

# UDALBILTZA<sup>®</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATIONS 2004



EUSKAL HERRIKO UDAL ETA UDAL HAUTETSIEIEN BILTZARRA

**INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION IN VIEW OF THE REQUEST  
MADE BY THE DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON OF THE JOINT PSE-EE-  
PSOE GROUP AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GIPUZKOA,  
RAFAELA ROMERO**

30th January 2004

In view of the fact that the Court of Auditors of the Basque Country has inspected the financial activity of UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkartea, in addition to the grant allocated to this association by the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa, the President of this association and mayor of Azpeitia, Julian Eizmendi, wishes to specify the following:

1. That the Court of Auditors of the Basque Country has, at the request of the Economy and Finance Committee of the Basque Parliament, already started reviewing the accounts of our association.
2. That the willingness of UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkartea is one of total collaboration and transparency with the Court of Auditors of the Basque Country with regard to our financial management of the public funds we receive.
3. That our activity forms part of the standard competences of municipalities such as the promotion of culture, which includes the promotion of Basque culture and Euskera, twinning between municipalities and the promotion of tourism and heritage of those municipalities. In this sense, we do not understand the demonization that UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkartea is being subjected to and the negative fixation on the part of PSE-EE-PSOE with regard to totally legitimate and democratic activities, which municipalities governed by socialist leaders also carry out.
4. That an appeal has been lodged before the Supreme Court against the rulings delivered by the Higher Court of Justice of the Basque Country against some contributions made by some municipalities to UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkartea. In our opinion, these rulings are completely without foundation and do not in any way prove that we are engaging in unlawful activity.

Euskal Herria, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2004

## **INSTITUTIONAL MANIFESTO ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTION**

4<sup>th</sup> March 2004

In September 1999, five years ago now, we set up UDALBILTZA as a Basque national institution devoted to reinforcing bonds of solidarity, collaboration and joint work among Basques from the seven *herrialdes* (territories) of Euskal Herria on a municipal level. Despite all the difficulties we have had to deal with, we think that the work we have carried out has been significant and in fact very important: defending all human rights of all individuals with respect while at the same time with the determination that our idea of gradually creating an increasingly more integrated Euskal Herria constitutes a democratic, legitimate, modern, Europeanist and future project.

As an example of this constant defence of our ideals, this institution has made different institutional declarations over its 5 years in existence which we have gathered together in this book that we are introducing to you here.

Kind regards,

Julian EIZMENDI ZINKUNEGI  
President of UDALBILTZA

## **UDALBILTZA® IN FAVOUR OF THE BASQUE NATIONAL TEAM**

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2004

### **UDALBILTZA takes part in the second fiesta of the Basque national team in Agurain on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, sponsored by the Basque national team**

In the opinion of UDALBILTZA, as Euskal Herria is a distinctive nation, it should be entitled to be included among those nations which have their own personality. As far as internal scope is concerned, if the management of all sports events is the duty of sports bodies, then why is Euskal Herria allowed the first-mentioned right and not the second?

There is no justification from a democratic point of view.

There are numerous peoples existing in Europe that, without having an independent state, maintain a national team in different sports. These include England, Scotland, Wales, the Faroe Islands, the Channel islands and Northern Ireland, etc. Why deny our people a right acknowledged to so many other peoples in Europe?

Euskal Herria demands its right to be independent in the management of sports. As it is a people and nation, it is fully entitled to this, as this is the will of the majority

This desire for independence is reflected in the Basque national team: in 20 years of football, in this fiesta and in many other events organized in favour of the Basque national team.

It is patently obvious that the desire for official recognition of the Basque national team is deeply engrained at the heart of our people. Indeed, the claim for official recognition of the Basque national team is a very profound feeling among this people.

Yet public institutions are not the only agents making these demands; sports institutions must respond to this request. Thus, Basque federations must address this claim with the different international federations once the greatest possible amount of support has been forthcoming on the part of citizens. Assistance from public institutions is very necessary, of course, but it should not be up to them to play the leading role.

To conclude, I wish to say the following: in the opinion of UDALBILTZA, it is clear that we need official Basque national teams, but in all sports, and it is us – all we Basques - who must ensure this. We must fight for official recognition by international sports federations.

Agurain, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2004

Peio Iparragirre  
Member of the Executive Board of UDALBILTZA  
Councillor of Agurain

## **INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION IN VIEW OF THE INFORMATION BROADCAST BY CADENA SER**

30<sup>th</sup> June 2004

In view of the information broadcast by *Cadena SER* regarding aid granted by Udalbide Elkarlan Elkartea to the *Zazpiak Bat* association, in name of the Executive Board, its President Julián EIZMENDI wishes to make the following clarifications:

1. That, like many other associations and initiatives, the *Zazpiak Bat* association has received aid because its objectives and activities are fully in line with the objectives and projects we wish to promote – in other words, promoting inter-relations between Basque citizens from the seven territories of Euskal Herria via the organization of a touring cyclist association for Euskal Herria as a whole by overcoming administrative hurdles and encouraging the use of Euskera, in this case of popular cycle touring, a hugely widespread activity in Euskadi. This is what we have done with other sports such as pelota and *sokatira* (tug-of-war). The grant has helped to set up the association and its website, and also the organization of numerous non-competitive cycle touring, such as that organized on the occasion of Araba Euskaraz.

2. That the aid we have received from the Basque Government has not been used to help this association, but rather has been destined for other projects which, logically, have been duly justified before Basque Administration. That at the request of the Economy and Finance Committee of the Basque Parliament, the Court of Auditors of the Basque Government had already started reviewing the accounts of our association, as is the case with many other institutions and associations. The willingness of UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkartea is one of total collaboration and transparency with the Court of Auditors of the Basque Country

3. That we reject the practice of broadcasting manipulated, vengeful information and *half-truths*. We condemn the attacks received by any legitimate initiative whose foundations are based on Euskal Herria as a whole. Our activity forms part of the promotion of culture, which includes the promotion of Basque culture and Euskera, twinning between municipalities and the promotion of tourism and heritage of those municipalities. In this sense, we do not understand the demonization that UDALBIDE Elkarlan Elkarte is being subjected to and the negative fixation on the part of some political parties with regard to totally legitimate and democratic activities, which municipalities governed by socialist leaders also, carry out.

Euskal Herria, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF UDALBILTZA®, JULIAN EIZMENDI, DURING THE DEBATE ON THE "PROPOSAL OF A POLITICAL STATUTE FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF EUSKADI" BY THE INSTITUTIONS AND INTERIOR COMMITTEE OF THE BASQUE PARLIAMENT**

Vitoria-Gasteiz, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004

I should like to give my heartfelt thanks to all of you for the opportunity given to us by the Basque Parliament to UDALBILTZA® once again to provide our view regarding the political future of Euskadi.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2002, UDALBILTZA took part in the Special Self-government Committee set up by this same chamber. On that occasion, we set out our thoughts regarding the present and future of Euskal Herria. Our contribution ended by pointing out that the time for imposition has come to an end, that at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens organize themselves based on respect for all rights of all individuals and on free and democratic adherence and the will of the people, respecting and starting off from the premise of who we are and what we have achieved so far.

We congratulate ourselves that since that day, Basque institutions have continued to take firm, determined steps towards analysing those measures in depth that may lead us to bring about suitable conditions for the development of a genuine normalization and pacification process for Euskadi based on political and democratic solutions. By way of a basic milestone in this process, the submission by the *Lehendakari* (Basque President), on behalf of the Basque Government, of a Proposal for Coexistence based on a reform of the 1979 Statute of Gernika, clearly forms a part of this.

It is not my intention to provide a detailed review of all the articles contained in this proposal. Rather, please allow me to highlight the major aspects of it that I hope may help you to reflect on this.

For UDALBILTZA, the Proposal of a Political Statute for Euskadi:

- Is fully democratic and appropriate,
- Is respectful and realistic in terms of the political-institutional situation in Euskadi,
- Links up neatly with basic Europeanist principles,
- Will provide suitable conditions for better economic and social development for Basque citizens,
- Cannot be politically subject to attitudes or stances involving non-negotiation of what the social majority in Euskadi wish to determine or aspire to,
- Requires popular endorsement or consensus, the organization and result of which is not going to bring about any social collapse in Euskadi, regardless of the outcome,
- We are sure it will cement the foundations of the yearned-for normalization and pacification of Euskadi.

### **A fully democratic and appropriate proposal.....**

This year we are celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification by referendum of the Statute of Gernika.

Its implementation and putting into practice has given rise to inconsistent results. On the one hand:

- It has helped to analyse and develop the Basque People's own identity among the peoples of Europe in terms of sufficient maturity, self-esteem and confidence for Basque citizens to be aware of their will, capacity and potentiality to survive as a people openly and in solidarity with the rest of the peoples of Europe and the world;
- It has helped to develop socio-economic welfare and internal and external solidarity in terms of modern European parameters, without allowing us to forget the shortcomings we still have.

However, on the other hand:

- There is an obvious degree of disappointment because the Statute - and consequently the development of the identity and welfare of the Basque People - has become mutilated due to its lack of full development and because the nature of it as a pact has been nullified by rulings delivered by the Constitutional

Court, by the development of Basic and Constitutional Laws and by the fact that the Spanish state, via the European integration process, has recovered certain competences that should be provided for in the Statute;

- There is also disappointment in the fact that Euskadi is not equipped with the legal and political security to comply with what has been agreed upon. Compliance with a Constitutional Law such as the Statute of Gernika has been and continues to be subjected to the mere will on the part of the Spanish Government to grant certain competences based on different majority and minority agreements.

Furthermore, the world, Europe and Euskadi itself have changed and have been hugely evolving over the last 25 years. We are anchored to Europe and to the Western world, where relations between peoples, identities, the economy, social relations and culture are being developed and evolving increasingly fast. Moreover, new problems, challenges and complexities are emerging that have to be resolved, meaning that a text drafted 25 years ago – in this case, the Statute of Gernika – needs to be adapted.

States, having *competence of a general nature* as States, may legislate and face these new situations. Not Euskadi. However, Basque citizens continue to need and demand a framework for freedom of movement within the scope of their self-government so as to be able to adapt to these new situations and continue to develop their identity, their welfare and their solidarity with and opening-up towards the rest of the peoples of Europe and the world.

As a result of all the aforementioned, we at UDALBILTZA think that the time has come to rethink all these parameters of Basque self-government, and we believe that the Proposal is in this respect fully appropriate, legitimate and democratic.

**It is respectful and realistic in terms of the political-institutional situation in Euskadi and links up neatly with basic Europeanist principles.**

In our opinion, the requirements and fundamental keys for being able to establish a suitable and modern framework for the development of the internal and external relations of Euskadi in terms of Pact and Coexistence Coordinates are mentioned in the Preamble to the Proposal.

In our opinion, there exists a Basque People and, consequently, its right to decide its own future freely and democratically, respecting the political-institutional reality in which we Basques are living at the present time. From our point of view, this is the key to political normalization and to overcoming the *Basque conflict*.

It is a modern and up-to-date perspective that is fully in keeping with globalization processes, including the European integration process. It is the key for Euskadi to be able to adapt, assimilate, and contribute to and actively participate in the process by freely reinforcing its own personality and identity.

The European Union is a product of history and suffering. The most powerful driving force behind European unification has been the desire for peace and political normalization. In the last century, two world wars pitched European states against each other. These same states today collaborate and cooperate together thanks to the *community method*: principles of free adherence and association, non-violence, non-imposition, the sum of the wills expressed freely and democratically and the imagination to devise and set in motion cooperative political organizational structures and forms at the service of and with the will of citizens. That is why it is clear that European politics and its method and principles also mean a pacification and political normalization policy.

And so why have certain principles and methods that have helped to bring peace to the heart of Europe not also helped to normalize relations between Euskadi and Spain?

**It will provide suitable conditions for better economic and social development for Basque citizens.**

I believe there is almost total unanimity when admitting that Basque self-government has enabled us to develop a whole series of public policies that have helped decisively to modernize our economy and our social and welfare model. As all of you here today are aware, the income of a Basque citizen is around 105% of the European average.

Therefore, Basque citizens are absolutely right when they express something they are fully aware of: that self-government also equals economic and social welfare.

And the reason is very simple and logical: an increasingly inter-related world that is changing at a faster and faster rate and the fact of having instruments at our disposal that enable the economic milieu to be adapted so that our economic and social players may continue to be competitive on new international and European stages, is of vital importance. In other words, Euskadi needs more new self-governing instruments in order for our businesses to be able to continue adapting quickly and with flexibility and thus face new challenges as they arise.

In our opinion, the limitations and difficulties in developing the current Statute of Gernika means slowing down developments in economic and social welfare. Both due to a lack of having achieved this and the set of constitutional laws and legal rulings that have restricted the statutory text prevent it from being developed, and have resulted in the fact that its potential has come to nothing.

To this end, without a political whim or a desire to seek confrontation, Euskadi needs greater capacities for self-government and a new framework regarding relations with the Spanish state that would provide legal security to both parties, so that we Basque institutions could then continue to improve the use of our resources in favour of the economic and social welfare of Basque citizens.

In this sense, we think that the Proposal of a Public Statute for Euskadi constitutes a good proposal for continued economic growth and in order to continue developing our social model of solidarity.

There are those who on repeated occasions are predicting chaos and economic and social hardship in the event that the Proposal should end up being approved and put into practice. This could not be further from the truth. Such voices ignore the fact that we are living in an increasingly inter-related world that is both open-minded and flexible. Tariff barriers are becoming fewer and even non-existent at the heart of the European Union and between the European Union and some non-EU European countries.

Under scrutiny, the Proposal by the Lehendakari on behalf of the Basque Government does not contemplate lifting economic walls or barriers in any way, but rather, quite the opposite. He who states otherwise does so with a narrow mind that has more in common with the imperialist structures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such detractors attempt to disseminate *economic fear* and the *horror of disaster* among

citizens, although this reasoning does not hold up to even the most minor scrutiny conducted with a minimum amount of good sense if one takes a look at the texts and taking into account the reality of the situation in which we find ourselves.

The Proposal constitutes a clear, positive channel for providing a response to the limitations and shortcomings of the current Statute of Gernika which, after 25 years, fails to provide the instruments for self-government required to continue favouring our growth and our social model of solidarity, in so doing responding to the new economic challenges and problems facing Euskadi now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**It cannot be politically subject to attitudes or stances involving non-negotiation of what the social majority in Euskadi wish to determine or aspire to.**

The procedure for drafting the Proposal carried out by the Basque Government is impeccable from the legal point of view. This is even endorsed by the recent decision of the Constitutional Court not to give leave for two appeals that sought to bring debate and discussion about it to a halt and ultimately to stifle it.

An attempt was made to prevent legitimate dialogue, discussion and contrasting ideas – something unprecedented in democracy. Moreover, this means the denial of the very essence of democracy itself.

The way we see it, these measures were never going to bring dialogue to a halt – put simply, because society demands it, society demands solutions to the problems we are facing, such as that of the normalization and pacification of Euskadi.

For UDALBILTZA, different international legal guidelines, the Statute of Gernika itself with its reservation regarding Historic Rights and the 1978 Spanish Constitution contained in its First Amendment, legally uphold the Proposal and its content. It is not a case of breaking off, but rather repairing relations between Euskadi and the Spanish state based on mutual respect, agreement and dialogue - rebuilding a relationship that is accommodated to the times while respecting the free and democratic decision-making powers and will of all Basque citizens.

In anticipating events, there are some who are already proclaiming that the Spanish Constitution will render the text emerging from this Parliament as not being worth the paper it is written on, that there will be no dialogue and that any type of progress will be prevented as a result of the force exerted by the constitutional text.

This attitude translates into contempt for the same debate, as has just become apparent in the core of this speech. And it also constitutes a bloody-minded stance, *something of a leap in the dark*, and of not wanting to even admit the reality of the situation. And now this point has been raised, we *would* like to recall that the Spanish Constitution was only endorsed by 30% of the electorate in Euskadi. Furthermore, we wish to state that holding in contempt what is maintained by the majority of the Basque population or what its Parliament approves basically restricts Basque self-government to limits supposedly set by the Constitution, although politically speaking it is a mistake to justify it from a legal standpoint, as this seriously weakens the legitimacy of the Spanish state in Euskadi.

**It requires popular endorsement or consensus, the organization and result of which is not going to bring about any social collapse in Euskadi, regardless of the eventual outcome.**

The coinciding of Basque citizens in a plebiscite in order for them to freely and democratically decide as to all these issues seems to us to be essential.

As for this point, there are also stances and attitudes opposed to this eventuality. Legislation has even been forthcoming that threatens to deprive of freedom all those who try to promote it. Such foolishness seems to us to be paradoxical and dubious from a democratic point of view.

The argument is also put forward that the Proposal itself and a possible plebiscite about it might bring about social collapse.

We do not agree with this appraisal. Direct participation on the part of citizens in an issue of this scope is both an obligation and a demand.

Statistics prove this: from a continental perspective, participation of the electorate is noticeably declining in Europe as a whole, there is a certain degree of disaffection with politics and electoral volatility is resulting in the emergence of populist movements that feed extremism.

However, it should be stated that perhaps the greatest cause for concern from the latest elections that have taken place in different parts of our continent would appear to be that representative democracy is experiencing a crisis.

It seems that in a modern information society, in which citizens have instant access to more and better information about the reality of our situation, the system of consensus among political elites is no longer accepted and the democratic ideal is not just confined to classic forms of representative democracy. Citizens now want to participate actively and have their say.

Isn't perhaps this disaffection with politics the result of reproach on the part of citizens against technocratism and political elitism that is unable to control and resolve the major issues facing the world (war, starvation and damage to the environment) while, at the same time, ignoring the true concerns of citizens?

The simplest and most direct way of involving citizens in public matters is by letting them take the floor.

The daily exercising of democracy is not the same as it was a century ago or even fifty years ago. The modern citizen is emancipated and cultured, and would evidently does not accept that their representation be delegated *en bloc* to elected individuals.

A referendum is not just an instrument, but rather, a factor of identity, as evidenced for example in the case of Switzerland. As the Helvetic Confederation has profusely resorted to the concept of referendum, the Swiss have become identified with this instrument and also with the confederal system which has given them the chance to put it into practice.

For all the previously-mentioned reasons and finding ourselves as we do at the heart of a Westernized, modern and advanced society, a plebiscite about the Proposal would constitute a sign of democratic maturity that would lend it maximum legitimacy. We are of the opinion that Basque citizens are sufficiently responsible, have the necessary maturity and are equipped with a sufficient sense of democracy and coexistence to accept the eventual outcome without any undue hardship.

Denying them the chance to have their say in this matter, however, would constitute a clear step back in democratic terms and would only help to undermine the legitimacy of the Spanish state in Euskadi.

We at UDALBILTZA are calling all political forces represented here to take part in the debate actively and with interest, putting forward proposals, arguing and counter-arguing, putting texts and ideas on the table – all this while being fully aware of the reality of the situation existing in Euskadi, in Europe and in the world at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in a climate of broad-mindedness and generosity.

You should know that in our view, the Basque People will appreciate whoever makes an effort to put solutions on the table, whereas it will censure escapist, destructive and negative attitudes.

It is time to end my speech now. And I do so with some words by Javier de Landaburu, who said:

***THERE IS NO STATE IN THE WORLD THAT IS ABLE TO ETERNALLY FACE A PEOPLE THAT DO NOT WISH TO FORM PART OF IT, HOWEVER STRONG THE STATE MAY BE AND HOWEVER SMALL THE PEOPLE MAY BE. COEXISTENCE IS NOT IMPOSED. IT IS SOUGHT:***

And Landaburu ends by responding to the framework of relations that Euskadi might well desire with regard to Spain:

***THE BASQUES WILL STATE THEIR CASE, BECAUSE THE ONLY THING THAT CANNOT BE DENIED THEM IS THE CHANCE TO DECLARE IT. AND IN SUCH CASE, DEMOCRACY OBLIGES; THEIR WILL MUST BE RESPECTED.***

Eskerrik asko.

**DECLARATION BY UDALBILTZA® IN VIEW OF THE SUMMONS TO DECLARE IN THE SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS INITIATED BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF MUNICIPALLY-ELECTED COUNCILLORS OF THE *IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE* (BASQUE NATIONALIST LEFT)**

31<sup>st</sup> August 2004

In view of the coming summons to declare before the Audiencia Nacional (Spanish High Court) against various members – most of them councillors – of the Assembly of Municipally-elected Councillors of the *izquierda abertzale* (Basque nationalist left) under charges of the alleged crime of forming part of a terrorist group, UDALBILTZA wishes to declare the following:

1. Its rejection of the dynamic promoted by the Spanish state in a genuine witch hunt in which there is no longer an ETA milieu, but rather that “everything is ETA.”

A dynamic in which the presumption of innocence is simply not being applied, in which very wide cross-sections of Basque society, representatives and cultural, political and social bodies are being vilified, insulted, boycotted and criminalized via intervention in and closure of its media and businesses, in addition to the arrest of their directors, editors and owners - processes characterized by legal insecurity, by the defencelessness caused by waits of up to several years without trial and without final rulings, trials in which rights and freedoms are being restricted and denied, causing irreparable harm to those who have to endure them.

2. Its conviction that peace and coexistence in Euskal Herria and the attainment of political aspirations of each and every one of us shall not be the result of imposition, witch hunts or violent responses, but rather from a firm defence and exercising of democratic methods and the will of those citizens who make up Euskal Herria.

Euskal Herria, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004