



*Euskadiko Lehendakaria*  
*El Lehendakari de Euskadi*

Vitoria-Gasteiz, December 2017

Munduko euskaldunok, lagun agurgarriok:

We are about to come to the end of 2017 and embark on 2018. We have taken a further step on Basque society's road to economic recovery to emerge from the long crisis. The road is hard, involving constant effort, on a journey that is not yet over. The Basque Country is making its way, step by step, and in this coming year we will carry on doing so in a spirit of "auzolana", working together.

While in the Basque Country we are finally leaving behind the dark days of violence, new threats have arisen in the world such as international terrorism, which has a direct impact on society and coexistence, politics and international relations. This year we were shocked by the attacks of London Bridge, Notre Dame in Paris and the Ramblas in Barcelona. These are just some of the cities around the world that have suffered the effects of these new forms of global violence, to whom we have expressed our solidarity and comradeship.

This year, on the other hand, the Basque Country has taken further positive steps at international level. Starting in Europe, with the expansion of the Euroregion, a project that has grown with the incorporation of Navarra, and with the setting-up of the first regional institution in Iparralde, the French Basque Country. We have also signed a cooperation agreement in the area of the development and normalisation of the Basque language with the Chartered Community of Navarra and Iparralde, with whom we share the "Basque-speaking territory."

The Basque community in the world has grown and the list of Euskal Etxeak has been joined by a community on the other side of the Atlantic, that of Saint Pierre et Miquelon, off the coast of Canada. Moreover, this year was the 140th anniversary of the "Laurak Bat" Basque Centre in Buenos Aires, as well as the Asociación Vasco-Navarra de Beneficencia in Havana; a meeting of the Euskal Etxeak of Europe, Asia and Oceania took place in Paris; and we shared the ENE Saria awarded to the William A. Douglass Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada in Reno.

These are milestones along the way that are of special significance because we are aware that a new global civilisation is forming, with a certain tendency towards uniformity and individualism, in which the values, culture and traditions that characterised our ancestors run the risk of being sidelined. Today, within this global scenario I would like to lay special stress on the hard work and commitment to the country by those of you who live abroad but continue to sustain and enrich Basque culture, personality and identity in the world.

Therefore, in support of your work up to now and respect for your freedom as civil society organisations, I encourage you to keep up the personal and collective commitment that makes the network of Euskal Etxeak the Basque Country's point of reference abroad. You represent a space for meeting and integration, support and mutual aid, passing on and strengthening what it means to be Basque in the world. This deserves all our admiration and recognition.

In the new year we are planning a "Basque Diaspora Day", a further opportunity to highlight your work and daily commitment. It will be a way to recognise and tell the world about the great figures and the immense cultural heritage the Basques have built up over the years, far beyond our own small country.

You have all our support and cooperation in continuing a task of which the Basque people in the world can be proud, and which it is our job to continue. I would like to send you and your families all my best wishes for the new year, 2018, from Euskadi, the Basque Country.

Adiskideok, Gabon zoriontsuak eta Urte berri on!

Bihotz-bihotzez,

Iñigo Urkullu Renteria