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Ahotsak, Basque women's voices for peace

Following the ETA ceasefire, on April 8 in San Sebastián two hundred women representing all of the political and trade union organizations in Euskal Herria, with the exception of the PP and the UPN, presented a declaration advocating peace and reconciliation, in which they demanded respect for «the decision» of Basque men and women regarding «the legal-political framework». The women, who signed the document in their own names, formed the platform Ahotsak with the purpose, as indicated by its name in Basque, of contributing «voices» to fostering progression of the peace process and converting women into «active agents». Directly behind a banner bearing the platform anagram, were Gemma Zabaleta (PSE-EE), Jone Goirizelaia (Batasuna), Gemma González de Txabarri (PNV), Begoña Errazti (EA), Kontxi Bilbao (EB), Aintzane Ezenarro (Aralar) and Nekane Erauskin (EHAK). Alongside them at the function held in the Palacio de Miramar, was Aihnoa Aznarez, from the Navarre Socialist Party,



Ahotsak blog.

Two hundred women representing all of the political and trade union organizations in Euskal Herria call for respect of the decision taken by Basque citizens regarding the legal-political framework

the French Socialist Colette Capdevielle and Mertxe Colina, from the independence supporters' movement, Abertzaleen Batasuna.

The declaration was read out in Basque, Spanish and French by the journalists Maddalen Iriarte,

Mertxe Aizpurua and Béatrice Molle. Before reading the document, they recalled other initiatives led by women in other countries in conflict: Colombia, Northern Ireland and Israel.

The text made three points. Firstly, that peace «is not only a question of the absence of any kind of violence», but is «linked to democracy, social justice, to a process of change permitting citizens to consider historical conflicts as closed and turn the page in terms of rights and freedoms».

Secondly, that «we have to seek a scenario permitting and guaranteeing the development and materialization of all projects through political and democratic channels in conditions of equality». And thirdly, that if Basque society «wishes to transform, change or maintain its currently existing legal-political framework, all men and women» should respect the guarantees and political procedures agreed upon so that «the decision of Basque society is respected and, if necessary, mirrored by legislation».