Basque Government have improved «dramatically» over the last few years (evidence of this being the process followed to ensure recognition of NABO) thanks to the proliferation of contacts and the efforts made by the GSOA with regard to the language barrier (there has even been talk of «professionalisation»). We have progressed from «Nora goaz?» to «Nola goaz?».

Various concrete problems have arisen as a result of the current use of computer-based communications methods. This method of communication implies an obligation on the part of the Basque centres to keep one eye on their e-mail in-tray at all times, something which is often impractical, especially as regards small centres which are not used on a daily basis. This issue was brought up in connection with Spain and Santo Domingo. Moreover, the Dominican report talks of the need to «establish more honest relations».

Visits by Basque authorities to various Communities have made a significant contribution to improving relations. For this reason, many reports highlight the need for periodic, even annual (Santo Domingo), visits of this kind.

This will require a significant organisational effort on the part of the Basque Government, in order to ensure that the goodwill generated by these human relations is used to its best advantage. More detailed information should be provided about the various visitors, be they Government representatives, University staff or members of the different Basque sectors.

FINANCING THE BASQUE CENTRES

The first thing that should be mentioned is the difficult economic situation in which certain countries, including Argentina, which has by far the largest Basque population, currently find themselves. The dependency of these countries on Basque Government grants is, logically, much greater.

The majority of countries fall either into the same category as Argentina, where the majority of initiatives cannot be implemented, or the United States, where subsidies are a new phenomenon, constituting a bonus on top of already existing activities.

The Argentinean report suggests that the Congress affirm the necessity of continuing the financial aid granted between 1995 and 1999. It also suggests that the appropriate budget adjustments be made to compensate the decrease resulting from the less favourable exchange rate and the growing number of centres.

The main argument put forward is the inability of centres to defray property costs, although larger centres gain an extra income from renting locales, in addition to annual membership fees.

Activity sponsoring and donations have been put forward as alternative means of investing in Argentina (indicating the method but failing to specify measures that have been taken to this end).

Other countries, above all those with large centres and good installations, gain most of their income through their restaurants. Also, some countries have adopted imaginative alternatives on occasions, instead of simply waiting passively for subsidies without proposing any kind of concrete contribution.

Some countries criticise the excessive time required to process the subsidy (very little time is left between the actual receipt of the subsidy and the end of the year).

Lastly, some reports suggest that Basque companies located in countries with Basque centres donate a certain sum towards their maintenance, forming a kind of Chamber of Commerce. This proposal doubtless refers to countries which do not yet have their own Institutes.

To close the issue of funding, we would like to consider a question asked by William Douglass last Tuesday. Professor Douglass stated that while democratic regimes tend to favour egalitarian treatment, he preferred a «common diasporic policy» which would prioritise some requests over others, according to the different situations. «It makes more sense to concentrate resources in areas with a higher probability of success, rather than waste them in the name of equality».

Perhaps we should asked ourselves: Are we prepared to accept this policy?

THE BASQUE PEACE PROCESS

The sensible refusal of the Basque centres to adhere to any one specific political party, despite the efforts that have had to be expended to resolve disagreements, has helped maintain the unity so evident in Basque centres throughout the world.

It has also resulted in the somewhat paradoxical situation of forcing the Basque Country to look outside its borders in order to find an example of Basques separated by different ideologies (Latin America) or geographical origin (United States) coexisting peacefully together within the same centre. In view of this, we can safely say that all efforts in this area have been well and truly worthwhile.

The peace process is being following with avid interest by the overseas communities, communities which wish to continue being the ambassadors of values traditionally associated with the Basque temperament, such as tenacity for example.

Therefore, we support the search for peace through total dialogue and aim to aid the process by bringing international pressure to bear, fundamentally by raising awareness among the international community.

We would like to demonstrate our unconditional support of the Basque Government and those institutions which signed the Lizarra Pact, through an initiative proposed by FEVA. This initiative would lead to a Declaration during this Congress of total support for the peace process and total agreement with the motion proposed by Parliament to send international observers to the Basque Country, as well as a recommendation that this motion be approved by the governments in our countries and lastly, that the central government play an active role in the process.

Finally, from their non-party position, North American Basques affirm, and this goes for all of us, that the goal of a prosperous and dynamic Basque Country living in peace leaves no room for more rhetoric.

PROPOSALS FOR THE NEW 2000-2004 FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Admittedly, the majority of proposals outlined below refer to parts of the previous Plan which need further development, and only a few contain new concepts and ideas.

We have attempted to sort them according to areas. Some ideas may have been mentioned earlier in this report.

Legal issues

- Continue implementation of Act 8/1994.

Representation

- Appoint members of overseas communities to serve as Basque centre representatives on the Advisory Board for Relations with Basque Communities.

Infrastructures

- Offer further opportunities to apply for credit guarantees

Basque identity

- Create an official ID card for members of Basque centres
- Avoid the use of the word «diaspora», as it has connotations of nations with no territory of their own.
- Institutionalise Aberri Eguna, and recommend that the Navarra Government and the Town Councils in the Northern Basque Country do likewise.
- Organise campaigns to ensure that Basques living overseas who are eligible for Spanish nationality are able to obtain it.
- Increase access to information regarding origins, surnames, descent, family, etc.

Communication

- Improve organisation in order to make better use of politicians' and academics' visits to countries with Basque Communities.
- Continue efforts to help EITB gain contracts with cable companies and broadcast to the Western United States (satellite or cable)
- Specialised technicians to conduct campaigns via satellite
- Try to visit the Communities occasionally
- Organise Basque centre leader training trips
- Promote greater human contact through visits and trips in order to improve communications

Culture and sports

- With the aim of arousing interest in Basque culture in the younger generation, increase the Gaztemundu programme (for English speaking communities) to twice a year
- Eliminate Basque descent as a sine qua non for participation in Gaztemundu
- Continue the spread of bibliographic material
- Set up txistu and tabor training courses through EITB
- Promote the Basque Pelota Federation

The Basque language

- Continue the Argentinian Euskaraz programme and expand it to include other countries
- Establish Basque Language Day as an official celebration throughout the world
- Organise Basque language courses in secondary schools and universities

- Conduct Basque language courses through EITB
- Send material to support Basque language teaching in all centres all over the world

Gastronomy

Given that the Basque Government has adopted gastronomy as the backbone of its new tourism campaign (The Basque Country «al pil-pil», a country in green sauce, etc.), now would seem the perfect time to take advantage of existing initiatives and to launch new projects in this area:

- Advise Basque centres to set up gastronomic schools and societies
- Continue to organise gastronomic weeks (Necochea and Mexico) with the aim of advertising the country and commercialising Basque products.
- Create a chain of 4 restaurants (Buenos Aires, Santiago, Caracas and Mexico) managed by a Basque television celebrity chef, famous throughout Latin America.
- Promote Basque restaurants at a local level
- Sign agreements with Basque Catering Schools

Education

- Continue the grant programme for Institutes and Foundations (through an agreement with the Deusto University Economics Department)
- Send university lecturers to give classes on culture, history, anthropology, etc.

Tourism

- Set up a communications system with Basque travel agencies
- Create an International Basque Centre on the Internet
- Set up Basque tourist information centres in all Basque centres

The Basque Country's image

- Consider the suggestion that the Basque centres, traditional centres of charity, mutual aid, etc., act as NGOs in their respective countries, thereby helping to establish a positive and caring image of the Basque Country.
- Organise a World-wide Awareness Plan through the Basque centres to promote the Basque Country as a defender of freedom, peace and development.
- Raise awareness of the environmental work carried out by the Basque Government within UNESCO (such as the Gaucho Way, for example), charging the Basque centres to monitor the environmental policies of their respective governments
- Raise awareness amongst the Basque centres of the Basque Country's activity as regards drug addiction, with the aim of sharing experiences
- Encourage the Basque centres to become involved in local anti-drugs projects

Social activity

- Organise trips for senior citizens under certain conditions (stays in boarding houses, etc)
- Provide over-65s that have Basque nationality with the same social and retirement benefits as those offered by the Basque Government
- Ensure the same benefits and pensions (for those with no retirement income) in their places of residence

- Organise an information exchange regarding senior citizen care
- Create a retirement home in the Buenos Aires Basque Centre Charity and Cultural Association to provide an integral service for Basque senior citizens, taking advantage of the existing infrastructure
- Set up day centres wherever possible in Basque centres (specific centres)
- Offer comprehensive medical care (favouring agreements with Argentinean institutions)

CONCLUSIONS

What are we, a group of Basques from nineteen different countries, doing here today? What unites Chilean Basques with Australian Basques with Uruguayan Basques?

The answer to these questions is obvious: Being, above all, Basques.

And apart from bring Basques, we are also promoters of all things Basque. This is what differentiates the 17,000 Basque centre members from the remainder of (millions of?) Basques and Basque descendants living overseas.

We have the obligation not just to maintain, but rather to ensure the survival of self-knowledge and Basque identity so that we can hand these qualities on to our children. To do this, we must maintain close ties with the Motherland.

And this is where the Basque Government plays a vital role.

For our part, we would like to give something back. For this reason we offer our collaboration in the huge task which, as Professor Douglass so rightly said «has yet to be started», i.e. documenting the history of the Basque colonies. This task urgently needs to be competed —said the Professor— to preserve the future of the diverse Basque identities that have emerged from the diaspora. Without this documentation, he doubted that our «hyphenated» identities would survive.

Last but not least, we would like to consider the issue of the Internet.

In this «supermarket of identifying products», Basques should be leading the way, but although some attempts have been made to establish a firm presence on the WWW, they lack the necessary level of organisation.

The Internet offers a myriad of possibilities to the Basque centres.

We would like to end this report-summary with a series of proposals that we consider expedient in this context:

- Greater Basque institutional presence on the Internet.
- Increase communication between the Basque centres
- Set up joint projects between Basques active on the web
- Publicise the different initiatives currently in operation and promote Basque-related websites
- Promote Internet content related to Basque culture

We suggest:

- That the government actively promote the development of Basque centres' institutional websites
- The creation of a Government website dedicated exclusively to publishing a constantly updated list of links to on-line Basque centres.
- The creation of a series of links to unite the government site with all the Basque centre sites.
- Greater co-operation between centres publishing on the web and the government

- The government keep Basque centres informed of the initiatives being developed in this area
- The government send Basque centres a constantly up-dated list of interesting Basque-related sites which promote communication between Basques throughout the world

ROUND TABLE ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT OF THE BASQUE CLUBS

Speakers:

Gloria Totoricagüena (United States)

Ignacio Guerrero (Spain)

Xabier Guisasola (Venezuela)

Chairperson: Josu Legarreta

The contemporary history of Basque Centres contains many references to the Basque associative movement over the last few centuries. To cite a few examples we could mention the following: in 1501, Luis de Arriaga attempted to organise a colony of 200 Basque families in four towns in Santo Domingo; in his early 17th century work «Discussion of the Age of the Cantabrian Basque Language», Baltasar de Echave el Viejo exhorted Basques to be proud of their ethnic heritage; on the twelfth of April 1635, the Illustrious Basque Brotherhood of Our Lady of Aránzazu was formed, with an explicit provision stating that «for the greater decorum of this Congregation, that all who are received into it be natives of» Alava, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Navarra and «5 of the four Mountain Cities...with the aim of carrying out works of mutual aid between themselves and with their fellow countrymen»; in 1671, the Basque Guild of Aránzazu was founded for Basque natives and descendants; in 1732, three Basques proposed the building of the Vizcayan Women's College in Mexico DF, as an asylum for poor girls, young women and widows of Basque origin; in 1876, a group of Basques in Montevideo decided to join forces to help Basque immigrants, creating the Laurak Bat Basque Centre-Euskaldun Guztiak Bat, etc...

One hundred and twenty-three years later, we are holding the 2nd World Congress of Basque Communities, under the shadow of the all important question posed by Professor W. Douglass during the last Congress: *Nora goaz?* (Where are we headed?)

There are currently 125 Basque Centres that have been officially recognised by the Basque Government. Nevertheless, despite the importance of this growing number, we cannot fail to wonder about our future, given both the virtual non-existence of modern-day Basque emigration to America and the economic situation of many of these countries.

Also, the current climate of globalisation and internationalisation gives rise to questions about Centres' origins, their plans for the future and their relations with the Basque Government, relations which were non-existent at the time when most Centres were founded.

For its part, the Basque Government shares this concern, and is aware of the important role that the Centres have played, and continue to play today. For this reason, since the middle of the eighties, it has been developing a specific programme with regard to the Centres as well as expanding its own international intervention policies within its sphere of influence.

In order to gain a global perspective, Representatives from three countries (Spain, the United States and Venezuela) in which Basque Centres have emerged for very different reasons were invited to participate in this Round Table. The following three blocks of questions were posed:

1. Why and for what purpose were the Basque Centres founded? To what extent are the original objectives preserved today and what difficulties does this involve?
2. What do modern-day Basque Centres offer their members? And what do other similar entities in your area offer?
3. What relations are maintained between different Basque Centres and what is their relationship with other institutions in their area, at both a national and international level?

The replies given in response to the first block of questions clearly demonstrate the plurality of the origin of Basque Centres: the United States Delegate, Mrs Totoricagüena, cited non-party mutual aid and the disseminating of Basque culture as original objects.

Basque Centres in the United States maintain these objectives to this very day, although in general terms, the high standard of living of Basques resident in this country makes the objective of «mutual aid» somewhat redundant.

The Spanish Delegate, Mr Guerrero, stated that, in general terms, the Spanish Basque Centres were not founded for humanitarian reasons. In the specific case of the Barcelona Basque Centre, the original motive was none other than a «simple desire to cook together». This gastronomic affiliation later gave rise to other projects, such as the setting up of a Basque Association for the dissemination of Basque Culture.

Nowadays, in the words of Mr Guerrero, «our problem is attracting new members, and not young members either, as our Basque Centres have a strong youth presence».

For Mr Guisasola, the Venezuelan Delegate, the origin of the institutions was politically motivated, the centres being founded by Basque political emigrants and exiles during the Spanish Civil War, which lasted from 1936 to 1939. The Centres' statutes clearly indicate the objective of «mutual aid».

Nevertheless, the Centres now need to rethink this objective and attract new members. On certain occasions there have been some attempts to respond to this latter challenge, although Mr Guisasola stated that «we are not sure whether we should proceed with this search for new members».

In relation to the second block of questions asked by the chairperson, Mrs Totoricagüena stated that the Basque Centres in the United States do not offer any kind of material services, only the opportunity for members to maintain their personal identity of BEING BASQUES. Therefore, members requiring other services must look to other clubs.

For Mr Guerrero, the Spanish Basque Centres are mainly social gathering places where Basques can meet and maybe take advantage of an excellent restaurant. They also offer Basque language courses, accordion lessons, internet and free tax advice, among other services.

Mr Guisasola commented that the principal activities in the Venezuelan Basque Centres take place at weekends, when the Centres become a social gathering place for members.

He also stated that unlike the Galician Centre for example, which has over 30,000 members, a Centre with a total of 400 members cannot effectively offer a wide range of services.

With regard to the third block of questions, the Venezuelan Delegate stated that the Basque Centres in his country maintained relations amongst themselves mainly through their Federation, although geographical distances made regular communications somewhat difficult.

Furthermore, the economic situation also prevents them from developing plans which go beyond their own survival. They do not, therefore, maintain relations with other Communities and/or national or international organisations.

For Mr Guerrero, this last block of questions represents a task that is still pending. He stated that the problem did not have an easy solution, but that it was vital to our future.

Nevertheless, he said he believed that Basque Centres should «open their doors to anyone prepared to understand us», be they Basques resident in the area, university students of Basque origin or those who consider themselves friends of Basques. Each Basque Centre should make a concerted effort to make its presence felt in the Social Media.

According to Mrs Totoricagüena, the Basque Centres in the United States are exclusive institutions. Their members are either Basques or Basque descendants, something which may begin to pose problems in the near future.

As to inter-Basque Centre relations, she stated that geographical distances were a real problem for the North American Basque Centres. In order to give an idea of the sheer magnitude of

these distances, just consider that New York is closer to Bilbao than it is to San Francisco. Nevertheless, they maintain relations with public and private institutions in the Basque Country as well as various Basque Centres located in Argentina, Canada, Mexico and Venezuela.

In general, these relations are co-ordinated by the NABO Federation, which liaises with all the Basque Centres, overcoming certain misunderstandings between descendants from the North and South Basque Countries.

With regard to international relations with other organisms, Mrs Totoricagüena stated that the possibilities available in this field were still largely unexplored.

ROUND TABLE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE BASQUE CLUBS AND THEIR FINANCING

Speakers:

Josu Garritz (Mexico)

Ramón Arozarena (Argentina)

Luis Basauri (Chile)

Chairman: Iñaki Aguirre (Secretary General of Foreign Action)

There are currently 155 Basque Centres in the world, 125 of which have already been recognised by the Basque government, while the remaining 30 have not yet submitted the necessary documents, or have done so only partially.

Their origins are undoubtedly varied, and their gradual growth seems to be assured, but despite these encouraging indications, the future of the Basque Centres is at best uncertain, especially if we consider the fact that many previously well-established Centres currently find themselves in a somewhat delicate economic situation.

Our first question, then, is that although we can neither legally prohibit the founding of new centres, nor prevent these centres from presenting the required recognition documentation, should we set in motion policies designed to create new centres or should we concentrate on consolidating existing ones?

We should avoid the temptation to interpret the current situation in a negative light. It is no mean feat that 17,760 Basques/Basque descendants are united in 125 institutions throughout the entire world. We are a significant community, and are now faced with the opportunity of becoming even more important over the coming years.

Nevertheless, this optimism should not overlook key aspects of current reality:

1. Basque Centres are no longer migration points for Basque emigrants.
2. The majority of Basque Centres are unable to increase membership numbers.
3. Various clubs and societies operating in the same areas as Basque Centres offer more attractive services. Youngsters participating in the Gaztemundu programme confirm this, stating that other organisations offer a more interesting social agenda.
4. In many cases, Basque Centres are subject to the weak economic situation of the countries in which they are located.

The Basque Public Institutions, being well aware of this situation and in response to requests from Basque Centre members, set up a specific financial aid programme. Nevertheless, subsidies and aid programmes do not provide a definitive answer to the economic problem. In fact, as a result of the growing number of Centres, the devaluation of the peseta against the dollar and a reduced budget increase, direct aid decreases year by year (I say «direct» because this calculation does not take into account investments such as the cost of international EITB broadcasts, for example).

These realities give rise to a series of questions concerning Government policy on Basque Centres and the Basque Centres themselves.

Questions for the Basque Government:

- a) Do you believe that subsidy regulations should be so generic, or should we concentrate our efforts on priority sectors? Why/why not?
- b) Can you identify these priority sectors? (e.g. economic relations, getting to know the Basque Country, traditional dancing, the Basque language)
- c) Which activities should not be subsidised?

Questions for the Basque Centres:

- a) Diverse methods of self-financing
- b) Inscription policy for new members
- c) New self-financing methods: restaurants, Visa, social gatherings, business services, new activities (classes, courses, registration fees, etc.)

After the chairman, Mr Iñaki Aguirre, had posed these questions, the speakers were invited to take the stand and all present were invited to take an active part in the debate.

The Mexican representative, Mr Josu Garritz, described the situation of the Basque Community in Mexico DF. There are currently 250 families associated with the Basque Centres, a number which has decreased by 75 % over the last 25 years.

As regards financing, the Mexican representative estimated that 30 % of the Centre's income is gained through fees, 30 % is provided by the restaurant, 20 % is generated by the club and the remaining 20 % is constituted by Basque Government subsidies.

Mr Garritz stated his support of the Gaztemundu programme, in so far as it fosters the involvement of participating youngsters in the active management of the Basque Centres.

Next, the Chilean representative, Mr Luis Basauri, said that he would go straight to the point: with regard to the question of whether to create new Basque Centres or to consolidate existing ones, he stated his belief that the creation of new centres should be spontaneous. In Mr Basauri's opinion, logistic support should be provided during the founding process, but financial aid should not be granted until the centres have firmly established themselves and proved their feasibility.

As regards subsidies, they should be generic, non-specific and regular, thereby enabling centres to embark on long-term projects. He stated his belief that the designated quantity should also be stabilised. Priority areas differ for each institution, and it should therefore be the centres themselves that decide how to employ their individual resources.

In response to the question concerning diverse methods of self-financing, Mr Basauri said that the Chilean Community had taken advantage of all opportunities offered them (for example, requesting the maximum permitted by the credit guarantee programme).

In the area of new members, the Chilean representative stated his belief that this is a spiritual issue that cannot be forced or coerced, and that therefore, the Chilean Community is not in favour of these types of campaign.

With regard to social income, Chilean resources are not extensive, although they do have an excellent restaurant (much effort was expended to improve the restaurant facilities in order to provide the licensee with profits and the Centre with dividends).

As to the issue of new methods of self-financing, Mr Basauri mentioned various projects set up in Chile to this end, such as the hiring of function rooms adjoining the restaurant for cocktail parties, celebrations, etc. Courses offered by the Centres are free, although students must pay for their own materials.

Mr Basauri closed his paper with a reference to a certain level of trepidation regarding subsidies. He mentioned the danger of becoming too dependent on an income which may one day cease to exist. He stated that the most important objective was the survival of the Centres.

Next, the Cuban representative, Mrs Mari Ruiz de Zárate, took the stand and remarked that Cubans are orphans among the American Communities. Zazpiak Bat was founded as a nationalist centre in 1962 by second generation Basques. The members of the previous Basque Centre, Laurak Bat, had defended the premise that Gernika was bombed by the Basques themselves, an opinion which resulted in their effective isolation. In their own words, the institution died of starvation.

The 70s was a boom era for the Cuban Basque Community: 10 Centres (9 in various provinces and 1 in Havana) were founded and still exist today. Although the Cuban Community looks set to continue growing, Mrs Ruiz de Zárate affirmed that this was not enough. She stated her support of promoting the celebration of Aberri Eguna, especially among the younger generations.

Mrs Ruiz de Zárate mentioned the commendable efforts of the Basque Government in the sending of medicines, etc. The Cuban Government also aids the Regional Centres by, for example, providing them with premises. The treatment given to the President of the Galician Community, who is received as a Head of State by the Cuban Authorities, is a striking example of the support offered.

As to the financing of this Basque-Cuban Community, the only source of income is membership fees. Mrs Ruiz de Zárate indicated that exchange programmes, for youngsters for example, would be well received. There is also a need for traditional Basque music (txistu players and drummers). She suggested that Communities with less resources should be prioritised.

In a revealing reflection of differences between countries, and even between centres, the representative of the recently founded London Basque Centre, Izaskun Salsidua, criticised the Chilean proposal of subsidising centres only once they have proven their feasibility. The British representative reminded those present that all centres are different, and the logical answer is to consider individual situations and not give blanket treatment. Ms Salsidua stated her support of the proposal to prioritise some requests over others.

Iñaki Aguirre then took the floor to state categorically the impossibility of automatic subsidies. He maintained that the Public Institutions should respect the principle of equal opportunities with regard to aid applications and the integrity of those responsible for allocating funds. It is impossible to treat each case in the same way: all applications are considered and the corresponding proposals evaluated accordingly (with the exception of those which are financially unfeasible). The decision process is governed by a series of proposal evaluation criteria, as stated in the Decree.

The question is, are we going to help those most in need, are we going to prioritise certain activities for a given length of time or are we going to allocate a blanket amount for all? Some projects have helped more than others. There are also various new Basque Centres. Mr Basauri, the Chilean representative, referred to a «period of exclusion», but this conflicts with the 1995 decision to help all new centres in equal measure.

We could choose to finance specific activities to a certain percentage for a given length of time, until another source of income is found. We could also lower the percentage limit for financing from 80 % to 50 %, and so on.

However, we have yet to address the question of new methods of self-financing.

At this point, Mr Arozarena, from Argentina, added that the principal concern of each Centre is its own problems and activities. He wanted to know what exactly the Basque Government expects from the Basque Centres.

Iñaki Aguirre replied that the majority of Basque Centres are in fact older than the Basque Government itself. They were founded with specific objectives by Basques resident outside the Basque Country.

New Basque Centres are also being created by independent individuals. The Basque Institutions provide them with a legal framework and offer the possibility of applying for financial subsidies.

However, in response to the question of what the Basque Government expects from the Centres, he voiced the opinion that they are small pockets of the Basque Country with responsibilities as Basques. The Government's aim is to use, in the best possible sense of the word, this infrastructure to defend Basque identity.

At times we work with some more than others, and our foreign policy does not just take into account the Basque Centres, but rather individuals also. Furthermore, we must consider the Basque-American Institutes, created in 1993-4 by, and with the support of, the Basque Government, which are the indirect representatives of 4 different countries.

Providing that common objectives (Government-Basque Centres) can be expanded, we will work in closer collaboration with the Basque Centres. The Centres do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Basque Government. They are completely autonomous. Therefore, support will only be guaranteed in the event of shared objectives.

In Mr Basauri's opinion, logistic support is fundamental. He wished to clarify the fact that his paper referred exclusively to financial subsidies. He finished by stating that subsidies constitute between 10 and 30 % of the income generated by some Basque Centres (including the Chilean Centre).

In some cases, Centres can apply for a subsidy for a certain project, in order to free up social income for other purposes.

He therefore reiterated that subsidies should be generic, the purpose for which they are employed being an internal issue decided by the management board of each individual Centre.

Finally, in the event of majority financing (80-90 %), the destination should be specified, but where funding is only partial (10-30 %), the subsidy should be generic.

Iñaki Aguirre explained that subsidies are granted for chapters VII (infrastructures) and IV (everyday expenses and activities). The Basque Government cannot grant a subsidy for a purpose in which it has no investment interests. The Centres must specify to what end any subsidy granted was employed.

If we want the subsidies to be generic, we must modify the corresponding Decree.

He also raised the question of whether personnel and overhead costs should constitute accepted ends in addition to the organisation of activities. He used FEVA as an example of an institution whose membership fees provide only a very low income. If the only accepted destination is the organisation of activities, how will an organisation such as FEVA ever be able to apply for subsidies? Will they be eligible for financial aid in order to subsidise their overheads and day-to-day expenses?

Mr Juan Carlos Ariztegui, the Uruguayan representative, took the floor next to state his support of the Chilean call for generic subsidies. If priorities must be established, he stated, economic relations should figure high on the list, with the aim of setting up a network to promote industrial activity in countries with Basque Communities.

Mr Arrondo (Argentina) offered two reflections on this theme: Argentina receives no new Basque emigrants. As a result, members of the 78 Argentinean Centres are almost all second and third generation Basques. The few remaining native Basques will not be alive for many more years. We should therefore make an effort to record this disappearing chapter of overseas History.

With regard to funding, he cited the example of the Laprida Centre, which was founded 10 years ago and which has habitually received Basque Government subsidies to enable members to purchase their premises. All financial aid issues are open to debate and should be dealt with urgently. A seminar has been planned to discuss the central issue of the future: funding.

We cannot dismiss the possibility that the recent resurgence in Basque feeling is due mainly to the attraction of Basque Government subsidies. New centres are being created by third generation Basques whose communities no longer contain native emigrants. Each centre should strive to face new challenges. We have much to offer young generations as regards training in an international framework that goes beyond Basque culture.

We should aim at establishing different roles for different Basque Centres: some cultural, others financial, etc. (small-scale consulates). Each Centre should be assigned a specific role. The Basque Government should put the onus on us, should guide us towards these functions, towards a new method of self-financing through sponsoring by Basque companies, etc.

I refer to a Government-based motivating programme which would prioritise human resources.

In response to the proposal regarding sponsorships, Iñaki Aguirre asked what the Basque Centres would offer the companies in return.

According to Domeka Etxearte (Venezuela), the expectation of support from companies is nothing more than a pipe dream. It is difficult enough to attract the attention of businessmen, yet alone persuade them to join the association. Institutes and Foundations usually have to offer extensive help and experience in order to gain support from businesses.

Basque Centres should be essentially self-financing, so that Government subsidies can be used to «sell» the Basque Country as a cultural phenomenon and train younger generations. Mr Etxearte spoke of the important role the Basque Centres play in the lives of many of their members. We should agree to use the Centres as a focal point for cultural dissemination.

Speaking for the Puerto Rican Community, Begoña Chavarri believes that one of the roles of the Basque Centres could be to promote tourist interests. She sees future Basque Centres providing information about the Basque Country to travel agents and private individuals, as well as supplying the appropriate promotional material: posters, bumper stickers, etc. There is also an increasing interest in surnames, family coats of arms, etc. Hilario Azanza, in fact, investigates surnames and contacts Basques by telephone as a means of publicising Basque Centres. Another possible source of funding may be the excellent facilities on offer at some Basque Centres.

Carlos Sosa, President of the Bahía Blanca Basque Centre in Argentina, which celebrates its one hundredth anniversary this year, stated that the centre has survived and developed thanks to the efforts of its members. Subsidies are used to disseminate Basque culture and language (the Centre currently has 50 Basque language students). With regard to the debate over whether some Centres are being founded with the sole intention of accessing Government subsidies, Mr Sosa made the following comment: if anyone is considering setting up a Basque Centre because they think there is money in it, all that they are doing is diminishing the resources of everyone else.

He said he wanted to send a message to the Basque Country: if «we are to be ambassadors», he said, «we need the appropriate support». Argentina used to be in a position to act, this is no longer true (due to the economic situation).

Therefore, if it is true that certain Basque Centres have been founded solely because of Government subsidies, we should examine the situation country by country.

On the other hand, if we wish to effectively disseminate our culture, we should follow the example of other communities. It is a fact that other communities receive financial aid from their governments. If we too receive aid and support, and use it appropriately, our efforts will be rewarded with greater success and recognition.

He called on the Basque Government to continue its support programme, but with tighter control over the needs of each individual situation.

David Maritorea, the Canadian representative, said that the youth issue was the most important. In addition to Vancouver, Canada has three areas with large Basque populations, made up of people from all walks of life, but none of them have joined to form a cohesive community. Canada's open emigration policy means that the Canadian Basque Community could have a very bright future. There are also various South American Basques living in the country, but they have mainly lost contact with their roots. It is possible that more Basque Centres will be created in Canada in the future.

According to Josu Garritz, in Mexico, 50 % of the management board are under 40 years of age (7 of 14 members).

In the case of Laurak Bat, in Argentina, 6 are under 40.

Mr Basauri commented that in Chile, only one of 9 members on the management board is under 40 (although this number increases with regard to assistants and deputies).

José Félix Olaizola stated that 75 % of members in the Dominican Republic are under 30. In his opinion, we should view Basque Centres as businesses: they either sink or swim on their own merits. The sole objective of subsidies should be to enable Centres to become self-financing. Further subsidies are only justified in the event of an extraordinary proposal.

At this point, Mr Iñaki Esnal, representative of the Basque Centres on the Advisory Board, took the floor to reiterate a viewpoint first expounded a few days ago: only ingenuity can achieve such an aim (people often have brilliant ideas).

He told the story of a Jewish teacher in North Africa who explained how his Community used their social meeting place to generate income, reserving one hour a week for imparting classes. All

profits earned in this way went towards financing the Centre. This example could serve as a model for other Centres.

A project which aimed to enable the Chilean Centres to become self-supporting was set in motion two years ago. Mr Basauri commented that the system within which different centres exist have a profound effect on their working. In this specific case, the project consisted of attracting the interest of a television celebrity chef in order to set up an international chain of Basque restaurants which would take advantage of the advertising possibilities offered by this section of the media. Although the attempt failed, Mr Basauri underlined the importance of attempting projects of this nature, even if they prove unsuccessful at first.

Domeka Etxearte commented that Basques in Italy and Germany have tried to establish similar projects, but that they are forced to spend half their time explaining who they are.

Pablo San Román, President of the Sukalde Association of professional chefs in Mexico, rejected the idea of an international chain of restaurants because he feels that the personal touch is essential. He then stated that there can be no doubt that certain aspects of Basque culture, such as its cuisine, for example, need no explanation. What is necessary, though, is to reach an agreement with professionals from this sector.

Emilia Doyaga (New York) sees the situation in the following light: every human group has its own agenda. New York receives 33 million visitors each year, and this number increases annually. They come with money in their pockets in search of new and exciting experiences. We are considering setting up an «International Basque Centre» in New York, with a Basque restaurant, tapas bar, conference halls, exhibition rooms and cookery, history, Basque language and art classes. She is convinced that the project has a bright future in the global village that is New York. Writers say that «Basques are secretive», that we do not like to say that we are different. We have a culture that is both very old and totally unique. In New York we plan to carry out the necessary advertising campaign to ensure the success of this international project.

David Maritorena suggested an international Jai-Alai association which would generate income for Basque Centres.

On closing the round table, Iñaki Aguirre underlined the problem that no conclusions had been drawn by the debate, although the most pressing concerns had been made evident. We need to find the key. Although no consensus has been reached, the Institutions face the task of identifying the principal proposals being put forward.

Finally, Francisco Javier Gogenola (Argentina) called for a professional audit to determine the situation of Basque Centres throughout the world.

PAPER OF MR. SABIN INTXAURRAGA, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

EUSKAL GIZATALDEEN MUNDU BATZARRA



AGURRA

Edozein euskaldunentzat, ohorea da Biltzar honetan parte hartzea eta kanpoan bizi zareten anaia-arreben ordezkariok agurtzea. Ohorea eta atsegina da, eta hunkitu egiten nau, zeren euskaldun askori gertatzen zaien bezala nik neuk ere, sendikoak, lehengusuak, ditut Argentinan eta Colombian eta zuen gizataldeetako batzuk bertatik bertara ezagutzeko zortea izan dudalako, gure Euskal Herri zahar eta txikiagandik urrun. Hain urrun, baina, aldi berean, hain gertu; izan ere, euskaldun batek zuen gizataldeak bisitatzen dituenean, neronek uda honetan Boisen egin ahal izan dudan bezala, edo joan zen urtean New Yorken, euskaldunok etxean bezala sentitzen gara.

Lehenik eta behin, Munduko Biltzar honen antolatzaileei bertan parte hartzeko eman didaten aukera eskertu nahi diet. Eta aukera honetaz baliatzen naiz nire esker ona eta elkartasunik handiena agertzeko zuek hemen ordezkatzeko ari zareten

euskotar guztiei, Euskal Herritik kanpora bizi diren eta gure kultura eta nortasuna mantendu eta indartzeko ahaleginean aritzen diren euskotar guztiei.

Gai horretan, aipatzekoa da Euskal Etxeei dagokien zeregin garrantzitsua, Euskal Etxeak baitira mundu osoan barreiatutako euskotar gizataldeetako kideak eta Euskadiko Administrazio publikoak elkarrekin harremanetan jartzeko bide nagusia.

Ez da zuekin izateko ohorea dudan lehenengo aldia. Legebiltzarreko nire taldearen izenean, Eusko Alkartasunaren izenean, txostengile gisa parte hartu nuen, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaz Kanpoko Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanei buruzko Legea onartzeko prozesuan; eta duela lau urte egindako Biltzarrean ere parte hartu nuen, Kanpo Ekintzako batzordeburu gisa, orduko hartan.

Gaur, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Justizia, Lan eta Gizarte Segurantzako sailburu gisa egokitu zait parte hartzea. Horrenbestez, Eusko Jaurlaritza nire Sailaren bidez egiten ari den gizarte politikan izandako esperientzia, kezka eta lorpen batzuk azaldu nahi nizkizueke.

Labur adierazten saiatuko naiz, eta sentitzen dut nire azalpena egin ondoren Biltzar honetatik alde egin behar izatea. Legebiltzarrerara joan beharko dut berehala, enpleguak Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoan duen egoerari buruzko eztabaida monografikoan parte hartzera. Urtero egiten dugu horrelako eztabaida bat, eta hain zuzen ere gaur egokitu behar!

Guztiok dakizue, dudarik gabe, azken urteotan langabezia zenbateraino hazi den, baita munduko herrialde garatuenetan ere. Horrela gertatu da Europako Batasuneko herrialdeetan; hain zuzen ere, Europako Parlamentuak langabezia hori masibo-tzat jo zuen bere garaian. Hemen, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoan ere, dagoeneko jakingo duzuen bezala, oso tasa handietara iritsi zen. Duela urte gutxi, langabezia-tasa, biztanleria aktiboaren aldean, % 25ekoa izatera heldu zen; baina gaur egun, zorionez, % 15 inguruan dago. Atzeraldi ekonomikoa igarota, eta gure autonomia-estatutuak ematen dizkigun eskumen guztiak osotara erabiliz, herri honek, euskal gizarteak oro har, bere Jaurlaritza aurrean duela, lehentasuna eman zion langabeziaren aurkako borrokari. Hartara, urte gutxiren buruan, joera horri buelta eman eta langabezia hamar puntu murriztea lortu genuen. Baina ez gara gelditu. Gure asmoa da ehuneko hamabosteko kopuru hori are gehiago jaisteko neurriak abiaraztea, langabezia-tasa Europako Batasuneko batez bestekoaren ingurura ekartzeko, hau da, % 10etik behera ekartzeko. Eta, ahal izanez gero, legegintzaldi honetan lortu nahi genuke helburu hori.

Urte hauetan, langabezia fenomeno iraunkorra izan da, eta bazterkeriazko egoerak sortzeko faktore erabakigarria izan da. Beharrezkoa zen, beraz, hainbat neurri hartzea: alde batetik, gizarte babesaren esparruan egindako ekintzak; gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera eta gizarte-larrialdietarako laguntzak batez ere, era horretan langabezia-prestazioen bidez aurretik ematen zen babes txikiegia indartzeko. Eta, bestetik, enplegua sustatzeko neurri aktiboak.

Hemen gogoratu beharrekoa dut Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko Autonomia Estatutuan araututa dagoela euskal aginte publikoek neurriak hartu beharko dituztela, gizabanakoaren eta gizataldeen askatasuna eta berdintasuna benetan gauza daitezen, baldintza egokiak sustatu eta oztopoak kentzeko.

Era horretan, betebeharrak hau jartzen zaie aginte publikoei: gizabanako guztien artean, edozein gizarte egoeratan daudela ere, berdintasuna lortzeko behar diren bitartekoak bideratzea.

Hori dela eta, Eusko Jaurlaritzak berariazko egitaraua abiarazi zuen, pobreziako eta gizarte bazterkeriako egoerei aurre egiteko. Eta, orain, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoak laguntza publikoen sistema bat du, gizarte-babeseko sistema orokorraren osagarri. Hiru helburu nagusi ditu laguntza-sistema horrek:

- Gutxieneko diru-sarrera bat bermatzea, oinarritzko bizibeharrak asetzeko nahikoa baliabide ekonomiko ez duten pertsonen laguntzeko.
- Oinarritzko gastu berezietan laguntzea, aldizkakoak ez diren gizarte-larrialdiko laguntzak emanez. Batez ere, etxebizitzarekin zerikusia duten gastuetarako dira.
- Planean jarritako prestazioen onuradun diren gizataldeei, gizartean eta lanbidean sartzen laguntzea. Horretarako, gizatalde horientzako egitarauak eta ekintzak egiten dira, negoziatutako edukia duten hitzarmenetan oinarrituta.

Hala bada, gutxieneko errenta bat izateko eskubidea, Euskadin, legean jarritako diru-sarreraren, bizilekuaren eta familia-egituraren baldintza objektiboak betez gero, eskatzaileak zuzenean lortzen duen gizarte-eskubidea dugu.

Azken urte hauetan, 16.000 familiak —hau da, 43.000 pertsona inguruk— jaso dute gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarreraren onura urtero; eta 13.000 familiak baino gehiagok —32.000 pertsona inguruk— jaso dituzte gizarte-larrialdiko laguntzak. Kopuru horien arabera, Euskadiko etheen % 2k jasotzen dituzte urtero laguntza horiek.

Hori guztia gertatzen ari den esparru politiko honetan, Estatutuak hogeitaz urteko indarraldia izan ondoren, estatutu hori erabat garatzea eskatzen ari gara oraindik ere. Eta oraindik ere salatzen ari gara ez diotela transferitu autonomia-erkidego honi gizarte-politikak modu eraginkorrean kudeatzeko ezinbesteko tresna: Gizarte Segurantzak, alegia. Administrazio zentralari etengabe ari gara eskatzen Gizarte Segurantzak kudeatzeko eskumena, guri dagokiguna, eman diezagula.

Eskumenaren ikuspegi hertsitik begiratuta, emigratuen eta atzerritaruen gaia Gobernu zentralari dagokio. Hari dagokio hasierako erantzuna ematea, beharrak asetzeko. Emigratuen itzuleraren gaian, bi eratako laguntza ematen da: alde batetik, behin ematen den diru-laguntza baten bidez, itzultzeko unean izaten diren ohiz kanpoko gastuei erantzuteko. Eta, bestetik, gehienez ere urte eta erdiz, hilero kopuru finko bat ordainduz, itzuli denak bere baliabide ekonomikoak ez dituen bitartean. Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko erroldan izena emanez gero, euskal erakunde publikoen aginpideen eremuan gongo dira.

Gai horren inguruan, 1994 urteko maiatzaren 27an, Eusko Legebiltzarrak lege bat onartu zuen: Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaz Kanpoko Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanei buruzko 8/1994 Legea. Lege horretan araututa dago, dakizuenez, Euskadira itzultzen diren euskal herritar emigratuek osasun-laguntzako eta gizarte-laguntzako prestazioak jaso ahal izango dituztela, aurretik hemen bizi izan direla frogatu behar izan gabe.

Geroago, gizarte-bazterkeriaren aurkako 12/1998 Legea onartu zen; eta lege horretan araututa daude gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera eta gizarte-larrialdietarako laguntzak. Lege horrek, bada, baldintza hau jartzen du prestazio horiek jasotzeko: eskaera egin baino gutxienez ere urtebete lehenagotik, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko edozein udalerritan erroldatuta egotea.

Hala ere, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaz Kanpoko Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanei buruzko Legearen 11.1 artikuluan adierazitako euskal gizatalde hauei, ezin zaie jarri baldintza hori, baldin artikulua horretan ezarritako baldintzak betetzen badituzte.

11. artikulua euskal gizataldeetako kideentzako prestazioei buruzkoa da, eta bi gizatalde hauek hartzen ditu kontuan:

- a) Atzerrian bizi diren euskotarrak, bai eta haien ondorengoak ere. Horiek guztiek, Euskadiko Autonomia Estatutuko 7.2 artikuluan ezarritakoari jarraituz, Euskadiko egoiliarren eskubide politiko berberak izango dituzte, baldin azkeneko egoitza administratiboa Euskadin izan baldin badute eta Espainiako naziotasuna gorde badute.
- b) Euskadin jaio, Espainiako Gerra Zibilaren ondorioz ebakuatu, eta bizilekua oraindik atzerrian dutenak.

Talde horietako pertsonaren bat Euskal Autonomia Erkidegora itzultzen denean da aplikagarria artikulua hori. Kasu horretan, ez da frogatu beharko aurretik erkidego honetan bizi izana; bestiere eragindako pertsona horiek baldintza hauetako bat betetzen badute:

- a) Espainia estatuko lurraldetik kanpora bizi izatea, etenik gabeko aldi batez, erkidego honetara itzultzen diren unera arte. Emigratu ez dutenei eskatzen zaien aldez aurreko egoitzako denboraren berdina edo luzeagoa izan beharko da aldi hori.
- b) Itzuli ondoren, euren bizilekua Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoan jarri izatea.

Azken batean, gizatalde horientzat ez da ezinbesteko baldintza izango urtebetez erroldan izatea, baldin lau baldintza hauek betetzen badituzte:

- 1. Adierazitako gizatalderen batekoa izatea.
- 2. Espainia estatuko lurraldetik kanpora bizi izatea, etenik gabe eta gutxienez urtebetezko aldi, erkidego honetara itzultzen diren unera arte.
- 3. Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko udalerri batean erroldatuta egotea.
- 4. Atzerrian bizi diren euskotarren eta haien ondorengoaren kasuan, azkeneko egoitza administratiboa Euskadin eduki izatea, eta Espainiako naziotasuna gordetzea.

Gogoan izan behar duzue, gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarreraz eta gizarte-larrialdietarako laguntzez gainera, aukeran duzuela gizarte-izaerako etxebizitzak esleitzeko deialdietara aurkeztea, eskaera egiteko baldintza gisa aldi jakin batez erroldatuta egon behar izanik gabe. Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanei buruzko Legean dago jasota aukera hori.

Kohesio eta elkartasun handiagoko gizartea lortzeko helburuarekin, laster batean abiarazteko asmoa dugun politika batzuei buruzko azalpenak emango ditut ondoren, azaletik bada ere.

Gizartekotzeko hitzarmenak

Lehen adierazi dudanez, araututako prestazioen —gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarreraren eta gizarte-larrialdietarako laguntzen— onuradun diren gizataldeei, gizartean eta lanbidean sartzen laguntzea da asmoa. Horretarako, gizatalde horientzako egitarauak eta ekintzak egiten dira, negoziatutako edukia duten hitzarmenetan oinarrituta.

Gizartekotzeko programetan parte hartzea, eskubide gisa itxuratu da: baztertuta dauden pertsona guztientzat irekitako eskubidea da; eta eskubidea da gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrerara jasotzen dutenentzat ere, baina nahitaez erabili beharreko eskubidea. Negoziatutako hitzarmen bat sinatzean oinarrituta dago, ondorengo abiaburu hau hartuta: gizabanakoa gizarte-bizitzan aktiboki parte hartzeko eta sisteman integratzeko eskubidea duela; hau da, hitzarmen horrek ez du pertsona sistemaren menpekotzat hartzen. Ez dugu nahi inor laguntzen jasotzaile pasiboa izatea. Era grafikoan esanda: ahal den guztietan, arraina emateaz gain, kanabera erabiltzen irakatsi nahi dugu.

Enplegurako pizgarriak

Hori da aplikatu nahi dugun beste figura berri bat. Lanerako pizgarriak ez kentzeko eta poliki-poliki lan-merkatuan sartzea bultzatzeko oinarritzko helburua du. Hartara, ehuneko jakin batean, laneko errentetatik datozen aldi bereko diru-sarrerak metatzeko aukera izango da, prestazioen zenbatekoa erabakitzerakoan.

Neurri egokiak bideratu behar ditugu, gizarte-babeseko politikak lan-merkatuan sartzen lagundu dezan, eta, bereziki, prestazioak jasotzearen ondorioz enplegua aktiboki bilatzeko pizgarriak gal ez daitezen. Kontua da, gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera jasotzen dutenek enplegua lortzeko edo soldata hobetzeko egiten dituzten ahaleginek beren eragina izan dezatela hilerok jasotzen duten diru-sarrera garbian.

Lortzen saiatuko garen beste neurri bat, kotizaziorik gabeko prestazioak osatuz gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrerak bermatutako mailaraino ekartzea da

Gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarreraren prestazioa edonolako baliabideen eta gizarte-prestazioen ordezkia eta osagarria denez, kotizaziorik gabeko prestazioak eta gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera jasotzen dituzten guztiei zenbateko ekonomiko jakin bat berma diezaiekegu. Pertsona batek hirurogeita bost urte betetzen dituenetik aurrera, ez du betetzen gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera jasotzeko adinaren baldintza. Proposamen honekin, adin hori betetzean eroste-ahalmenari eustea bermatu nahi dugu.

Gizarte Eskubideen Agiria

Herritarren ekimen baten bidez Eusko Legebiltzarrean aurkeztutako legegai horrek helburu hau du: euskal herritar guztiei lana lortzeko aukera eta oinarritzko errenta bat bermatzea, herritar izatearen eskubide guztiez goza dezaten.

Laster hasiko da legegai horri buruzko eztabaida, Legebiltzarreko txosten gisa, eta datorren urtean onartuko dela uste da.

Gizarte-lana: AUZOLAN

Une honetan, gizarte-laneko beste egitarau bat onartzea ere aztertzen ari gara. AUZOLAN deitzen diogu egitarau horri. Gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarrera jasotzen duten pertsonak gizartekotzeko hitzarmenak gauzatzeko balioko luke, eta 45 urtetik gorakoak diren eta luza-roan lanik gabe izan diren herritarrak gizartekotzeko ere bai. Helburu horrekin, komunitatearen onerako lanak eginez lan-merkatuan sartuko lirateke aldi baterako. Izan ere, badakigu, jakin, gizarte-bazterkeriak sortzen dituen arazorik gehienak lan-merkatuan sartuz gainditzen direla.

Administrazio publikoek eta beren erakundeek egingo dute lan-eskaintza hori; batez ere, udalek.

Azken helburua berezko lan-merkatuan sartzea da, eta gizarte-lana behin-behineko konponbidea baizik ez da. Horregatik, lan-kontratu horrekin batera, prestakuntza osagarria izango da, merkatuan benetan eskatzen dena oinarritzat hartuta. Eta lan-kontratu hori behin-behinekoa izango da, oinarritzko errentaren onuradun diren langabeak areago txandakatzea lortzeko.

Azken batean, eta betiere adierazitako egitasmo horiek zehaztuko dituzten arauetan arautzen dena bete beharko dela kontuan izanda, uste dut itzulitakoei hitzeman diezaiekedala Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaz Kanpoko Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanei buruzko Legeko 11.1 artikulua gizartekotzeko gutxieneko diru-sarreraren irizpide berberei jarraituz aplikatuko zaiela; hau da, aldez aurretik aldi batez erkidego honetan erroldatuta egon behar izan gabe.

Hala ere, eta bizilekua estatuaz kanpoko herrialdeetan mantentzen duten emigratutako eus-kotarrei dagokienez, aipatu beharrekoa da gizarte-babeseko eskumenak Administrazio zentralare-

nak direla. Gai horretan, badago gizarte-izaerako prestazio ekonomiko bat, bereziki adin handiko pertsona babesgabeenei zuzendua. Prestazio horrek, nolabait ere, kotizaziorik gabeko erretiro-pentsioa zabaltzea dakar. Kanpoan bizi diren eta Espainiako pasaportearen duten emigratuen aldeko laguntza-izaerako zahartzaro-pentsioa da. Lan eta Gizarte Gaietarako Ministerioak kudeatzen du, Migrazio Zuzendaritza Nagusiaren bidez, eta enbaxada eta kontsulatuetan izapidetzen da. Lehen esan dudana bezala, autonomia-erkidego honek Gizarte Segurantzako eskumena oraindik ere ez daukalako gertatzen da hori; bitartean, eskaerak izapidetzeko gure laguntza tekniko eta juridikoa baizik ezin dizuegu eskaini.

Era berean, behinola emigratu zuten edo atzerriratu ziren euskotarrekin batera, hor dugu Euskal Etxeak dituzten milaka bazkideen gizataldea. Legearen aldetik, ez dute status bera, baina guretzat, egiaz, denak dira, denok zarete, gu bezain euskotarrak.

Gizatalde horrentzat, bestelako diru-laguntzak planteatu daitezkeela uste dugu, berariazko programen bidez edo Lehendakariatzatik ematen diren laguntzen deialdi orokorraren bidez. Zuen egitarau propioen osagarri izan gaitezke, elkarri laguntzeko sortu ziren Euskal Etxe askoren sorrerako asmo berarekin. Horretarako, zuen erakundeetako agintariek bide horretatik doazen helburuak aurkeztu behar dituzte, finantzaketa-sistema konkretuak zehaztuta.

Ildo horretan, eta kanpoan zuzeneko laguntza emateko egitarau konkretuak aurrera eramateko dauden zailtasun tekniko eta juridiko ugariak gainditzearen, zuen laguntza eskatuko dut, Euskal Etxe guztien laguntza, benetan eta zehazki jakiteko zer-nolako laguntzak behar dituzuen, eta batez ere premia larrian diren bazkideen berri izateko.

Ez nuke nire azalpena amaitu nahi, Gerra Zibila bukatu ondoren erbesteratu zirenak gogoratu gabe. Izan ere, haien atzerriratzearen 60. urteurrena bete da aurten. Horregatik, Eusko Legebiltzarra, joan den ekainean egindako osoko bilkura batean, erakunde demokratikoen aurkako altxamendu faxista hura gaitzesteaz gainera, Eusko Jaurlaritzari eskatu zion lanerako plan bat bultzatzea. Plan horretatik, bi helburu hauek nabarmenduko ditut:

- Gure atzerriratuak hartu zituzten herrialdeetako erakunde demokratikoekin adostuta, atzerriratu horiei edo haien ondorengoei beharrezko direnean laguntzeko diru-funts bat eratzea. Hartara, atzerriratu horiek hartu dituzten herrialdeetako egoera ekonomikoarekin bat datorren gizarte-soldata bat bermatuko zaie.
- Euskal erakunde publikoek erkidego honetara itzultzen direnen bizi-baldintzak hobetzearen eta itzulitakoak gizartekotzearren egiten duten lana sustatzen jarraitzea.

Horiek izan daitezke, bada, Euskal Gizatalde eta Etxeekiko Harremanetarako Aholku Batzordearen bidez 2000-2003 Ekintza Planean aurkeztu beharreko ildoetako batzuk.

Benetan eskertzen dizuet Euskadira etortzeko egin duzuen ahalegina eta eskaini didazuen arreta. Eta bihotzez eskertzen dizuet, orobat, zuek hartu zaituztetan lurraldera bisita egitera joaten garenean ematen diguzuen berotasuna.

Eskerrik asko eta ongi etorri!

TRANSLATION

AGURRA (Greeting)

It is an honour for all Basques to take part in this Congress and to have the opportunity to greet the representatives of our brothers and sisters living overseas. It is both an honour and a source of great satisfaction for me as, similarly to many other Basques, I also have relatives, cousins in my case, in Argentina and Colombia and have had the opportunity to visit various Communities which exist so far away from our tiny, ancient homeland. So far and yet so near also, because when a Basque visits your Communities, as I was lucky enough to do this summer in Boise and last year in New York, we feel truly at home.

Firstly, I would like to thank the organisers of this World Congress for giving me the opportunity of speaking here today, and I would like to take advantage of the occasion to express my sincere gratitude and profound solidarity with all Basque people, represented by you, living outside the Basque Country who make such a great and successful effort to maintain and strengthen our culture and identity.

I would also like to make a special note of the important role played by the Basque Centres, which are the preferred channel of communications between members of the Basque Communities throughout the world and the Basque Public Administrations.

This is not the first time that I have had the honour of being with you all. I acted as speaker for my parliamentary group, Eusko Alkatasuna, in the passing of the Basque Autonomous Community Act on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres, and I also participated in the last Congress, held four years ago, in my capacity as the then Basque Parliament's President of the Commission of Overseas Affairs.

Today I address you in my present capacity as the Basque Minister of Justice, Labour and Social Security, and as such, I would like to explain some of the initiatives, concerns and achievements of the social policies being developed by my Department within the Basque Government.

I will try to be brief, and must apologise in advance for having to leave this Congress almost immediately afterwards to make my way to the Basque Parliament in order to attend the annual monographic debate on the employment situation within the Basque Autonomous Community. The debate is held only once a year, and unfortunately, that day is today.

You are doubtless aware of the high unemployment levels which have plagued even the most developed countries in the world over recent years. The European Union has been no exception, and at one point, unemployment was described as «massive» by the European Parliament. The BAC has also suffered extremely high unemployment rates, as you are no doubt well aware. A few years ago, in 1994, the unemployment rate in relation to the active population was over 25 %, although fortunately, today the level has dropped to around 15 %. With the end of the economic recession and by making use of all the freedom granted us by the Statute of Autonomy, this country, Basque society in general with its Government at the head, prioritised the fight against unemployment and succeeded in reversing the situation and reducing the employment figures by 10 % over a very few years. Nevertheless, we do not intend to sit on our laurels. Within this session if possible, we aim to reduce the percentage from 15 to lower than 10 % in order to coincide with the EU average.

I will now turn to another of my department's concerns: the field of Social Issues; an area in which the Autonomous Government enjoys a greater authority and liberty of action.

The effect of the unemployment issue over recent years and its role as a determining factor in the development of situations of social exclusion, has necessitated the setting up of active job creation initiatives as well as social benefit programmes, mainly Minimum Income (MI) and Emergency Social Aid programmes, which complement the insufficient services offered by unemployment benefit policies.

I should mention at this point that the BAC's Statute of Autonomy establishes that the Basque Public Authorities should adopt measures aimed at creating the necessary conditions for ensuring that the concept of individual and group equality becomes a tangible and effective reality.

The Public Authorities are charged with implementing all means necessary to ensure equality between all citizens, regardless of their social situation.

In order to comply with this duty, the Basque Government set up a specific programme to deal with situations of poverty and social exclusion. As a result, the BAC currently has a public benefit system which complements the general social security system, and which has three main objectives:

- to guarantee a minimum income for those who lack the sufficient economic resources for basic necessities;
- to cover specific basic costs, mainly housing-related, by establishing permanent emergency social aid;
- to facilitate the social insertion and insertion into the job market of recipients of the benefits outlined in the Plan, through participation in insertion programmes and activities based on negotiated content agreements.

In the Basque Country, the right to a minimum income is a social right to which the applicant has direct access providing they meet the objective requirements with regard to income, residency and family structure.

The annual number of MI recipients over the last few years has been 16,000 families (43,000 individuals) and over 13,000 families have received emergency social aid (23,000 individuals). These figures mean that almost 2 % of Basque homes receive these benefits every year.

All this has taken place within a political framework in which, twenty years after being granted our own Statute, we are still awaiting its complete development. The Central government has still not granted the BAC full management authority, and has still to effectively transfer the authority necessary for the effective management of social issues, Social Security being one of these.

In a strict sense, the issue of emigrants and exiles falls under the jurisdiction of the Central Government. It is this body which must provide an initial answer to the problem by providing for immediate necessities. In the case of returning emigrants, firstly, the government provides a specific, one-off financial sum to cover the extraordinary costs involved in returning, and secondly, pays returnees a fixed monthly sum for a maximum of eighteen months until they settle down and are able to generate their own economic resources. Once they are registered in the BAC, they fall under the jurisdiction of the Basque Institutions.

In this respect, the Basque Autonomous Community Act on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres, passed in 1994, includes a mandate stating that Basque emigrants returning to the Basque Country are eligible for health and social security benefits without the need to prove any specific period of prior residence.

The Anti Social Exclusion Act 12/1998, which currently regulates Minimum Income (MI) and Emergency Social Aid (ESA) benefits, requires applicants to have been registered in any town within the Basque Autonomous Community for a minimum period of one year previous to the benefit application.

The requisite does not apply to members of Basque Communities referred to in article 11.1 of the Basque Autonomous Community Act 8/1994, passed on 27 May of that year, on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres, providing that they meet the requirements outlined in the said article.

Article 11, in relation to the benefits which may be granted to members of Basque Communities, applies to the following two groups:

- a) Basques citizens and their descendants that are resident overseas, who, in accordance with article 7.2 of the Basque Country's Statute of Autonomy, will enjoy the same political rights as those resident in the Basque Country, providing that their last registered place of residence was within the Basque Country and that they have conserved their Spanish nationality.
- b) Those born in the Basque Country who were evacuated as a result of the Spanish Civil War, and who are still living abroad.

The article covers the eventuality of some of those included in the above groups returning to the Autonomous Community. In this event, they will not be required to prove prior residence, providing that they:

- a) Have resided outside Spain for a continuous period, immediately before their return, of equal or greater length than the prior residence period stipulated in the case of non-emigrants.
- b) Have settled in the Basque Country on their return.

In short, a year of prior residence will not be required of those returnees that meet the following four requirements:

1. That they belong to one of the relevant groups.

2. That they have resided outside Spain for a continuous period of 1 year or longer immediately before their return.
3. That they be registered within the Autonomous Community.
4. In the case of Basques and their descendants resident overseas, that their last place of residence was in the Basque Country and that they maintain their Spanish nationality.

I would remind you that in addition to access to the MINIMUM INCOME and Emergency Social Aid (ESA) benefits, the Act on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres grants returnees the right to participate in council housing allocations without having to prove a prior residence as an application requisite.

Here, I would like to make a few brief observations about some of the policies which we intend to implement in the near future, with the aim of achieving greater social cohesion and solidarity:

Insertion Agreements

As I mentioned earlier, we aim to facilitate the social insertion and insertion into the job market of those receiving supplementary benefits (MI and ESA) through their participation in insertion programmes and activities based on negotiated content agreements.

Participation in insertion programmes is an open right for those in situations of social exclusion, and an obligatory right for those receiving MINIMUM INCOME benefits. It is established on the basis of a negotiated agreement, and we consider this commitment to represent to the individual their right to take an active part in country's social life, their right to be a part of the system and not simply to be dependent on it. We do not want anyone to simply be a passive recipient of social benefit. To put it in more graphic terms, we do not just want to give them fish, we want to teach them how to use a fishing rod.

Employment initiatives

This is another new initiative that we want to implement. With the basic object of preventing demotivation and of promoting progressive reinsertion into the job market, this initiative aims to enable the accumulation, in a certain percentage, of parallel earned income which will determine the relative sum of benefits received.

We should establish means to ensure that social service policies favour reintegration into the job market, and, in particular, that they do not act as a demotivating factor in the active search for employment. We should avoid the pitfall whereby the efforts of Minimum Income recipients to find work, or in certain cases to improve their Income level, have no effect whatsoever on their net monthly income.

Another plan that we wish to introduce is that of complementing Non-Contributive Benefits (NCB) in order to ensure the level guaranteed by the MI

Given that the Minimum Income (MI) benefit is subsidiary and complementary to other social resources and benefits, those receiving Non-Contributive Benefits as well as MI can be guaranteed a certain economic level. On reaching 65 years of age, a person ceases to be eligible for MI. This proposal aims to guarantee a procedure which will enable those affected to remain eligible after reaching this age.

Social Rights Charter

This is a bill that was presented to the Basque Parliament as a popular legislative initiative with the aim of guaranteeing all Basques access to employment and a Basic Income, to enable them to take full advantage of all their citizens' rights.

The bill will be debated shortly in the heart of the parliamentary committee and is expected to be passed some time next year.

AUZOLAN-Community Service

We are also in the process of debating a new community service programme called AUZOLAN, which would implement the Insertion Agreements reached between the Administration and citizens receiving MI benefits or citizens of over 45 years old who have been unemployed for long periods and whose reinsertion into the job market is especially difficult. The aim of AUZOLAN is that by taking part in community welfare projects, these people are temporarily reinserted into the job market, a result which is beneficial to all as studies clearly indicate that the majority of problems resulting from social exclusion can be solved through reinsertion.

Town Councils, with the aid of the Public Administrations and their related Organisations, will be responsible for extending this employment opportunity.

Given that the ultimate objective is reinsertion into the normalised job market, and not the creation of dependency on social benefits, community service will be linked to a complementary training scheme firmly based on market demand. It will also be of a temporary nature in order to ensure that the project benefits the greatest possible number of unemployed.

In short, although these projects have yet to be formally processed, I am in a position to affirm that Basque returnees will be eligible for the benefits and services outlined in article 11.1 of the Basque autonomous Community Act 8/1994 on Relations with Overseas Basque Communities and Centres, under the same conditions as they are with regard to the MI: i.e., without having to prove prior residence.

Nevertheless, regarding Basque emigrants residing overseas, I should mention the Central Administration's social protection schemes. The Spanish Government provides a socially-orientated financial benefit specifically for senior citizens in situations of extreme need, which is in some ways an extension of the non-contributive pension. The benefit is a complementary retirement pension for emigrants with Spanish passports and is administered by the Ministry of Labour, Justice and Social Services through the Department of Migrations, although it is distributed by the various Embassies and Consulates. As I mentioned earlier, the Basque Government still lacks the authority to set up this kind of Social Security project, and in the meantime, we can only offer our collaboration as legal-technical advisors in the processing of applications.

We must also consider that, alongside Basques emigrants or exiles, there are thousands of Basque Centres members who, despite not enjoying the same legal status, are, in our eyes, just as Basque as we ourselves.

For this group, we believe that another type of subsidiary financial support programme could be set up, either through specific initiatives or by a general aid programme administrated by the Presidency. We could complement your own programmes, in keeping with the founding philosophy of so many Basque Centres, which were set up as mutual aid associations. In order to achieve this goal, your Institutions should establish the relevant objectives in this area and then set up concrete financing schemes.

With the aim of overcoming the numerous legal-technical difficulties involved in implementing concrete direct foreign aid programmes, I must ask for your collaboration, and for the collaboration of all Basque Centres, in providing us with more detailed and exact information about your members' current necessities, and in particular about situations of dire need.

I cannot finish without mentioning those who were exiled as a result of the end of the Spanish Civil War, given that today is the 60th anniversary of this sad event. In a plenary session held at the end of last June, in addition to condemning the fascist military uprising against democratic institutions, the Basque Parliament insisted that the Basque Government implement a working plan with the following main objectives:

- To study the possibility of working in collaboration with the democratic institutions of the countries which welcomed our exiles to set up an aid fund to attend to the necessities of

Basque exiles and their descendants, thereby guaranteeing them a social income in keeping with the country's current economic situation.

- To continue the efforts of the Basque Institutions aimed at improving the standard of living and social insertion of those who choose to return to the Basque Country.

These, in short, could constitute some of the areas that may be included in the 2000-2003 Action Plan, through the Advisory Board for Relations with Basque Communities and Centres.

I would like to thank you all for your attention and for the effort you have all made to travel to the Basque Country. I must also express my thanks for the warm welcome you give us when we visit you in your adopted countries.

Eskerrik asko eta ongi etorriak!

PAPER OF MRS. M.^a KARMEN GARMENDIA,
MINISTER OF CULTURE

Dear friends

During this series of talks with institutional representatives, it falls to me, as is only natural, to talk about culture. It is not, I think, the easiest subject approach. Other issues such as the economy, industry, the health service or even politics, have a much more clearly defined framework. When we talk of these issues, both the speaker and the listeners share a common field of perception. Culture, on the other hand, is a more intangible concept, difficult to define and tricky to pin down. There is no universally accepted academic definition of the concept «culture», and for this reason I will begin by looking at this lack of definition and attempt, during this talk, to reach some kind of more concrete resolution.

When trying to define just what «culture» means, I would start by considering this very meeting. If we ask ourselves why we are gathered here today, or why you have decided to attend this Congress, the answer is obvious: because we feel ourselves to be Basque. Our Basqueness, this feeling of belonging to a specific group, of sharing, in a certain sense, a collective personality, is the sole reason for this meeting. We could say that we are here today because we share a common culture.

According to this first definition, culture is a set of common values, customs and traditions, common ways of understanding life and the world, common ways of perceiving work, family or social relationships, a set of common symbolic references, in short, that which makes a group of people identify with each other and feel part of a community. Every one of us here today has acquired over the years multiple references that combine to define our individual personalities. But in our specific case, above, or perhaps below, these defining references with their endless variety of ideological, national, religious, etc. nuances, I repeat, above or below these individualising factors, we all share the feeling of having something in common, of being able to speak to and understand each other, of sharing common references which enhance our communications. We could say that, regardless of the differences in our mother tongues, we all speak a common language. And this common language that enables us to communicate, is culture. Basque culture.

In this primary sense, then, culture is memory. We share the same culture because we share the same memories. Our parents, grandparents, and ancestors in general have handed down to us similar ways of being, behaving, celebrating, organising a family and relating to each other. Similar tendencies to value certain qualities and condemn others. As a rule, a person's general behaviour tells us immediately whether or not they belong to our group.

I would like to tell you an anecdote which may serve to illustrate what I am trying to say. I myself find it strongly symbolic. Recently, I had the occasion to address a group of young people from overseas Basque Communities who were here in the Basque Country as part of the Gaztemundu programme. It was a gathering very similar to this Congress, in fact, except that the participants were all somewhat younger. I told them a story of a member of a farming family from Idiazabal who went to Argentina. Once he was settled there as a successful cattle farmer, he wrote home to invite his brother, who was many years younger than himself, to come and join him. So, the younger brother travelled to Argentina and on arriving at the farm, jumped over the fence to reach the house. The older brother was watching from the veranda and when he saw the young man jump over the fence he said to him: «You are my younger brother, aren't you? I recognised you from the way you jumped over the fence, I used to jump in exactly the

same way when I was young». The strangest part of the story is that afterwards, when the young people were all leaving, a young girl came up to me and said: «The young man that jumped over the fence was my grandfather. I've heard the story of how his brother recognised him many times».

We cannot conclude from this story that all Basques jump over fences in the same way. However, if the fence symbolises life, the way in which we behave and relate to one another, what we can say is that we share a common culture which enables us to recognise each other and to identify ourselves as a community. Memory, this accumulation of experiences from a common past, is the basis of our common culture, a culture that is in many ways our heritage, the inheritance of a common past.

I believe that it is vital that we preserve this heritage, especially in a world which is increasingly globalised, a world in which individual cultures are gradually succumbing to the strongest. The strongest, I say, not necessarily the best. It is important that we preserve our heritage not only for our own sake, but for others' also. We should preserve it for our own sake because we all need our own identity, our own ties to our individual communities to protect us from becoming rootless and depersonalised. What we once were is always part of what we are now, and if we are not linked to our own past, we risk becoming completely disorientated in the world and losing the references that guide us in our life and in our decisions.

Nevertheless, it is also important, as I have said, to preserve our heritage for others' sake. Cultural peculiarities, as long as they do not become intransigent or isolationist, serve to enrich our universal culture. We are no better or worse than anyone else. We are simply different, and we should continue to be so. Without us, without Basque culture, the world would be a poorer place, more monotonous and less varied.

You who, in general, live in societies with a wider ethnic and cultural variety than ours, will perhaps understand this better than those of us who have remained here. Argentina, for example, or the United States, to give just two examples, would not be what they are today if they had not known how to take advantage of the diverse cultural groups that constitute and enrich their society. And I am in no way preaching against integration. To the contrary, in fact, I believe that authentic integration consists of creating something new, of mixing the contributions of the different components that constitute a nation to make something better, without losing the individual peculiarities of each. I believe that integration is giving and receiving without ceasing to be oneself. It is sharing with others a new identity, the sense of belonging to a new nation, without needing to tear up the roots that link you to your origins.

But, I have perhaps said enough on this subject. I think that we Basques have proved ourselves to be fairly tenacious, even obstinate, when it comes to preserving our heritage. The Basque reputation for «pigheadedness» is not entirely undeserved, and meetings such as this are clear evidence of that. We have proved that we have a long memory. For this reason, rather than dwell on this theme for any longer, we should perhaps reflect on some other relevant aspects.

Culture is certainly memory, and, without a doubt, the culture of any given group is largely made up of shared recollections. But there is more to it than this. Culture is also creativity, evolution and thoughts for the future. It is this aspect of culture that I would like to look at now.

If human communities have managed to survive over time, it is because they have learned to evolve, to adapt, to anticipate new circumstances and to invent new ways of surviving. Only old, out of date practises live exclusively in the collective memory. To survive, a community must look to the present and learn how to face the future. To go back to the metaphor of roots that I used earlier, our roots only make sense when they grow into a new tree complete with all its great variety of branches.

To return to reality, we Basques, spread throughout the world, should not limit ourselves to recognising each other from our common roots. We should also work towards to the goal of recognising each other from our common branches. We should not base our identity solely on our past, but on our current projects also. Our ultimate objective is not only to maintain the memory of a common past, but also to share a common project for the future.

Basque society is not stagnant. This is why it has survived down the centuries. I would say that the most telling characteristic of our culture is continuity in change. We continue to be Basques, just as our ancestors were, but our lives have very little in common with theirs. Our current lifestyle is much closer to that of any other modern western society than it is to Basque society of just a few centuries ago. Nevertheless, we continue to feel identified with each other as a group. From a fundamentally rural society, which is what many of our ancestors abandoned when they chose to emigrate, we have undergone an intense process of industrialisation and now find ourselves in a post-industrial, and to use a fashionable term, post-modern, era.

Those of us who live here are perhaps less aware of the changes that our society is undergoing. You, who only visit us every now and then, perceive these changes more clearly, and sometimes, I would imagine, with a certain astonishment. We no longer correspond to the image of «the Basque Country» that your elders passed down to you. The memory no longer corresponds to the project currently underway.

I believe that over recent years, Basque society has been undergoing a period of profound transformation. I could be wrong, but I would say, albeit rather cautiously, that this transformation is comparable to that which occurred during the middle of the last century with the event of industrialisation, when our society gradually began to abandon its rural origins.

The great era of an economy based on the iron and steel industries is gradually giving way to greater industrial diversification and state-of-the-art technology. Furthermore, as a consequence of this, the service industry is becoming increasingly important. All this implies profound changes in what we could denominate social «customs and traditions». Consumer goods, dependent on social demand, are changing and the demand for leisure activities and cultural products of all varieties is reaching levels comparable with any other European country.

All this is having a notable influence on the production, distribution and consumption of the concept we call culture. Culture, in its widest sense, is breaking the defining bonds that have restrained it until so recently and is gradually infiltrating areas which are being forced to take it into account when defining the general welfare and quality of life standards of our society. The «cultural dimension» is now a fundamental part of the «sustained development» of our economy. These days, in addition to governmental institutions, financial entities and large companies have also come to realise that culture has a part to play in their strategies, even if it is only to gain a greater social acceptance. Culture is fashionable, and is well established even in those areas where, until recently, it was considered marginal or even dismissed altogether.

You yourselves, coming as you do at periodic intervals, must be aware of both these changes and of something new which is currently occurring in our country. You may have noticed, as many of those who live here have noticed, the recent boom in infrastructures and cultural initiatives. In just a few years, important and novel cultural facilities such as the Guggenheim Museum, the Euskalduna and the Kursaal Conference Centres and Auditoriums, the new Museum of Contemporary Art in Vitoria and the increasing activity of the Bilbao Museum of Fine Art, to name but a few. And, most importantly, all these initiatives are having a double effect. Firstly, they are having an internal effect, within the Basque Country, where they are being met with enormous social approval, and secondly, they are having an external effect, projecting a new image of our country to the rest of the world.

With regard to this last factor, in my capacity as Minister of Culture, I can assure you that I have received more foreign visitors than ever before, visitors who come to our country to find out how we have managed to link the «cultural dimension» so successfully to our economic development and standard of living. For example, less than a month ago, the British Minister of Culture visited Bilbao to hold a series of meetings with me and other institutional representatives to discuss this very theme. Three weeks ago, the President of the World Bank personally invited me to attend a conference organised by the said bank and the UNESCO in Florence, to discuss the relationship between culture and development. Less than a week ago, during the XL Anniversary Celebrations of the Guggenheim Foundation in New York, the success of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum was the subject of much praise and acclaim.

These are just three recent examples, and are no more than part of a long list. I mention them, not for mere self-gratification, but rather to illustrate the fact that something very important is happening in the Basque Country with regard to culture. Something which, furthermore, is not just some passing trend, but a phenomenon which will have a lasting effect on our society. It will change, on the one hand, the image that Basques have of themselves, and on the other, the image that we project to the rest of the world. Thanks to this new cultural boom, today, the Basque Country is perceived as a place worth visiting, a perception that has resulted in a spectacular increase in the influx of tourists.

But to return to our initial reflection. What I would like to say is that the roots that we share, our collective memory, is producing certain offshoots which we should all, both Basques living here and those living abroad, include in our common cultural heritage. We should not be satisfied with simply sharing a common past, but rather strive to share a common future. Our cultural community cannot remain anchored to the past. We must look to the future, otherwise we will reach the point when we cease to recognise each other. We must work to ensure that every time overseas Basques return to their homeland, they recognise their fellow countrymen and recognise themselves as part of this new cultural community. We must strive to ensure that we remain like that young man who was recognised by the way he jumped over the fence. The Basque Country that your ancestors left has not become lost in the mists of time. It is the same country, transformed but the same none the less, not in spite of the change, but rather because of it.

The incorporation of these new cultural models into our collective personality is the only way to maintain community links with the younger generation. Young people look more to the future than to the past. They are more interested in current projects than in memories. They will feel more closely linked to a community through actions than through any «stories» that we may tell them.

The best means of preserving this link and of conserving our sense of belonging and community feeling, is to maintain constant and effective communications. The feeling of Basqueness that we all want to preserve cannot simply be a concept based on history. It must be a concept that we add to day by day. I repeat, we cannot share only memory, we must also share the future. And the future of the Basque Country is based in the new culture that current generations are attempting to incorporate into our unique personality.

Nowadays, it is easier than ever before to set up effective, permanent communications channels. If anything characterises the modern world, it is just this: communications. These days we do not need to wait until the young man jumps over the fence in order to recognise him, we can follow his progress day by day, chart his evolution and recognise him without recourse to memory. This is the great tool that we should use to maintain, between all of us, that which I have identified as our most defining characteristic: continuity in change. We may do different things, but we always do them our way. Permanent communications will help us to recognise precisely this special way of doing things.

I believe that we are making substantial progress in this area. We are becoming increasingly active on the Internet, although there is still much to do, and we have launched, and continue to improve, our own satellite television channel. We want you to take an active role in some of our cultural activities, and in this vane, our Symphony Orchestra will be touring Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil in the year 2000. We must also find a way to make the majority of our literary, graphic and cinematic resources available to you, and strive to bring cultural initiatives currently being developed in your countries to our Autonomous Community. Perhaps the system of mixed foundations, the famous Basque-American Institutes, can be expanded to include cultural activities in addition to the highly successful economic activities of recent years. These Institutes could become, alongside the Basque Centres, key communicative elements between Basque Communities throughout the world. I am thinking, of course, of initiatives such as that set up by the Basque-Mexican Institute, which, in collaboration with Deusto and Ibero-American Universities, has organised a diploma course on interesting and relevant aspects of modern-day Basque society, such as the influence of Basques on the American continent throughout history. Initiatives of this kind contribute to maintaining links which go beyond the mere sharing of a collective memory.

The instruments are there to be used, the key is knowing how to use them. We must find a way to make them serve our purposes, not only to maintain our collective memory, but also to ensure that we all play an active role in our present, and, most importantly, in our future.

PAPER OF MR. GABRIEL M.^a INCLÁN, MINISTER OF HEALTH

HEALTH POLICY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY



Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to share some time with you, the proud representatives of our country throughout the world and to explain the basis of our health system which, I should say in advance, is something that we feel is deeply rooted in our society and a decisive factor in redistribution, fairness and social unity.

I. History of the health system in the Basque Country

In order to understand our position today, we need to remember where we have come from and how we have been gradually building up our health service ever since, in 1979, the Basque Country's Statute of Autonomy was passed.

It was in 1979 that we started out, with the transfer this very year of what we call, public health. What we mean by this is the monitoring and control of all those aspects that affect public health such as the quality of drinking water, environmental quality, the prevention of outbreaks of food poisoning, etc.

Subsequently, in 1981 we obtained ownership of the AISNA hospitals, that mainly dealt with respiratory illnesses. These were called «the chest hospitals» in those days and included Leza hospital in Alava, Santa Marina in Bizkaia and Amara in Gipuzkoa.

Later on, in 1983, Act 10/83, creating «Osakidetza» the Basque Health Service, was passed. This was a milestone because it provided us with an autonomous body with the main mission, apart from managing (at that time) the very limited health resources that we had, of preparing our Public Administration to come to terms with the major transfers that we were entitled to in the area of health care.

These transfers began to become somewhat more specific in 1985, thanks to the Historical Provinces Act, by which the Basque Government was given those health services that had been traditionally covered by the provincial governments. So, the psychiatric hospitals of Zaldibar, Zamudio and Bermeo in Bizkaia, las Nieves in Alava, all mental health out-patients departments and the Gorliz, Santiago and Gipuzkoa hospitals, all came under the wing of Osakidetza (The Basque Health Service).

That was when the Basque health service began to reach a significant level of importance in the field of health service provision.

But the major transfer, the one that really meant our coming of age, came about in 1988 when we had transferred to us all the health centres, outpatients' departments and hospitals of the State health service (INSALUD). With this transfer, Osakidetza became the largest company in the Basque Country and we had to face up to modernising it and adapting it to new times.

This meant that only a few minor details were left, some of which were very important from a symbolic viewpoint and which were gradually incorporated within the Basque public health service in subsequent years. What I am referring to here are local health services (family planning services and the Uribe Kosta Consortium), the Basurto Hospital (although it had actually been operating already as one of the Osakidetza hospitals) which was formally transferred in 1992, and finally the Navy's Social Institute, which was transferred in 1996.

All of this means that, with the exception of overseas health, which is looked after by Madrid, the Basque Government has a complete health-service structure and has far-reaching powers in both health policy and health management.

II. Strategies for change used within the Basque Health Service

With this new situation, we embarked upon a profound reflection to establish a series of strategies for changing Basque health care, that would allow us to face up to its modernisation and prepare it to face up to the challenges raised by an increase in demand, greater user requirements, changes in epidemiological patterns and new technologies.

With the participation of hundreds of professionals, we managed to draw up a plan which we call «Osasuna Zainduz», which was given the backing of the Basque Parliament in 1994 and became a reference point for public health system practitioners.

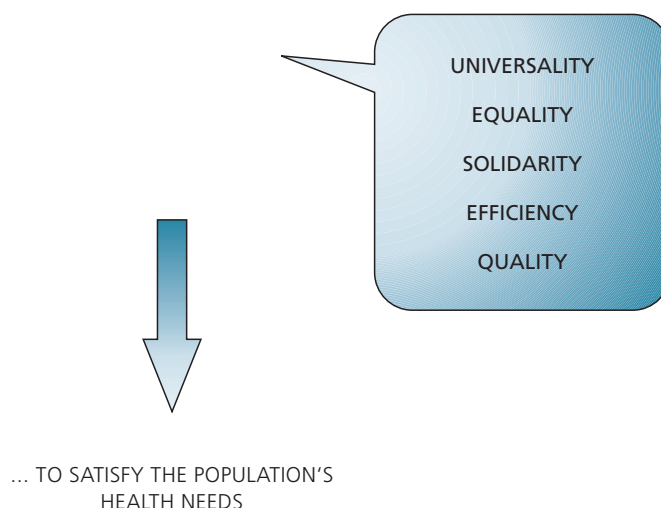
We drew up an appropriate health-care model to satisfy the health needs of the population effectively, efficiently and rationally, covering all health areas and with the participation of the entire population, all of which was under a new organisation.

The main practical points were:

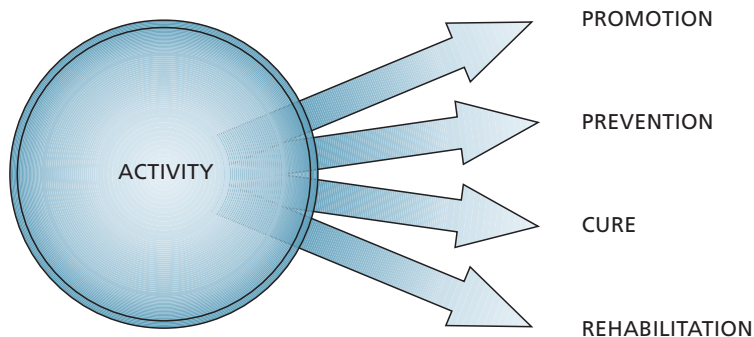
- 1) Considering the individual person as a fundamental objective within the system.
- 2) Public participation.
- 3) A comprehensive consideration of the system
- 4) Priority orientation towards health promotion and illness prevention.
- 5) The separation of the regulation and financing functions in the provision of services.
- 6) Sufficient public financing to cover medical assistance
- 7) Working with fixed objectives and resource allocation
- 8) Increasing competitiveness between public health centres
- 9) Encouraging the participation and responsibility of practitioners.
- 10) Carrying out continuous evaluation.

Following the lines laid down in this Plan, after a 15-year experience in health-care management during which time the social and economic context had changed considerably, we presented the Basque Parliament with a Bill on health management that was passed on the 26th June 1997.

III. The Basque Health Management Act.



The Basque Health Management Act



The Basque Health Management Act

The Basque Health Management Act has the following main objective:

«To provide the best health-care possible for our population, thus consolidating one of the main elements that go to make up the welfare state and a united society».

The Act stipulates that the Basque Government, through its Health Department, will provide the health services necessary to satisfy the population's health needs and, something which is very important, according to the criteria of universality (for everyone), equality (under equal conditions), solidarity, efficiency and quality.

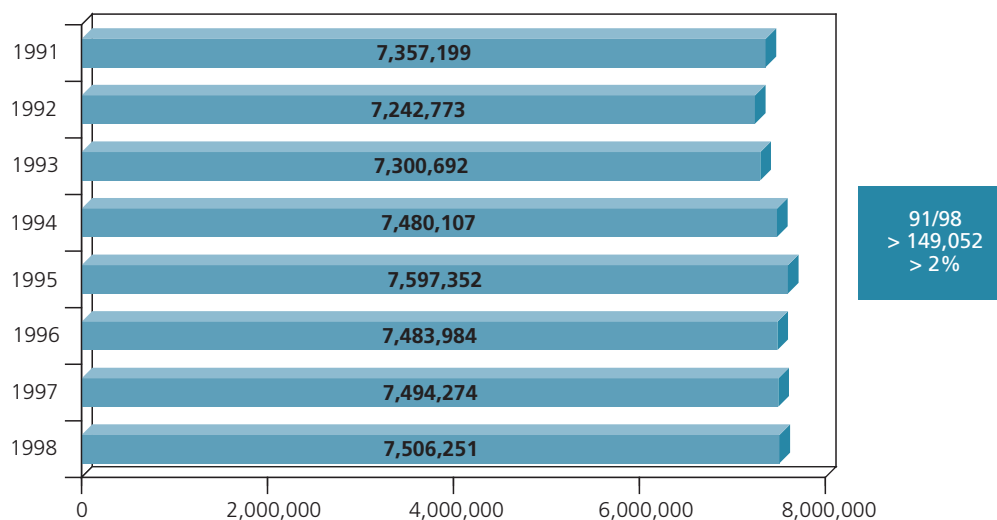
The health service will also cover the areas of health promotion, illness prevention, cure and rehabilitation.

In order to make all of this possible, the Act introduced a series of significant organisational changes, which can basically be summed up as the following:

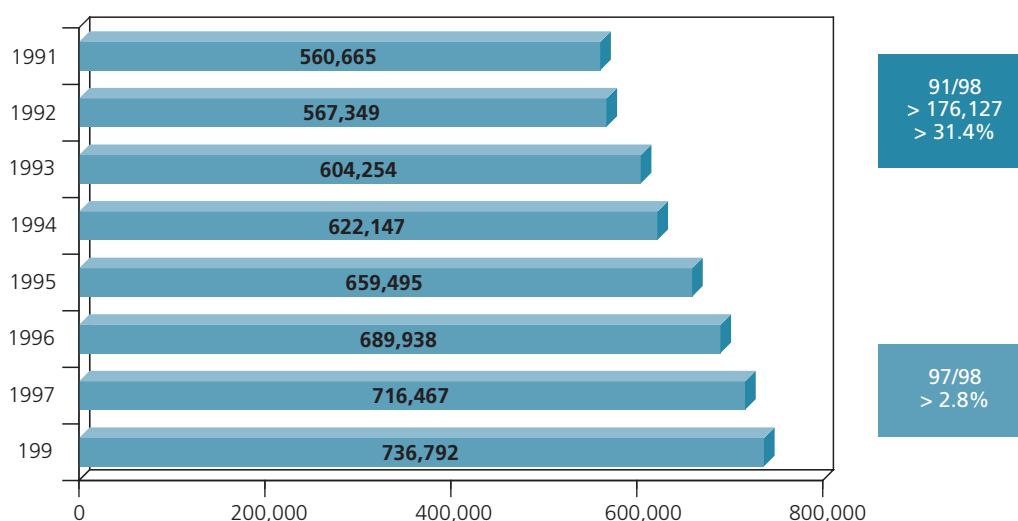
1. The Health Department is the health authority, the public's guarantor and the contractor and financial backer of health services.
2. To carry out this task it has a Health Plan that draws up a series of health-care priority areas.
3. The Department contracts and finances the services with Osakidetza as a public provider, through contracts and, in the case of the private health sector, through agreements- Obviously the vast majority of services are provided within the Osakidetza network of services.
4. Osakidetza is a public body governed by private law. More specifically it is governed by private law in the following areas; economics taxation, internal organisation and operation and internal legal relations. Everything regarding heritage and responsibility, however remains under public law.

Therefore, we have a comprehensive health system which guarantees all members of the public, without any difference, quality health care both for basic and specialist health care, plus mental health, with a wide range of services, all of which are financed by the Basque Autonomous Region's general budget

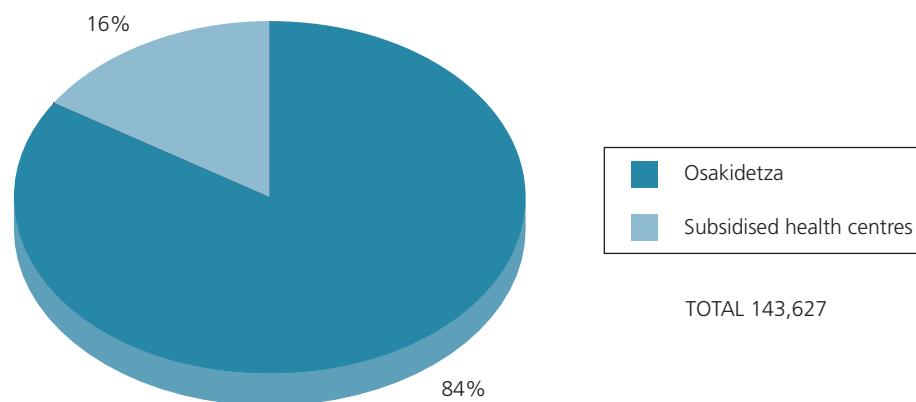
IV. Some facts and figures about our activity



Basic health care
General medicine. Total number of visits



Hospital for the chronically ill
Number of casualties attended



Total number of operations: Osakidetza + health centres that are subsidised by Osakidetza
1998

Now that we have a picture of what our health-care model is, I am going to just give some facts and figures about the health-care activity that Osakidetza carries out and which may provide you an idea of its significance, especially bearing in mind that it is aimed at a population of slightly over two million inhabitants.

In general medicine in 1998 we attended 7,500,000 appointments in general medicine, 7,000,000 in infirmary and 1,300,000 in paediatrics. That means over 15,000,000 appointments in just one year.

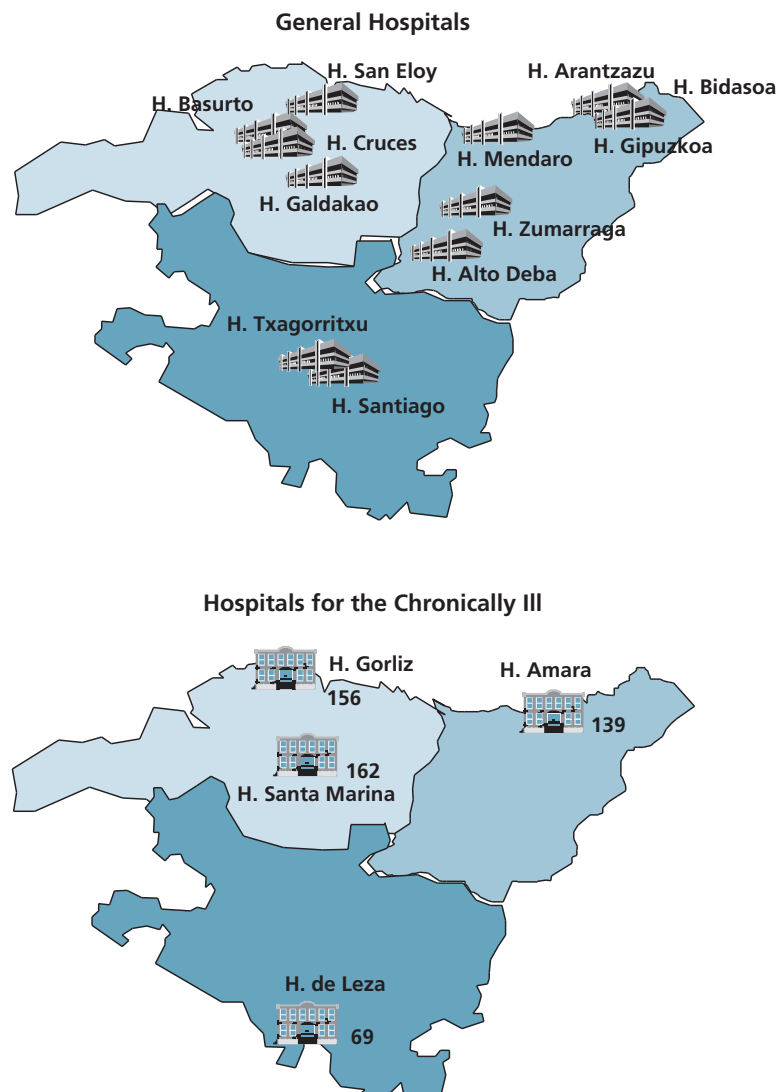
In specialist medicine we attended 2,400,000 outpatient appointments, 736,000 hospital casualties and 143,000 operations.

These figures, that are only for 1998, become even more relevant if we put it in perspective and realise that it has increased year after year.

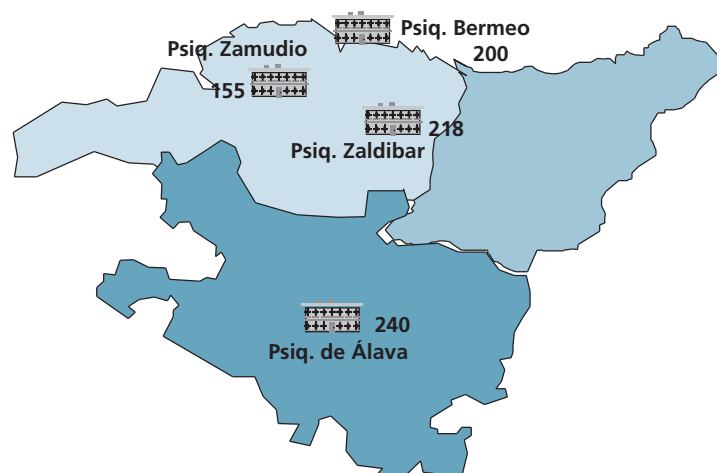
We are also very active in the field of transplants, in which the Basque people have the highest level of organ-donation in the world and in other pioneer programmes at a national levels such as free dental care for children (something that has enabled us to reduce the level of tooth-decay and other teeth-related problems amongst our youngsters to (together with Ireland) the lowest levels in Europe), a service for food disorders, early breast cancer detection, etc.

All in all, what is most important is that during all these years, this activity has been increased at the same time as continuously increasing our quality indicators.

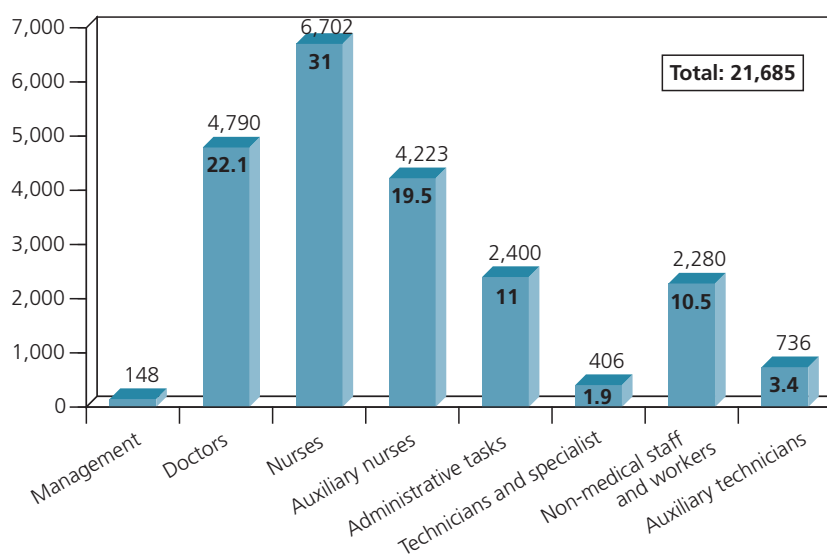
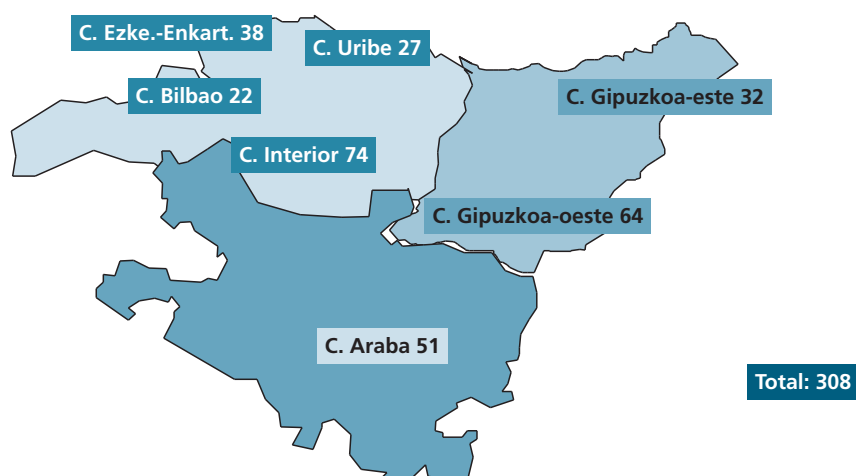
V. Physical Resources



Psychiatric Hospitals



Basic Health Care Centres, county by county



Osakidetza's workforce (by category)

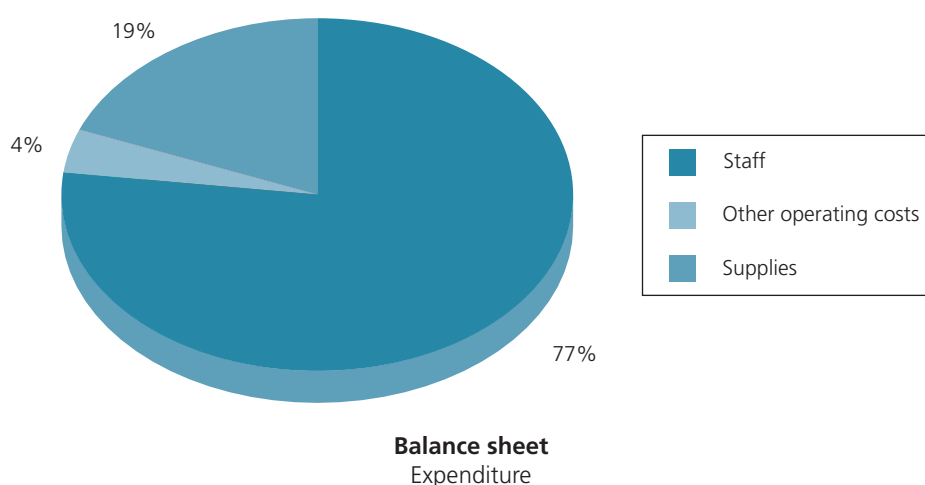
Obviously, all of this activity requires a great deal of infrastructure and although it was already outlined in my introduction, I am going to now look at it in detail.

Osakidetza has twelve general hospitals, four for medium and long-term stays and four psychiatric hospitals, that have a total of 5,548 beds.

In the field of basic health care, Osakidetza has 308 health centres that cover the whole of the Basque Country.

But obviously the system's most important capital is its staff. Osakidetza has a total of 21,685 workers, of which 4,800 are doctors, 6,700 nurses and 4,200 auxiliary nurses. The majority therefore (72 %) are obviously health-care professionals.

In 1998 Osakidetza spent 172,169 million pesetas on providing health care.



The Basque Government has obviously made a tremendous budgetary effort in recent years that illustrates the eminently social nature of our programme. This is quite clear if we compare the 83,000 pesetas spent on health care per person in 1988 with the 122,000 pesetas spent in 1998 and the 128,000 that are forecast for the year 2000.

VI. Conclusion

In short, we are working so that we can maintain in the Basque Country a quality health service that is aimed at serving society.

Our policy is based upon our commitment to combine social and economic development by, amongst other things, concentrating our efforts on the permanent improvement and consolidation of the Basque Health Service.

In this end, from our point of view, the public sector should carry on maintaining the levels that allow us to cover basic social needs, providing real content to the principles of universality, equality, solidarity and quality.

And all of this organisation, have no fear, is also at your service, because the Basque Government, through its Health Department will guarantee to provide health care to all those members of Basque communities that are in the Basque Country, either on a temporary basis or because of a definitive transfer to the Basque Country.

PAPER OF MR. INAXIO OLIVERI, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITIES AND INVESTIGATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Hezkuntza Sistemaren aurkezpena



Adiskide agurgarriak:

Ohore handia da niretzat, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaren hiriburuan bildu zaituzten Biltzar honetan, mundu guztian sakabanatuta dauden euskal etxeen ordezkarioi hitz egitea.

Badakit gogotik ari zaretela lanean; hona ekarri zaituzten gaiak oso garrantzitsuak eta interesgarriak direla guztiontzat. Egonaldi honek oso emaitza emankorrak izango dituelakoan nago, eta ikusi ahal izan dudanez, arlo batzuetan arazo berberak ditugu; horiei ere irtenbidea aurkitzeko aukera izango dugula espero dut.

Azken bi legealdietan Hezkuntza Saileko ardura niri egokitu zaidanez, euskal hezkuntza sistemaren ikuspegia azaldu nahi nizueke. Ez dizuet itxuraz dena ona duen sistema bat azaldu nahi, baizik eta oraindik sendotuta egonik ere eta osasun ona duen sistema eta harro gauden sistema izanik ere, arazo batzuk dituen sistema. Arazoak gure gizarteak bizi duen aldaketa azkarren ondoriozkoak dira, eta beste batzuk, lehendik datozkigun arazoen jarraipena.

1.1. A CROSSROADS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The education system has reached a crossroads. The 1990 Organic Law on the General Organisation of the Education System (OLGOES) forced non-university centres to rethink their resources and teaching methods. On the other hand, certain external factors are also coming into play, such as: the fall in birth rates and the subsequent decrease of students, the distribution of students between two educational networks and the gradual implementation of bilingualism, with the spectacular development of teaching in Basque.

If these are the problems faced by non-university centres, university education is coming up against its own set of difficulties. We must remember that the universalisation of university education took place over a very short space of time, a fact which makes adaptation problems almost inevitable.

Some of these problems are rooted in the relative youth of the university structure, others are connected to imbalances in the degree courses available, to the fall in demographic rates, a problem which will become increasingly serious over the next few years with the implementation of bilingual options, and lastly, to the spectacular development in the field of postgraduate research.

I would now like to take a more detailed look at the situation outlined above.

1.2. THE NON-UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The structure of the non-university system has been affected by the global reform process with the implementation of the educational regulations outlined in the OLGOES. This law organises

the education system in a general teaching system and a special teaching system. The former is divided into the following sub-groups:

- a) Infant Education (up to age 6, divided into two, three-year cycles. Not compulsory).
- b) Primary Education: from age 6 to age 12. Compulsory. Divided into three two-year cycles.
- c) Compulsory Secondary Education: from age 12 to age 16. Divided into two two-year cycles.
- d) Higher Education: includes the Bachillerato⁴, a two-year course, and Medium Level Professional Training.
- e) Higher Level Professional Training.

As I stated earlier, there are three factors that, as I see it, help explain the current situation of the non-university system and enable us to identify future tendencies. These factors are:

1. The significant drop in student numbers.
2. Their distribution between two educational networks (public and private).
3. The evolution of bilingual teaching methods.

A brief analysis of each of these three factors tells us that firstly, the impact of falling birth rates has been especially strong in Gipuzkoa, somewhat less serious in Bizkaia and even less intense in Araba. As a result of this phenomenon, the activity loss between the years 1990-91 and 2000-01 is estimated at 35 %. This means that while in the 1990-91 school year there were 465,000 primary and secondary school students, this number has dropped to 330,000 in 1999-2000. The effects of this drop is mainly being felt in the number of students of between 3 and 14 years old, although in coming years this effect will expand to include the 14-18 age group also. In fact, figures for the current school year indicate that 40 % of students fall into the 14-18 age group, while the remaining 60 % are spread between the ages of 3 and 14.

Secondly, we should consider another of the factors mentioned above: the distribution of students between two educational networks. Although primary and secondary education in the majority of EU countries is financed by the state, the absolute and relative proportion of private education in the BAC is a somewhat unique case within Europe. In fact, of all the countries which make up the European Union, only the Netherlands (78 % of students in private schools) and Belgium (58 %) have a higher percentage of private students than the Basque Autonomous Community. In Spain, the percentage of students that receive a private education is approximately 25 %. In our Autonomous Community, the private sector accounts for around 50 % of all non-university students. As regards age groups, a larger percentage of students between the ages of 3 and 14 have opted for private centres, while the majority of students between 14 and 18 years old attend public schools.

Bilingualism

—Today, the Basque Education System is bilingual:

- Basque
- Spanish

—They are teaching languages.

—A very unusual phenomenon: Quebec / the Basque Country / Catalonia



generalised

—Generalised bilingual education is possible:

- good results
- no personal imbalances.

⁴ Bachillerato: Qualification obtained at the end of secondary education (equivalent to a high school diploma in the USA).

— Specific information about the IKASTOLAS (Basque schools).

- founded in the 60s in response to the possible disappearance of the Basque language.
- developed throughout the Country (Navarra and the Northern Basque Country also) → popular initiative.

— Characteristics:

- Basque as the main educational language.
- Popular initiative = movement.

In 1980

— Only Ikastolas taught in Basque: ≈10 %.

— Public Network → NOTHING → only 4 % of teachers.

From 1983 onwards

— Act on Basque Language Normalisation and Use:

- knowledge
- right to choose which language

— Bilingualism Decree:

- Models: A, B and D.

— Gradual increase in the use of Basque as a teaching language.

- 16-18 years old: A → 78,8 %
D → 21 %
- 3 years old: A → 13 %
B → 31 %
D → 56 %

— Differentiated territorial development.

- Gipuzkoa: There is no A
- Bizkaia: 14 % in A
- Araba: 20 % in A

— Education System:

- Key factor in the recovery and modernisation of the Basque language and in its generalisation.
- There are problems → Model A.

— How?

- Political Will → there are problems.
- Resource management → + 5.000 million pesetas per year
- Efforts made by the teaching staff

— Characteristics of the Basque Education System:

- Effort → awareness → experimentation
- Maintenance of the spirit of research and experimentation
- Continuous research into:
 - Teaching methods
 - Evaluation

The third factor, as I mentioned earlier, is the evolution of bilingualism. This is a structural characteristic of our education system. In fact, since the Bilingualism Decree was issued in 1983, the evolution of different models and the number of students that opt for each have been varied. The number of students opting for model A (teaching in Spanish) has dropped, the demand for model D (teaching in Basque) has increased steadily and after an initial growth in the number of students within model B (50 % in Spanish and 50 % in Basque), figures for this option have subsequently frozen.

Logically, the Basquisition process has had its greatest effect on the 3-14 age group.

If we compare the different historical territories, we can clearly see that the Basquisition rate is much higher in Gipuzkoa.

We can also see how Araba currently favours model A (59 %), although if we look to the future, i.e. if we analyse the figures for 3-year-olds who started school this academic year, it becomes clear that only 20 % of students opted for model A, in comparison with 44 % who chose model B and 35 % who enrolled in model D. In Bizkaia, 14 % of three-year-olds opted for model A, 27 % for model B and 58 % for model D. In Gipuzkoa, 2 % enrolled in model A, 22 % in B and 76 % in D.

This tendency indicates that the Basquisition process within the education system is becoming increasingly consolidated, and almost all future students will use Basque in all areas of their lives.

This process has required a clear and well-defined show of political will and an important financial commitment, as well as a concerted effort by the teaching staff. The Basquisition of teaching staff has been especially notable in Gipuzkoa, where 84 % of all teachers are qualified to give classes in Basque. I should add that the greatest progress in the field of language training has been made by Infant and Primary school teachers.

Factors such as age and language skills look set to become key factors in the definition of teaching policy over the next few years.

1.3. OTHER FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE DEFINITION OF THE SYSTEM

Other factors that I should mention are the financing system, education rate and ratio of students per class. With regard to the first factor, I would like to underline that non-university education is totally state financed, and non-compulsory education receives substantial financial aid, especially as regards Professional Training. To give a clearer idea of this, consider that the BAC invests 453,601 pesetas per student, while the figure for Spain is 360,767.

The education rate in the BAC is also higher than in Spain: all Basque students between the ages of 3 and 16 attend school.

With regard to the student/class ratio, the number of students/group has fallen constantly over the recent years. Currently, the average for infant schools is 18 students/class; the figure for primary schools is 17 students/class and for secondary schools: 23 students/class.

1.4. THE SYSTEM'S FUTURE: DETERMINING FACTORS AND DILEMMAS

I would now like to turn to some determining factors which seem to define the future of the non-university education system. I will focus on the following seven factors:

1) The majority of transformations that affect the education system mainly focus on secondary education. The extension of compulsory education to the age of 16, based on the recognition of, and subsequent catering to, the heterogeneity of the student population, along with the concept of an understanding school system, constitutes a real challenge. The promotion of education for all without losing sight of specific objectives, should ensure that both humanistic and scientific criteria are met.

2) Professional Training, so important in our country, must strive to demonstrate its capacity to produce qualified professionals and insert them into the job market. The Basque Professional

Training Scheme, approved in 1998, is a novel initiative on whose development the future of this educational area largely depends.

3) We are working to establish the principal of autonomy in educational centres, although this entails defining a new framework which would favour the self-organisation of each education system. Initiatives of this kind require: management staff to be properly trained, a stable teaching staff, the development of centres' independent internal financial management and the participation of different educational sectors in the definition of the teaching programme.

4) We need to promote strategies and programs aimed at strengthening the commitment and influence of the teaching staff.

5) The improvement of evaluation systems is a key element in the training process. The concept of evaluation as we see it is not limited to simply measuring student performance, but also includes teacher and centre evaluation.

6) The existence of two educational networks, which are nowadays more competitive than complementary, requires us to redefine clear criteria regarding financing, student distribution, recourse management, etc.

7) Lastly, Basquisition has made spectacular progress in compulsory education. Language issues regarding non-compulsory levels should be given serious consideration in accordance with the definition of each specific model.

2. The University System

The Basque university system is made up of three universities: one public one, which was founded 25 years ago and has 60,000 students (85 % of the BAC's university population) and two private ones (Deusto and Mondragón). The former is run by the Jesuits, is over one hundred years old and has over 15,000 students, while the later is part of the Mondragón Co-operative Corporation Group, is only two years old and has 2,500 students.

The following will give a clearer picture of the current university structure:

1. It is a relatively young structure, given the length of time necessary for a university to become firmly established. We must not forget that the massive demand for university places is a recent phenomenon, in the sixties the number of students attending Spain's twelve universities was less than one hundred thousand, whereas today, there are sixty-three (63) universities with a total of one and a half million students between them. There are now fifteen times as many university students in Spain than there were just three decades (30 years) ago. This increase is much sharper than that recorded for any other public institution.

Over these last three decades, the percentage of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 that attend university has also undergone a meteoric rise. In 1960, 2.5 % of the said population sector attended university, in 1990 the figure had risen to 25 % and the current figure is 38 %, i.e., 38 out of every one hundred young people of between 18 and 24 now attend university.

This sharp increase has given rise to an important structural problem: the number of university students is rising so rapidly that neither the university structure nor the resources reserved for education are able to cope.

2. Another important factor is the fact that the BAC university centres are spread all around the three Basque territories.

3. If we examine the degree courses taken by students, we see that Social and Legal Sciences are the most popular (50 % of students). Of the remaining 50 %, 9 % opt for Humanities, 16 % for Experimental Sciences and 25 % for technical courses.

4. Finally, the gradual implementation of bilingual teaching, an implementation which is quicker and more wide-spread in the public sector, is another important factor. 55 % of courses taken by students are taught in Basque.

The implementation of the Basque language in university courses is not uniform. In some fields its development has been quick and effective (Humanities and Social Sciences), while in others (Technical Degrees) the situation still leaves a lot to be desired. According to data provided by the evaluation of Basque language implementation, this implementation is not only a necessity, but rather an inevitability with regard to the new millennium.

2.1. DILEMMAS

Similarly to in all European countries, university management in the BAC has entered a period of profound reflection, especially with the passing of the Act on University Organisation in 1998. One product of this period of reflection is the introduction of new criteria and new financing schemes, new research objects, greater contact between the universities and the industrial and business sectors and improved teaching techniques, to name but a few. All these are focused on achieving the goals set by an emerging knowledge society, which insists that we be competitive while still preserving our own individual identity. At this point we should perhaps ask the following question: what kind of education is needed to face the challenges posed by our knowledge society?

Permanent education is the most fitting and appropriate answer, due to the numerous advantages it offers this society. Among these advantages we could name flexibility, diversity and accessibility, both as regards space and time. This solution gives a new meaning to the concept of training, as well as enabling it to adapt to the emerging needs resulting from the evolution of our professional lives.

Nevertheless, this objective must overcome many obstacles, the most important being adaptation difficulties. We need quick solutions, and the system is not able to move with the required agility. These difficulties are the result of habits ingrained into the various educational institutions, where routine, bureaucracy and rigid customary practises resist any type of change. Problems also arise as a result of our political impotency to act as we would like to in areas which contribute to the strategic definition of the education system. In many ways, the current legal framework is a limiting factor which prevents us from reacting as we see fit to the challenges posed by university education.

The university education system towards which we are working should be capable of facing the future from the basic principals of quality, flexibility and joint responsibility. It should set the following objectives: to create an independent culture and well qualified citizens with a firm work ethic, sense of responsibility and commitment to quality, firmly rooted in our interests and in our individual sense of identity. The education system should be closely connected to the demands of the job market, with a policy of equal opportunities, permanent education, harmonious mixing within a heterogeneous society and a firm commitment to quality based on potent teaching figures and the differential identity of the university education system.

We should take especial care to ensure that our university system does not fall behind the times. We must promote innovation, make the most of teaching resources and diversify the educational offer by creating new courses, degrees and research institutes. At the same time, educational management should adapt itself to meet the demands of the knowledge society, incorporating new teaching methods and new technology. We must continue to increase public financing at the same time as we promote private funding, self-financing and joint responsibility with other public institutions as regards investment in education. Similarly to non-university education, we should strive to create job placement procedures for young graduates, as well as working towards consolidating the scientific community by increasing research investment. We must rethink current organisational and management models in order to adapt them to the educational needs of the new millennium.

Regardless of the similarities and differences between our higher education system and those of our neighbours, the problems faced by Basque universities are similar to those of other European universities. What are these problems? The ten most important are outlined below:

1. Overcrowding. As I have stated throughout this article, the problem of overcrowding is misleading. The percentage of university students in the BAC is similar to those of other European

countries. If we consider the number of young people and economic level of Basque society, it becomes evident that the number of university students is not, in fact, excessive. What is clear, on the other hand, is that there are too many students in relation to the capacity of current university facilities: lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, teachers, etc.

2. Territorial distribution. Although this is one of the key characteristics of our university system, it is also a constant source of problems. The organisational structure of a single public university conflicts with the divisive tendencies of the public university system. We must rethink the organisational and management structure of the public universities, which are, at present, too dependent on the founding model and have a top-heavy bureaucratic structure which impedes adaptive innovation.

3. The relative youth of the Basque university structure generates many difficulties regarding infrastructure, teaching staff, administration and services. Until now, interim measures have been introduced in response to these problems which provide only temporary solutions and in no way resemble the medium-term strategic measures necessary to ensure the future development of the public university system.

4. We invest less financial resources in our higher education system than our neighbours, both as regards investments per undergraduate and investments per lecturer (we invest 1 % of the GDP as opposed to the European average of 1.5 %), despite the rising tendency illustrated by the fact that we have increased spending in this area by 0.25 % over the last five years (from 0.75 % to 1 %). This percentage is not only due to insufficient investment in higher education, it is also the result of an inefficient teaching system which inflates student numbers. In fact, the number of university students is distorted by the lack of official part-time students, the excessive length of some degrees, late withdrawals and some students' continuous repetition of the same year.

5. The number of official courses on offer has risen dramatically since the start of the university reform procedure. The Basque system offers an extremely wide range of Humanities and Social Sciences courses in particular, and the Experimental and Health Science Departments offer the greatest number of courses possible. The most notable lack is in the technical field. Despite the industrial focus of Basque society, educational opportunities in this area are scarce, with little variation and obvious insufficiencies. There are very few Higher Engineering degrees available and even less Technical Engineering courses. The same Technical Engineering courses are repeated mimetically in the three university campuses, despite the wide range of professional opportunities offered by this field.

6. The evolution of Basque as the teaching language in the Basque Autonomous Community appears to be passing through a consolidating phase, despite certain internal imbalances regarding the necessary level of language expertise. The implementation of Basque through specific schemes and initiatives is one of the most important tasks of the next few years, although this objective is sure to be the subject of wide-spread social debate and contrasting academic opinions.

7. The drop in birth rate and the recent diversification of courses on offer as a result of the reform procedure, call for an extensive reorganising and restructuring of the university system over the coming years. The combination of less students and a wider range of courses on offer, will give rise to drastic changes in this area.

8. We have no doubt all heard again and again that we are a knowledge society, and that knowledge is the key to our future. Therefore, we cannot, and must not, invest in training if we are then unable to insert this training into the productive system. We must take advantage of already existing mechanisms (rotational work experience, the creation of specific jobs to encourage the insertion of PhD students into the labour force, etc.) to incorporate graduates into the job market. If we do not do so, then one of the cornerstones of our system will be missing, and the majority of plans and initiatives developed in this area will become meaningless.

9. Over recent years, an important scientific community has grown up, research investment has tripled, we have set up a network of technological centres, created high-performance groups and begun to establish research institutions and foundations. We must continue to increase

research investment with the aim of creating a network of university institutes and consolidating the emerging scientific community.

10. We need urgently to rethink the university organisational and management model. We must consider the organisational and structural option. The following are some of the areas we must take into consideration: the current principle of decentralisation, territorial divisions, the role of Centres, Faculties and Schools, the organisational structure based on fields of expertise and educational cycles, the connection with non-university education and in particular with Higher Level Professional Training, the university system network organisation, flexibility and adaptation of management models, the need to create new governing bodies and establish an alternative function distribution and the need to promote the concept of joint responsibility, the concept of individual identity based on shared values and common denominators, not on complaints and the shirking of responsibility. The only way to visualise the Universities of the new millennium by transforming them into a cutting-edge institution, prepared to take risks, to create a flexible organisational structure and assume joint responsibility not only for what it does, but for what it does not do also.

3. Ondorioak

Hauxe izan da gure hezkuntza sistemaren aurkezpena. Sistemak dituen dilemetako batzuk, gure zenbait arazo eta gure itxaropen asko azaltzen saiatu naiz.

Konturatuko zineten dagoeneko, niretzat hezkuntza dela gure gizartearen garapenerako oinarria.

Ziur nago euskal gizartearen etorkizuna hezkuntza sistemari lotuta dagoela. Horregatik, galderra bakoitzari eman beharreko erantzunean asmatzea ez da erretorika politikorako jolasa, premia bizia baizik.

Zuei guztioi gure esperientzia eta urte hauetan metatutako ezagupenak eskaintzeko prest gaude, baina bereziki eskaini nahi dizueguna gure ilusioa da, gizarte honek hezkuntza sistemarekin duen konpromisoa, hain zuzen ere.

Hezkuntza sistema heldua dugu, hala unibertsitate mailan nola unibertsitateaz kanpoko esparruan esperientziak esportatzeko gai den sistema. Ezagunak dira gure euskalduntze-programak, metodo pedagogikoak, Lanbide Heziketako sistema, Hirugarren Zikloko unibertsitate programak, baita Zientzia Esperimentalen eta Teknologiako arloan izan ditugun lorpenak ere. Arlo hauetan, eta dagoeneko hitzartutako aurrekontuan oinarrituz, hezkuntzari dagokionez, Euskal Diasporaren eta Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaren hezkuntza sistemaren arteko harreman-eredu bat sortzeko lan egin dezakegula adierazi nahi dizuet.

Jakizue zeuon esku duzuela guk hemen daukagun guztia. Horrez gain, eskatzen diguzuen guztian Hezkuntza Sailaren lankidetzaz izango duzuela ziurtatzen dizuegu.

*Mila esker nire hitzak entzuteagatik,
ongi etorri zeuon etxera*