

# UDALBILTZA<sup>®</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATIONS 1999



EUSKAL HERRIKO UDAL ETA UDAL HAUTETSIEIEN BILTZARRA

## **APPEAL BY MAYORS**

**25th of January 1999**

**On the 25th of January, twenty-one mayors invited all the municipal representatives of Euskal Herria to take part on the 6th of February of the same year in an assembly of municipally-elected councillors held in the Carlos III cinema in Iruñea-Pamplona.**

We, the undersigned, the mayors of 21 municipalities in Euskal Herria, in view of the news that has generated so much hope in our towns and cities, consider that town halls must maintain an active stance so that in the future we may have a Euskal Herria based on peace, democracy and freedom.

At the gates of the 21st century, in a world under the permanent influence of globalization which is exposed to the continual changes generated by it, in this Europe that is being born which new states continue joining, we citizens of Lapurdi, Zuberoa, Nafarroa, Araba, Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia lack any common institution that may unite us.

The importance of things at a municipal level is evident in Basque politics, and this is a point which is linked to the deep-rooted municipal tradition serving the rights of Euskal Herria. Both before and now, the municipality constitutes an inescapable reference point in order to be able to articulate our institutions, as it is the sole institution with representation in the seven Basque territories.

Some of us municipally-elected councillors promote the recognition of the territoriality of Euskal Herria, and the unitary action of all councillors may constitute a major initiative in favour of the cohesion of the Basque political community and its international scope. Similarly and after following a common, unitary and homogenous diagnosis, the administering that we carry out on a daily basis may help us to face up to the social, cultural, economic and linguistic challenges and problems that we all have.

It is for this reason that, taking into account the plurality existing in Basque society, the individual personality of each historic territory and the degree to which we respect the free expression of decision-making of all citizens of Euskal Herria, with the aim of going more in depth into democracy, we invite both you and the spokespeople of the political groups of your town hall to the meeting which will take place on the 16th of February 1999, at 11 o'clock in the morning. The purpose of this meeting is to assess the need to set in motion a Basque National Institution of a municipal nature. In the hope that we may count on your attendance,

Kind regards.

- J.A. CUERDA MONTOYA	Gasteiz
- M <sup>a</sup> DEL YERMO URKIJO ELORZA	Laudio
- (P.O.) I. ARESO MENDIGUREN	Bilbo
- H. CIRARDA ORTÍZ DE ARTIÑANO	Getxo
- R. OTXANDIO IZAGIRRE	Basauri
- J.M. BASTIDA ARRIETA	Azpeitia
- J. JAUREGI BEREZIARTUA	Beasain
- J.A. AGIRREBENGOA IMAZ	Altsasu
- J.L. ETXEGARAI ANDUEZA	Lesaka
- J. ANIOTZBEHERE	Sara
- J.A. ALTUNA AIZPURUA	Usurbil
- J. IÑARRA AGIRREZABALA	Oiartzun
- F. FLORES LAZKOZ	Etxarri-Aranatz
- M.G. MENDIETA ZELAIA	Aulesti
- P. GONZÁLEZ ARGOMÁNIZ	Urretxu
- I. BERAZA ZUFIAUR	Agurain
- J. HERNANDORENA CALANTE	Truzios
- F.J. OIARTZABAL IRIGOIEN	Baztan
- JOANES GOIENETXE	Ostankoa
- JEAN MICHEL GALANT	Azkarate
- J.L. CAMPO VALLE	Berriozar

25th of January 1999

## **DECLARATION OF IRUÑA - Carlos III**

**6th of February 1999**

**After debating different topics, the proposal made by the mayors calling the assembly was read, it's being approved unanimously. The document pointed out the desire to set in motion a national institution of a municipal nature and summarized its objectives in five points.**

In the appeal made on the 25th of January 1999 by the mayors of Gasteiz (José Angel Cuerda Montoya), Laudio (Maria del Yermo Urkijo Elorza), Bilbao (P.O. Ibon Areso Mendiguren), Getxo (Humberto Cirarda Ortiz de Antiñano) Basauri (Roberto Otxandio Izagirre) Azpeitia (José María Bastida Arrieta), Beasain (Jon Jauregi Bereziartua), Altsasu (José Antonio Agirrebengoa Imaz), Lesaka (José Luis Etxegarai Andueza), Sara (J, Aniotzbehere), Usurbil (José Antonio Altuna Aizpurua), Oiartzun (Jon Iñarra Agirre Zabala), Etxarri-Aranatz (Juan Fernando Flores Lazkoz), Aulesti (Gema Mendieta Zelaia), Urretxu (Peio Gonzalez Argomaniz), Agurain (Iñaki Beraza Zufiaur), Truzios (Juan Hernandorena Calante), Baztan (Francisco José Oiartzabal Irigoien), Ostankoa (Joanes Goyhenetche), Azkarate (Jean Michel Galant), and Berriozar (Jose Luis Campo Valle ) to all the mayors and spokespeople of the municipal groups of all the Basque municipalities, to attend a meeting to be held on the 6th of February 1999 at 11 o'clock in the morning in the Carlos III cinema, located at calle Cortes de Navarra nº 7 in Iruñea-Pamplona, with the aim of analysing the convenience of and/or need to set in motion a Basque National Institution on a municipal level, 666 mayors and spokes people from the municipal groups of 317 towns from throughout Euskal Herria attended.

The act, under the President,

Y of the 21 mayors who called the meeting, commenced with a performance by a music group of the "Alkate Soinua", which those present listened to standing up. José Martín Abaurrea (municipally-elected councillor of Iruñea-Pamplona) then proceeded to welcome the councillors to Iruñea in Euskera, Castillian and French.

Roberto Otxandio (Mayor of Basauri), on behalf of the mayors who called the meeting, explained in Euskera and Castillian what the reasons for calling the meeting had been, and what he stated had been undertaken from the point of view of the legitimate right of all those persons in attendance to meet and freely express their opinions. Likewise, he stressed that, in view of the new political phase which was generating so much hope in the towns of Euskal Herria, the 21 mayors had considered that the municipally-elected councillors should play an active part in this, and that they should incorporate into their daily political work, and what each of them represents, the task of building a future in peace, democracy and freedom for the Basque People. He also referred to the major role played in defending the rights of Euskal Herria which municipally-elected councillors have always had.

He concluded by saying that, from the standpoint of recognition of the plurality of Basque society, respecting the personality of the different historic territories, as well as the free expression of the will of the citizens of Euskal Herria and with the desire to promote and encourage a process of in-depth democracy, they had made the appeal and put forward a proposal designed to set in motion a Basque National Institution on a municipal level, a permanent institution if it should be deemed appropriate.

Then, Gemma Mendieta (Mayor of Aulesti) in Euskera, Jean Michel Galant (Mayor of Azkarate) in French and Iñaki Beraza (Mayor of Agurain) in Castillian proceeded to read aloud the Declaration of Municipally-Elected Councillors of the Town Halls of Euskal Herria which the 21 mayors who had called the meeting had drawn up:

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| - Borja Jauregi Fuertes         | Hondarribiko alkatea     |
| - María del Yermo Urkijo Elorza | Laudioko alkatea         |
| - José Luis Etxegarai Andueza   | Lesakako alkatea         |
| - Jon Jauregi Bereziartua       | Beasaingo alkatea        |
| - Gemma Mendieta Zelaia         | Aulestiko alkatea        |
| - Fernando Flores Lazkoz        | Etxarri-Aranazko alkatea |
| - Peio Gonzalez Argomániz       | Urretxuko alkatea        |
| - Iñaki Beraza Zufiaur          | Aguraingo alkatea        |
| - Joanes Goyhenetche            | Ostankoako alkatea       |
| - Roberto Otxandio Izagirre     | Basaurkiko alkatea       |

We mayors and councillors of the territories of Lapurdi, Zuberoa, Nafarroa, Araba, Bizkaia and Guipúzcoa have met here today in Iruñea to carry out a fully democratic act, maintained by popular representation which each one of us represents and in the exercise of the rights of assembly and freedom of expression. The democratic nature of this act cannot be distorted by the campaign of manipulation which has preceded its call and which among its objectives has aimed at preventing it from being held and sought confrontation among Basque citizens.

From the standpoint of the representation we hold, the different legal-political frameworks in which we work, we wish to legitimately promote relations between the Basques of the seven territories. We consider it necessary to overcome the separation into three administrative structures which have prevented us from facing up to the challenges of the 21st century with guarantees.

We find ourselves in a complex world subject to factors such as economic, cultural and social globalization at a time of great changes and transformations in all fields and faced with a Europe under construction, with the incorporation of new states. We therefore consider it essential to provide the experience of the Basque municipalities in the task of building a new future, as they are institutions which have always played an important role in the political life of our People.

Moreover, the new political era which has generated so much hope in our towns and cities requires of the municipally-elected councillors of Euskal Herria that they work openly on the possibilities available and incorporate our daily political work with the aim of building a future in peace which strengthens democracy and the freedom of the Basque People.

By way of which we, the municipally-elected councillors of Euskal Herria, declare our will to shape a Basque National Institution on a municipal level with the following objectives:

- 1) To declare the existence of Euskal Herria as a nation.
- 2) To contribute towards the political structuring of Euskal Herria by bearing witness to its territoriality and in the hope of embracing the municipal representatives of the seven Basque territories within a common framework.

To promote the national construction of Euskal Herria, this being understood as being a dynamic and democratic process sustained by the free participation and decision-making of all Basque citizens.

- 3) Given its nature as a permanent institution, it is designed to join and unite wills and not to transform itself into any other, and by paying attention to its national scope, it will promote political dynamics and collaborate in analysing and discussing the future political and institutional backbone of Euskal Herria.

The point of creating such a backbone will have to be broached in any case, in a democratic process with the participation of all Basques and by respecting the personality and systems of the Basque territories.

- 4) To make progress in the process of constructive inter-relations among the municipalities of all territories, with an open vocation on the part of all municipally-elected councillors who carry out their duties in the natural community that is Euskal Herria, making an agreed plan of action among municipal representatives possible which may enable all those fields of work and collaboration to be promoted which define us as a political, cultural, sociological and economic community, such as language, culture, sports the environment, the organization of territory, economic development and social welfare.

This would, in the first instance, involve carrying out a basic diagnosis of Euskal Herria so as to subsequently deal with the problems and common challenges it faces jointly and homogeneously in terms of national construction, and to channel the specific proposals into other institutional areas, social movements and organizations, in so doing encouraging the dynamics of social participation.

5) To project the existence of Euskal Herria in the international field as a distinct nation in its own right, and it's willed to act as such in the future shaping of Europe and in its institutions.

A series of speeches was then given in which the following took part: José Luis Campo (Mayor of Berriozar), Joanes Goyhenetche (Mayor of Ostankoa), Peio González (Mayor of Urretxu), Jon Inarra (Mayor of Oiartzun) and Borja Jauregi (Mayor of Hondarribia), all the aforementioned doing so in order to express the fact they were giving their full support to the Declaration being put forward from their different political standpoints.

With the Declaration being subject to vote, it was approved unanimously by those present who proceeded to give a grand ovation when the result of the vote was announced. Once the Declaration had been approved, the Presidency proposed the election of a Permanent Committee that would put into practice the work envisaged in order to set up the Basque National Institution on a municipal level as included in the approved Declaration.

Thanking those who had called the meeting for their historic initiative for the future of our people and in the midst of a grand ovation, the 21 mayors abandoned the Presidency in order for it to be taken up by the Permanent Committee.

Roberto Otxandio (Alcalde of Basauri) in exercising the Presidency of the Permanent Committee, referred to the major role once more that the municipally-elected councillors had played in this act by taking on such commitments in defence of the rights of Euskal Herria, thus giving a historic, great new boost to the situation and relations among the seven Basque territories.

He warned that the new Institution emerging from the approved Declaration would always maintain its doors wide both in terms of its management and its evolution, so that those who had not attended might also join in the future.

He ended his speech by congratulating Euskal Herria, encouraging everyone henceforth to work towards and help in building the future, for an Euskadi in peace, democracy and freedom, and on behalf of the Permanent Committee and in accordance with the Declaration that the town hall councillors of Euskal Herria had approved of taking on the commitment to set in motion the proposed Basque National Institution on a municipal level.

The meeting was closed at 13:00 hours, with the orchestra present performing "Agur Jaunak" and followed by a grand ovation on the part of all those present as a token of their approval for what had taken place.

Iruñea-Pamplona, 6th of February 1999

# **ASSEMBLY OF MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES OF EUSKAL HERRIA**

**Bilbao, on the 18th of September 1999**

**In the course of the meeting held in the Euskalduna Palace, those councillors present made public their first public declaration together with the setting-up of Udalbiltza.**

The Basque people have forged their history throughout a complicated thousand-year process and have shaped a Euskal Herria with both common and diverse characteristics from the Aturri (Adour) to the Ebro rivers.

There are almost three million of us Basques settled over the more than 20,800 square kilometres which make up the seven territories. The recent past of our people, marked by wars, impositions, forced action and abolitions of unreturned rights, means that at the threshold of the 21st century, Euskal Herria would appear to be located between two states that deny it its national identity, with a dismantled political and cultural reality and an uneven asymmetrical economic and geographical evolution. Yet Euskal Herria maintains the will to carve out its own path in history, and we find ourselves faced with a new situation and in conditions to enter a new phase in the exciting task of the national and democratic construction of Euskal Herria. And it is undeniable that, as in the case of previous stages, this duty and the corresponding effort demand the incorporation of municipally-elected councillors and a prominent role to be played by the institutions on a local level.

In meeting in Iruña (Pamplona) on the 6th of February last, the mayors and councillors belonging to the territories of Lapurdi, Zuberoa, Navarra, Alava, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, declare their will to shape a Basque national institution with the aims as contained in the declaration itself.

The national reality. The decision taken was based on the firm yet simple premise of understanding. On the one hand, we are Basques and, over and above the divisions and separations that deny and conceal our national reality, it is necessary to formulate an instrument which while bearing witness to our existence as a people, also serves to make progress in its construction. On the other hand, an attempt was made to respond suitably to the responsibility that the citizens of Euskal Herria had placed in the hands of their municipal representatives, by promoting relations among the Basques of the seven territories.

Following the municipal electoral process put into practice this last month of June in four of the Basque territories, and once preparatory work carried out by the Permanent Committee elected in Iruña and dealing with the proposal is formulated, we mayors and councillors of Euskal Herria present at this act have decided to make that political will our own and build the first national Basque institution, under the name Euskal Herriko Udal eta Udal Hautetsien Biltzarra-Udalbiltza, an institution whose definition derives from the objectives set by the municipal representatives in the Assembly of 6.2.1999, in which we ourselves take on the commitment to work towards said objectives and achieve their putting into practice.

Therefore, the activity and functioning of Udalbiltza shall be geared towards:

1. Declaring the existence of Euskal Herria as a nation.
2. Contributing towards the political structuring of Euskal Herria by bearing witness to its territoriality and in the hope of embracing the municipal representatives of the seven Basque territories within a common framework.
3. Promoting the national construction of Euskal Herria, this being understood as being a dynamic and democratic process sustained by the free participation and decision-making of all Basque citizens.
4. Making progress in the process of constructive inter-relations among the municipalities of all territories, making an agreed plan of action among municipal representatives possible in areas such as language, culture, sports, the environment, the organization of territory, economic development and social welfare, etc.

5. Projecting the existence of Euskal Herria in the international field as a distinct nation in its own right, and its will to act as such in the future shaping of Europe and in its institutions.

Udalbiltza is thus set up for the citizens of Euskal Herria, in terms of a unitary, representative, democratic and territorial institutional reference point, linked to the municipal elective mandate, and which should serve as a framework for reflection, analysis and promotion of the different aspects which make up Basque national construction.

Udalbiltza symbolically and in practical terms expresses the territoriality of Euskal Herria. Udalbiltza shall make it possible to act as a nation. Udalbiltza shall enable the existence of the Basque Nation to be visible before the world. For we municipally-elected councillors de Euskal Herria, Udalbiltza becomes a political and institutional reference point, in such a way that its decisions shall provide guidelines for our daily activity in town halls, in which we are attempting to turn initiatives, recommendations and criteria established by the Assembly into reality. Udalbiltza must contribute decisively towards municipal management becoming involved actively and with specific actions geared towards achieving the objectives of the National Institution.

Udalbiltza and its Executive Committee elected today commence their activity linked to these objectives and, to do so, the first and most urgent task is to know in what situation they are starting from, to obtain the most accurate picture possible of the current social, economic and cultural reality of Euskal Herria as a whole.

We need to have data, statistics, economic guidelines population pyramids, etc., but that refer to the seven territories as a whole; this is a non-existent global diagnosis at the present time because Euskal Herria has never been allowed to look into its own mirror.

Furthermore, each of the different objectives set require specific or individual treatment, whereby Udalbiltza, in terms of its internal organization, is to be equipped with work groups which set, develop and carry out the most suitable measures in order for what today is a statement of intent to be given practical expression as soon as possible.

## **Open to all**

In this commitment, we shall encourage work in common with other institutions and economic, social and trade union agents, and we shall cooperate with all those initiatives that promote the integral development of our people. It cannot be in any other way. National construction must be open to participation by all citizens, and such continuous communication and collaboration shall constitute the main feature of the activity of Udalbiltza. Moreover, it shall be initiated right away. Euskal Herria as a democratic project requires an institution such as Udalbiltza because it helps to determine the political character and its territorial scope, an essential source of its survival as a people.

Yet this project also needs to define the internal organization of the different territories and the institutional model on which the former is to be founded, to which Udalbiltza, from the privileged position of the municipalities, shall help in analysing and debating under the principle of respect for the personality and regimes of the historic territories. In putting these tasks into practice, we are going to try hard in order for the project of national construction of Euskal Herria that we are advocating and of which this foundational act of Udalbiltza forms a part, to be perceived by Basque society not as a confrontation or division or imposition, but rather as a process of integration; this should be based on recognition and respect among people and territories, as well as on the free adherence on the part of Basque citizens and from the fact that the sense of belonging to a same cultural, linguistic and political community unites us. We are Basque municipally-elected councillors and we believe in the Basque nation.

We invite Basque citizens and the other municipal representatives to play a leading role in this historic moment in order for Euskal Herria, being the owner of its present, to in the near future become a political character with its own identity in the international community. We have hope and the capacity to work in order, by establishing certain foundations for common political action that is unprecedented in the history of our People, to overcome resistance to change as regards state structures which refuse to accept any operative political reality other than their own. The future of Euskal Herria belongs to the Basques. It is time for our people.

*Zorionak Euskal Herria! (Congratulations Euskal Herria!)*

*Udalbiltza*

Euskal Herriko Udal eta Udal Hautetsien Biltzarra.

Euskalduna Palace, Bilbao, 18th of September 1999.

# **ETA ANNOUNCES THE BREAKING-OFF OF THE CEASEFIRE**

**25th of September 1999**

On the 25th of September 1999, as a consequence of the breaking-off of the ETA ceasefire, UDALBILTZA made this declaration:

1. Overcoming and resolving the conflict which Euskal Herria is currently experiencing involves respecting the decisions that Basque society may freely and democratically take. This is the real political crux of the conflict.

2. In addition to legislation, there is an obvious lack of courage and democratic political will on the part of the political parties and institutions of Spain and France in recognising the sovereignty of Euskal Herria and its capacity for decision-making as the nation and people that it is.

3. Over these days, significant declarations have appeared as regards the need for a new political framework which can draw together all Basques and some political parties and most trade unions in this country have publicly committed themselves to putting proposals on the table with a view to its creation and structuring.

4. As gathered together in the tasks approved by the General Assembly on the 18th of September, UDALBILTZA has made it its mission to analyse the current legal-political reality and take steps to channel and define the political and institutional structuring of Euskal Herria. We ratify our total will to tackle this mission, in collaboration with all the social agents that may draw up proposals which take all Basques into account.

5. UDALBILTZA, therefore, offers the aforementioned political parties and trade unions a working group based around the political and institutional structuring of Euskal Herria, with the aim of debating at its core the proposals already put forward or which might be submitted regarding this and of reaching a consensus on the channel for achieving this new political framework that may bring together and structure Euskal Herria.

6. In this objective of bringing Euskal Herria to fruition as a political subject, UDALBILTZA shall devote special attention to relations between the different territories and to its political and institutional interweaving. The working group has already established the methodology to be used in his discussion process.

In Euskal Herria, 25th of December 1999