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## Flemish and Basque culture come together in Flanders - Euskadi

- The project will embrace various creative disciplines, such as performing arts, music, visual arts, plastic arts, literature, and more.
- The programme initiated by the Etxepare Basque Institute to promote Basque culture internationally will provide opportunities for local stakeholders and creators to engage in international initiatives and projects.
- The programme will run throughout 2023 and 2024.

Today the Etxepare Basque Institute presented the cultural exchange project "Vlaanderen - Baskenland" or "Flanders - Euskadi" at the Tabakalera International Centre for Contemporary Culture in Donostia/San Sebastián. The Basque Government's Minister for Culture and Language Policy **Bingen Zupiria**, Etxepare Basque Institute director **Irene Larraza**, Flemish Minister-President **Jan Jambon**, general director of Tabakalera **Edurne Ormazabal**, and general director of Dantzaz **Fernando Sáenz de Ugarte** provided details on the programme, which is already in progress and set to continue through 2024. This project has a dual purpose. The first is to foster collaboration among cultural stakeholders and encourage experimentation and mutual learning, and the second is to collaboratively develop tangible cultural proposals that showcase the quality and innovative nature of creative endeavours in

both

regions.

The initiative, which focuses on culture, contemporary creation and language, includes a wide range of multidisciplinary activities. It will also foster collaboration between cultural stakeholders, artists, creators, and cultural industries through a diverse program encompassing over eleven projects from various fields. This cultural project is the outcome of a two-year relationship. In 2021 and 2022, working visits were organised to Euskadi and Flanders to learn about the Basque and Flemish cultural and creative ecosystem and to facilitate connections between the various actors involved in collaboration with the Office of the Basque Presidency, the Flanders Department of Culture and the Flanders Arts Institute. This year, the Basque and Flemish governments have also launched several calls for proposals to promote cultural cooperation between the two regions. Most of the selected projects are the outcome of these working visits.

Today, the first initiatives were unveiled today of a programme that anticipates a rise in the number of activities for the upcoming year.

## Cultural programme

Within the framework of the **Binded Bodies** project, cultural industry professionals met in Leuven, Flanders, and at the Humour Fair in Leioa, Bizkaia, last May to talk about Flemish and Basque street arts. Four one- to two-week creative residencies will be held in November 2023 (Basque companies in Flanders) and in 2024 (Flemish companies in the Basque Country). And as part of the street arts programme, an exchange between professionals will take place next year.

Tabakalera and the Morpho centre in Antwerp launched a **call for artists in residence**. The selected artists (one local and one from Flanders) will participate in a three-month residency in 2023. Basque artist Gala Knörr was selected for her project "Passion Social Club". Knörr will begin her residency in August.

Following the Azkuna Zentroa centre's participation in the Flanders-Euskadi 2022 professional meetings, Flemish artist **Lore Stessel** visited the centre. As a result, Stessel has become a 2023-2025 Azkuna Zentroa member and will take part in 'PROTOTIPOAK 2025', the International Biennial of New Art Forms, with the project BASKENLAND. Azkuna Zentroa also promoted the **Bilbao Harbours for Arts & Culture** project, aimed at creating and bolstering new relationships and collaborations with institutions, cultural centres and festivals in different parts of Europe. In this regard, the project undertaken with Antwerp is part of the two-years cultural exchange carried out by the Etxepare Basque Institute.

In two weeks, LLS Paleis and ANTespacio will launch **Antwerpen Bilbao: Itzulera guztiak!**, a project that promotes artistic exchange. Taxio Ardanaz, Justine Grillet, Amaia Molinet, Leire Muñoz and Rik Van Gorp will create an experimental exhibit in Antwerp and Bilbao on the meaning of each artist's work.

The **Dance and Community** project draws on the similarities between Molenbeek (in the Brussels region) and Errenteria. Among other things, they share the responsibility for two centres dedicated to choreography: 'Ultima Vez' in Molenbeek and 'Dantzaz' in Errenteria. After working on various methodologies, they will produce a publication on their processes and share the results with other cultural and social entities.

Thanks to the **Vertical Visions** programme, which began in September and will run until the summer 2024, the vertical dance companies La Glo Zirko Dantza and Cirkus in Beweging will launch a collaborative education and research project. As a grand finale, they will present a captivating show that blends circus, music, and illustration.

In October and November, the **Crossing Voices** project will bring together contemporary Basque and Flemish music. Akartia Trio has worked on a project with several Basque and Flemish composers, which will include a programme of concerts featuring two premieres, the first, by Flemish composer Ward De Vleeschouwer and the second, by Basque composer Mikel Chamizo.

At the end of the year, the **Korrontzi Dantzan in Flanders** project will merge Basque and Flemish music with dance. Korrontzi will bring Basque music and traditional dance to Flanders, creating new choreographies integrate dancers from the Muziekcentrum Dranouter centre into their show.

One of the projects scheduled for development next year is the **Flenbasque Chamber Music Exchange**, offering an opportunity to explore contemporary music and avant-garde creations. Basque and Flemish composers will present their work in each other's region. This project also aims to establish a durable framework for collaboration and create a music network between the two regions.

**Minority Languages and Translation** is a seminar organised in conjunction with the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) designed to provide a platform for exchanging ideas and shared knowledge among minority language communities. The UPV/EHU works with several Flemish universities.

**YouYou & Irrintzia, ahots praktika tradizionalaren begirada berri bat** is a joint project between Factoría de Acciones del Valle de Ayala and the vocal group YouYou Group, based in Brussels. With the objective of revitalizing the oral tradition, voice and creation laboratories, gatherings, and workshops will be organized, among other activities.

**Transpoesie** is a literary festival held annually in Brussels to mark the European Day of Languages and Linguistic Diversity. In 2023, the poet Lizar Begoña will take part in

the

festival.

**Cultural Connections: fostering dialogue between countries.**

In 2019 the Etxepare Basque Institute began to pay special attention to the regions identified as significant in terms of the internationalisation of the Basque Country. This policy fell in line with the Euskadi-Basque Country strategy. Cultural Connections was born with the purpose of incorporating the cultural dimension into these international relations and encouraging interaction within the realms of culture and academia. The first target was Scotland, which took place in 2019, followed by Quebec in 2021 and 2022. The project with Flanders (Vlaanderen-Baskenland) is currently underway and will run until 2024.