



DOCUMENT WITH CONCLUSIONS 6TH WORLD CONGRESS OF BASQUE COMMUNITIES ABROAD

Delegates from the Basque communities of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela, meeting at the 6th World Congress of Basque Communities Abroad held in Vitoria-Gasteiz from 7th to 9th October 2015, AGREED:

- To approve this document with conclusions
- To send it to the Advisory Council of Relations with Basque Communities for consideration in drawing up the Four-Year Institutional Action Plan 2016-2019, in accordance with article 13.4 of Law 8/1994 of 27th May 1994

Prior to the Congress, the Basque centres and federations present at the event sent a series of written considerations and reflections about the three central topics proposed: generational relay and the role of women; the new Basque emigration, and finally relations with other diasporas located in the same places. After studying these reflections, and including the debates and discussions at the Congress, the following set of measures is proposed for adoption in the period 2016-2019.

A) Measures related to relational networks and structures

A1. To organise joint projects in Europe and assess the viability of setting up a European Federation of Basque Centres

Law 8/1994 having been in force for over twenty years, the boost to the Basque associative movement abroad in the form of Basque Centres and Federations has proved satisfactory.

In Europe, where a large number of Basque centres did not exist, new Basque centres and groups have been set up in response to a new kind of emigration as a result of the free movement of people.

The representatives from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom favour the creation of a network of European Euskal Etxeak to pursue joint projects.

A2. To strengthen relations between Federations

We are in favour of strengthening relations between Federations on a bilateral basis, creating new areas for cooperation, to encourage the pooling of successful experiences and the organisation of joint activities.

A3. To carry on holding regular regional meetings in order to create more spaces for debate

The regional meetings of Basque centres held within the framework of the previous Four-Year Plan are rated highly positively, as they create dynamics of participation and inter-relation on a more frequent basis than the Congresses, which are only every four years. Examples of good practices could be taken from other Basque institutions which, with small budgets, provide annual contacts between neighbouring geographical areas.

A4. To regulate the election of representatives of the Basque centres through the Advisory Council

We are in favour of concise rules governing the appointment of representatives of the Basque centres and federations through the Advisory Council, in order to speed up the process. The other determining factors to be taken into account would be: representation by geographical area; the appointment of substitutes for official representatives in case these are unable to attend meetings; appointment should be nominal or the type of vote by position.

A5. To adapt the format of the Congress to make it more participatory and dynamic

To meet the growing demand for inter-relations, the Basque Government should study how to make it possible for delegates to the Congress to work in parallel committees during the event, without all the delegates necessarily having to attend the main talks as listeners, or find some other model to cater for participants' different areas of interest. It would also be useful to have the programme and contents far enough in advance and use the pre-congress events to explain its methods to new participants. Participants themselves should take their share of responsibility for providing content.

A6. To support and publicise current Basque cultural events

We are in favour of making new cultural options emerging throughout the Basque community more visible among the Diaspora.

B) Measures related to youth and the new emigration

B1. To foster inter-generational participation in decision-making and the pooling of experience between young people at Basque centres in different geographical areas

We are in favour of fostering relations between different generations to put older generations' experience together with that of the new generations, as the latter wish to take on new responsibilities.

B2. To take the example of other institutions working with young people in order to broaden the range of activities on offer

The aim is for Basque centres to have programmes of activities to attract new young audiences, paying special attention to good practices followed in other institutions around them.

B3. To take steps to include recent Basque emigrants in Basque centres, acting as host institutions

The Basque centres wish to take steps so that new Basque emigrants can become part of their organisations, broadening their networks of relations at all levels.

At present, new emigrants may need host platforms where a relationship of affinity can make it easier to fit into the host country. This hosting system need not be based on a physical place at first, or even a physical meeting, but can be via online platforms or networks.

It would also be a good idea to monitor young Basque talents who have emigrated and are outside the network of Euskal Etxeak, helping Basque centres to act as contact and host centres. To do this, people who emigrate need identifying and attracting through the institutions that enabled them to move.

B4. To boost the educational events run within the global Basque community

The call to set up a global Basque educational network does not envisage a network of regulated, approved studies, but rather a boosting of measures of an educational nature undertaken by Basque centres and federations, in the awareness that their survival in the future depends on the level of awareness of their origins and culture that they themselves are able to pass on to the new generations.

B5. To include the topic of emigration in educational curricula

Contacts with the Education Department of the Basque Government should be reinforced in order to cooperate in adding the subject of emigration to the content on Basque culture in secondary education, in an effort to add a more comprehensive section on Basque communities abroad.

C) Measures related to the programmes run by the Office for the Basque Community Abroad

C1. Subsidies for Basque centres: to regain their budget allocations and the maximum limit that can be awarded, depending on the available budget, and speed up the process

We call on the Office to redouble its efforts to ensure that the timescales laid down in current regulations are met.

C2. Extreme need assistance: continuing and building up the programme

Experience with this kind of social assistance, which has kept its budget allocation despite the economic crisis, also reveals possible areas for improvement.

C3. Gaztemundu: reinforcing the programme and defining educational areas

Taking part in this programme is one of the most important ways of attracting young people to Basque centres; we are therefore in favour of reinforcing the programme to give this opportunity to as many young people as possible. The following topics are proposed:

- 2016: Basque gastronomy
- 2017: Traditional Basque music
- 2018: Basque dances
- 2019: Managing cultural bodies

A common module should be included every year on Basque history, culture and language.

D) Other measures

D1. To foster the teaching of Basque, especially to “txikis”, in Basque centres

The Basque language is an important identifying factor for the global Basque community. The possibility of learning and using it should also be guaranteed, not only through the “Euskara Munduan” programme, but also through educational measures aimed at “txikis” and other initiatives to strengthen and expand the Basque language abroad.

D2. To share good practice in the field of self-financing, taking advantage of regional meetings

Reflection is required on self-financing for Basque centres and federations, a topic that needs to be approached through a generalised commitment by the centres that could be implemented at the regional meetings.

D3. To publicise Basque origins through the study of surnames

The aim is to carry on rediscovering family and group stories of emigration through different initiatives and programmes, as well as steps that could be taken in the fields of study of names and genealogy, to link interested people directly to the Basque Country.

D4. To promote the gender perspective as a central thread in the life of Basque centres

To recognise and promote the historic role of women in the creation and history of the Euskal Etxeak, raise the profile of their work and boost the cultural transmission of their experience to new generations and among new migratory flows.

D5. To inform the relevant bodies of the obstacles that exist to exercising the right to vote

The Basque Government should inform the relevant bodies of the concern that exists among the diaspora over the difficulties involved in exercising their right to vote through the system of having to apply for a vote.

D6. Relations with other local diasporas

Fostering and boosting activities to foster Basque culture and relations with other diasporas in their host countries as a key part of the work of the Euskal Etxeak.

D7. To support the .eus domain

To promote the use of the .eus domain among Basque associations and other bodies around the world.

D.8. To promote studies in the form of online university courses

To publicise the range of online courses offered by Basque universities to make them accessible to members of the Basque community abroad.

D.9. Founding values of Basque centres

Basque centres undertake to carry on promoting the founding values that formed the basis of the first Euskal Etxeak: promoting Basque identity, mutual aid, solidarity, etc., so that like this they can go on being a point of reference for the Basque presence abroad.