

TO ALL FOREIGN BASQUE LANGUAGE SCHOLARS

EUSKERAZAINZTA is an association of Basque language writers, teachers, popular poets and language arts workers.

EUSKERAZAINZTA was created to protect and strengthen the Basque dialects that have been used for centuries against the present tendency to despise and abandon the Basque in popular use.

We are deeply worried by the confusion created in the last fifteen years by the methods used to impose a given orthographic reform, which have damaged the popular standing of the Basque language.

It is, in fact, necessary to attain a unified spelling, but we sustain that the unified written Basque must be based on the living forms of Basque used by the majority of the population.

It does not appear necessary in order to attain the unification, to make use of the letter "h". Which over ninety per cent (90 %) of Basque speakers do not pronounce. Its introduction unnecessarily complicates the spelling to the users of the major dialects.

In spite of the valuable effort carried out at the "ikastolas" (Basque language schools) the number of Basque speakers, and specially those among them who can write their own language, has diminished considerably. Not all this reduction has been due to the pressure exerted by the surrounding languages. It has in great measure been due to the confusion brought about by the capricious reform of the orthography.

Because the feelings sustained by EUSKERAZAINZTA equally concern wide sectors in the Basque Country, it is our intention to make this situation known to the scholars who have gathered in these international meetings on Basque studies.

We also take advantage of this letter to show to the attending foreign visitors our appreciation for their research work and for the interest shown in our national language, wishing them all a pleasant stay among us.

In order to make our points better known to foreigners interested in the problems faced by our language, we would encourage establishing direct relations with our institution.

Gernika 25-8-1980

EUSKERAZAINZTA
Lino Akesolo
President