



*Euskadiko Lehendakaria*

*El Lehendakari de Euskadi*

Vitoria-Gasteiz, December 2022

Munduko euskaldunok,

In 2022 we have moved on from the Covid-19 pandemic and our everyday lives and communities are getting back on track. I would like to begin by remembering the people lost to Covid and express our solidarity with their families. They are not forgotten and the Sempervirens Park in Vitoria-Gasteiz is a place to come together to honour their memory

This summer saw the 500th anniversary of the feat led by Juan Sebastián Elcano, when his ship completed the first voyage around the world, and that would pave the way for the great migrations down through the years. On 8 September, the 5th International Day of the Basque Diaspora was held in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, in Baja Navarra, and paid tribute to Elcano and to your immigrant ancestors. In the same as every year, since 2018, the institutional event brought together Basques abroad and on both sides of the Pyrenees.

This year we have seen a return to full activity. After being cancelled for two years due to the pandemic, the Gaztemundu programme was run in December and provided a view of the Basque Country of the 21st century; 20 young people from the Euskal Etxeak (Basque centres) of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, the United States and Uruguay took part. We organised the Dantza Munduan online programme, a virtual space to learn and perfect traditional Basque dances for a second time, and ran the second "Equality as an Element of Quality in the Management of the Euskal Etxeak" online course.

We also took an important step forward with the opening of the sixth Basque Country Delegation Abroad, this time in Paris. A milestone that will have a great impact in the future. This Delegation in France will improve our positioning abroad and will help to energise the participation of the Euskal Etxeak. The first public event organised at the Delegation coincided with the presentation of the "Gran Départ del Tour", which will set off from the Basque Country on 1, 2 and 3 July 2023. It will be an opportunity to showcase our country to the world.

During the year, the final push was given to the new Basque Community Abroad Act, which will take over from the current Relations with the Basque Communities and Centres Abroad Act, which has been in force since 1994. The new legislation seeks to structure the Basque presence abroad in the coming two decades, by integrating the organise presence through the Euskal Etxeak, the Basques living abroad, people who are in contact online, and other Basque stakeholders acting outside the Basque Country.

We have also launched "Han Hemen", the new Basque network in the work, which will be a virtual meeting point for all Basques or people around the world with an affinity for all things Basque. Our goal is to continue driving the activity of the Euskal Etxeak by means of different programmes and to foster knowledge of the Diaspora thanks to initiatives such as the post-graduate course in Basque Diaspora studies, already being run for the second time, or the fledgling Basque Diaspora Archive.

Overcoming the worst moments of the pandemic has given us new hope and inspires us to share our desire to carry on creating value together for our Country. That is what we have always done and it is now more important than ever with the new instruments provided by science and technology. As the Lehendakari of the Basque Country, I am sending you all my heartfelt greetings in this festive season and my best wishes for the coming year.

Gabon zoriontsuak igaro ditzazuela eta Urte berri on!

Iñigo Urkullu Renteria