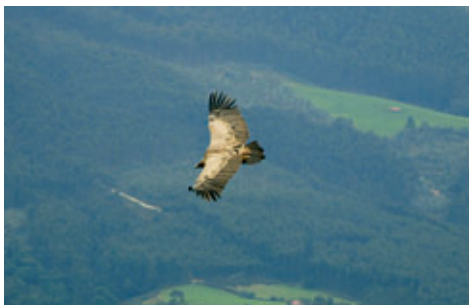




The Basque integral environmental policy in synch with European policy



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On 4 June 2002, the Basque Cabinet of Ministers approved the Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development (2002-2020) and the first Environmental Framework Programme (2002-2006), giving this issue a long-term strategic view in synch with the commitment made at the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, to prepare sustainable development strategies in each territory. The Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development establishes five environmental goals and five necessary conditions promoted primarily by Basque public administration. These targets and conditions have been set alongside the European Union Strategy for sustainable development and the Sixth Environment Action Programme. By approving this Strategy, the Basque Country now has an integral environmental policy, designed to work in synch with the European Union's environmental policy.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL AIMS FOR THE BASQUE COUNTRY

1

GUARANTEEING CLEAN, HEALTHY AIR, WATER AND SOIL

Currently, only 15% of water is untreated and 211 hectares of contaminated soil were recovered between 1990 and 2003. The Government committed to reducing total pollutants dumped into public canals and coastal areas by 50%, complying with air quality targets set by the European Union, recovering 20% of polluted public land and establishing food labeling for human consumption, indicating production methods.

2

RESPONSIBLE NATURAL RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

In 2003, 10.7 million kilograms of waste was produced. 97% of it was not dangerous and 3% was considered hazardous. Out of the total 5,196 kilograms of waste produced annually per person, 419 correspond exclusively to household waste (if municipal waste with institutional, industrial and commercial origins is considered, then this amount increases to 588 kilograms annually); 2,048 kilograms come from the primary sector; 1,872 kilograms from industry; 732 kilograms from the construction sector and 124 from the service sector. One hundred percent of dangerous industrial waste has been managed since 1998. Selective collection of urban waste has increased by a factor of 16 between 1990 and 2001. One out of every three kilograms of municipal waste is currently collected selectively (188 kilograms per person and year). The Government proposes to reduce urban waste being sent to landfill by up to 75% of the total quantity generated. It hopes to change growing trends in water consumption per inhabitant and reduce water losses by 20% of the total consumption by 2012.

3

PROTECTING NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY: STRENGTHENING THIS UNIQUE TREASURE

54% of Basque territory is wooded forest land. 15% of the surface is protected (Urdaibai and Txingudi coastal wetlands, seven nature reserves and five protected biotypes). The target is to increase this area to 25-30% by creating environmental correctors. Six of the Basque Country's wetlands are included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance or Ramsar List. The aim includes establishing management plans for one hundred percent of the species classified as being in danger of extinction and recovering a minimum of 15 kilometers of river bank.

4

MOBILITY AND TERRITORIAL BALANCE: A COMMON FOCUS

The aim is to reduce mobility needs, by discouraging activities and urban uses that represent an increase in automobile use. The Government proposes to increase use of public transport by 10% over total passenger transport in key urban areas. This intends to reduce the use of road transportation by 2012, transferring demand to railroad, shipping and public transport.

5

LIMIT THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATIC CHANGE

This aims to meet targets for reducing greenhouse gases, in the Kyoto agreement, by 2012. The Basque Government has committed to increasing the use of renewable energy by 2012 following European Union objectives, namely meeting 4% of Basque energy demand in 2003. It will promote subsidized housing equipped to use solar energy and it has also become involved in installing photovoltaic solar energy panels in Basque schools.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS

To continue down the straight and narrow, the Basque Public Administration considers that five conditions should be met: integrate the environmental variable within other policies; improve existing legislation and its implementation; urge the market to act in favor of the environment; train and prepare the population, authorities and companies, and change their behavior towards greater sustainability; lastly, research, technological development and innovation in environmental issues.