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Biljana Isailović and Serbian publishing house Treći Trg win the 2026 Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Award

— The Serbian translation of *Zazpi etxe Frantzian* (Seven Houses in France) by Bernardo Atxaga, published under the title *Sedam kuća u Francuskoj*, was recognized for its literary excellence.

— Biljana Isailović has translated eight of Atxaga's books, five of which have been published by Treći Trg, helping to bring his work to a wider audience in Serbia.

— The prize recognises the contribution of translators and publishers who help bring Basque-language literature to new audiences across different languages and cultures.

Bilbao, 12 November 2026. The Serbian translation of Bernardo Atxaga's novel *Zazpi etxe Frantzian* (Seven Houses in France), published under the title *Sedam kuća u Francuskoj*, has won the 2026 Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Award. Translator Biljana Isailović and Serbian publishing house Treći Trg, which published the book in 2025, have been honoured at the twelfth edition of the awards, organised jointly by the Etxepare Basque Institute and LABORAL Kutxa.

Translator Biljana Isailović and Dejan Matić, editor-in-chief of Treći Trg, received the award at a ceremony held this morning at the Bidebarrieta Library in Bilbao. The award was presented by Ibone Bengoetxea, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Culture and Language Policy of the Basque Government, and Jokin Gorriti, representing LABORAL Kutxa. Also attending the ceremony was Bernardo Atxaga, author of the award-winning work, and Irene Larraza, Director of the Etxepare Basque Institute.

The jury praised the translation as ‘excellent’, highlighting its naturalness and fluency in Serbian. It also commended the meticulous work involved in preserving the style, tone and atmosphere of the original, while skilfully adapting them to the nuances of the target language.

In addition to the quality of the translation, the jury took into account Isailović’s extensive career as a literary translator, with around 55 works to her name, and in particular her ongoing contribution to promoting the work of Bernardo Atxaga in Serbia. To date, she has translated eight of the writer’s books into Serbian, published by three different publishers.

The jury also noted Treći Trg's commitment to the work of Bernardo Atxaga, having published five of his books, including the winner of this year’s award. Furthermore, it praised the publisher’s promotional efforts, which have facilitated the writer’s participation in literary fairs and festivals in Serbia, in collaboration with translator Biljana Isailović and editor Dejan Matić.

A total of 15 entries were reviewed in this twelfth edition. The judging panel consisted of Jokin Gorriti, representing LABORAL Kutxa; Imanol Otaegi, from the Etxepare Basque Institute; Elizabete Manterola, lecturer at the University of the Basque Country (EHU) and member of EIZIE (Association of Basque Language Translators, Proofreaders and Interpreters); and Mikel Lasa, Head of Brand and Communications at the Etxepare Basque Institute.

Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Award

Established in 2015 by the Etxepare Basque Institute and LABORAL Kutxa, the award recognises the translation and publication of literary works originally written and published in Basque. It highlights the quality of the translations and the role of publishers in bringing Basque literature to new readers across different languages and cultures.

The call for entries is open to professional translators and publishers worldwide who have published a translation of a literary work originally written and published in Basque during the previous year (2025 for this edition).

The prize is worth €6,000, shared equally between the translator and the publisher. It recognises both the literary quality of the translation and the efforts made to promote the book. Both recipients are also eligible for an additional grant of up to €3,000 to support promotional activities in the country of publication, including book launches and advertising campaigns.

This initiative forms part of the Etxepare Basque Institute's ongoing efforts to promote Basque literature internationally by providing translation grants, supporting the participation of writers at international book fairs and festivals, and undertaking other initiatives designed to promote their presence on the literary scene in different countries.

Through this award, LABORAL Kutxa reaffirms its commitment to the Basque language and culture, strengthening a partnership that supports the creation and dissemination of literature in Basque.

Biljana Isailović

Biljana Isailović is a Serbian translator specialising in literature and audiovisual media. She graduated from the University of Belgrade in 1985 with a degree in Spanish Philology. Throughout her career, she has translated works by numerous figures from Spanish and Latin American literature into Serbian, including Jorge Luis Borges, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Benito Pérez Galdós, Javier Cercas and Carmen Martín Gaite, in addition to Basque writers whose works are in Spanish, such as Miguel de Unamuno and Pío Baroja.

Bernardo Atxaga's work features prominently in her career. Since 2009, she has translated eight of his books into Serbian, including *Zeru Horiek* (*The Lone Woman*), *Soinujolearen semea* (*The Accordionist's Son*), *Obabakoak* and the now award-

winning *Zazpi etxe Frantzian* (*Seven Houses in France*). Her translations of Atxaga's works have been published by the publishers Utopija, Partizanska knjiga and Treći Trg.

Her awards include the Miloš N. Đurić Prize for the best literary translation from a foreign language, awarded for her translation of *Escritos sobre música y músicos* (*On Music and Musicians)*, by Manuel de Falla, and the Radoje Tatić Prize for the best translation from Spanish, awarded for her translations of works by Benito Pérez Galdós and Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. She has served as vice-president of the Association of Literary Translators of Serbia for two terms and has been working with the Yugoslav Film Archive as an translation specialist since 2002.

Treći Trg

Founded in Belgrade in 2004, Treći Trg is an independent cultural association and publishing house dedicated to promoting contemporary literature and culture. With a particular focus on European poetry and fiction, it has become one of Serbia's leading publishers of contemporary poetry. Its catalogue includes more than 450 books by authors from over 25 countries, spanning poetry, novels, short stories, essays and plays.

Alongside publishing and translating literary works, Treći Trg organises events, readings and festivals. It places particular emphasis on promoting lesser-known contemporary voices and supporting emerging writers and translators. Among its key initiatives is the Belgrade European Poetry Festival, which has been held 20 times and has brought together more than 400 authors from over 28 European countries. It also organises other literary events and takes part in book fairs in Serbia and across Europe.

The publishing house has released five works by Bernardo Atxaga in Serbian and has promoted the author's participation in literary fairs and festivals across the country, helping to raise awareness of his work amongst the Serbian public. Its editor-in-chief is Dejan Matić, a poet and founder of the Belgrade European Poetry Festival, who was

awarded the Miroslav Antić Prize for his poetry collection *Between Thirty-Three and Death* (2013).

Etxepare Basque Institute

The Etxepare Basque Institute is a public agency dedicated to promoting the Basque language, culture and creative talent internationally, while building lasting relationships with other countries and cultures. It supports high-quality artistic initiatives, facilitates the international mobility of artists and cultural professionals, and promotes the teaching of Basque language and culture. The Institute also fosters collaboration with international partners on cultural and academic projects.

Previous award winners:

2025
Manel Rodriguez Castelló and Ediciones Contrabando
'Glosak' (Tere Irastortza)
Poetry, Catalan

2024
Estibaliz Lizaso and Pol·len edicions
'Kontrako eztarritik' (Uxue Alberdi)
Essay, Catalan

2023
Amaia Gabantxo and Parthian Books
'Hezurren erretura' (Miren Agur Meabe)
Novel, English

2022
Mariolein Sabarte Belacortu and Zirimiri Press
'Amek ez dute' (Katixa Agirre)
Novel, Dutch

2021
Nami Kaneko and Shinchosha
'Soinujolearen semea' (Bernardo Atxaga)
Novel, Japanese

2020
Eider Rodriguez and Lander Garro and Literatura Random House
‘Bihotz Handiegia’ (Eider Rodriguez)
Short stories, Spanish

2019
Ainara Munt and Pol·len edicions
‘Hilda dago poesia?’ (Joseba Sarrionandia)
Poetry, Catalan

2018
Amaia Gabantxo and Center for Basque Studies
‘Harri eta Herri’ and ‘Maldan Behera’ (Gabriel Aresti)
Poetry, English

2017
Yaroslav Gubarev and Anetta Antonenko
‘Behi euskaldun baten memoriak’ (Bernado Atxaga)
Novel, Ukrainian

2016
Nami Kaneko and Hakusuisha
‘Mussche’ (Kirmen Uribe)
Novel, japanese

2015
Isaac Xubín and Kalandraka
‘Tempo de exilio’ (Joseba Sarrionandia)
Poetry, Galician

+ Info

Communications Department
Etxepare Basque Institute
Tabakalera / Andre Zigarrogileen plaza, 1
Donostia / San Sebastián
T: +34 943 023 400 / M: +34 688 670 217
komunikazioa@etxepare.eus

www.etxepare.eus