

UDALBILTZA[®]

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATIONS 2000



EUSKAL HERRIKO UDAL ETA UDAL HAUTETSIEIEN BILTZARRA

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION IN FAVOUR OF NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION AND AGAINST VIOLENCE

28th of March

Institutional Declaration against violence, 28th of March 2000

In September last year in the Euskalduna Palace in Bilbao, 1,800 municipally-elected councillors from all over Euskal Herria set up UDALBILTZA, a Basque national institution on a municipal level. On the same day, the mission of this national institution was proclaimed: "To promote the national construction of Euskal Herria, this being understood as being a dynamic, democratic process and sustained by the free participation and decision-making of all Basque citizens."

Seven months beforehand in a meeting held in Iruña-Pamplona, the objectives of the new institution were agreed upon: "Through the representation that we enjoy, through the different legal-political frameworks in which we work, we wish to legitimately promote relations among the Basques of the seven territories. We consider it necessary to overcome the separation existing between the three administrative structures which have impeded the integral development of our People, so as to be able to face the challenges before us in the 21st century with guarantees."

Therefore, the purpose of UDALBILTZA is national construction from an integrating point of view, based on respect for people and territories, as well as on the free will of citizens; thus, these are the criteria on which its activity is based. On the other hand, both the Assembly of Iruña-Pamplona and that of Bilbao, in addition to detailing the specific objectives pursued by the Institution, made special mention of the climate of peace and hope which Euskal Herria was experiencing at that time. In the course of both acts, the resulting scenario of the ETA ceasefire was present.

The declaration of Iruña-Pamplona clearly transmitted the hope felt at that time: "Moreover, the new political phase which has generated so much hope in our towns and cities, demands of us municipally-elected councillors of Euskal Herria that we work on open possibilities and incorporate our daily political duty into the aim of building a

future in peace which deepens the democracy and freedom of the Basque People.”

It is clear that UDALBILTZA came into being amidst a climate conducive to hope, although already from the time of its beginnings, it experienced innumerable instances of manipulation and attacks by more than a few means of communications and political powers, both Spanish and French.

Time and time again, they attempted to make UDALBILTZA and any similar initiative fail, with the aim of harming and satanizing everything that might lead to Basque national construction.

Neither Madrid nor Paris has made the slightest effort to respect the will of Euskal Herria; on the contrary, they have proved to be obstinate in defending an irremovable state legal code, thus showing a total lack of courage. Similarly, they have repeatedly ignored the majority requests by Basque citizens and their representatives in favour of the rights of prisoners, thus putting a strain on the climate of hope that had been created.

Despite all the aforementioned, UDALBILTZA has developed the objectives set forth in the Assembly held in the Euskalduna Palace. UDALBILTZA is today a reality.

Unfortunately, the scene in which UDALBILTZA was administered has varied since the ceasefire was made public, since ETA started once again to commit terrorist attacks. Acts of kale borroka (street violence), often committed against municipally-elected councillors, are an obstacle to achieving the democratic, open objective of UDALBILTZA. Terrorist attacks by ETA, in addition to being ethically and morally reprehensible, directly attack the national construction which UDALBILTZA is attempting to carry out freely and democratically. These actions show disregard for social initiative, conditioning and questioning the project of national construction.

For all the aforementioned reasons, because it cannot remain impassive when faced with these events which hinder the achieving of its objectives, UDALBILTZA declares the following:

1.- That national construction must be sustained by the use of democratic channels, in freedom and through the will and decision-making on the part of citizens, rejecting the use of violence, and respecting human rights at all times and without exception.

2. - That it is Basque citizens who constitute the subject of the Basque nation. And that the free and democratic exercise of citizens' will does not allow for the imposition of irremovable frameworks, nor freedoms imposed by force.

3. - That ETA hinders Basque national construction. Its terrorist attacks fail to respect either human rights or citizens' will. We demand that they allow Basque society to build its future in peace. That would be the most to the point and bravest decision. That it lets Basque society do the talking and that it ceases its activity. Violence and national construction are incompatible, in the same way as democracy and imposition are.

4. - That UDALBILTZA is going to continue along the path taken, developing its plan of action. That it shall work to achieve the objectives laid out by making use of all the means at its disposal, and always along a path towards national construction based on the voluntary participation of municipalities and councillors, and in a democracy free of impositions.

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE

In Euskal Herria, 28th of March 2000

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION

The 23th of Mai 2000

NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION IS FOUNDED ON THE NON-USE OF VIOLENCE

UDALBILTZA has declared on more than one occasion that its objective of national construction is based on the non-use of violence, on democratic ways and means, on the freedom and on the will and decision-making of citizens. And likewise, on means that shall always absolutely respect human rights.

On the basis of this fundamental principle, UDALBILTZA has condemned ETA murders and kale borroka attacks, because in addition to hindering the objective of national construction, they violate human rights. Again, UDALBILTZA must severely condemn the recent murder of the councillor from Durango. This action, as well as violating the most basic of human rights, conditions and impedes the free participation of the town halls and municipally-elected councillors of Euskal Herria.

Based on the fact that human rights cannot be used at the convenience of each and everyone, UDALBILTZA wishes by means of this Declaration to respond to the request by Basque political prisoners, pointing out the following:

1. - Human rights, both individual and collective, must be preserved in their entirety. The fundamental right of life and also the rights of prisoners.
2. - Basque citizens and the immense majority of their institutions (Town Halls, Regional Councils, Parliament, etc.) have for a long time now demanded compliance with the rights of prisoners. However, the Spanish and French Governments have largely ignored this and remain obstinate in their respective stances.

3. - We demand of the Governments of Paris and Madrid that they bring prisoners closer to their place of origin and release those who have completed three-quarters of their sentences, as well as those who are suffering from serious illnesses. Likewise, we ask that living conditions inside prisoners be made more humane and that all prisoners' rights be complied with.

4. - We appeal to all Basque citizens to defend all human rights, both the fundamental right of life and the rights of prisoners.

5. - This Declaration shall be forwarded to all the town halls of Euskal Herria so that, if they wish, it may be read so as to show their adherence to it.

In Euskal Herria, 23th of May 2000

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION

18th of September

INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION ON THE 1ST ANNIVERSARY OF UDALBILTZA, ON THE 18TH OF SEPTEMBER 2000.

On the 18th of September 1999 in the Euskalduna Palace in Bilbao, nearly 1,800 of us mayors and councillors from Euskal Herria decided to set UDALBILTZA in motion, the first Basque national institution. Today is the first anniversary of this new organization. As we did in the course of that meeting, on that date we ratified the validity of the principles and fundamentals of this institution. That is, we continue wishing to deepen and promote relations among the seven Basque territories, this being understood as being a dynamic and democratic process, working on relations involving fraternity, without excluding anyone and for the whole of Basque society, this being founded on the human rights of all Basques, their free capacity for decision-making and their free will.

When assessing these last 12 months of existence of this recently-created institution, we wish to underline its positive nature. As the first national institution, we have started from zero and the physical and mental divisions we have experienced over so many years are not overcome from one day to the next. The Permanent Committee of UDALBILTZA has already approved its first Management Plan. 40 municipally-elected councillors have taken part in drawing it up over a period of 6 months; and within it have been envisaged different initiatives to be developed in relation to Euskera, sports, culture, economic development, education, the organization of territory, the national reality and international relations. In some cases, practical questions are proposed, while in others, in-depth assessments and reflections.

It is undeniable that UDALBILTZA came into being amidst a climate of peace and hope, although already from the time of its beginnings, it experienced innumerable instances of manipulation and attacks by more than a few means of communications and political powers, both Spanish and French. Time and time again, they attempted to make UDALBILTZA and any similar initiative fail, with the aim of harming

and satanizing everything that might lead to Basque national construction.

The political climate of peace and hope in which UDALBILTZA was administered has altered since ETA announced its decision to end the truce and, above all, since it recommenced terrorist attacks. The terrorist attacks and acts of *kale borroka* (street violence), often committed against municipally-elected councillors, are a direct obstacle to achieving the democratic, open objective of UDALBILTZA. As UDALBILTZA has clearly stated on many occasions over recent months, violence and national construction, imposition and democracy, are incompatible. Terrorist attacks by ETA, *kale borroka* and threats, in addition to being ethically and morally reprehensible, show disregard for human rights, as well as for the will and capacity for decision-making on the part of Basque citizens. It is for this reason that; once again, UDALBILTZA demands that ETA let Basque society decide its own future and that it cease its activities once and for all.

On the other hand, throughout these last 12 months, we have had the opportunity to hear all types of declaration and opinion regarding UDALBILTZA. Many of them have not been to the point. In this sense, UDALBILTZA wishes to recall the basic characteristics of this Basque national institution: democratic and legitimate, pro-European and full of future, enriching and beneficial for citizens.

Democratic and legitimate, because those of us who make up UDALBILTZA have been democratically elected and joined this project with total legitimacy and freedom. Pro-European and full of future because it is fully integrated in the process of European development and freedom; in fact, it constitutes a positive contribution towards overcoming the physical and mental borders of the continent, while at the same time developing Basque socio-political and cultural identity. Enriching and complementary, because it fills the evident vacuum existing in institutions working nowadays on the other side of the border. And lastly, totally beneficial and positive for citizens in so far as, by town halls being the closest institutions to them, it constitutes the best way of gathering together the concerns and needs of citizens.

In view of all the aforementioned, UDALBILTZA, on its first anniversary, wishes to declare:

1.- That national construction must be sustained by the use of democratic channels, in freedom and through the will and decision-making on the part of citizens, rejecting the use of violence, and respecting human rights at all times and without exception.

2. - That it is Basque citizens who constitute the subject of the Basque nation. And that the free and democratic exercise of citizens' will does not allow for the imposition of irremovable frameworks, nor freedoms imposed by force.

3. - That ETA hinders Basque national construction. Its terrorist attacks fail to respect either human rights or citizens' will. We demand that they allow Basque society to build its future in peace. That would be the most to the point and bravest decision. That it lets Basque society do the talking and that it ceases its activity. Violence and national construction are incompatible, in the same way as democracy and imposition are.

4. - That UDALBILTZA is going to continue along the path taken, developing its plan of action. That it shall work to achieve the objectives laid out by making use of all the means at its disposal, and always along a path towards national construction based on the voluntary participation of municipalities and councillors, and in a democracy free of impositions.

In Euskal Herria, 18th of September 2000