



Culture as a Shared Language: The Basque Experience

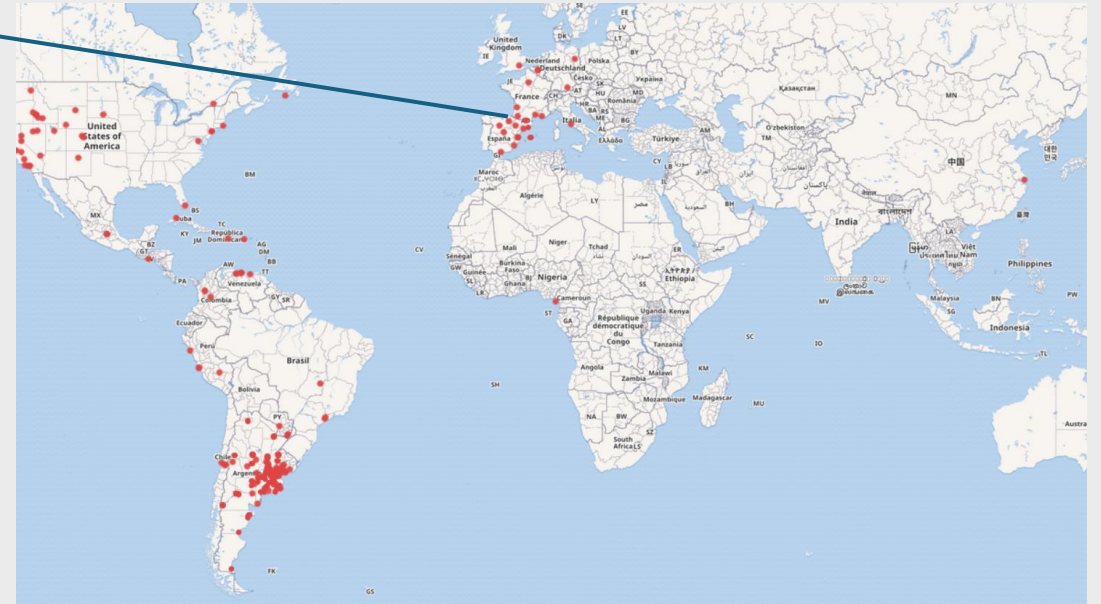
“to share, we must first have something to offer”

Imanol Galdos
Donostia Kultura

The Basque Country (Euskal Herria)



A Cross-Border Identity



- 7 territories across 2 states (Spain & France)
- Donostia: The urban heart of the Basque language (Euskera)
- A global diaspora acting as cultural ambassadors

Sixty Years of Resilience



Rebirth in Dark Times

- Overcoming dictatorship through a modern, integrated strategy
- Cultural pillars: The birth of Ikastolas and language standardization
- Economic backbone: The Mondragon cooperative model

A photograph of three young women with long dark hair, smiling and laughing. They are wearing black halter-neck tops with a gold-colored band across the chest. The woman in the foreground is wearing a black mesh glove on her right hand. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor event setting.

Culture as a Path to Peace

Healing Social Divisions

- Overcoming decades of terrorism, political violence and polarization
- Cultural expansión = Greater spaces for dialogue and coexistence
- Donostia 2016: European Capital of Culture focused on reconciliation, not just infrastructure

DONOSTIA 2016
SAN SEBASTIAN

The Power of Community Engagement

Alternative Narratives for Society

- Moving culture from the periphery to the center of public policy
- Human connection, nuance and empathy in the age of AI
- **129.000 members of DK** out of 187.000 population

The Donostia Model in Figures (2025 Data)

Solid Institutional Foundations

- **€27 Million** total Budget | **€ 14 Million** direct investment
- **230** professionals **23 cultural spaces**
- **17** libraries & **10** local cultural centers
- Over **280.000** tickets sold across performances and museums

Global Branding & Diplomacy

Present in the World from Our Roots

- Multifaceted diplomacy: Gastronomy, science, sports (jai-alai) and top-tier corporations
- Intersectoral alliances: Merging culture with science, health and sport
- Fierce defense of the European Project since its founding fathers (Lehendakari Agirre)



The Next 60 Years

Facing the Challenges of Globalization

- Rejecting individualistic nihilism and short-sighted pragmatism
- Defending minority languages and the humanities in modern curricula
- **The Success Formula:** Complete your domestic homework to fly safely abroad

Rethinking the future without renouncing our core values

