



A COMMITMENT TO **PEACE**

EBB CONCLUSIONS ON **PACIFICATION-NORMALISATION.**



INTRODUCTION.

EBB CONCLUSIONS ON
PACIFICATION-NORMALISATION.

**ELKARBIZITZARAKO
BAKE-BIDEAK.**

THE BASQUE NATIONAL PARTY,
EAJ-PNV, ON AN END TO VIOLENCE
THROUGH DIALOGUE AND A RETURN
TO POLITICAL NORMALITY.

POLITICAL **PROGRAMME.**

EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.
**THE EUROPEAN UNION:
A SCENARIO FOR PEACE.**

ADOS.

A FUTURE PROJECT FOR THE GLOBAL
BASQUE COUNTRY. SELF-GOVERNMENT,
INTERNATIONALISATION AND PARTICIPATION.

**THE BASQUE COUNTRY,
A EUROPEAN NATION.**
POLITICAL CHALLENGES 2015.

Since ETA emerged as an organization using violence with political intent, the Basque Nationalist Party has opposed its praxis of terror and violation of human rights. The calls and initiative implemented by the PNV in the search for peace in the Basque Country are countless.

Both in the Franco era and since the return to democracy, the PNV has strived to make an organization that should never have existed, ETA, put an end to its activity.

This is how the Basque Nationalist Party has always understood it. Beyond reprobation or socially and politically outlawing violence, it has focused its efforts on searching for ways that lead to lasting peace for our country and its citizens.

From the amnesty of 1977 to the present day, there has been no public or private occasion at which the Basque Nationalist Party has not sought the end of violence in the Basque Country.

The PNV has explored ways to dialogue and integration which, until now, have been in vain. We have tried political and social agreements which would take us closer to the supreme right of peace. Agreements like the Ajuria Enea Pact; direct contacts such as those carried out in Lizarra-Garazi or, ultimately, in the Loiola conversations.

The PNV has spared no effort or sacrifice to overcome a conflict that has filled our society with unnecessary pain and suffering.

The Basque Nationalist Party has no regrets about the lack of success and frustrations of the failed attempts. It has learned from them to continue analysing alternatives that allow us to see the light at the end of the tunnel of violence.

Peace is the supreme right. There are no political considerations that attach a price to it. Peace for the sake of peace. That is the key to the solution.

And this is what we have stated in our doctrinal documents: Conclusion on Pacification-Normalisation 1997 (Conclusiones sobre Pacificación-Normalización 1997); Path to Coexistence – October 2005 (“Elkarbizitzarako bake bidea” -octubre de 2005); Policy Papers 2000-2004-2007 (Ponencias Políticas de 2000-2004-2007); European Elections Programme - “Peace” Plan 2009 (Programa Elecciones Europeas -Plan “Peace” 2009); “ADOS” Project-Initiative 2010 – 2011 (Proyecto-Iniciativa “ADOS” 2010- 2011; Euskadi European Nation” General Assembly 2011 (“Euskadi Nación Europea”-Asamblea General 2011).

Achieving peace is a constant in our political activity. And it will remain so until the end. An end that we believe should be immediate. Bakea orain – Peace now and forever.

The International Conference to be held on Monday 17, with leading players and protagonists, is a unique opportunity to end the cycle of violence in the Basque Country once and for all. So that the peace we feel with the tips of our fingers does not slip through our hands. That is our commitment.

Basque society is hopefully awaiting the final outcome. Bakea orain – Peace now and forever. Now is the time.


IÑIGO URKULLU

President of Basque Nationalist Party.



EBB CONCLUSIONS
ON **PACIFICATION-
NORMALISATION.**

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA
(EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EAJ-PNV)
1 FEBRUARY 1997.



EBB CONCLUSIONS ON PACIFICATION-NORMALISATION.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA
(EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EAJ-PNV)
1 FEBRUARY 1997.

EAJ-PNV is fully aware of the nature of the Basque society in which it seeks to implement its project. Consequently, it recognizes and assumes that Basque society, like any other modern society, in which individuals aspire to develop and exercise their personal freedom to the utmost, is a plural society.

It also recognises and assumes that the plurality that characterizes any modern society has special connotations in the specific Basque case, insofar as it affects its citizens' awareness of their own nationhood, as well as the manner and intensity with which its different territories, collectively, live this same plural awareness. For this reason:

1º. EAJ-PNV advocates, in its founding aspiration, the achievement of Sovereignty for the Basque people, the gradual exercise of self-determination, embodied today in the development of the Statute of Autonomy of Gernika, the achievement of territorial unity and political, economic and culture empowerment of our people, considering that this is the task to be carried out by Basque nationalism in the forthcoming years.

After the forced suppression of the statutory *foral* system, so-called Basque nationalism is an expression of the Basque struggle, whose true protagonist for the last hundred years has been the PNV.

ETA, which emerged during the Franco dictatorship, is a violent undemocratic expression of this struggle, which has adopted the modern fighting techniques of minorities, known as terrorism.

2. We are a party that in a hundred years of existence has demonstrated its unequivocal democratic conduct in our internal procedures and in our political activity.

Never, in one hundred years, have we fallen into the temptation of force to achieve political ends, despite being banned, persecuted, imprisoned and separated from social life for almost fifty of those hundred years.

Moreover, we have always condemned any group or movement that seeks to supplant the will of the people with armed struggle.

3. In EAJ-PNV we are convinced that in addition to ethical convictions about the use of violence, ETA's persistence in its "violent alternative" is causing serious damage to Euskadi, the Basque Country, here and now; to its construction, its progress, its social stability, its economy and its image.

There is also a widespread belief, even among the police forces, that this kind of radical organizations, that use violence to achieve political ends and are backed by a certain level of social support, are phenomena that cannot be solved solely by police methods. That means that they end at some kind of dialogue and negotiation table.

4. We baulk at the prospect of being the last portion of the Western world in which irrational violence used for political ends remains, without being able to find a way that enables us to approach the solution to this conflict, which is choking us as a people and subjecting us to a devastating future of hatred and confrontation.

We are obliged, because we are nationalists committed to the construction of our nation, to achieve peace.

From the basic principle of respect for the human rights of all people, rejecting violence with all our energy and supporting the work of the Ertzaintza (Basque police force), demanded and supported not only by justice but by Basque society, which does not tolerate murder, kidnapping or vandalism, we must seek and facilitate the way to solution, whether it be called dialogue, negotiation or whatever.

5. Hence, the PNV is willing to risk and move towards peace, without reaching the point of ceasing to be what we are, by adopting or being led to strategies, tactics or forms of collaboration which are incompatible with our political nature, already well defined for over a century. That means without abandoning or distorting our alternative, or our political strategy.

6. Regardless of our deep scepticism about the possibility of ETA and the State being able to solve the conflict that affects us, the truth is that ETA has always thought about and requested direct exclusive negotiation with the State. A State represented first by the Spanish Army, then by State powers and now by the Spanish Government. Moreover, ETA has always rejected any intervention by the PNV or any other, attributing the PNV only with the role of clearing the way.

In its negotiating demands, ETA has introduced different formulas over recent years: the KAS alternative, advocated for a long time and finally its “peace offer”, which it called “democratic alternative” in April 1995.

This “alternative”, the subject of an extensive propaganda campaign, was delivered to the González Government in August 1995 by the Argentinean mediator Perez Esquivel, chosen by ETA and accepted by that Government. More recently, the Aznar Government rejected mediation by Esquivel once and for all.

The different governments have not rejected the possibility of an end through negotiation or dialogue, they have simply insisted that ETA must lay down its arms or stop killing in order to be able to consider negotiation and, in any case, not political content.

7. PNV has never sought and should never seek to enter a negotiation process like the one described above, unless requested to do so by the parties. Considering ETA’s clinging to the ETA-State negotiating scheme, EAJ-PNV states its unwillingness to remain inactive if faced with a permanent impasse in the said possible bilateral negotiations. Therefore, it reserves the right to take the positions or actions that its own responsibility requires of it.

8. Consequently, we believe that we must express to the Government, inasmuch as it considers itself fully responsible for democratic order and social peace, and to ETA, in that it demands negotiation with the Government in order to abandon its violent methods:

- a) That this situation has to finally cease.
- b) That any serious attempt in this direction will have our support, without any claim to leadership.
- c) That we are going to take part in any independent and popular opinion movements that have the sincere and rigorous aim of creating a climate conducive to conflict resolution, so that, in any case, Basque society can draw its own conclusions about the sincerity and the effort made by the parties involved in trying to find a solution.

9. EAJ-PNV recognizes the positive effects of the Ajuria Enea Pact, whose chief virtue was to make Basque society aware of the senselessness of violence. This Pact has often been treated in a reductionist manner and, instead of having been developed as a genuine offer of normalization and pacification, has been used, by some, to set up and project a “front against terrorism”.

Taking into account that the differences which have arisen among the members of the Pact have been and are important, we understand that the Pact, if it really wants to contribute towards creating active peacemaking movements, needs revitalising and updated redrafting, which might lead to expansion in the near future.

10. In view of other international experiences trying to change the course of equally or fiercer conflicts than ours, EAJ-PNV does not dismiss the possibility of any contacts or initiatives, with other political parties, labour unions or social groups, that might be required to guide the solution to the current situation of violence in Euskadi.

11. In any case, EAJ-PNV shares the Basque people’s desire for PEACE. And it will not be convinced that some political parties want it as much as they claim until it clearly verifies that the problem of violence is removed from electoral interests and power-opposition dialectics.

The road to peace and political normalisation might be long and complicated. EAJ-PNV considers it a political priority to achieve peace and to achieve it by the shortest possible route, within a framework of dignity and freedom.

As we stated in 1992, “the risk of failure bears no comparison to any benefit for peace, however small in might be”.

EAJ-PNV states its determination not to stop in the search for peace.



ELKARBIZITZARAKO BAKE-BIDEAK.

THE BASQUE NATIONAL
PARTY, EAJ-PNV, ON AN END
TO VIOLENCE THROUGH
DIALOGUE AND A RETURN
TO POLITICAL NORMALITY.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA
(EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EAJ-PNV)
10 OCTOBER 2005.

ELKARBIZITZARAKO BAKE-BIDEAK.

THE BASQUE NATIONAL PARTY, EAJ-PNV,
ON AN END TO VIOLENCE THROUGH DIALOGUE
AND A RETURN TO POLITICAL NORMALITY.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EAJ-PNV)
10 OCTOBER 2005.

INTRODUCTION. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BASQUE NATIONAL PARTY, EAJ-PNV.

I. BASQUE SOCIETY IN SEARCH OF PATHS TOWARDS PEACE.

1. A FRESH OPPORTUNITY.

- Factors propitiating peace.
- The courage of society.
- Towards a just peace.
- The responsibility of everyone.
- A victory for everyone.
- A programme of reconciliation.
- Acknowledgement and repair for the victims.
- A time for politics.

2. VALUES ALREADY ACCEPTED.

- Our ethical and civil commitment in the face of violence.
- The nature of the conflict in the Basque Country.
- The democratic struggle against violence.
- The value of peace.
- In search of a democratic exit.
- The Basque people have a right to peace.
- Political co-existence is the challenge.

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF VIOLENCE.

- The key to the process.
- No channelling of the political process.
- A shared appraisal of the cessation of violence.
- Prisons policy and reinsertion at the service of peace.
- Commitments to the building of a peace process.

II. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL NORMALISATION.

1. TO MAKE A POLITICAL AGREEMENT POSSIBLE.

- The current and future frameworks of co-existence.
- An agreement based on acceptance of the rules of democracy.
- An agreement which respects the pluralism of Basque society.
- Towards an agreement scenario.
- The right to decide and commitment to the pact.
- Commitment to respect for the decision taken by Basque society.
- A democratic conception of territoriality.

2. THE NEGOTIATION TABLE AND AN AGREEMENT FOR POLITICAL NORMALISATION.

- Undertakings for the agreement.
- When, who and where.
- On both tables.

3. NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF THE CONSULTATION.

- Giving a voice to the Basque people.
- Conditions for the consultation.

INTRODUCTION.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BASQUE NATIONAL PARTY, EAJ-PNV.

We present this document with an unequivocal vocation of service to the country and with a great desire for peace. We are encouraged by the undertaking to move forward the political initiative which the

women and men of the Basque National Party accept at this historic crossroads, in the awareness that Basque society, which has entrusted us with political leadership in Euskadi, demands of EAJ-PNV leaders the special exercise of responsibility and flexibility, clear convictions, the ability to negotiate, diplomacy and humility. And, most particularly, it demands we take the initiative, that we put forward our own projects and help reconcile them with others in order to reach an agreement acceptable to all, with the participation and commitment of social agents. We are aware of the importance of the task, the responsibility we are taking on, and the risks this entails. But we would betray ourselves and, an even more serious offence, the majority of Basques who have placed their trust in us, if we drew back to avoid the vertigo of responsibility. We take up the challenge with our gaze fixed on a future of peace and a return to political normality for our people.

Euskadi yearns for peace, and also aspires to political normalisation. For too long we have been immersed in deep conflict. A political conflict which has installed deep collective dissatisfaction, and we must all work together to seek a dignified exit. EAJ-PNV, the Basque National Party, founded as the political expression of that conflict, has the historical memory to take up the challenge. Our party was created 110 years ago with the objective of guaranteeing the existence of the Basque Country as a differentiated nation and retrieving sovereignty, following the abolition of our system of fuero laws in the 19th century. Since that time, generations of Basque men and women have suffered the consequences of this political conflict. Those who suffered in war, in prison, exile, political persecution and economic hardship, when their only crime was defending democracy, freedom and the national cause of Euskadi.

The Basque cause, unfortunately, has also been used cruelly against Basque society itself: calls for freedom have killed, extorted and violated within our country and elsewhere, staining the national Basque cause with blood and opprobrium.

Those who suffered repression for defending democracy and freedom in the Basque Country and the victims of violence and terrorism call out to us, and call for a solution to the Basque Country today, for the Basque Nation of the 21st century. And we place the emphasis on a solution, not the solution, because doubtless a permanent solution does not exist, nor will it be the only solution.

We are a modern society in transformation, immersed in larger spaces. This is the framework within which we must search for an agreement setting out the basic parameters for peace and co-existence, to allow the Basque society of today to decide their political and social status. An open, modern agreement, including formulae which respect the wishes of the Basque people as expressed by the usual mechanisms of advanced democracies, and which also includes the supra-national realities around us with which we must interrelate to build a better future together.

I. BASQUE SOCIETY IN SEARCH OF PATHS TOWARDS PEACE.

1. A FRESH OPPORTUNITY.

Factors propitiating peace. Some of the factors which have helped design and provide the first glimpses of a definitive end to violence in the Basque Country are as follows:

- Certain changes in Basque society, changes in mindsets, sensitivities and public awareness – nor must we forget various pacifist expressions, mobilisation in favour of victims and the contributions of a number of forums for dialogue;
- Social processes in relation to generational change, consolidation of the welfare state or new values among young people, turning violence into a dramatic extravagance;
- The irreversibility of the rejection of violence by a majority of Basques, including considerable sectors of ETA's social environment, many of whom at least question the pragmatic use of violence;
- The Kursaal Declaration as a catalyst to the calls of our people for peace, the wishes of the majority to build Euskadi on a national and social level, whose principles formed the basis for the Proposal for a New Statute approved by an absolute majority in the Basque Parliament on 30 December 2004;
- The work of self-government carried through by the Basque Government, insofar as this has consolidated national Basque identity within the institutions, and the tasks carried out by the institutions to ethically de-legitimise the use of violence;
- The change of government in Madrid, signalling the end of confrontation and the perspective of a policy based on dialogue and respect for plurality;
- Certain sections of the Anoeta Declaration signed by the National left in its entirety, excluding ETA from interlocution to secure an agreement for political co-existence;
- The Downing Street Declaration, the Stormont agreements and the peace process in Ireland, which have initiated the search for a solution to a conflict of similar characteristics to our own;
- The effect on ETA of what has been dubbed international terrorism following the attacks of 11 September, which provoked particular sensitivity and rejection by the public at large, and also reinforced common judicial and policing space in Europe and worldwide;
 - a long period with no killings;
 - the political juncture following the last elections to the Basque Parliament, where we must take account of the following:
 - No-one wishes to be, nor should they be, excluded from major decisions which affect society.
 - Integrating solutions are required, solutions which are articulated on the basis of centrality and understanding.

The courage of Basque society. A particularly important factor in the creation of this political climate has been the maturity of our society. To quote the Coalition Agreement between EAJ-PNV/EA and EB-Berdeak, “the immense majority of the Basque people rejects violence and terrorism as instruments of political action, they are committed to solidarity with the victims, and advocate dialogue and respect as methods to solve conflicts”.

Much of this climate is due to factors which go beyond the juncture or the actions of a legislature, and also beyond the task of a government or a party in isolation. Violence is a problem which can only be solved to any degree of satisfaction between everyone involved, although they may be involved to a greater or lesser extent and hold more or less responsibility. Those who do not see the situation as clearly as this will find it hard to understand where the solution lies.

Towards a just peace. Together we have all opened up the horizons of a just peace, “within a framework of dignity and liberty”, as the *Euzkadi Buru Batzar* said in a statement issued on the first anniversary of the break in what was known as a cease-fire by ETA¹. A just peace which will be a victory for local citizens - in other words, an opportunity for repair, reconciliation and cohesion within a society whose democratic convictions (non-violence and dialogue with no exclusions) are the main tools of pacification. The message conveyed by Basque society is extremely clear: peace must be built between all parties, with no sterile blockages or dogmatisms. This is an opportunity which must be seized with intelligence, modesty and cooperation on all sides.

The responsibility of everyone. Ahead of us lies a path we must take with enthusiasm, but not naïvely or with excess voluntarism, because we have learned from our own successes and mistakes, and indeed from those of others. No-one has a magic formula, and no-one should exclude anyone else. Within a peace process ETA and the State are not the only agents operating, since building peace is a social task involving a host of political and social agents who are essential for a successful process of peace and reconciliation.

EAJ-PNV accepts its role in a legitimate and responsible fashion, in accordance with the trust placed in us by thousands of Basque citizens, and we intend to constitute a basic reference in the construction of a just and lasting peace for our people.

A victory for everyone. In recent years, we have worked honestly and sincerely to keep the problem of violence out of partyist traffic. Now we must turn a successful peace process into a victory for everyone.

A programme of reconciliation. The extent of the damage caused by violence is so great that the return to normality in social life will not be complete even when the actual damage has disappeared, because the wounds remain in people and in the social framework. Thus it may be understood there is an all-consuming need for a Comprehensive Plan for Peace and Reconciliation, undertaken by the Basque tripartite because “it is necessary to work within a culture of peace, which means, in addition to the rejection of violence, living and internalising ethnic references such as respect for individual and collective human rights, equality, solidarity, social justice, respect for diversity and active defence of civil and political liberties”².

The Basque National Party accepts any responsibility which may fall to it in the attempts to achieve this objective. To this end, “we will have to regenerate lost trust in order to bring into our society the spirit of self-criticism, humility to ask forgiveness and generosity to forgive”³. This is a task which cannot be carried out by the institutions alone – it requires active commitment from political parties and social agents.

Acknowledgement and repair for the victims. The victims of terrorism and violence occupy a central location in the Peace and Reconciliation Plan to be moved forward by all because, beyond personal solidarity, there must be social acknowledgement of unjust suffering; without this, it is impossible for rightful reconciliation to take place between us. EAJ-PNV supports the resolutions passed by the Human Rights Commission and approved by a plenary session of the Basque Parliament in June 2004.

A time for politics. The Coalition Agreement in the current Basque Government states that “We are entering a new phase. We have a fresh opportunity. Now no-one can look away. Basque society would never forgive them for it. It is time for Politics with a capital P. And for Politics to be heard, the guns must be silent. We are not talking about setting pre-conditions for dialogue – we are simply stating two premises which are shared by the majority of political formations. The first is that we must discuss the root of conflicts to solve terrorism. The second is that Peace has no political price, but Politics can do a lot for Peace”. We call for this posture in response to imposition, fanaticism, immobilism, or a lack of imagination, in our awareness that politics is only an instrument of pacification when it is practised with no closed formats or dogmatisms, with that willingness to compromise and reach integrating agreements which characterises our best traditions.

2. VALUES ALREADY ACCEPTED.

Our ethical, political and civil commitment in the face of violence. The current expectations of peace are possible because Basque society and the democratic institutions have shown their strength and superiority in the face of violence. It is the victory of ethical principles, even when it is obvious that much delicate work lies ahead.

In these moments preceding what could be a final end to violence, we must point to the profound political error and moral damage which terrorism has caused to so many people and to the Basque national cause, to its lack of legitimacy, its political ungainliness and absolute immorality. Pacification will be complete when not only the guns fall silent, but when the impositionist posture which attempts to justify them ceases, the posture that anything goes to achieve certain political objectives. The approach of ‘no to violence’/‘yes to dialogue’, in other words, a move towards peace and democratic methods, does not require anyone to renounce their own political aspirations.

¹ Pronouncement by the Basque National Party’s Executive Committee (Euzkadi Buru Batzar, EBB) on the anniversary of the break in ETA’s cease-fire (28 December 2000).

² Speech by the Basque Prime Minister during the Investiture Debate in the Basque Parliament, 22 June 2005.

³ Ditto.

The nature of the conflict in the Basque Country. In the Basque Country there is an old unsolved political conflict –which, it must be said, predates ETA’s violence– to be interpreted as non-acceptance of a political entity with the right to decide, the solution to which requires a complex set of political agreements and democratic respect for the wishes of the Basque people. This conflict cannot be interpreted on the criteria of ETA, thus giving us to understand that the statute process has been illegitimate, that resorting to violence has an explanation to justify it, even though the history of the transition of power, the text of the constitution itself, or development of autonomy may well leave much to be desired. ETA did not respect either the majority consensus of Basque society in relation to the Statute, nor did it respect the voice of the Basque People it claims to defend. The conflict of identities and the conflict of violence are two different things; terrorism is not the natural consequence of a political conflict. It is likewise unacceptable that its persistence is used to ignore or deny the existence of a conflict of a political nature or “profound Basque contention”⁴ which must be carefully studied. It is for this very reason that our ethical, political and civic commitment does not annul our determination to seek an exit from our political conflict in the form of dialogue.

The democratic struggle against violence. At this crossroads signalling a host of opportunities for peace and reconciliation, albeit not exempt from certain threats, our democratic convictions and a humanist sense of politics and justice oblige us to state that it is not possible either to use any means in the fight against terrorism, and here we wish to denounce the serious excesses of State institutions. Rights have been violated in the fight against ETA in an attempt by State powers to destroy the organisation, seriously blemishing the democratic system. Much-needed social reconciliation would not be possible either if we did not speak out against the serious attacks carried out by the *Batallón Vasco-español* and the *GAL*, and judicial “errors”, with no acknowledgement or repair to their victims.

In recent years the most sensitive portions of the democratic system have been reached, precisely those portions which point to its quality: parties have been declared illegal, newspapers shut down, preventive jail terms have been issued for pacific and innocent people, the separation of powers has been filed down, and the excuse of ETA has been used to attack democratic Basque nationalism and Basque institutions in the most implacable, offensive and anti-democratic fashion.

The anti-democratic actions of the “Aznar era” with the blessing of the Spanish Socialist Party, and its consequences in particular, some of which are still in place today, must finally be overcome if we are to return to normal social and political relations in the Basque Country.

The value of peace. At the present time, all political formations accept that a just peace must be based on the principle that, in a democracy, decisions are taken solely by the people. The contrary would be ethically reprehensible, socially unacceptable, and a political contradiction. A peace process ought to be “understandable, acceptable and plausible for democratic public opinion”⁵. When we have defended an end to violence through dialogue, we have done this from the historical experience that this type of conflict ends in a phase of dialogue and agreement, something quite different to giving an armed organisation decision-making rights which belong only to Basque men and women.

In 1988 the Pact of Ajuria Enea had already stated that the persistence of terrorism could not be used either as an excuse to slow down development of the Statute of Autonomy, or as an argument to secure greater levels of self-gov-

ernment than democratically agreed. The origin of the need to separate an end to violence and an end to political conflict is the consideration that conflict is not the cause explaining the persistence of violence, but rather the consequence of the fact that the current judicial and political framework does not satisfy a substantial portion of Basque society. Thus it is necessary to open up dialogue between the representatives of popular wishes in order to reach a political agreement with a broad social basis. "It is for this reason that any Normalisation Agreement must contemplate the democratic principle that Basque society has the right to be consulted on its own future, in a scenario free from violence and impositions, with respect for plurality and commitment to the pact through mutual recognition. Here we understand that a Normalisation Agreement must find its channels of expression within a specific model of political self-government and social construction of the Basque Country, and also within a legal framework in relation to the State"⁶.

In search of a dignified democratic exit. An end to violence through dialogue means a democratic exit, an appeal to the entire scope of judicial apparatus, to examine all the possibilities open to us, and not shut off certain routes. The proposal to create two areas of dialogue starts up a process whose initiative and decision are in the hands of the legitimate political representatives, and ultimately in the hands of Basque society. Our future decisions and any political agreements which we may reach as political parties will not be conditioned by ETA, which found itself unable even to accept the majority wishes of the Basque people, or the democratic legitimacy of the institutions we have created. In view of these considerations, we are certain that the Basques are willing to work and generously drive forward towards peace and reconciliation.

The Basque people have a right to peace. Peace means the consolidation of justice and respect for human rights. Peace begins with the absence of violence, and this depends on those who use it in its different forms. Peace is also social repair of the unjust suffering which violence and terrorism have caused to so many of our people. Peace also means bringing an end to the suffering of many people associated with ETA. To be fair and lasting, peace must necessarily involve reconciliation, requiring large doses of generosity from those who have suffered most and from society as a whole.

No political project can be considered as a condition for peace, simply because, above and beyond any specific political project are the decisions and the wishes of the Basque people, decisions and wishes which are at the origins of today's institutional frameworks. These must be respected, in the same way as in the future there must be respect for the various territoriality formulae or projects for political co-existence, through respect for the wishes of Basque society.

Political co-existence is the challenge. In accordance with the humanist and democratic principles which have guided the Basque National Party at all times, we consider that co-existence and cohesion of Basque society are major challenges to our political activity. Not only in view of our undertaking to proceed with the social construction of Euskadi, but also due to the national

⁴ Expression used in the Pact of Ajuria Enea.

⁵ "For an agreement between the negotiating parties in relation to an end to violence through dialogue. Working Document" (17 March 1998).

⁶ EAJ-PNV/EA/EB-Berdeak Coalition Agreement (27 June 2005).

dimension involved in an identity construction process of the Basque Nation as a community and a collective political unit.

It is not possible to build a cohesive and integrated nation upon either the confrontation of identities or upon imposition of a project which does not meet with the approval of Basque society, expressed by free and democratic consultation in a violence-free scenario. Thus conflicts of rights, of values and interests between the various identities, are permanent and inevitable, and what we must do is establish viable arrangements and compromises between the parties. Within this context, the value of pluralism in Basque society is not a lesser evil, but a consubstantial, enriching, positive feature of our society.

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF VIOLENCE.

The key to the process. Since it considers that politics and violence are radically incompatible, EAJ-PNV proposes the democratic demand that the resolutory dialogue for the end of the process should not be the consequence of violence, but rather of the cessation of violence.

The resolution approved in the Madrid Parliament by all parliamentary groups, with the exception of the PP, in May 2005, literally echoing point 10 of the Pact of Ajuria Enea, stated that “if the proper conditions are fulfilled for an end to violence through dialogue, based on a clear wish to put an end to such violence and with unequivocal attitudes which could lead to this conviction, we support processes of dialogue between State powers and those who decide to abandon violence, with respect at all times for the irrevocable democratic principle that political matters must be resolved solely through the legitimate representatives of the wishes of the people...”.

In his recent Investiture Speech, the Basque Prime Minister stated that “ETA must take a decisive step and, clearly and unequivocally, declare its wish to put an end to the violence. Basque political parties must accept their responsibility and undertake to provide the Basque people with a ‘Political Normalisation Agreement’ in relation to matters at the root of political conflict”.

No channelling of the political process. Respect for what Basque women and men decide, directly represented by their political parties through a consultation, is incompatible with supervision or conditioning exercised by an armed organisation. Political parties and representative institutions are the only entities which guarantee the democratic nature of the process, with consequent resolute negotiation with no impositions, with respect for plurality, giving all projects an equal chance of being carried through, and giving the last word to the people⁷.

A shared appraisal of the cessation of violence. The new political era urges us to share criteria and appraisals of the validity of abandoning violence. We feel it is necessary to draw up an agreed definition between political parties in relation to the abandonment of violence and shared ascertainment of its authenticity.

Prisons policy and reinsertion at the service of peace. In democracy, prisoners deserve basic rights which the authorities are bound to respect and protect in all circumstances. If one feature characterises the State of Rights in relation to its prisons policy, it is a constant orientation towards social reinsertion.

Thus, flexible application of the penal code, prisoners serving jail sentences near home, consideration of their families and close relations as agents of peace and reconciliation, and under no circumstances as persons who are *collaterally guilty* – these are today, more than ever, essential features at the service of pacification. This does not require any pre-conditions. It is therefore the time to take a decisive step towards a new focus which is consensuated, dynamic and flexible in relation to prisons policy, and here we reiterate the Basque National Party's commitment to the challenge. In any case, this is something which in our opinion should have already been done, in accordance with the resolutions approved by the Basque Parliament in 1997, and by the Spanish Parliament in 1998.

Commitments to the building of a peace process. A priority objective for EAJ-PNV is to put an end to violence, and guarantee no violation in the Basque Country of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

The following are essential for this objective to be achieved:

- Encouraging the use of all democratic means to guarantee security, freedom and human life, and to show support and solidarity to those under threat and to the victims of violence.
- Encouraging social mobilisation against violence and in defence of life, of all the basic rights of all people, and defending a culture of human rights with no exceptions, based on the inalienable dignity of human beings, protecting and paying particular attention to the human rights of people deprived of their freedom.
- Carrying through policies of relaxation, communication and political and social conciliation to overcome any kind of threat, incommunication, exclusion or sectarianism.

And also, from the point of view of the defence of basic rights and liberties:

- Making a contribution to the democratic liberties, the basic rights and basic guarantees of a State of Rights.
- Encouraging the use of all political, judicial and institutional means to defend democratic principles and re-establish the bases of the democratic system.
- Encouraging social mobilisation against cutbacks in liberties, and enacting mechanisms to denounce the situation of democratic involution on the international front.
- Encouraging legislative measures to strengthen the democratic liberties, the basic rights and basic guarantees of a State of Rights.
- Adopting political initiatives to prevent the exclusion of part of our society, and helping implement processes which allow all sectors of society to participate in equal conditions of democracy.

We must also tread the path of reconciliation. As the Basque Prime Minister stated in his investiture speech on 22 June 2005: "We must regenerate lost trust in order to bring into our society the spirit of self-criticism, humility to ask forgiveness and generosity to forgive. We all have the moral obligation to make our own contributions to overcome suffering and to walk the path of reconciliation together, because this will form the sturdiest basis of our co-existence as a society".

⁷ Lizarra Declaration. Key points towards a solution (12 September 1998).

II. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL NORMALISATION.

1. TO MAKE A POLITICAL AGREEMENT POSSIBLE.

The current and future frameworks of co-existence. We advocate respect for the wishes of the people and for the right of Basque society to decide its political future in a free and democratic fashion.

We undertake to reach an agreement in relation to recognition of this right and the procedures which ensure respect for the decision or decisions taken by the Basque people.

Within a context of loyalty, free of dogmatisms, the Basque National Party undertakes to reach an agreement for exercise of free decision and respect for the will of the Basque people, which may be shared between the various political sensitivities in this country.

An agreement based on acceptance of the rules of democracy. Proclaiming respect for the current institutional frameworks, and the real possibility of modifying these, means accepting the legitimacy of all political projects and ideas which, in due observance of human rights, are upheld by democratic means. This principle affects both the various approaches to configuration of the State and the various forms of Basque political and institutional organisation, because in a democracy everything should eventually be possible. In other words, not only should it be possible to defend any project which shows respect for human rights and freedom, but it must be possible to implement it, provided it enjoys the required support of society and uses democratic procedures.

An agreement which respects the pluralism of Basque society. EAJ-PNV respects the pluralism of Basque society. We want the right of the Basque people to decide their own future to be conceived as a space for encounters, and we wish to arrange it so that everyone involved can feel it and recognise it as a shared right. Respect for the wishes of the Basque people means respect for different feelings of identity, and attempting to integrate them within a format of agreement and compromise. This is a challenge whereby we intend to solve the historical-political Basque conflict with no reduction in the social cohesion and integration of our country.

Consolidation of this discourse favouring positive recognition of the collective rights of the Basque People must be accompanied by active commitment on the part of the State towards its plurinationality⁸. Only in this way will it be possible to overcome the conviction installed in certain social spheres that Basque national aspirations conceal some form of democratic illegitimacy, a conviction manifested with greater strength at junctures such as the present, which has already been dubbed a second transition.

Towards an agreement scenario. Our objective is to reach an agreement of political normalisation defining a model for co-existence, and a framework of relations with the State featuring effective bilateralism, guarantees and conditions of loyalty.

The pact and non-imposition is the procedure which constitutes the rules of play of advanced societies. It is worthwhile considering at this point that

the Irish agreements accepted the principle of differentiating the political movements of the majorities as against the broad agreement needed to define a community, and some precautionary measures were drawn up in connection with what was to be understood as “sufficient consensus”. In our case, this would have to be agreed and not set unilaterally by the State.

The right to decide and commitment to the pact. We have linked the ability to decide to the commitment to agreements, as did the judicial principle drawn up by the Canadian Supreme Court, and as in the Proposal for a New Autonomy Statute approved by the Basque Parliament. We are in favour of posing an exercise of sovereignty in spaces for encounters where matters must be solved through dialogue and agreement. The multilateralism which the most progressive positions demand for the new configuration of the world may also be demanded as an organisational principle for our societies. The pact between Basques and with the State is a procedure which, in fact, is linked to our best traditions of *fuero* rights, on which we built our two Statute experiences – the Statute of 1936 and the Statute of Gernika.

Commitment to respect for the decision taken by Basque society.

We propose the following two commitments:

- **not imposing** an agreement less widely acceptable than those currently in force, and
- **not preventing** an agreement more widely acceptable than those currently in force.

Not imposing guarantees acceptance, on the criteria of social contribution and political integration, of the wishes of Basque society; *not preventing* avoids veto by the Spanish parliament. This is, therefore, acceptance on principle of the most democratic and most integrating principle.

A democratic conception of territoriality as a basis to constitute a political entity. We in the Basque National Party are working towards the political union of all Basques, and our democratic convictions would never allow us to accept any modifications to political decisions originating from blackmail or imposition. Only citizens from each of the Basque territories and their legitimate representatives may take decisions as to the possibility of forming a single political-institutional community or expressing any other relationship mechanism and so, in any case, respect for and effective exercise of such decisions must be guaranteed, as stipulated in the Proposal for a New Statute.

EAJ-PNV aspires in democratic fashion to political articulation between the judicial and political spheres of the Basque Country, and we intend to work towards this using politics, with no impositions whatsoever.

To speak of common cultural, linguistic or political links does not mean defining the country in a determinist or essentialist manner, nor does it place the territory above its actual inhabitants, regardless of what the people decide at each historic moment, as set out in the Proposal on the Right of the Basque People to Self-determination approved by the Basque Parliament on 15 February 1990.

⁸ See the text of the Barcelona Declaration, July 1998.

We also support the agreement at the Egino Conference to “accept the decision-making capacity of this plural reality consisting of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, the Community of Navarra and the Basque territories in Aquitaine, provided a clear majority of the citizens from each of these areas expresses, also in a clear fashion, their wish to participate in a concurrent decision process”.

The wishes of the inhabitants of each of the three judicial-political territories of the Basque Country must be respected. From this point, it is just as legitimate to propugn a common political structure for all Basques as it is to propose a free option of another institutional expression, differentiated or articulated between the different Basque territories.

We wish to make explicit in all conviction, although aware of our more limited political representation in Nafarroa and Iparralde, the Basque National Party’s undertaking to work with other political formations and with social agents in both territories in order to reach agreements and implement a joint working methodology and procedure, and consequently create the required forums for political encounters and social participation to reach a broad political agreement which respects the decisions of the people of Nafarroa and Iparralde and, through respect for these wishes, makes it possible to create bodies and institutions common to the other Basque territories.

2. THE NEGOTIATION TABLES AND AN AGREEMENT FOR POLITICAL NORMALISATION.

Undertakings for the agreement. To create a forum or a debating space for parties, we first need to (re)construct the framework of trust between Basque political parties. The objective is that configuration and methodology be irreversible or, at least, make it extremely difficult to go back, and gradually bind the participants to an undertaking in search of a solution. One particularly interesting contribution is that submitted by the Egino Conference, which the Basque National Party undertakes to share with the other political parties. There are a total of seven undertakings, as follows:

- respect for human rights,
- respect for pluralism,
- respect for the wishes of the people,
- acceptance of exclusively democratic and pacific means,
- dialogue with no exclusions,
- negotiated and consensuated execution of any decisions adopted, and
- establishment of measures for arbitration and guarantees for any disagreement as to the interpretation and application of agreements reached.

The Basque Prime Minister set out five principles in his Investiture Speech, and we stand by these: the first two put forward the framework of conditions according to which we can draw up how, when and where; the third, fourth and fifth focus on the requirements which would have to be met to obtain a truly shared political agreement:

1. The principle of non-violence and the undertaking to respect human rights, using, solely and exclusively, political and democratic methods.

2. The principle of non-exclusion and the undertaking to respect the right to participate of all political, social and territorial sensitivities that wish to do so.
3. The democratic principle and the undertaking to respect the will of the people and exercise of Basque society's right to decide.
4. The principle of equality and the undertaking to accept that all political projects defended democratically must find a way to be included as part of the judicial system.
5. The principle of respect for plurality and the undertaking not to impose/not to prevent the exercise of the various feelings of identity present within Basque society.

Finally, the EAJ-PNV/EA/EB-Berdeak Agreement of June 2005 refers to certain aspects or contents, the terms of which should be defined, debated and agreed within the framework of discussion between the parties. These are, among others, acknowledgement of the Basque Country as a decision-making entity; territoriality; the right to decide, and bilateral agreement.

EAJ-PNV wishes to state its undertaking to participate in an active fashion to allow these tasks to be carried out and to put forward proposals to be debated between parties in order to reach agreements with a broad social and political base.

EAJ-PNV will contribute its postures on these matters to the debate, as set out in the Proposal for a New Statute. This contains the basic consensus reached by the tripartite (EAJ-PNV, EA and EB) with regard to matters and concepts such as the nature of the Basque People as a political entity, the right to decide and exercise of this right, territoriality, the framework for relations with the State and the pact as an undertaking⁹.

On this basis, the Basque National Party undertakes to strive anew towards understanding and agreement. In consonance with our democratic and institutional tradition, the new political juncture obliges us to take on a new negotiation process towards settlement of a judicial and political slot for the Basque Country in the immediate future. Without waiving any of our ideological and doctrinal aspirations, EAJ-PNV takes up the challenge of reaching a broad integrating agreement in relation to such matters.

When, who and where. The first of the above principles conditions the phases and commencement of the resolute phase, and to this end it is necessary either that ETA has ceased its activity or that Batasuna and EHAK have called upon it to do so. It is essential that conditions exist to allow all political parties to sit at the negotiation table and that no-one is missing, except through self-exclusion, which would not be desirable. Maximum participation will make debates more representative, and this will give us a better chance of reaching more integrating and stable agreements.

On both tables. Differentiating governability, a return to political normality and pacification and the forums for this have been a constant feature of the Agreements drawn up by EAJ-PNV, EA and EB-Berdeak (2001 and 2005). Batasuna also took a step in this direction when it posed its *two table* scenario in the Anoeta Declaration. The Socialist Party has also accepted the two differentiated areas of dialogue.

⁹ See, for example, the Preamble and articles 1, 2, 6, 7, 10 and 13 of the Proposal for Reform of the POLITICAL STATUTE OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY, approved by an absolute majority of the Basque Parliament at a plenary session on 30 December 2004.

Debate in relation to the simultaneity or separation in time of the two tables has polarised around two extreme opinions:

- *Any agreements from discussions by parties are a concession to the threats of ETA.*
- *Any such agreements must be seen as credits to ETA and, if this is not the case, there will be no agreement.*

In any case, it is the responsibility of political parties to work to prevent debate and agreement at discussions between parties from being conditioned by matters other than legitimate debate between formations of differing levels of representation, with different and diverse feelings of identity, with different political projects. Initial activation of the discussions may be a mechanism to permit this necessary differentiation, compatible with the contents of the Anoeta Document. Such a decision may be defended in terms of democratic guarantees for the conclusion of the process of normalisation.

3. NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF THE CONSULTATION.

Giving a voice to the Basque people. Consultation of the people is a political and democratic must, provided substantial modifications are proposed to the framework of co-existence. This is the consideration in the political proposals of the vast majority of parties. The Basque National Party supports the joint commitment with EA and EB-Berdeak and the Basque Prime Minister during his Investiture Speech of June 2005, and undertakes to work hard towards an agreement between parties and to carry out consultation. Consultation is therefore the result of a process in which no effort will be spared. It is not, in any shape or form, a weapon, nor is it an excuse for parties to delegate to society their obligation to work towards an agreement. Nor can we accept any veto rights which could prevent the Basque people from expressing themselves in a democratic fashion.

Conditions for the consultation. A democratic consultation must fulfil a number of conditions, the most important of which are an absence of violence and exclusions. The Prime Minister stated this expressly in his Investiture Speech: “if we reach an Agreement for Political Normalisation and Co-existence, I will request authorisation from the Basque Parliament, within a context of non-violence and non-exclusion, to carry out a consultation of Basque society to ratify the Political Agreement reached”. He added: “authorisation from the Parliament must be pactured to include the various aspects relating to the consultation, such as ratification of the conditions of non-violence and non-exclusion, the democratic principles established for acceptance of the results, and the enabling procedure for negotiation and inclusion of these within the judicial system”. A pact to secure the conditions to carry out the consultation is also the right procedure to ensure it is an integrating consultation producing sound results, and is feasible for subsequent negotiation.

Our objective in this consultation will be to achieve greater cohesion than obtained by the Gernika Statute, considering that in Nafarroa improvement of the *Fuero* Laws was not even submitted for approval¹⁰. This will constitute the cornerstone, the basic reference for democratic validation of the new meeting point for political co-existence.

¹⁰ The northern Basque territories of Iparralde do not even have their own institutions, and many sectors of society are calling for the creation of a Basque département.



POLITICAL
PROGRAMME.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA.



POLITICAL PROGRAMME.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA,
15-16 JANUARY 2000.

PEACE.

At the 1995 General Assembly, one of our political priorities was achieving peace.

The political address said that, “EAJ-PNV has the duty, along with its people, to seek as humane a solution as possible, exploring all fair channels in order to overcome this conflict once and for all and achieve peace”.

This priority was established in spite of, or perhaps because of, the harsh judgement of ETA or the self-styled MLNV (Basque National Liberation Movement) in the same document. It was just at the time when the Oldartzen Motion was approved and a period of relentless activism against everything and everyone began. EAJ-PNV was also a victim of the strategy of “socializing suffering” although it was PP and its councillors who withstood the most distressing pressure of the armed action in the final period of this dynamic.

Four years later, we find ourselves in a substantially different situation and one in which we could not possibly dream of back then.

Today, it seems clear that, following the reformulation of the “KAS Alternative” with the April 1995 proposal, its offer of dialogue to the socialist and conservative governments, and the latest formulation of “giving a voice to the Basque Country”, **ETA is looking for a way to give**

up its armed activity, following in the footsteps of other groups, which, given the times, have learnt how to evolve, replacing their military strategy in order to secure democratic processes.

In view of the new horizon that was opening, in February 1997, EAJ-PNV announced, through a public declaration by Euzkadi Buru Batzar that “... *the PNV is willing to take a risk and move in order to obtain peace, without reaching the point of no longer being what we are, adopting or ceasing to carry out strategies, tactics or collaborations that are incompatible with our political self, which has been well defined for over one hundred years. In other words, without abandoning or distorting our alternative or our political strategy*”.

Likewise, EAJ-PNV declared in that document that “... in view of other international experiences that attempt to redirect similar conflicts or even more bitter ones than ours..... we do not renounce maintaining as many contacts or initiatives with other political groups, trade unions and social groups, without exclusion, in order to channel the solution to the current dynamic of violence in the Basque Country”. “In any case –that document textually went on to say- EAJ-PNV shares a longing for peace with Basque society. It will not be convinced that some political groups want it as much as they say, as long as it is not clearly seen that the problem of violence is removed from electoral deals and power-opposition dialectics”.

On the verge of a new millennium, with the help of years of experience and, essentially, with the level of permeability of our social porosity, we are convinced that we are witnessing the end to ETA’s armed activity. In such a perception, we reassert what was said in 1997: **we are willing to risk so as to turn over this page of our history forever.**

We still fail to understand the political gain that some parties appear to pursue with their irresponsible decision to wait patiently for peace to knock on the door, but not with a hostile attitude to the pacification process itself.

At the same time, we also fail to understand how ETA, which calls for “giving a voice to the Basque Country”, does not realise that nobody in Basque society has asked for its protection so as to freely decide our future.

Basque society is mature enough to decide for itself. Basque society does not need ETA. What’s more, as the country’s main trade union, ELA, said: ETA “is superfluous and an obstacle” in Basque society. To “give a voice”, guns are out of place. To talk legitimately only requires public support, the support of those with the democratic support of the votes. ETA has not received a single vote from the Basque citizens throughout its extensive history.

It is also time to recognise the social interlocution of those who have been granted the democratic legitimacy by this Society so as to defend their opinions and ideology.

We are therefore willing to take a risk, to continue moving in order to achieve peace. However, nobody will force us towards strategies, tactics or cooperation that is incompatible with our political self.

THE ARDANZA PROPOSAL.

In the eager search for peace that was proclaimed in all of our official documents and public action, President Ardanza, towards the end of his years of office as President of the Basque Government, drafted a proposal to move forward from Point 10 of the Ajuria-Enea Pact, adapting the decisive elements of the Irish peace process, and presented it to all Basque parties.

In summary, the Ardanza Proposal includes the following points:

- a)** Foster an in-depth agreement for an “exit through dialogue”, designing an active pacification strategy.
- b)** This is a debate to stop ETA intervening in politics through the “armed struggle”, and for the political branch that supports it (HB) to get involved once and for all in the political activity of the democratic system.
- c)** As it is unlikely that ETA will disappear merely as a result of police action, or give up its armed struggle for the sake of it, the following is proposed:
 - An end through dialogue that is likely to have an impact on the current judicial-political system.
 - The necessary “cessation of hostilities” by ETA prior to any resolution through political dialogue.

Resolution through Political Dialogue:

- 1.** No pre-requisites (Constitution and Statute or Right to Self-Determination).
 - 2.** With an indefinite abandonment of violence by ETA in response to a specific pacification offer.
 - 3.** The opinion of the Basque citizens will be taken into account.
 - 4.** ETA will not be a spokesperson in the resolution through political dialogue.
- d)** The spokespersons are initially the parties that are representative of Basque society.

Beforehand, the competent State authorities should declare to:

- 1.** Leave the resolution in the hands of the Basque political parties.
- 2.** Make the agreements of the Basque Institutions (Basque Parties) their own (State Institutions).
- 3.** Agree their eventual incorporation into the legal structure.

This peace channel which was prepared and fostered by President Ardanza from the end of 1997 until spring 1998, ended at the meeting held in Ajuria-Enea on 17th March 1998. The peace proposal was accepted by EAJ-PNV, EA and IU and rejected by PP and its Government, as well as PSE-PSOE and UA.

Madrid does not accept the Ardanza Proposal particularly on the grounds of points c)-1 and d)-1 and 2.

LIZARRA – GARAZI.

The climax of violence and the parallel peace process in Northern Ireland influenced the heart of ETA and the MLNV as a whole, and became a reference for Basque society.

By then, numerous meetings had taken place called by the social parties and organizations concerned about peace, like that of 12th March 1995 in Bilbao through the ELKARRI movement. In this respect, in 1997, a “new breed” of contacts had been initiated with representatives of the HB National Committee, who were later imprisoned. Such a setback did not interrupt the dialogue process, whereby talks continued with the new representatives appointed by the Herri Batasuna National Committee as a result of the imprisonment of the “mahaikides”.

Although HB had not taken the Ardanza Proposal as its own, talks between these organizations and the three parties approving the document of the President at that time, in addition to the trade unions, with the exception of CC.OO. and UGT, drew up a document with a similar philosophy to that of Ardanza. However, whilst Ardanza talked about institutional “authorities” of the Spanish State from his institutional position, the Lizarra Declaration also involved the French state. It was called the Estella, Lizarra or Lizarra-Garazi Document.

Following a prelude into the factors leading up to the Irish peace process, the document defines the political problem underlying the violence as “a historical conflict with political origins and nature”. The questions to resolve are essentially:

- the right to decision,
- territoriality,
- political sovereignty.

It considers a process of dialogue without exclusions, but with the absence of all expressions of the conflict’s violence, whereby its objective is a global negotiation to resolve the conflict and does not seek victory for any of the parties.

Respecting the plurality of Basque society, all projects will be presented in equality of conditions.

The final word on the future lies in the hands of Basque citizens.

Their decision must be respected by all states involved.

If Ardanza’s approaches caused serious confrontation, the Lizarra-Garazi Declaration continues to be the prelude to hell. The approaches to the confrontation are essentially the same. This time, governmental and media outrage and mass lynching is due to the fact that the proposal is backed not only by HB and ETA, but is also sustained by the Country’s political and trade union majority.

The Lizarra-Garazi Declaration is not a nationalist front. Non-nationalist social and political forces are also behind it. Neither is it a project for independence, but it is merely a method for conflict resolution that aims to offer unionists and pro-independence supporters a seat around the negotiating table and leave the final decisions in the hands of Basque society.

ETA CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL PROPOSALS.

If the Lizarra-Garazi Declaration was signed on 12th September 1998, ETA announced its indefinite ceasefire on 18th September. In other words, six days after signing the Declaration.

Beyond the peace process described, ETA and the self-named Izquierda Abertzale consider “a new Transition underway”. According to their political strategy texts *“the dynamic will consist of abandoning the current framework and building a new one, investing all existing resources in the new framework, instead of managing the former division framework”*.

Throughout the extensive history of ETA and MLNV, we have witnessed many rhetorical approaches that have attempted to create a national construction model that will combine the principles of territoriality, sovereignty and self-determination.

The role supports any theory formulation model.

For more than one hundred years, EAJ-PNV Basque nationalists have focused our political action on making Basque society a natural community called Euskal Herria, a new political project called Euzkadi. A new legal-political formulation which protects Basques from Adour to the Ebro, from Agüera to Ezka, from Bayonne to Valdegobia, from Truzios to Ablitas and Barkoxe.

We therefore consider Euzkadi as a global political formulation which should lay its foundations in the free will and sovereignty of its citizens. Under this premise, we conceive a new Country built on goodwill and free and personal commitments.

The Izquierda Abertzale should make its alternative for the construction of a nation public. It would be a mistake to insist on contemplating laboratory experiments that detract from global concept of the Basque Country rather than analysing the reality of this Country and observing pragmatically our social photograph.

The energy and imagination of the “Izquierda Abertzale” should not be spurned. On one memorable occasion, shortly after the establishment of the first Basque Parliament and the first Basque Government, the leadership of ETA verbally proposed the dissolution of these institutions to the leaders of EAJ-PNV, the denunciation of the recently decided Statute and Spanish Constitution in order to work together, “because together, we will win”. Looking back, EAJ-PNV does not appear to have made the wrong choice by rejecting this proposal, which should make it more cautious when considering offers for new projects that are daring and appealing to a nationalist, but not always equipped with any practical possibility.

PREMISES AND OBJECTIVES.

SOCIAL COHESION.

The political stance of EAJ-PNV, expressed through President Ardanza’s Proposal of 17th March 1998, as well as the contents of the Lizarra-Garazi Declaration signed by EAJ-PNV on 12th September 1998, takes us to today’s **need to get to grips with a process of talks and political negotiation by all of the parties representing the people’s votes.**

Bases for consensus:

- Shared feeling that we are all Basque.
- Recognition of the plurality of Basque society.
- Disappearance of all expressions of violence. Make the ETA ceasefire permanent.
- Deepen the goodwill and humanization gestures.
- Recognition of the existence of the Basque Country as a historic, linguistic and common cultural reality.
- Acceptance of political and democratic channels to fulfil the different political projects in Basque society, with the aim of reaching political co-existence through free choice rather than imposition.
- Acceptance by all parties of the free will that is democratically expressed by Basque citizens.

OBJECTIVE:

Using these bases, the aim is to reach agreement in areas such as: territoriality, national identity, sovereignty, the political framework, etc.

THE RIGHT OF BASQUE SOCIETY TO DECIDE ITS OWN FUTURE.

The basic idea that EAJ-PNV defends is the right of Basque society to decide its own future.

Nowadays, Basque society, its citizens, are stakeholders in the decision on their political future and on the organization of their political ties with the Spanish and French states into which they are divided.

Only the Basque citizens are entitled to decide their future. This is a principle that we defend and consider to be implicit in the freedom of thought and political option.

This is the key aspect of the declaration on the Right to Self-Determination by the Basque Parliament in February 1990.

Therefore,

- From the ability of being and decision of Basque society, EAJ-PNV reiterates its objective of national recognition for the Basque Country, so that Basque society can establish the political and legal status that it considers necessary and opportune, through its condition as a key player in its own history.

- EAJ-PNV will study in-depth and define the political and social development of a full, global self-government with its own identity, promoting as many political, social and institutional actions as necessary.

- From the historic and political legitimacy of Basque society's right to its own political self-government, EAJ-PNV invites Basque society, as a key player in the decisions that affect it, to participate in the design of the political project that defines its internal organization and external relations, establishing the political status and power framework that Basque society requires for the forthcoming decades at such a historical time as the present.

RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT TO DECIDE.

THE RIGHT OF BASQUE SOCIETY TO DEFINE ITS FUTURE.

Basque society is the stakeholder in the decision or decisions on its political future and on the organization of any political ties with the French and Spanish States that may be adopted.

The principle that Basque society is entitled to decide its future lies in the undeniable nature of the society that even with controversial territorial boundaries, the Spanish state has recognised its right to its own legal structure, implicit in the freedom of thought and political option and is the key aspect of the declaration on the Right to Self-Determination by the Basque Parliament in February 1990.

Therefore,

- From the ability of **being and decision** of Basque society, we defend the objective of national recognition for the Basque Country, so that Basque society can establish the political and legal status that it considers necessary and opportune, through its condition as a key player in its own history.

- We are committed to the political and social development of a full, integral self-government with its own identity, promoting political, social and institutional actions.

- From the historic and political legitimacy of Basque society's right to its own political status, we must promote the conditions for Basque society, as a key player in its own decisions, to participate actively in the design of the political project that defines its internal organization and external relations, establishing the political status and power framework that the Basque society requires for the forthcoming decades at such a historical time as the present.

EAJ –PNV, coherent with its founding principles and its defence of human rights for individuals and groups, starts from the political reality and the current legal frameworks and, bearing both in mind, reality and frameworks, it is unequivocally committed to the development of a legal-political arena that covers all Basques and confers effective respect on its national being and the historical, cultural and linguistic reality, as well as the right to define its own future, its internal organization and its external relations.

A POLITICAL PROCESS AIMED AT THE NORMALIZATION OF POLITICAL CO-EXISTENCE.

In order to bring these principles into political practice, **it is necessary to initiate and develop a political process.** A political process based on the recognition of the essence of Basque society, **recognition of the right to decide, whose objective shall be to ensure the normalization of political co-existence,** through social consensus. Therefore, the key to this process lies in Basque society, in its freely formed and expressed will.

This political process starts from an established political situation and leads to another to be defined by Basque society for its future. We must bear in mind the different situation with which we are faced at this time with respect to the transition at the end of the 1970's. At that time, we started off from the absolute denial of the existence of a Basque Society; with the political, social, economic and military pressure derived from the dictatorship and the inexistence of its own institutional references. This political process is being developed from a consolidated awareness of the political identity although with diverse territorial implementation; some institutions are close to the citizens from where the political action can be addressed and an important background of power of public action in most of the territory and population.

With these starting bases, the legitimate objective, as nationalists, of gaining recognition for the national identity of the Basque Country is more possible than ever in the history of our society.

INITIAL POLITICAL SITUATION.

The main aspects of the current political situation are:

- There are institutional frameworks with an important capacity for self-government in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Nafarroa, as a result of the Autonomy system assumed under the Statute of Gernika and in the "Amejoramiento". In addition to these realities, there is also an important element of political singularity such as the fundamental recognition of a collective subject with its own rights prior to the 1978 Spanish Constitution, through the combination of the Additional Provisions.

EAJ-PNV does not just set off from these political realities, but it has also played a key role in their implementation and development, assuming government responsibilities that ensure the provision of advanced public policies to all Basque citizens.

- Whereby there is an institutional framework and the ability for self-government, its level of development is different in the Basque Country as a whole. Institutional political evolution and the level of development of self-government is different in the Basque Autonomous Community and in the Chartered Community of Navarre, whereby similar institutional references are lacking in the territories of Iparralde (the 159 municipalities of Baxe-Nafarroa, Lapurdi and Zuberoa).

- There is a varying level of implementation and extension of Basque national awareness among citizens of the seven territories that form part of the Basque Country.

KEYS TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

The underlying concepts on which the political process to be developed is sustained are:

- **SOVEREIGNTY:** The objective is to consolidate the political and legal framework in which the collective subject of Basque society in its entirety has declared and defined its full right to decide its political future: recognition of the right to self-determination and its consolidation in basic political texts that make up the foundations of the subsequent legal structure.

- **TERRITORIALITY:** In spite of the institutional diversity and the differences derived from the Spanish and French constitutional systems, it is true that the **Basque Country is defined as an undeniable community with deep historical, cultural, linguistic and social roots.**

- Our way of understanding the concept of territoriality is that, with respect to the diverse level of development of national awareness in the seven territories, decision-making ability and freedom to association, **the result of the political process to which we are committed means that all citizens and territories can join Basque society's political subject,** removing and overcoming obstacles and creating the necessary political-legal conditions in order to exercise such a right.

- The territorial element of the political process involves creating a constitutional option, which is non-existent today, but perfectly deducible of the recognition and guarantee of the Historical Rights of Basque society. This option is consistent in the fact that **belonging to the Basque socio-cultural community may also entail the recognition of collective political rights corresponding to a political subject, if this is the wish of the respective citizens.**

- **SOCIETY:** A society and national awareness is not created through the establishment of a certain institutional framework. Institutions, including national ones, as the highest representation of the Basques, are the result of the political maturity of society which is essentially the existence of a common national awareness which is different to surrounding ones. Therefore, the essential element is the **extension and affirmation of national awareness (the commitment to being) among the citizens of the Basque Country.**

- Therefore, the political action to be developed as a result of this political process should be contemplated and debated throughout the Basque Country, although it must recognise and take into account the diverse realities and different political situations in the territories that make up the Basque Country, otherwise the real voice of our society would be lost.

On the one hand, the process is based on the fact that the Basque Country is a Nation and as such, is a stakeholder of political rights and, on the other hand, the current institutional realities are different as is the plurality of concurrent identities in Basque society. **So real is the national affirmation and the diversity of the institutional framework and the plurality of identities. Our political project is sustained in all of these principles, whereby not one of them takes precedence over the others.**

FOUNDATIONS OF THE PROCESS.

According to our criteria, the normalization process for political co-existence is based on the following foundations or assumptions:

- **For Peace:** Prior to any political initiative, all forms of violence, coercion or threats by any party must permanently cease. A political process of this magnitude cannot be embarked upon without the utmost respect for the human rights of all individuals. This comes from an ethical conception of the commitment to political and democratic channels and the legitimacy of the process. Only from a scenario of absolute peace can we build the political future of the Basque Country on the bases of freedom and free association.

- On the recognition and consolidation of Basque Society as a subject with its own identity and the decision-making capacity regarding its political future.

- **On the recognition of the territorial integrity of the Basque Country** as a physical base for the political subject, understanding this principle as previously analysed, based on respect for the diverse situations in the social and institutional arena in the different integral parts of the Basque Country.

- **Territorial integrity should be a political principle of the process** and the action procedure fostered by nationalists should be aimed at promoting awareness of territorial integrity in those areas where it is weak. In any case, this awareness of territorial integrity should be contemplated and understood in terms of political equality of territories, associative will and not in terms of absorption.

- To foster these conditions, work will be carried out on establishing levels of political and institutional relations between the parties that form part of the Basque Country, overcoming existing legal-political obstacles in the Spanish and French systems, as well as in the Statute and the “Amejoramiento”.

- **Of the Recognition of the plurality of identities in Basque society**, in which extremely diverse national consciences coexist with different levels of territorial implementation.

- **Of the exclusive use of democratic procedures**, with the corresponding acceptance by all parties (Basque, Spanish, French and their corresponding institutions and authorities), of the free will democratically expressed by Basque society.

- Of the extension of the political co-existence Project for the free association of the Basque people.



POLITICAL PROGRAMME.

EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA,
17-18 JANUARY 2004.

1. RECENT PAST: THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION SINCE 1998.

President Ibarretxe's Proposal is not the Basque Presidency's first serious attempt in search of a solution to such a difficult and "gordian" situation as the Basque case.

Nor can "Lizarra" be understood without the efforts of President Ardanza, near to the end of his term of office, to provide a way forward for an aged and stalled Ajuria-Enea Pact.

This initiative was recalled and summarised in the political address approved at our 2000 General Meeting.

President Ardanza prepared his own proposal. He personally took it and read it, first of all, to the members of the Committee, and later to Aznar, in the presence of the Minister for the Interior at that time, Mayor Oreja. He issued it to the Secretary General of PSOE and the General Coordinator of Izquierda Unida and commented on it with them. With the exception of the latter, none of them took it into consideration.

This pacification channel, which was led and drawn up by President Ardanza from the end of 1997 until spring 1998, ended at the

meeting held in Ajuria-Enea on 17th March 1998. It was accepted by the representatives of EAJ-PNV, EA and IU, and rejected by the PP representative who was blindly followed by the PSE-PSOE and UA representatives.

Rejection by Madrid, without any alternative being presented led to the demise of the Ajuria-Enea Committee, which had been active for 10 years. A new way to solve the problem was embarked upon by EAJ-PNV, EA and IU, and culminated in the "Lizarra Declaration" which has, even to the present day, been the "black beast" of the PP and, by extension, the PSOE.

1.1. CRITICAL READING OF THE CEASE-FIRE PERIOD AND THE LIZARRA DECLARATION.

The signing of the Lizarra Declaration and the ETA cease-fire in September 1998 gave our country a historic opportunity to place the Basque conflict in similar parameters to those of the peace process in Ireland. However, this hope was only kept alive for 18 months. ETA announced the end of the cease-fire in November 1999 and committed its first fatal attack in January 2000. A thorough, critical and self-critical analysis of what happened in that period and the role played on all sides is still pending today. It needs to be a non-demagogic and shared study so as not to repeat the same mistakes in the event that a new peace opportunity arises. The cease-fire, the Lizarra Declaration and the management of its Forum represented a point of inflection and a failed opportunity due to a set of factors which can be classified into three blocks of responsibility: that which can be attributed to ETA and the self-named MLNV (Basque National Liberation Movement), that corresponding to the Spanish Government, to PP and PSOE, and that which lies with the parties and organizations that form part of the Lizarra Forum Standing Committee.

1.1.1. ETA AND THE BASQUE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT (MLNV).

The determining, definitive and irreversible factor that wiped out the potential of the Lizarra Declaration as well as the agreement and change processes that were being developed is ETA's decision to call off the cease-fire. The problem originally lies in the role assumed by ETA as an evaluator of the process, putting military supervision before political action and destroying any possibility of political leadership in HB/EH/Batasuna. A similar process in the future must ensure a strictly civil and political decision framework.

The behaviour, attitudes or logic behind ETA's actions cannot be understood by those who do not act in the name of violence. With the absence of terrorist attacks, although unfortunately there were still episodes of street violence, it became evident that the people, including the great majority of those known as the "izquierda abertzale" (Nationalist Left), do not want or even understand this logic. When a group like ETA is formed, by its own members, as the people's armed wing and these people neither call for it, want it, or understand it, it becomes patently clear how much ETA is out of place within the framework of the people it aims to liberate.

ETA's calling off of the cease-fire, in addition to two terrible murders and the threat extended throughout Basque society, has led to contempt for our society's ability to resolve its own problems and the impossibility of political cooperation among all Basque nationalists.

Another direct consequence of the end of the cease-fire was the strengthening of the political parties and their leaders who have maintained an ultra-conservative stance towards the peace process and have been more belligerent with Basque nationalism and the distinguishing marks that make up our society, demonizing Basque nationalism as an ideology and pursuing its ethical discreditation.

ETA, a domineering ETA with solitary and unilateral action, called off the cease-fire and returned to killing, dragging an organization such as HB/EH/Batasuna, which was publically committed to exclusively political and democratic channels, towards a political-military idea. In addition to committing political fraud, HB/EH/Batasuna had lied to its voters, its social base, with whom it worked on diverse initiatives, and to Basque society as a whole.

1.1.2. THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, PP AND PSOE.

The obstructionism and resistance to change of the PP Government was another important obstacle in the process. Following some initial hesitancy – remember the meeting between the “President’s men” and the leadership of ETA– Aznar and the PP renounced playing the historical role of Tony Blair in the case of Northern Ireland and decided to dig its trench in the Basque anti-nationalist and vote-catching demagoguery. PSOE blindly followed PP. The lack of the socialists’ own policy was one of the important shortfalls of this period. The power of the Spanish Government in the media was also clearly seen.

The mass media acted monolithically in favour of PP and played a destructive role in the open process. Constructively involving the largest number of political forces and media is one of the challenges that any resolution process faces.

Today, there is no hope of any cooperation with the Aznar Government and the PP initiative other than a channel of force, confrontation and aggression for those who do not follow their way of seeing things. Our distancing from the Aznar/PP Government occurred as a result of this absolute discrepancy in the analysis and diagnosis of the problem and, hence, its means of solution. This has been the root of a policy that has demonized and identified EAJ-PNV with ETA; of the call for changes in our ideology and political objectives.

1.1.3. MEMBERS OF THE LIZARRA FORUM.

Coherent with its deep-rooted commitment to the search for peace, our Party, like a large part of Basque society, got decisively involved in the dynamics that arose as a result of signing the Lizarra Declaration and ETA’s subsequent cease-fire.

However, in spite of the initial expectations, the Lizarra arena hardly had any opportunity to carry out the initiative and was forced to act defensively. This was due to many reasons. First of all, a unified strategy between political parties, trade unions and social movements that are not used to working together or that have even been in conflict with one another is not easy. On the other hand, we had to go through three electoral processes within the space of one and a half years and the distortion caused by these periods is marked. Analysis carried out by

the different political forces did not coincide on more than one occasion. The forces did not carry out a regular diagnosis; at times the analysis was changing or postponed, awaiting consultation. Each and every one of these political forces, without exception, had different feelings, which hindered decision-making. For these reasons, probably none of the forces participating in the management process put in all of the necessary resources to develop a cooperation policy.

The on-going media and political attack against Lizarra did not have a well-proportioned and appropriate response. The penitentiary policy was creating frustration and scepticism in sectors that lost hope in the process due to the lack of results in this area. The “kale borroka” (street violence) practically did not stop at any time and its effects were breaking up, neutralizing and delaying any cooperation. The impact of this phenomenon was used by a large section of the media to detract credibility and authenticity from the overall efforts. For these and other similar reasons, the Lizarra initiative was trying to defend itself after the events. The Lizarra or Udalbiltza initiatives, the cooperation agreement with EH in the Basque Parliament or Batera, to give just four examples, did not have the time or the opportunity to develop their own dynamics. All this meant that the process could not opt for its gradual expansion during the cease-fire period.

However, what was surely more harmful for the process during the cease-fire was the unstructured mixture of different processes which were not handled differently. The resolution of the political conflict, the national construction, the humanization or governability of the institutions are different processes although they are interconnected. The main error in the Lizarra arena was to publically try to achieve two objectives at the same time: develop a national construction project between nationalist forces and offer society and the remaining political groups a democratic methodology of conflict resolution through dialogue and a multi-party system.

Through our own errors or “wise moves” in the eyes of those opposed to the process, the discourse on national construction took over from the multi-party resolution of the conflict and ended up burying it. The result has been extremely counterproductive, because it favoured the “anti-Lizarra” demagogy and created confusion amongst an important part of society, by extending doubt as to whether we really wanted to solve the problems or obtain an advantage for nationalists.

1.2. FOUR YEARS AFTER THE END OF THE CEASE-FIRE.

1.2.1. THE POLITICAL SCENARIO AFTER LIZARRA.

Since the calling off of the ETA cease-fire at the end of 1999, there has been a scenario consisting of three strategies:

- *ETA's strategy of subordinating dialogue and politics to violent action and its threats.*

This strategy is characterized, first of all, by an unlimited extension of the suffering, which represents the civil and political dissolution of the “izquierda abertzale” and has seen the distancing from society and reality. It has led to divisions, an unprecedented loss of social and electoral support

and the weakening of its own project. The “armed struggle” is, today, the best pretext used by the PP Government to justify its own strategy.

- *The strategy against nationalism and the Basque institutions. Strategy of “non- dialogue” of the Anti-Terrorist Pact, led by the PP Government.*

The core of this strategy is the head-on fight against nationalism and the Basque Institutions and the refusal for any kind of dialogue. The PP Government considers ETA and the MLNV to be the instrumental factors in this central combat.

Unilateralism and authoritarianism are the main distinguishing signs of this strategy which is followed by the PP Government, through the Anti-Terrorist Pact, with an enormous amount of media exploitation and socialist following. The main consequences of this strategy have been the serious democratic reversal, the breaking of the principle of division of powers and the breakdown of the system of guarantees. Its most prominent results are the illegalization of parties or the closure of newspapers.

- *The strategy of “dialogue and non-violence” of the social majority, shared and led by the tripartite system.*

This strategy is defined by the four “Kursaal Principles” which were put forward by the Basque President on 8th February 2001: Yes to human rights; Yes to dialogue; Yes to the will of Basque society and Yes to social construction. This strategy has been socially supported in the results of the elections of 13th May 2001 and 25th May 2003 and has led to the tripartite Government and the presentation of the President’s Proposal.

1.2.2. KEY EVENTS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, SOCIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

The events that have had the most impact on the evolution of Basque politics over the past four years have been the following:

Each and every one of the ETA terrorist attacks.

The PP absolute majority. The Anti-Terrorist Pact.

The regional elections of 13th May 2001.

The terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 and subsequent events.

The Organic Law on Political Parties and the subsequent illegalization of Batasuna, AuB, Udalbiltza (SA)...

The closure of Egunkaria and aggression towards the Basque speaking world.

The Iraq War and post-war

The 2001 municipal and cantonal elections in Iparralde and the 2003 autonomous and municipal elections in Hegoalde.

The political-judicial aggression on the Basque Parliament.

In Hegoalde, the social pronouncements have come from the immense majority and are unequivocal: Basque society has been forced to say clearly, forcefully and repeatedly: No to ETA; NO to the illegalization of parties and NO to the closure of newspapers. When society has had the op-

portunity to speak out positively at the polls, in surveys or in protests, it has also spoken clearly and has once more said: YES to a project of non-violence, dialogue, non-exclusion and freedom of decision for Basque society.

Over this period, EAJ-PNV has been constructively accompanying and leading the majority social positions in each of the aforementioned events. This allows us to make a positive evaluation of the role played in this particularly complex and adverse period.

2. PRESENT: THE MAIN BLOCKADE FACTORS FOR BASQUE SOCIETY.

2.1. VIOLENCE, THREATS AND THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

Terrorist attacks against life and the situation of those threatened by ETA are undoubtedly the elements with the greatest urgency. The end of violence, the end of the threats and active solidarity with all of the victims is a priority from the point of view of commitment to human rights.

This commitment to the dignity of the individual should be coherent and without exceptions and this is how our society perceives it. For this reason, defence of the human rights of those imprisoned or detained against defencelessness, dispersion and reports of torture should also be a preferential action.

The violation of human rights is one of the main factors of political blockade: “destruction” and “demoralization” are the words that best define their impact on Basque society and the political situation, with the risk involved in the loss of social faith in peace and the possibility of political and social normalization of our country.

In spite of the campaigns of the political use of suffering practised by different groups, we reiterate our solidarity and proximity to all victims of violence and suffering.

2.2. THE BLOCKADE OF THE POLITICAL CONFLICT.

The current political situation is the result of a gradual deterioration over more than 25 years in our most recent history. The determining factors of the Spanish Transition did not allow the constituent process to be carried out with the desired consensus. That process ignored the majority of Basque society. The Gernika Statute has been broken and devalued, and the political dispute between Basque society and the Spanish State continues unresolved. The Ajuria Enea Pact, the Algiers Talks, the Ardanza Proposal, the Lizarra Declaration and other social initiatives have been lost opportunities. ETA's violence and the authoritarianism of the PP absolute majority, which rejects any possibility of democratic dialogue, have worsened and deepened this blockade.

The impact of this accumulated blockade on Basque society and the political situation, is characterised by frustration and monotony, with the risk that society will cease to believe in politics and in the future of this country.

In this context, the President of the Basque Country's proposal represents hope and a real possibility to overcome this situation.

2.3. DEMOCRATIC INVOLUTION.

The process of democratic involution led by the PP (People's Party) Government is based on five lines of action:

- a) The authoritarian and intolerant exercise of the absolute majority;
- b) The privatization of important state companies to be run by individuals and institutions loyal to the PP and willing to run them in accordance with the political and media interests of the Spanish Government;
- c) The economic and political control of the main media and the subsequent manipulation of the news;
- d) The Anti-Terrorist Pact to quash the PSOE opposition, the confrontation with Basque Institutions and the criminalization of Basque nationalism, and
- e) The political control over the judicial power through the indiscreet involvement of the Director of Public Prosecutions and certain judges of the High Court and the political-partisan appointment of members of the General Council of Judicial Power, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court.

The most serious political-social consequences of this strategy are the break-up of the division of powers principle, media unanimity and the disappearance of democratic and citizen control mechanisms over the exercise of power. This democratic involution has had three main instruments:

- The *reinterpretation of the laws*, for example the Penal Code, opening the way for the expansive and vague interpretation of the crime of collaboration or membership of an armed band and the imputation of offences on groups. This has led to the closure of newspapers, the illegalization of different social organizations and the imprisonment of dozens of people;
- The *creation of new laws* which have been drafted ad hoc, whose maximum expression has been the Organic Law on Political Parties for the illegalization of HB, EH and Batasuna, and which is being used as a pretext to develop an unprecedented offensive against the Basque Parliament and against initiatives that promote changes to new political frameworks;
- Finally, the *change in laws* to centralize penitentiary vigilance in the Audiencia Nacional (High Court), systematically applying preventive imprisonment, establishing life imprisonment, or quashing de facto penitentiary benefits, parole and reintegration.

This panorama reports a serious situation for democracy. The fundamental liberties and rights of a modern democratic system are on the line: ideological or electoral freedom, freedom of expression, of the press, of association, of demonstration, of political choice, the right to political participation, to form political parties, to reintegration, to equality before the law...

We are faced with an important factor of political and social blockade. For some time now, the PP Government has ceased to form part of the arena of solutions to become part of the problem; democratic involution is now added to violence and political conflict. The impact of all this on Basque society and the political situation can be seen in the distrust of politics, justice and democratic functioning. The associated risk is disinterest and social insensitiveness to a quality democracy with solid foundations¹.

3. THE FUTURE: CHALLENGES FOR BASQUE NATIONALISM IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. EAJ/PNV COMMITMENTS.

Exclusion is one of the main causes of chronic problems and conflicts. Fighting against two types of exclusion is a top priority in the Basque Country: social exclusion and political exclusion. Social exclusion is related to inequality and new forms of marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors. It is essential to move forward with the construction of a society based on the equality of rights and opportunities, fostering public policies to avoid all forms of exclusion.

Political exclusion is expressed in three ways:

The elimination, sectarianism and imposition implicit in the ETA threat, aimed mainly against different sectors and political parties at a state level.

Political expulsion and civil exclusion, which is directly related to the illegalization of Batasuna and AuB, hence leaving around 10% of our society out of politics and co-existence.

Marginalization as a result of national, cultural or linguistic identity, which is revealed in the crude reality of the UPN - PP policies to marginalize Basque nationalism, the Basque language and the Basque culture and the backing of PSOE and CDN. In Navarra, Iparralde or in the Basque Autonomous Community, nationalism must fight against all forms of marginalization or exclusion because of different feelings of national belonging or cultural identity.

¹ In the Appendix to this paper entitled "Neo-constitutionalism and Democratic Deficit (25 Years of the 1978 Spanish Constitution)" these questions are dealt with more thoroughly.

The socio-political impact of exclusion leads to the despair, disintegration and marginalization of the excluded sectors. This leads to the risk of not being able to unite and involve society in constructive processes. Nobody is unnecessary in our society and the future should be built with the support of everyone.

Therefore, looking towards the future, EAJ/PNV has set out a series of commitments which aim to respond appropriately to the essential challenges faced by our society, which are also the challenges for Basque nationalism.

3.1. CULMINATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PEACE PROCESS.

A priority objective for EAJ-PNV is to put an end to all types of violence and ensure that the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Basque Country are not violated.

To achieve this objective, the following is essential:

Support the use of all democratic means to ensure the security, freedom and life of all individuals and offer support and solidarity to threatened individuals and victims.

Promote social action against violence and in defence of life, in favour of all the fundamental rights for all people and defend a culture of human rights without exceptions, based on the inalienable dignity of individuals that protects and pays particular attention to the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

Foster dialogue processes with the political and social forces to define a peace and reconciliation process to end violence.

Develop political and social goodwill, communication and conciliation policies that allow all forms of threat, non-communication, exclusion or sectarianism to be overcome.



POLITICAL PROGRAMME.

**EUZKADI BURU BATZARRA
(EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EAJ-PNV)
1-2 DECEMBER 2007.**

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION: AS THREE CYCLES REACH THEIR END, THE FUTURE MUST BE WRITTEN.

This political programme will be in force and be developed in a period when Basque politics is about to enter a new phase. And in this new era it is easier to predict the end of some political cycles than the variables upon which the future will be constructed.

Basically, three cycles are reaching their end. Three cycles that have gone beyond, crossed through and had a decisive influence on Basque socio-political reality in recent years.

- ***The end of the ETA cycle.***- Politically motivated violence has never made sense nor has it ever found an ethical home among us. And in present-day Basque society, following the processes experienced over the last 10 years, no-one now calls into question that violence, objectively, is the greatest single obstacle in the path of the Basques towards its national social and economic emancipation.

The ETA communiqué announcing the end of its ceasefire also shattered the Anoeta proposal, so resuming their control of Batasuna

who renounced their representation, giving up in turn the role that should fall to them to play in Basque politics. All this makes it extraordinarily difficult to genuinely search for an outcome through dialogue and deepens the deactivation of the socio-political basis of the radical *abertzale* ('patriot') left itself. We are living at a time when the cycle of ETA violence is coming to an end, at the same time that the capacity to make institutional politics on the part of Batasuna, ANV and EHAK finds itself considerably reduced and runs the risk of being pulled down along with the collapse of ETA.

Probably the last peace process lacked maturity and responsibility in certain aspects that could have helped underpin it better. In this sense measures should have been taken in prison policy earlier; it probably also lacked clarity and discretion and it also had an excessively obstructionist and electoralist position. But we should not forget the basics and we should repeat as did EBB on the occasion of the breakdown of the previous ceasefire, that "it is the sole and exclusive responsibility of those who have decided to return to the use of violence, which is to say, of ETA".

- ***The end of the strategy of blocks in Basque politics.***

The last ten years in Basque politics have been dominated by a system of blocks that has also pre-designed the policy of governmental alliances in the institutions. But the evolution of Spanish politics over the latest legislature has left important ruptures between the PP and the PSOE and has generated serious and irreparable differences among their bases. This, together with the separation from the central core that represents institutional nationalism, in expectation of a new, forthcoming post-ETA scenario means that a new panorama opens that we should analyse attentively.

The political perspective, both in the socialist ranks and those of the self-appointed *abertzale* left, seeing a "Catalan-style" institutional alternative close at hand, which other parties, such as EB and EA view expectantly, back our analysis that new times are getting underway in Basque politics.

- ***The end of a cycle in Spanish politics.*** The Partido Popular views the political context created with the end of the ceasefire as the great opportunity to further develop its strategy of using ETA violence as an activating element in an electoral turnaround with a view to the next General Election. In addition, the Socialist Party is aware that the breakdown of the permanent ceasefire leaves them in a weaker position to manage the immediate future and it is also aware of the impossibility of returning to the context of the anti-terrorism pact agreed on with the Partido Popular who almost completely dominated it.

In this situation the next General Election will also confirm the end of a certain political cycle: for the PSOE the time for ambiguity is running out as is the time for mimicking the PP who have converted it into a victim of itself, as was clearly shown by the recent episode in Navarre, where the PSOE refused to form a progressive and plural government with Nafarroa Bai in the Autonomous Community of Navarre.

With the coming general election will come the time for clarification and the moment of truth for both parties. Whoever wins must govern a State which contains Nations that are unsettled within it and wish to negotiate their status based on a just cause that respects the democratic and sovereign will of its citizens.

- **The future asks for our commitment:** We foresee the end of these cycles, but the reference points for the future do not appear to be so clear. The past has died, but what lies ahead still has not been born. We have lived through a time of crossing over from expectation to hope, from expectancy to frustration. We have lived through the materialisation of the latest commitment to an end of violence through dialogue and we have seen the chance arise of a round table of parties with the objective of reaching a basic agreement on political normalisation based on the respect for the will of Basque society.

We have made a firm commitment –and we will continue to do so in the future- to this double objective, putting forward resolutions, in the Basque Parliament and the Spanish Parliament for the modification-suspension of the Law on Parties in favour of a humanitarian policy in relation to prison inmates; taking an active part in all initiatives, preparing the methodological and political bases for an agreement between the Basque political parties.

Following the municipal and provincial elections of May 27, 2007 we can learn two lessons for the future: a) the EAJ-PNV makes up the central axis of Basque politics, as decided by the electorate and, from this central position, will guarantee the governability of the institutions whose leadership it upholds; b) the electorate demands a style of politics that combines efficiency, honesty, respect, social participation and accessibility in the decision-making processes and attention –in terms of coherence between discourse and practice – to the special questions or those of great social and political sensitivity in Euzkadi.

It is increasingly evident that for a satisfactory response to the demands of the general public, the political parties need an open and integrating approach. And there is no doubt that this must be one of the keys that the parties must take into consideration before the coming date with the polls. It is one of the lessons that the Basque electorate has taught us and that the EAJ-PNV must continue to apply with strength, efficiency and honorability.

Basque politics finds itself at a new crossroads. But it is a crossroads where the only path whose limits are defined is the one already travelled upon. The new paths must be marked out, must be cleared of undergrowth. This is the task that the EAJ-PNV faces for the next four years: to make a path for the Basque Nation, to create the conditions so that the Basques can write the future of Euzkadi. **Katea ez da eten**, the goal of the 112-year history of the EAJ-PNV has always been to construct the Basque Nation. A free Euzkadi, whose people are free is the task entrusted to the new generation of **abertzales** by their **jeltzale** predecessors, those who gave form to the ideas of Sabino and those who kept them alive in the worst conditions of exile and dictatorship. In homage to them and as a contribution to this Euzkadi under construction, the EAJ-PNV, with the force given by unity and internal cohesion and the majority social backing, has no doubt which are its challenges and commitments for the more or less immediate future.

EAJ-PNV perceives a conviction in Basque society that the solution to the Basque political conflict will come about through the tandem of peace (respect for human rights) and political normalisation (recognition of

the political entity, the right to decide and an agreement regarding its being exercised). In other words, a central position fixed on three basic principles:

- **Political Dialogue**, which implies the unequivocal commitment to dialogue to achieve Peace and as a means to face the situation, both of the conflict of political normalisation and also that of coexistence that exists in our society. An open dialogue between parties where their members make a pledge to defend our projects via exclusively peaceful and democratic means.

- **Respect for the decisions of Basque society**, which means respect for the Institutions and legal frameworks constructed thus far by the will of the majority of Basques, and also respect for the democratic legitimacy of opinions concerning their change, updating and modification.

- **Social Construction**, from the recognition and acceptance of the plurality of Basque society, based on a model of integration, progress, social justice and solidarity with the most underprivileged. A reference point able to confidently face the profound changes and transformations that our Country must overcome in the 21st century.

CHALLENGES FOR THE BASQUE NATION.

THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE.

The EAJ-PNV considers that peace, even when it starts with the absence of violence, is much more than that: it is the horizon of a process that is linked to dialogue rather than monologue, to education and tolerance rather than to ignorance, inconsideration or indifference. A process that must be based on the deepest respect for people.

The EAJ-PNV maintains its commitment to carry on working on the conditions that will allow, following the announcement of a definitive ceasefire, an end to violence through dialogue which leads to ETA definitively giving up its arms. The starting point must necessarily be the definitive abandoning of arms by ETA. And to arrive at this point requires that the political forces, with the participation of the social agents and public institutions, must consolidate the necessary democratic basis for the transformation and reorientation of the social base that sustains the violence of ETA.

To this end, the EAJ-PNV will foster the following measures:

- Firm rejection of terrorism and violence, as well as denouncing the breach of rights included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Removing the legitimacy of the discourse that sets out to justify violence through the use of educational and cultural policies, détente, communication and political and social reconciliation that leads to all kinds of discourse that is comprehensive of threat, lack of communication, exclusion and sectarianism to be overcome.
- Use of democratic instruments to guarantee life, liberty and safety. We reject the use of exceptional measures in the fight against ter-

rorism such as the Law of Parties, which infringe civil and political rights and hinder all political expressions having the representation that is granted by the popular vote. We also reject special criminal legislation, exceptional prison legislation and, in general, jurisdictional measures that affect the guarantees of the pertaining magistrate.

- Support and social recognition for all victims of terrorism and a deeper exploration of all the means of achieving peace and reconciliation in Basque society, for which it is also essential to support, recognise and should it be the case, to rehabilitate the victims of Francoism, developing whatever measures are at the disposal of the Basque institutions to alleviate, counteract and restore the honour and the heritage taken by force.

- Dialogue between the parties to approach once more a negotiated end to violence, using the premise that political questions can only be clarified in the democratic political arena.

Our commitment to peace also depends on providing Basque political life with maturity, composure and sound judgement, dignifying it in the eyes of society, and fostering social participation, which is the greatest indicator of democratic vitality: we, the EAJ-PNV, have this responsibility because it is to us that the Basque people have entrusted their political leadership.

PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO DECIDE, AS A MEANS OF PROGRESSING TOWARDS POLITICAL NORMALISATION.

In Basque society there is a conviction that the solution to the Basque political conflict will come about through the tandem of peace and political normalisation. In short, it will come about through shared work based on two pledges: YES to peaceful coexistence and YES to respect for the free and democratic decision of Basque society.

The accumulation of political initiatives aimed at overcoming the Basque conflict in less than a decade –the attempt to reopen the Ajuria Enea Talks-Plan Ardanza, the Lizarra process, the project for a New Political Statute, the Loiola process- generated expectations and excitement in our society and when they were frustrated, created pessimism that we must now overcome from the conviction that a solution is close at hand.

Society awaits positive democratic proposals that tackle the way to a solution to the political conflict suffered by a country. It awaits solutions that resolve the structural problems provoked by the lack of political normalisation.

When we speak of political normalisation we refer to the recognition of the Basque Country as a political entity and the right to free self-determination and consequently, respect for the right for the Basque people to freely and democratically define its future as a Nation.

The EAJ-PNV, from the principle for the popular will and the right of Basque society to decide its future freely and democratically, makes the commitment to promote an agreement on the right to decide and the procedure that guarantees the respect for the decision or decisions of the Basque people. A pact to exercise free decision.

The right to decide and the ability to exercise it is inherent to the existence and recognition of Countries. Applied in conditions of equality for all citizens, it is a democratic tool that we should turn into the meeting point for the Basque people.

In the opinion of the EAJ-PNV, the project for the New Political Statute, passed by absolute majority in the Basque Parliament, in addition to the Reform of the Improvement presented in the Parliament of Nafarroa, included sufficient principles and content to tackle the solution to the Basque political conflict.

From the conviction that the result of the majority will of the Basque people makes up the basis of political and democratic legitimacy, the EAJ-PNV promotes as many political initiatives as necessary to enable a scenario offering a solution to the political conflict.

The EAJ-PNV sets itself the objective of achieving an agreement which is the fruit of a broad consensus between the political forces, the Institutions of Euzkadi and the Spanish state. A new scenario that must be approved by society in a framework of respect for human rights and democratic freedoms.

It is to this end that the EAJ-PNV, political parties and Institutions should apply themselves, with the desire for agreement and rejection for all kinds of veto, offering solutions to Basque society. It would be preferable, in the event of possible obstructions, that it was Basque society itself who, through a democratic instrument such as a popular consultation, validated a process that would let us overcome the existing barriers and obliged everyone to respect the popular will.

Responsibly and resolutely, creating the conditions to make the scenario outlined above possible will be our task, the task of the Basque Nationalist Party over the next four years.



EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS:

**THE EUROPEAN
UNION: A SCENARIO
FOR PEACE.**

7 JUNE 2009.

THE EUROPEAN UNION: A SCENARIO FOR PEACE.

Euskadi is home to the last outbreak of political violence in Europe. The European Union can and should help in overcoming this situation. Particularly significant has been the case in Northern Ireland, where the Community institutions actively supported the parties, encouraging them to find common ground and generously funded initiatives that ensured cross the path of peace and reconciliation.

The achievement of peace in Northern Ireland has been one of the largest and least known political successes of European integration. As the European Council on his Declaration of 20 December 1993 said *“the end of the bitter conflict in Northern Ireland would have great economic and social benefits for the region, the affected Member States and the European Union as such.* Thus, the general interest of the Union is involved, certainly in the eradication of the terrorist violence that our country suffers.

PEACE II (EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region and Ireland) pursued the goal of forcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation, not only to benefit the most affected region but of the whole European Union. Considering also that the document itself contains the possibility of exporting the fruits of experience to other regions **EAJ-PNV advocates that the EU should assume a key role in resolving the conflict in Euskadi.**

EAJ-PNV is convinced that, as European integration originated with the goal of ending conflicts between states, to seek a structural peace today in the XXI century the Union must do everything possible to end the last of the conflicts within their borders. Not only because of generous and consistent with the values underlying the political Europe, but in a manner consistent with the role of peacemaker agent outside their own borders.

Peace demands, in short, collaboration and generosity of this political space called European Union. Different to Ireland case, Euskadi does not need financial aid. However, the political, institutional collaboration and the pursuit of recognition of our people and our institutions will be one of the objectives pursued by EAJ-PNV relentlessly confident that we will move steadily toward peace and normalization policy.

EAJ-PNV seek collaboration and support of community institutions to promote and consolidate a lasting peace possible scenario based on political dialogue based on the most scrupulous respect for human rights.



ADOS.

A FUTURE PROJECT FOR THE GLOBAL BASQUE COUNTRY.

SELF-GOVERNMENT,
INTERNATIONALISATION
AND PARTICIPATION.

ADOS

A FUTURE PROJECT FOR THE GLOBAL BASQUE COUNTRY.

SELF-GOVERNMENT,
INTERNATIONALISATION AND
PARTICIPATION.

NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT: THE PACIFICATION OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY.

The political situation in Euskadi, the Basque Country, has changed dramatically in recent times. Basque citizens house a well-founded hope, that increases day by day, of finally achieving a lasting peace. In the past, different peace initiatives have been thwarted, creating a great sense of frustration. Now, however, things are beginning to change, with movements from the grassroots level, although with lower social foundations for hope due to the repeatedly frustrated processes over the last decade.

An ample majority of Basque society is fully convinced that we are witnessing the end of ETA activity, a conviction based on three reasons:

A FUTURE PROJECT FOR THE GLOBAL BASQUE COUNTRY.
SELF-GOVERNMENT, INTERNATIONALISATION AND PARTICIPATION.

1. Transcendentally, a large majority of Basque society has always rejected the actions of ETA. This reprobation has grown increasingly stronger since the transition to democracy. Society has maintained an active role in this regard. With the passing of the years, the use of terrorism has become unbearable for the Basques, leading to society itself stifling the legitimization of violence.

This has been reinforced in the consideration with regard to terrorism, collective action and international isolation against it, especially since 9/11.

2. The second factor that gives encouragement to the hope of peace is the strategic change brought about by the historical *Izquierda Abertzale* (Nationalist Left), which has adopted a stance in favour of democratic channels and has taken a decisive step in rejecting the use of violence. This step has not been taken rashly but, on the contrary, has been long debated, considered and decided by the so-called *Izquierda Abertzale*. A political *Izquierda Abertzale* which has taken on the need for its leadership and pointed out to ETA that violence has no place in the social and national construction of the Basque Country.

ETA has no future whatsoever without the legitimacy provided by the historical *Izquierda Abertzale*. It is precisely this strategic change that has raised the hopes of society.

3. Third, the permanent, verifiable and general “ceasefire” declared by ETA itself shows that it is aware of the desire expressed by the self-styled *Izquierda Abertzale*, and that it could be considering taking that path.

Basque society demands that we take advantage of every opportunity. Peace has a high value for our people; hence, it is worth us all doing our utmost to take advantage of every opportunity that occurs.

What does taking advantage of every opportunity mean?

It means that peace, in itself, has to be the ultimate goal, and that we should not let anyone try to use peace for their own political interests.

Taking advantage of every opportunity means giving rein to practicing politics in a climate of respect for and commitment to democracy. It is necessary from a democratic point of view, and necessary for the pacification of Euskadi.

Demanding a commitment to democratic means by the *Izquierda Abertzale* and, at the same time, keeping it in a situation of illegality, is a contradiction which is hard to beat. Even more, smoothing the path to democracy for the historic *Izquierda Abertzale* is essential if the legitimization of violence is to become a thing of the past.

Full political participation should be encouraged, opening up the possibility of institutional representation to all political options.

In this context, the popular culture in favour of peace and reconciliation should be consolidated; we must not forget the personal suffering caused during decades of violence.

We should encourage this transition from violence to democracy, offering recognition and memory to all victims of terrorism, helping all victims of violence, humanizing the situation of relatives of ETA prisoners.



**THE BASQUE COUNTRY,
A EUROPEAN NATION.**

POLITICAL
CHALLENGES 2015.

THE BASQUE COUNTRY, A EUROPEAN NATION.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES 2015.

CHANGES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY SINCE 2007.

Peace, seen as the end of ETA, closer now.
New players on the institutional stage.

OUR CHALLENGES AS A COUNTRY.

More sovereignty and self-government.
Building a nation-state via a strategic process.

PROPOSALS FOR THE BASQUE COUNTRY, A EUROPEAN NATION 2015.

Peace and harmony.

CHANGES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY SINCE 2007.

In politics, there have been many changes. In the institutions, despite winning the regional elections with a comfortable margin, the use of political manoeuvring in the application of the law of political parties and the reaction to it – draining of seats in the Basque parliament and the PSE-PP Alliance– resulted in the eviction of Basque nationalism from the Basque government's use of power.

The constitutionalist parties have tried to set up a new 'central channel', an idea already in action in some local councils in the Basque Country, as well as in Navarra with the UPN-PSN agreement. This is an idea that is based exclusively on Spanish constitutional frontism, with the progressive assimilation of the Basque Country into the constitutional system, turning the autonomous community into another community of the State. We have witnessed an attempt by the State, including the law of political parties, to achieve the objective of cancelling out the Basque differential.

The reality is that two years later, with a monochrome Basque government in minority, with theoretically sufficient external parliamentary support, this option has failed miserably. It has failed, not because of inefficiency and artificiality, but because Basque society itself has delegitimised it at the municipal and provincial elections held recently.

Elections which, with the incorporation of the new left-wing nationalist parties, have redrawn the political map of the southern Basque Country. A pluralistic map, in which the EAJ-PNV has lost seats. A new map which requires a search for agreements on the basis of mutual recognition, as well as the need to acknowledge the real plurality and equality of status of all the political players and projects.

The agreement consists of the procedure which asks Basque society for the achievement of the goals set and which is therefore a basic objective for this Party, as its political weight in the institutions has undergone a notable transformation. We are still the leading political party in the Basque Country, but we have lost authoritative weight.

This political change and move towards pluralism have all been possible in the Basque Country because of another important evolution; the end of the cycle of violence of ETA. We are witnessing the last stages of a terrorist organisation and should soon see, in whatever way, its definitive end. This closure will open the way for new hope in the Basque Country and has already done so. A new era is here.

This is a new era which has opened up opportunities for solving the Basque political conflict still being fought. The Basque nation, as the expression of the collective identity of the Basques, is backed by the right to freely and democratically choose our own political structure. The only subject of legitimation for this political structure is the Basque nation residing within seven territories. That is the end goal of the EAJ-PNV.

The political conflict between the Basques and Spain and France lies in the lack of recognition of the Basque people and their rights, in the same terms in which those States recognise the rights of the Spanish or French nation.

EAJ-PNV is an instrument at the service of the Basque people, as well as an instrument in the search for a solution to the political conflict. ETA has been and is a player which has objectively prejudiced the building of the nation and the interests of the Basque Country. The end of ETA's violence provides an opportunity for the Basque people to make a qualitative leap forward and the EAJ-PNV should become the central instrument for this strategy.

PEACE, SEEN AS THE END OF ETA, CLOSER NOW.

We find ourselves closer than ever to our objective of Peace, setting out from none other than the end of ETA's violent activity.

The firm desire of Basque society to reject ETA's violence has been a fundamental factor which has meant that the left-wing nationalist parties and ETA itself have had to reorient their strategies. The message from Basque society is clear; there is no room for violence. This pressure from society, added to police and judicial action, as well as coordination on the international stage, has borne fruit and weakened ETA enormously, forcing it to decree a 'permanent cessation of its activities in general'. A first step, important but not everything, since much as they hate to admit it, ETA knows that its time is over and that sooner or later it must admit this and declare a definitive termination to its armed activity.

The historical left-wing nationalists, who for a long time lived in submission under the political and military leadership of ETA, have accepted that the use of arms is impossible. They have declared this before Basque society, and have proceeded to adapt themselves to legality, which has enabled them to compete freely in elections. They are cognizant that 'politico-military strategy' with the use of violence is outmoded and that new times are here, times for politics. They have taken a step, and have to take many more to be incorporated irreversibly into the democratic culture, the only way to achieve and attain political objectives.

We are living a new political era in which Basque society sees the end of ETA nearing. The clear, forceful rejection of terrorism by society has made the nationalist left contemplate a strategy based exclusively on political and democratic means. ETA still owes Basque society the definitive end to the violence and we must demand absolute pro-activity from the nationalist left in achieving this aim.

However, achieving real peace and an authentic reconciliation goes beyond the disappearance of ETA. It is necessary to go deeper into the values and the democratic culture of all the citizens, carrying out a real educational campaign for democratic life in attitudes, values and behaviour.

Peace building and reconciliation must be based on the recognition of others' pain and moral and material compensation for all the victims. The end of

ETA must be supported by the ethical attitude of Basque society as a whole and not by the victory of any political project over another. Building a story about the end of ETA based on political interest would only lead to the establishment of shaky foundations on which to build a future of peace and reconciliation. The support of the new era must involve an ethical attitude shared by the entire society.

NEW PLAYERS ON THE INSTITUTIONAL STAGE.

In the institutional context, the traditional left-wing nationalists met the legal conditions for their legalisation. This return to legality has led them strongly to the municipal and provincial institutions. The place where they always should have been. With the legal conditions fulfilled, they have yet to comply with the political and ethical conditions that democratic coexistence requires. And consequently, the state still needs to legalize its own brand of left-wing nationalism.

OUR CHALLENGES AS A COUNTRY.

MORE SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT.

To achieve our goals, we need to become less and less dependent. To have at all times more ability to respond and decide for ourselves, greater independence. To gain space as a society and country that is a point of reference in the international arena.

The Basque Country is its own social, economic and political project. We have our own culture, language and identity. It is a project supported by the will of the Basque citizens. We are and want to be ourselves. We share an identity that we want to strengthen. Progress in sovereignty and self-government is now proposed in a new strategic project for the country that brings together the democratic principles of the recognition of our right and ability to decide the future as well as respect for all human rights.

The will of our people justifies our desires and rights for self-government, but we cannot forget that self-government is not a fetish for us, but a proposal for welfare and quality of life. Institutional construction in the southern Basque Country has brought us economic growth (human development, income level above the EU average) and effective basic public services (health, education, social services, culture, transport and mobility), mainly in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

Our way has not been wrong. Self-government was and is progress, welfare and quality of life. Therefore we must further strengthen our identity and the common interest of Basque society.

We do not want to give up the status of self-government that we have already achieved. On the contrary, we want to grow institutionally from this base, to consolidate our position in the world. The Basque Country is not and does not want to see itself at the “rear end”. Our place has to be in the “European locomotive” in the construction of a more advanced economic, social, cultural and political Europe.

In this context, modern Spain has become an obstacle to the development of the Basque Country. Economic and institutional imbalances in Spain generate great international distrust. This distrust is transferred to the international financial markets and also to those who may be client markets of Basque companies. We need to form an international benchmark, not only politically, but also socially and economically, with a presence and identity unique to the Basque Country throughout the world.

We need to reach a rate of development that is impossible to achieve under the umbrella of the Spanish state and without the proper tools in the French one. And this requires applying and politically structuring the principle of sovereignty, i.e. the right and ability to decide our own future. Not for political confrontation, but in the interest of the public. Because Basque men and women want a better future and because we have the same rights as other nations in the world.

We have to defend and promote these values. And who better to do that than the EAJ-PNV, which has always defended the interests of the Basque Country. The EAJ-PNV should lead the Basque nationalist strategy and seek agreements with political and social players on the basis of shared principles and content, for a new national project. A strategy to develop in the institutions that we have given ourselves as a people and in other forums, including from the opposition. Always at the service of our country.

To become anchored in the uniformity and/or in the fields of power already achieved, is to be left behind, losing out to the reality of the future. We aspire to have our own political structure that will allow us to protect and develop our social, economic, cultural and political identity. The Basques want to live better, with certainty about employment and welfare, and with top level public services. With economic strength. Achieving all this requires first achieving institutional development and government commensurate with the challenges.

Our strategy aims to promote the growth of the Basque Country, to grow from the political, social, economic and institutional standpoint; to achieve the progressive institutionalization which would mean the recognition of the Basque Country as a nation. Economic growth and institutional growth are the foundations that should un-

derpin the achievement of greater social cohesion and development. Creating wealth for a strong and cohesive society in Europe should be our choice. Exercising daily sovereignty, consolidating the conquered areas and taking new steps.

The Basque Country is an old nation that is renewing and strengthening itself. The Basque Country, a nation in Europe. Along with some that are already, like Estonia and Croatia. Together with others who are pushing forward, such as Scotland or Flanders. We must set our goal where “the European train” moves. Link “political sovereignty” and “economic sovereignty”. Without confusing “economic sovereignty” with “economic protectionism” because we want and need a more independent Basque Country, which at the same time is also more open to the world.

Our gateway to the world is Europe. It is our natural geopolitical and economic space, from which we also look to the rest of the continents.

Europe is a reality that affects us. And more and more often. 80% of EU legislation is directly applicable in the states. The southern Basque Country, as a political community with its own personality and powers, cannot fall outside the scope of European decision-making. We do not want to be a subsidiaries or subordinates in this either, nor in the northern Basque Country, where we aspire to a new model of local government and institutions that have the powers and autonomy necessary for the development of this territory. We believe that the project of a Basque nation has a future, and that it has it for its own sake, as a reality seeking space and recognition within the European Union.

Therefore we must look further. We need to develop a blueprint for the economic, political and cultural globalization of the Basque Country.

This project should have Europe as the first destination, but it should aspire to the new global stage. The Basque Country, a nation in Europe and the world. Close to the countries with economic, cultural or emotional ties that bind us, because they have significant Basque communities. And also to countries which we have less to do with, but which are a chance for our companies. We must approach them with determination.

We are a country that knows how to do things, that does things well. So we need to create, promote and position our brand, “Brand Basque Country”. A brand representing a Basque community with values and its own identity, different, plural and open to the world, that has a positive impact on our country and helps to participate in a global arena open to dialogue between countries and cultures. This also includes the institutionalization of relations on the basis of the “Basque territory”, the shared cultural territory that situates the Basque community in the world. A territory that goes beyond currently known political limits and to give shelter to those who, of their own free will, feel and express themselves as Basques.

BUILDING A NATION-STATE VIA A STRATEGIC PROCESS.

The first essential ingredient in this recipe is Peace. If we have been capable of reaching the current level of welfare in a context of violence, we must ensure that this new era, the end of the cycle of violent activity by ETA, is an opportunity for a new start. A time when, of the free will of our people, our legitimate political aspirations can be realized.

PROPOSALS FOR THE BASQUE COUNTRY, A EUROPEAN NATION 2015.

PEACE AND HARMONY.

The search for peace is a social imperative. Our society cannot understand how the political parties step up their efforts to reach agreements over minor issues and, by contrast, are calculating and selfish when it comes to the major interest, peace.

What is it about peace that is so elusive? Something unspeakable; a price? Or rather, many prices? Peace is a matter of life and death for those who kill and die. But peace is also, and always has been, the subject of political calculation.

There are as many prices for peace as unavowable desires to get it, but only if personal benefits are obtained by getting it. Peace for all is not achieved after an interim payment of benefits to be gained by each political agent. The premise and condition of peace for all is the absence of fear, and the result and prize is the end to terror and a return to democratic normality.

It is not possible for us all to win if everyone is determined to “win.” If ETA is sparing with its decisions, calculating the success or benefit the legalized nationalist left will get from them. Or if, on the other hand, the government of the day or the opposition party, with a desire for victory, seek to profit from the end of violence as a springboard to electoral and political goals. Neither attitude is now admissible.

Over the last four years decisive and, we believe, irreversible steps have been taken towards peace in the Basque Country.

The antecedent in this period, following the strength of society at large in the de-legitimization of the practice and justification of violence for political ends, and after the uprightness of Basque nationalism in institutional commitments, took place in November 2009 with the unilateral declaration of the traditional left-wing nationalists, assuming the “Mitchell principles”, that is, exclusively political and democratic means.

This statement, endorsed in Brussels and Guernica, includes the demand to ETA for a “permanent ceasefire, unilateral and verifiable by the international community as an expression of a definite will to abandon their armed activity.”

Before anything else, the key to the process is the total incompatibility between dialogue and violence. Therefore, the acceptance of a resolving phase towards peace and normality in coexistence must be based on a complete cessation of violence. Thus, dialogue and negotiation are not in themselves an instrument of the peace process, but a consequence of a verifiable desire for the end of violence.

ETA must move from its current position to at least the “Declaration of Guernica”. This means, from not conducting “offensive military action” to a “unilateral ceasefire and permanent” and “verifiable permanent cessation of armed struggle.” It must do this by unilaterally renouncing its usual role of active agent or “guardian of the process.” It must stand aside, absolutely suspend its military activity, and do so in ways that can be proven externally through an institutionally authorized and ratified verification.

Similarly, ETA must cease to be a political reference. Not only must it silence its weapons, but also cease to be a leading reference in the process. Only a civil settlement can build a just and lasting peace.

When these expectations are met, the new political times will require us to share views and assessments of the validity of the abandonment of violence. We will link our assessment to a definition agreed between the political parties about the abandonment of violence and a shared verification of its authenticity. But despite the fact that the end of violence and the beginning of a new era of peace seem to be at our fingertips, there are still obstacles to reaching the desired goal. Either because ETA has not clearly expressed its intention to renounce the armed struggle permanently, or because of the new left-wing nationalists’ arrangement that does not clearly express to ETA the requirement for its definitive termination.

The legalization of Bildu, its electoral appearance and its not inconsiderable results, seems to have lowered the bar that the traditional left-wing nationalists kept in relation to ETA. The proof is Bildu’s refusal to publicly express their demand for ETA to specifically state its end. So is the repetition of gestures belonging to the past or the maintenance of certain public statements, including the opinion, not stated, that with their decisions “they will not hand electoral victory to the PSOE or PP on a platter”. All this makes us think that, once again, in traditional left-wing nationalism, political calculation continues to outweigh the common and general good.

The Basque Nationalist Party believes that it is time to act with the responsibility that the Basque Country demands. To this end, we believe it essential to establish, beyond political expediency, the following considerations:

PEACE REQUIRES A PROCESS WITH GUARANTEES.

There is an element of decision which clearly lies with those who exercise violence, as to what is the will of ETA to end its activity.

We political parties and social partners can contribute to creating the social, political and legal conditions that accompany this decision. Therefore, the end of violence cannot be addressed by a mixture of hurry and good intentions.

We political parties, who cannot accept a process with no guarantees, demand of ETA its acceptance and unconditional respect for the decisions we Basques may take freely.

DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION.

The necessary condition for a decisive dialogue process is the complete cessation of violence by ETA, as well as compliance by the Spanish state of the legislation in force, both internally and internationally, in questions of Human Rights. In this context, the dialogue should be aimed at a technical negotiation process for bringing about the absolute end of violence and terrorism.

THE DISASSOCIATION OF THE TRADITIONAL LEFT-WING NATIONALISTS FROM ETA.

The reformulation of traditional left-wing nationalism as a democratic, autonomous organization should have the recognition and legitimacy that the legal framework establishes for other political organizations, with the same level of rights and obligations, restoring the full civil rights that a political party has in a democratic system. Such recognition will not only serve for the sociological and electoral rebuilding of Basque society, but will also permit the political debate to reach a path of civil and institutional standardisation.

A PROCESS WITH PARLIAMENTARY VALIDATION.

The resolution adopted in Congress by all parliamentary groups except the PP, in May 2005, literally citing point 10 of the 1988 Ajuria Enea Agreement, declared that *“if there are suitable conditions for a negotiated end of violence, based on a clear will to put an end to it and unequivocal attitudes that can lead to this conviction, we support dialogue processes between the competent authorities of the State and those who decide to abandon violence, whilst respecting at all times the undeniable democratic principle that political issues must be resolved only through the legitimate representatives of popular will...”*

Now, as before, EAJ-PNV maintains these principles, although our earlier experience from previous processes leads us to believe that any initiative of tech-

nical or sectorial dialogue with ETA, for the sake of a verifiable exercise of the permanent abandonment of its armed activity, should have *parliamentary authorisation, parliamentary control and parliamentary sanction. Only the people's representatives in their natural seat, the Parliament, can guarantee the success of the dialogue or assume its failure without further cost.*

PENITENTIARY AND REINTEGRATION POLICY IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE AND HARMONY.

In a democracy, prisoners are entitled to basic rights that public authorities have a duty to respect and protect in all circumstances. If anything characterizes the rule of law in the area of prison policy, it is always aimed at social reintegration. In that sense, a flexible application of the Criminal Code, the serving of sentences in prisons close to the homes of the detainees, the consideration of their families and relatives as potential agents of peace and reconciliation and, in no case as *collaterally guilty* are today more than ever, essential elements in the service of pacification.

This does not require any precondition. It is, therefore, the time to give, finally, a new orientation, an agreed, dynamic and flexible approach to prison policy. We therefore reiterate the commitment of EAJ-PNV to this challenge. In any case, it is something that we believe should have been done already, according to the resolutions adopted by the Basque Parliament in 1997 and by the Congress in 1998.

THE ROAD FROM PEACE TO HARMONY.

We want and seek a fair peace, as something that Basque society needs inexorably after so many years of violence. But we must not forget that the ultimate goal should be harmony, reconciliation. The suffering, the pain suffered by the victims must be acknowledged by everyone, with generosity and high-mindedness. So we will have to design and lead the difficult path from peace to harmony. Other people have succeeded. We must also do so.

CONCLUSION.

As progress is made at this stage and irrefutable steps are taken to consolidate an option for peace and normalization, the Basque Nationalist Party will encourage and participate in the proposal of joint initiatives with all political parties and institutions in ways that contribute to achieve these ends.

Thus, EAJ-PNV reserves all discreet and/or public initiatives deemed necessary to achieve definitive peace in the Basque Country.