



NOTA DE PRENSA: 16.11.2021

## Cultural actors from Flanders and the Basque Country meet to forge new professional relationships

- **Fifteen Flemish stakeholders from the fields of performing arts, cinema and audiovisual, literature, music, art and language meet in Vitoria-Gasteiz, San Sebastian and Bilbao.**
- **The encounters aim to bolster cultural ties between the two territories.**

Cultural exchange between the Basque Country and Flanders is now underway. The first in a series of activities are meetings in Bilbao, San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz set for Monday to Wednesday, November 15 to 17, between Basque and Flemish cultural stakeholders. The participants will also take part in various cultural activities.

After meeting with Etxepare Basque Institute Director Irene Larraza, Basque President Iñigo Urkullu received the group on Monday at the President's Office (Lehendakaritza). Representatives of fifteen organisations from the language, culture and creative industries will take part in professional meetings in Vitoria-Gasteiz, San Sebastian and Bilbao, together with some thirty Basque stakeholders. The meetings are intended to bolster cultural ties between Flanders and the Basque Country and are the first step in creating new opportunities for Basque cultural creation. Flanders will take over from Quebec and Scotland in the Basque cultural exchange programme.

Flemish Minister-President Jan Jambon met yesterday with Basque President Iñigo Urkullu at Ajuria Enea, the official residence of the Basque President, to review the traditional areas of cooperation between the two regions. Following the meeting, the

two presidents signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which reinforces the Collaboration Agreement signed in 2015.

The meeting was an opportunity to take stock of the areas in which the two regions are already collaborating, such as cultural and creative industries, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, climate change and tourism, and to explore new areas of activity. The two leaders also shared their views on the situation revolving around the pandemic and their prospects for the future.

### **Professional encounters**

The Flemish visitors will visit several sites including the Cathedral of Santa Maria and Artium Museoa (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Tabakalera Centre for Contemporary Culture in San Sebastian, the Chillida Leku Museum, Itsas Kultur Faktoria (the Albaola Museum of Basque cultural heritage), and the Guggenheim Museum, Fine Arts Museum and Azkuna Zentroa in Bilbao.

The Etxepare Basque Institute organised these meetings between Basque creators and cultural actors from Flanders to promote mutual knowledge, foster cultural exchange between the two regions, promote creation and dissemination, and share experiences and know-how.

A total of fifteen Flemish cultural professionals from the performing arts, cinema and audiovisual, literature, music, art and language will come together in the various activities organised in Vitoria-Gasteiz, San Sebastián and Bilbao.

The organisations visiting the Basque Country include Cirklabo, COMAV / FeBeME-BeFEM, Constant: Association for Art and Media, Cultural Department of the City of Leuven, Curating the Young, Flanders Arts Institute, Flanders Literature, Hiros, LLS Paleis, Mama's Open Mic, Nadine & BYSTE, Out of Sight, SoundImageCulture – SIC, and the Z V E Z D O L I K I ensemble.

Among the Basque cultural actors joining them are Artekale, ADDE Euskal Herriko Dantza Profesionalen Elkarte, Albaola Itsas Kultur Faktoria, Artium Museoa, Asociación de Escritores de Euskadi - Euskadiko Idazleen Elkarte, Azkuna Zentroa,



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Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, Bitamine Faktoria, Dantzaz, Danzalava, Deabru Beltzak, Duo Olaia & Gilles, Eremuak, Eskena, Etxepare Basque Institute, Euskal Editoreen Elkarte, Euskal Irudigileak, Eusko Jaurlaritza Kultura eta Hizkuntza Politika Saila, Fundación Catedral Santa María, Publishers' Guild of the Basque Country / Euskadiko Editoreen Elkarte, Mari Zaunka 46, MIE Musika Industriaren Elkarte, Musika Bulegoa, Musikari, Okela, Tabakalera and Zirkozaurre.

### **Flanders-Euskadi Agreement**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on Monday states that Euskadi and Flanders "share a deep sense of shared identity and of their own particular history, culture and language". Therefore, the two declare their intention to deepen bilateral relations for the purpose of working together in areas of mutual interest.

The document sets out the 15 initial areas of the collaboration on which the two governments will initially focus. These include: digitalisation; the environment (especially in relation to the circular economy, climate change and marine research); transport (mainly related to ports, logistics development, mobility and public works); social policies; gender equality; tourism; cultural and creative industries; health; and employment and public employment services.

#### **Info+**

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