



Euskadiho Lehendakaria
El Lehendakari de Euskadi

Vitoria-Gasteiz, December 2023

Basques of the world,

I am yet again ending the year by taking stock of our experiences, and also our losses, during 2023. My first, and most sincere and emotional, thought must go to everyone who has left us.

We ended the year at the **VIII World Congress of the Basque Community Abroad** in Donostia/San Sebastián, with a lighthouse as the symbol and the slogan "Eraldaroa" (time of change). The Congress has been the opportunity to share the changes and transformations on the horizon ("eraldaketa") in this new era ("aroa"). Which explains the choice of "Eraldaroa".

Coinciding with the Congress, the **Gaztemundu Programme** for 2023 was published. Fifteen young people took part, who had come to Euskadi to become acquainted with our Basque Country, train and be part of the World Congress.

Euskadi, the birthplace of top cyclists and with a great following of the sport, was the backdrop to the "**Grand Départ**" of the **Tour de France** in summer. The event was extremely successful in terms of organisation, attendance and dissemination. The ikurriñas (Basque flags), the atmosphere and the landscapes of the Basque Country were showcased in a unique spectacle televised in the homes of over 190 countries.

At the end of summer, on 8 September, we celebrate the **Day of the Basque Diaspora** in the garden of the Euskal Herria Museum in Gernika. This year, the focus was on the emigration to Australia and it was the sixth consecutive event honouring our Diaspora.

During the year, gatherings have also been held of the Basque Communities around the world: Festivals in the USA; Celebrations in the cities of South America, the Basque National Week of Argentina; Meetings of the Basque community of France; Cultural events and festivities at the **Euskal Etxeak** (Basque Cultural Centres) of Europe, Oceania and Asia.

In October, I had the opportunity to travel to Asia, as part in the **Basque Country-Japan 2023 programme**. I took part in the Basque Week; at the Tokyo Euskal Etxea, I met the active Basque community and learnt about the interest in our People and culture.

During those trips and in my relationship with you all, I have seen the important growth in technologies in that regard. In a global framework of interdependency, **every country is seeking to create networks** in order to generate economic, cultural and social benefits for its citizens.

With the hope that we will continue **to create values for our country, Euskadi**, I am sending you season's greetings and a heartfelt embrace, and with my best wishes for the new year in 2024.

Gabon zorientsuak igaro ditzazuela eta Urte berri on guztiontzat!

Iñigo Urkullu Renteria