

The declaration of Lizarra

On September 12th 1998 PNV, HB, EA and IU, and about twenty unions and social groups, signed in Estella (Navarra) a text known as Lizarrako Adierazpena (Declaration of Estella). The parties that signed represent more than 60% of the Basque Parliament, and they suggest that the debate on the peace process that is taking place in the Basque Country should follow the principles stated in it. The signature of the Declaration of Estella preceded the announcement, on September 16th, of a “general and unlimited cease-fire” by ETA.

Factors that have promoted the peace agreement in Ireland

- 1 All parties in struggle have agreed that they are dealing with a political problem that must therefore find a political solution.
- 2 The British Government and the IRA accepted that neither of them was going to achieve a military victory, and therefore, they accepted that the struggle –in case things remained as they were– could go on indefinitely.
- 3 Thanks to the efforts of all participants in the struggle, confrontation gave way to work in common (at first among those who were close although different, then among frank opponents, and finally among enemies) but always trying to include everyone in these relations.
- 4 Among the variety of reflections, one became especially relevant: the old idea of the republican movement of building a model of solution to the problem that would include and respect all traditions existing in the island. This contributed to reduce the resistance of those in favor of excluding dialogues or isolating policies.
- 5 Gradually the dialogue and understanding that sprung from this net of relations took the leading role that had been played until then by the use of violence and the isolating policy. Friendly gestures were made on both sides and no inexcusable conditions were demanded before dialogue could start.
- 6 The acknowledgement of the right of self determination for all the citizens of Ireland has brought about progress in democracy both in relation to contents (creating new possibilities of sovereignty) and in relation to the method (giving the citizens the last word). These political features that can be found in the peace agreement include a new understanding of the negotiation not as something anybody could win, but as a way of solving the problem, including all traditions existing in the island. All political projects are treated equally and the only difference existing between them is the support of the democratic majority.
- 7 Some international factors played a significant role in the process: the firm support and direct participation of the Government and the President of the United States; the positive reactions of different institutions belonging to the European Union (including the promised substantial aids), and the political support and advice offered by the Government and President of South Africa during the whole process. ■

The Declaration is signed by

AB, HB, PNV, EA, IU, BATZARRE ZUTIK, ELA, LAB, EHNE, ESK-CUIS, STEE-EILAS, EZKER SINDIKALA, HIRU, GOGOIA, AMNISTIAREN ALDEKO BATZORDEAK, SENIDEAK, BAKEA ORAIN, ELKARRI, EGIZAN, HERRIA 2000 ELIZA, GERNIKA BATZORDEA, AUTODETERMINAZIOREN BILTZARRAK.

Possible applications in Euskal Herria

Bearing in mind the way the peace process and agreement have taken place in Ireland, we believe the problems of Euskal Herria could be overcome using the following guidelines:

• IDENTIFICATION •

The Basque dispute has historical origins and a political nature, and it involves both the Spanish and French states. It must necessarily be solved politically.

As there are different opinions about the roots and duration of the dispute, and these differences determine the disagreeing ideas about territoriality, the subjects of decision and political sovereignty, they have become the core of the fundamental questions to solve.

• METHOD •

The political solution can only be reached through a process of dialogue and negotiation open to and including all parties and with the intervention of Basque society in general.

• PROCESS •

Preliminary stage

The process of dialogue and negotiation can be promoted with multilateral conversations, provided they do not demand previous conditions the agents could find impossible to fulfill.

Solution stage

The real process of negotiation and solution, that implies the will and the engagement of dealing with the causes of the dispute, should take place in an atmosphere of permanent absence of every kind of expression of violence in the dispute.

• NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATION •

The negotiation must be global in the sense that it must deal with and solve all the matters that constitute the dispute, as well as those that are its consequences. There should be no limits in the agendas. The negotiation should not be seen as a process with particular guarantees, but as a way to solve the problem.

• RESOLUTION KEYS •

All this implies that an effective negotiation should not include specific impositions, it should respect the plurality of Basque society, it should treat every project under the same conditions, it should heighten democracy in the sense that the citizens of Euskal Herria are given the last word in relation to their future, and that their decision will be respected by the states involved in the dispute. Euskal Herria must have the last word and decision.

• RESULTING STAGE •

The agreement will not contain closed and definitive stages, on the contrary it should promote open frameworks where new solutions for the traditional aspirations of sovereignty of the citizens of Euskal Herria can find room to live. ■