



**N.A.B.O. Board of Directors
Zoom Meeting Saturday 10th October 2020**

Dear Friends,

First of all, our warmest greetings to the whole of the Basque community of North America and heartfelt condolences for those loved ones who are no longer with us in this worldwide pandemic situation.

Secondly, very special thanks to the communities that hosted the mostly young Basques who from one day to the next found themselves with no flights back to the Basque Country or without accommodation.

Covid-19 took every country in the world by surprise and the Basque Country is no exception. Over 2,000 people have died in Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa provinces; more than 47,000 have been infected; 30,000 jobs are expected to be lost and GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to fall by 8.7% this year; and earnings are expected to fall by 3,000 million euros.

We will have to cope with a highly complex health, economic and social situation in the coming years.

As you know, on 5th September this year, Lehendakari Urkullu was sworn in for his third term for the period from 2020 to 2024. A new Basque government is currently being formed.

I can tell you that my position as Director for the Basque Community Abroad will be renewed, enabling us to carry on working together for another four years. They will be hard years, but I am sure we will manage together.

At the online meeting held by the Lehendakari on 25th June this year with the Euskal Etxeak of the world, the difficulties currently being experienced by the different Basque communities were made clear. We will soon be calling another meeting to assess the situation in each country on the basis of concrete data, and consider how we can help. We are aware that some Clubs have started to work on campaigns and actions to raise funds (list).

On 14th September the ordinary financial assistance for this year was announced. This year we are collaborating with 76 Basque Clubs with assistance on programmes and activities and with 28 Basque Clubs with assistance for maintenance and acquisition of facilities and infrastructure.

In the United States of America 5 Basque Clubs and the Federation will be receiving €86,420 for activities and 3 smaller Basque Clubs €27,850 for work on their facilities. Financial assistance is also to be received by the Euskal Etxeak in Montreal in Canada and Saint Pierre et Miquelon, which is now a Basque Club recognised in our official register.

Unfortunately we have been forced to suspend the GAZTEMUNDU program for 2020, which was to be devoted to traditional Basque food. For next year we will have to look into the possibility of making up for the edition missed in 2020, either through a double GAZTEMUNDU or by expanding the number of participants in the 2021 edition.

We are aware of everybody's efforts to keep our Basque Clubs alive, and the Basque Government would like to congratulate the Basque community worldwide for its great response to the third edition of Basque Diaspora Day on 8th September. Once again it was shown that the Basques are able to find imaginative solutions to adverse circumstances and we filled the social networks with a Basque presence. We received 53 videos, 5 of them from the United States. With all this material we are preparing a documentary video showing how we all experienced Euskal Diasporaren Eguna in the year of the pandemic. Eskerrik asko!

We have some major challenges with a view to the new legislature:

- Changing and adapting Law 8
- Changing and adapting existing programs, bearing in mind the realities of each country.
- Creating new programs and lines of collaboration with the Euskal Etxeak and the new Basque migration, like the "Dantza munduan" program, just as there is the "Euskara munduan" program; and also taking steps to gain recognition for the game of "mus" as part of Basque intangible heritage.
- Progressing in setting up the Archive and Library of the Basque Diaspora.
- Consolidating 8th September, Basque Diaspora Day.
- Improving the channels for two-way communication and dissemination between the Diaspora and the Basque Country.
- Creating a masters course of "specialist" on Basque Diaspora studies, together with the University of the Basque Country, that can be followed anywhere in the world.
- To go on "Diasporizing" Basque society by setting up programs of study on Basque migration at different academic levels; by publishing researches, by organizing exhibitions and more.

There will be plenty of time for detailed preparation and explanation of all these questions in the coming months. But to do all this it is vital that we work together, so we are entirely at your disposal.

We hope the health question and the imminent economic and social crisis allow us to go on working and making progress; that the Clubs can resume your regular activities; that the Jaialdi, picnics and "key" dates for Basque communities can go ahead without problems; and above all we hope that all of you, your families and all members of our community stay well.

Eskerrik asko eta zaindu zaitetze!