

31st AEMI CONFERENCE

RELATIONS BETWEEN DIASPORAS AND THEIR HOME COUNTRIES:
New migrations, return movements and historical context (roots)

Palacio Miramar Jauregia, Donostia-San Sebastián

Sep. 29 – Oct. 3, 2021



Call for Papers

The 31st AEMI Conference will be hosted by the Office for the Basque Communities Abroad, Basque Government, in Donostia-San Sebastián. The OBCA is the unit of the General Secretariat of Foreign Affairs at the Presidency of the Basque Autonomous Government, that was created to promote, coordinate, establish and foster relations between the Basque Country and the Basque communities abroad, and also to drive action to collect the historical memory of the diasporas. This last goal is what explains OBCA being a member of AEMI since 2007.

Taking into account that last year's Conference had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, this year's theme should have a broader scope, including return. Accordingly, the general theme for this year will try to offer a large umbrella to researchers, although our perspective is that of the countries of origin.

RELATIONS BETWEEN DIASPORAS AND THEIR HOME COUNTRIES: Historical context, return movements and new migrations.

Diasporas as are known today have started to play a key role in the international arena. The importance of an organized diaspora has become critical not only for the host country but for the home country, in particular. Although diasporas are viewed with suspicion to a certain extent by some host countries, there are a myriad of regulations and plans in most home countries and regions trying to identify and engage their emigrants as actors of soft power for their international relations.

Such was the wave of emigrants during the XIX and XX centuries that fled from Europe, that today their descendants, well rooted citizens, are more and more intrigued by what makes them different to others in the American melting pot. However hard their parents worked to make their children assimilate and be part of the hosting society, keeping their cultures and traditions alive but at home, it is obvious that the third generation phenomenon made those children or grandchildren look back at their origins. What their parents perhaps wanted to forget, they wanted to remember.

As a result, new relations with the homelands (that were now more prosperous and had nothing to do with the lands their grandparents left behind) are being established by these new generations. What is the main purpose for the homeland governments in trying to connect with these organized movements? Is there any kind of interest for a return migration? What do homeland governments have to offer to the descendants of those who one day left?

In addition to the study of actual migration, we should also consider the variety of dimensions associated with the migrant's consideration of the option of return. Even if the migrant did not actually return themselves, the Diaspora could come to exercise its influence at home in a wide variety of ways. Thinking, for example, about the primary overseas destination of many European migrants – America – we can detect from the later nineteenth century on, a growing process of 'Americanization' across Europe.

However, besides the interest of keeping a relationship with descendants of those who one day left, young generations are still leaving their countries. This time, the push and pull factors might be different, in this shrinking world. So, where are the actual destinations of the young migrants in the XXI century? How are the countries of origin

keeping their brains at home? Do they offer programs for the “brain gain”? How does the international experience of their young generation affect each country? What are the differences and similarities of past and present migrations?

Europe has become and is becoming more and more a hosting place rather than a place of origin for those migrants that come from outside its borders in search of a better future or only a future. Are those groups organized in the host countries? What is their relationship with governments and public agencies? Who is their legitimate representative? Who is representing the needs and aims of immigrant groups?

In addition to formal institutions and organizations, informal actors often play key roles for immigrants. In some cases their goals do not necessarily coincide with those of the formal institutions who are accepted as official and legitimate representatives.

The Covid19 pandemic changed the rules for international travelling and reshaped the meaning of borders dramatically. At the same time, the use of digital communication has increased the contacts and reduced the inter-generational gap. How will all this impact on a daily basis the work of the diaspora institutions and/or the relationship between home countries and their diasporas?

The conference is designed to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and create an optimum learning environment. Therefore, the organizers have responded to feedback by limiting the total number of presenters to thirty-two (32) based on a first-submitted, first-selected basis.

There are three main categories of presentation:

Single speaker presentation – a stand-alone proposal in which each individual will have 15 minutes to make their presentation – usually as part of a three person panel – a unified proposal for a self-contained panel on a particular theme (normally comprising of three presenters) – 45 minutes will be available for the entire panel

The presentations can include any artistic or cultural discipline.

A workshop – this can take several forms but the critical element is a commitment to inter-activity and audience participation – each workshop will be allotted 30 minutes.

A round-table – the organizers of the conference will invite key participants to take part in a round-table / podium discussion.

Abstracts of 200-300 words (including a short CV) in English should be sent no later than Friday, April 30, to:

- Benan-Oregi@euskadi.eus
- N-bedialauneta@euskadi.eus

Conference participation is free of charge for AEMI members.

Non-members are welcome to participate.

The language of the conference will be English.

Conference presentations will be delivered at the Miramar Palace (www.palaciomiramar.eus), and there will also be the possibility to follow the Conference on line.

Should you have any further queries concerning the conference please contact Benan Oregi or Naiara Bedialauneta at the above e-mails.

COVID-19

Should the Conference be affected by risks or restrictions related to Covid19, we will move to go through with the Conference in alternative ways; electronically or otherwise