

**INDAR POLITIKO INDEPENDENTISTEN ARTEKO
AKORDIOAREN OINARRI ESTRATEGIKOAK**

RULES FOR A STRATEGIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN PRO-INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL FORCES



LORTU ARTE

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EUSKO ALKARTASUNA and IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE come from different traditions, experiences and political actions that have even been highly contradictory at times. Although recognising each other's different paths, positions and specific of ideologies, we understand that it is time to prioritise converging commitments and move forwards working towards the wishes and needs of the majority of Basque society. It is time to join forces so that Basque citizens can channel their convictions, ambitions and forces, opening up a new political phase in the process towards an independent, progressive and left-wing Euskal Herria.

This agreement is therefore the result of this converging effort and it establishes the rules for working together with a clear purpose: creating the Basque State. On this basis, this agreement is strategic.

1. Political references

Euskal Herria is a nation that over history has constantly reasserted its own identity and wish to control its own destiny. It has demonstrated this in political institutions and in its legal ordinances both relating to the capacity to decide over its internal organisation and referring to how its foreign relations are organised.

This fight for our identity and institutional personality has led to confrontation with kingdoms and/or states that have claimed its political, economic and cultural assimilation. This legacy of fighting and rebelling has remained latent in the face of the persistence of the Spanish and French states denying our national reality and consequent democratic rights.

Over the last few decades, the political forces signing this agreement have maintained their position and held differentiated actions in this fight for national recognition and sovereignty. We would like to summarise the key reflection and intervention aspects that have characterised each political force.

For EUSKO ALKARTASUNA, the statutory framework, as a formal legal basis for self-government agreed over twenty years ago, is no longer sufficient. It was a responsible answer (the only one possible at the time) to this country's urgent needs, given the serious risk of political involution whilst it was being negotiated. In addition to a responsible answer, from the doctrinal point of view it guaranteed/protected our people's historical rights. The first chapter of the Autonomy Statute recognises Euskal Herria's right (as a natural community) to form a political community to express its nationality and adds that Araba, Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia in the same way as Navarre, have the right to join it. However, over the last two decades, this has constantly lost material content, as a consequence of attacks made to its interpretation and application by means of the interminable spread of Spanish State basic legislation.

However, the basic problem does not revolve only around not complying with specific articles in the Statutes, although this fact is very serious in itself; the fundamental problem lies in the fact that the Treaty to set up self-government has not been met, in so far as this treaty has been devalued and played down because one of the parties, the Spanish State, did not have the political will to meet its commitments. Nor should we forget that the Improvement Law (Amejoramiento Foral, never put to a referendum by popular vote) has only been used to strengthen pro-Spanish Navarrese movements politically and socially and that in the North Basque Country the current situation requires a new approach to gain the legal recognition corresponding to us as a people.

Nowadays we can see that we are systematically being denied recognition for Basque national history and politics and for this reason, nationalists cannot in any circumstances question that the statutory framework has been all played out and that, in itself, it is not the right instrument to satisfy the political aspirations of the country's social majority.

On the other hand, the IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE, when reflecting on the political path that our people have undertaken over the last thirty years, wishes to highlight the attempt to reach an agreement between Basque political forces carried out in Txiberta. At the time, when the Spanish State was establishing the rules for Francoist reforms, the need was raised for a convergence of objectives and forces to achieve a democratic scenario in Euskal Herria.

The Spanish Constitution, and the statutory framework emanating from this, determined the contents of a political transition organised around the arbitrary partition of Basque territories, negation of the Basque political subject and their right to Self-Government and levels of Regional Competences that were always conditioned and vulnerable to the decisions made by the State

Voting in the Spanish Constitution referendum made it clear that the resulting legal-political framework was not supported by the social majority in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre. The later formulation of the Autonomy Statute, along with unilateral imposition of the Improvement Law (Amejoramiento Foral), were little more than instruments of political assimilation for IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE; in other words, a political trap.

For this reason IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE considers that it is fundamental to consolidate a democratic status working from national recognition and the right to Self-Government and territoriality. This has defined their work and initiatives over the last thirty years.

In Lapurdi, Zuberoa and Nafarroa Beherea, the key aspects to the political situation lie in the French State's political approach as it refuses to recognise the mere existence of the Basque People. So, the French State continues with a political assimilation strategy responding with pseudo-instruments to any steps taken to claim political recognition for the Basque People's own nationality and the Autonomy.

From these generic references retrospectively, and looking at the development of the Statute within the CAPV, the Amejoramiento Foral and the situation in the North Basque Country, IZQUIERDA ABERTZALE and EUSKO ALKARTASUNA consider that current legal-political frameworks have run their course and it is essential to make political changes based on national recognition and respect for the wishes of the people. This ascertainment and requirement is assumed by an increasing number of political and social agents.

This majority demand continues to come up against the anti-democratic closed doors of both states. In the South Basque Country, the legal-political framework crisis, referring to its exhaustion, has been tackled by the Spanish State using a political blocking strategy involving anti-democratic laws and "State Treaties" (UPN-PSN, PSE/EE-PP) presented as instruments of "national salvation" to try and revive an expired constitutional-statutory model. This blocking strategy thereby claims to modify conditions for political change that have already been developed and demanded in Basque society.

This political challenge is undergoing an economic crisis and an antidemocratic step backwards (using justice for own purposes, corruption, etc.) leading to regressive measures in political, economic and social rights for all Basque society. In the North Basque Country, any claims for recognition and autonomy come up against imposing and intolerant Jacobinism.

However these domineering and anti-democratic positions do not reflect the states' force but their strategic weakness when faced with a people that stands firm in their national conscience and demands for democratic rights. With conviction, resistance, dedication, steadfast fight and constant rebellion we have entered current times in a position to make structural changes within our collective recognition and future. Today the principle that "Euskal Herria has a voice and can make decisions" is founded on a solid democratic connection between all political cultures and it is the basic reference point to make definitive and stable agreements permitting our people's secular political conflict to be resolved.

In parallel, sovereignty and pro-independence forces are gaining members among citizens as options guaranteeing development of a democratic Euskal Herria at the service of an alternative and supportive social model. Consequently, based on Euskal Herria's right to be a sovereign state, if this is what the majority of Basque citizens decide, our political action will work towards achieving a Basque State.

2. Rules, nature and characteristics of the agreement

This agreement is a tactical-strategic instrument to see in the new political times that Euskal Herria must work towards. We are responding to a crucial historical moment in our country on its way towards full sovereignty and, with this, the desire for a very broad nationalist movement sector. This strategic agreement has sufficient political and social weight to be able to articulate a progressive place for itself in favour of independence and can thereby act appropriately working towards necessary political change in Euskal Herria.

This agreement is based on respect and commitment to our people and on the quest to join a pro-independence project that benefits from all institutional, cultural, economic and social dimensions. We would like the Basque people to be free, living in peace and in control of their own destiny to be able to build a new model of society based on social justice and equality between men and women.

Beyond the interests of very few, beyond the partisanships, throwing out subordinations, the wishes of the majority will be our only aim and reference point demanding maximum effort from us to tackle the challenges that Euskal Herria is facing. It is time to act courageously, to respond to society's wishes with solid convictions, loyalty and the commitments that Euskal Herria demands.

As opposed to the black and white uniformity of French and Spanish nationalism, upholding our people's multi-coloured diversity and working from every path and political culture, the time has come to join forces. We are thereby committing to converging objectives and commitments to responsibility and hope, aware that this is what the current historical moment is crying out for.

To do this, this agreement has the following characteristics:

- **Respect between parties.** Aware of our different political cultures and diverse positions in matters of a different nature, we will work together to overcome any contradictions relying on respect and a positive will to come to an agreement in all fields of common work. The aim of this agreement is not to make this objective reality disappear, because imposing criteria will endanger the agreement's potential.
- **Mutual trust.** All contents and commitments within this agreement determine a special relationship between the parties, giving our reciprocal relations a preferential nature within our political relations. This situation requires trust and trust has to be nourished by dialogue, open debate, agreement and by loyalty to what has been agreed.

3.- Field of the Agreement

The subject of the agreement is the Basque territories making up Euskal Herria, and so it takes on a national field.

This national dimension will be developed whilst aware of the distinct rhythms within the different territories and decision-making frameworks, thereby responding to them in terms of respect and protecting diversities. However, we also believe that national construction and our strategic objectives require national perspectives. So then, this agreement will have projection to all geographic and social places in Euskal Herria

4. Contents of the agreement

A) Institutional area

4.1. Strategic objectives: Constitution of the Basque State.

The main aim of this agreement is to set up an independent Basque state on an international stage, with full political and economic interdependence. This is our strategic objective and the basis for our common work.

Independence is the only way of assuring the future of Euskal Herria. Our people need all the instruments within their reach to be able to develop in all fields without any limitations and this is only currently possible by forming a State. This is the most beneficial option for Euskal Herria and for its citizens.

The past and the present have shown us that Spanish and French nationalisms do not have any intention of recognising our national identity or allowing us to develop in compliance with our needs. This is a lesson for the future. Without our own State, we run the risk of perpetuating imposition and subordination.

We would like the sovereignty to be able to live in peace with other populations and develop reciprocal supportive relations. Euskal Herria is ready to share its sovereignty with other peoples in the future construction of Europe, but first of all we must be a sovereign state, democratically exercising our Right to Self-Government. It is not possible to build a common project from subordination.

For this reason, we state that setting up the Basque State does not go against anyone. We do not want walls to spring up along the Ebro or the Aturri Rivers. We want to establish relations on an equal footing with other states, peoples and nations from developing a Basque national project in all its dimensions.

The aim of the Basque State is also intrinsically linked to an economic and social project that develops our capabilities from our own integral point of view whilst always aiming to create equal living conditions for all citizens. We are convinced that the Basque socioeconomic space, from the constitution of a State, would have great purpose and strategic potential.

4.2. New legal-political structures for the Basque territories

During the process of building the Basque State, it is necessary to overcome the legal-political structures currently in force. We need a phase where Basque national subject recognition and institutionalisation can lay the foundations to exercise the Right to Self-Government as a people. We need legal-political frameworks that make it possible for Basque institutions to obtain competences and capabilities in economic, social, cultural and linguistic matters, overcoming the current restrictive and over-bearing situation.

Regarding the CAPV, we are clearly aware of the diverging positions held by the signing parties. One side considered it a valid instrument to move forwards and the other, on the contrary, a mechanism of assimilation. Today, both forces agree to highlight the need for a new legal-political framework working from national recognition and respect for popular will as bases for its development.

Regarding Navarre, it is clear that the institutionalisation and the political process deriving from the Amejoramiento aimed to hold the will of the Navarrese hostage, eradicating the very slightest option to decide on a common project for Euskal Herria. This is why, by means of this agreement, we are showing our commitment to work to attain a new scenario that does create any limitations on freewill for Navarre's citizens.

The situation in Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa is unsustainable, lacking any type of recognition from the French State. The signing parties will continue to boost different dynamics seeking this recognition and our current proposal involves setting up a Regional Autonomy for these three territories.

The democratic reason to overcome the current legal-political structures lies in the Basque people's capacity to decide our future freely, without any type of interference from anyone. For this reason, new legal-political structures should guarantee the right to decide on our internal structuring as well as on external relations. In this way, citizens from the different territories will have the chance to solve the problem of territorial division and be able to choose independence or another formula of relating to the Spanish and French States.

The process of constructing new legal-political structures will be based on dialogue and negotiation and it will be essential to hold a citizen referendum on any resulting proposal. The states should assume the people's democratic wishes by making the consequent legislative modifications.

The signing parties commit to debating beforehand and working to reach an agreement on the proposals that we are presenting as a pro-independence force, through dialogue and negotiation to build this new legal-political structure.

Among other matters, the new legal-political structure will have to tackle its own projection within the international field to set up diplomacy in advance for the independent Basque State and so that by means of delegations open all around the world, peoples, nations and states that are in favour of the Basque State can participate in friendship and cooperation.

In parallel to the definition and development of these new legal-political structures we also aim to set up national institutions from the recognition and consideration of the institutional reality in force at all times. In this respect we are committing to building a unique institution with a national character and a municipal base, taking up the path followed a few years ago with Udalbiltza and using its basis as a reference point.

Also, from the legal-institutional structure established we will boost a Basque national vision and in the CAPV we will work hard to achieve change in the LTH (Historical Territory Law). From the current legal and administrative situation, we will promote the strategy based on construction and national ordinance, by means of both specific national measures and potentially transitory measures.

B) Resolution of political conflict

The root of the conflict that we are suffering in Euskal Herria is political and therefore requires a political solution. As we have already mentioned in the previous section, the reason for the conflict lies in the structural denial that Basque citizens should be masters of their own destiny. The conflict has also brought violence and, unfortunately, expressions of violence and suffering remain amongst us. It is the wish of those of us signing this agreement to overcome the political conflict and that the violence might disappear definitively. This is our priority.

To achieve this objective, we believe that it is necessary to boost an in-depth democratic process and develop it fully. This democratic process, working from dialogue, negotiation and agreement between political agents, should establish essential commitments to respect Basque society's decision, making democratic development possible for all the political projects in Euskal Herria as a whole. This democratic process requires our commitment to exclusively use political and democratic strategies, whilst defending all Human Rights.

So then, it is our immediate priority to overcome a situation involving many types of violence, offering Basque society a future with no suffering where their rights are not violated. Aware that the resolution will not be an easy path, it is necessary to start taking steps that must appear from now on in specific commitments to overcome all violence.

In this respect, we consider that a multi-party dialogue process must be developed based on the **"Mitchell Principles"** particularly referring to:

- Exclusive commitment to pacific and democratic lines to resolve conflict.
- Commitment to renounce the use of violence and reject all attempts by others to use force, or the threat to use it, to try and influence the progress or result of multi-party negotiations.

In addition to recovering minimal democratic conditions, developing the current democratic process requires progress to be made in different fields:

- Recognition of basic civil and political rights. The right to hold demonstrations, association and freedom of expression should not be repressed. We demand the derogation of the Law of Political Parties and the establishment of measures that resolve illegitimate situations currently undergone by public institutions. We consider it to be basic to accept the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Treaties on civil and political rights and social, economic and cultural rights as well as the Women's Rights Charter.

- Derogation of measures that aim to punish political prisoners boundlessly (life sentences, denial of parole, denial of release for the seriously ill, dispersion, isolation, etc.). They should all be transferred to prisons in Euskal Herria. Steps should also be taken in a process that aims to release political prisoners.

- Suppression of measures and instruments used for political repression, including legal processes contrary to civil and political rights and to free political activity.

- Deactivation of police pressure suffered by popular sectors.

- End of threats and pressure against all people

Political agreement can only be achieved after assuming the firm and definitive commitment that only pacific, political and democratic lines will be used and after setting up these measures, through dialogue between the different agents. We have started to take steps so that the violence leading from the political conflict should be definitively withdrawn from the very start of the process. We also consider it necessary to move on, repairing and overcoming its serious consequences. The democratic process should lead us to a scenario guaranteeing respect for Basque society's democratic wishes

C) Model of society. Bases for political management towards a new Euskal Herria

Working from the previously developed references - resolving conflict, new legal-political structures and Basque State - the signing parties commit to sharing and managing actions in matters that we consider strategic for the national construction process and development of an alternative social model.

This action unit should be looked at in greater depth, specifically in later agreements; it is based on the following strategic axes:

- **PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY:** Parliamentary democracy requires in-depth remodelling with effective popular participation measures and guarantees to not use public administrations as an

instrument for corruption and political cronyism. Pro-independence forces commit to leading this type of participation, making it possible to return power to citizens.

- **SOCIAL JUSTICE:** We are concerned about people's wellbeing and, being progressive, we are working for social justice by fighting social exclusion and situations of inequality. In this respect, we are working on creating our own framework within the socio-economic field and in work and social security relations, as well as in favour of a special economic regime. This regime will guarantee fiscal economic and financial sovereignty and will act on a level footing with any economic and fiscal regime present in the European Union.

The Basque Socioeconomic Area is a strategic objective that we must promote completely from the institutional fields in force at all times. Within the context of neoliberal economic globalisation, this is a determining issue for the future purpose of the Basque State and its projection for a fair social model.

- **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TERRITORIAL ORDINANCE:** Citizens have the collective right to defend nature and to a reasoned and reasonable use of the territory. This is also an obligation demonstrating support for current generations and those to come. Public powers, as physical and legal persons, must make use of nature and the environment responsibly and reasonably. All Public Administration policies will be based on respecting nature, taking care of energy sources and natural resources, as well as guaranteeing the necessary balance between economic and social needs and the need to defend nature. These policies will be developed from a national perspective and, as far as major projects are concerned, their promoters will be required to demonstrate participative mechanisms adopting them.

- **EQUALITY:** The disappearance of situations of inequality, the claim for equality and the fight to eradicate all types of violence against women are our priority in the work that we are committing to take forward, so that when the Basque State has been created, all situations of discrimination and violence suffered by women will no longer exist.

To do this, we actively commit to taking this commitment into account in any action that we carry out, in both the social and the political field, by articulating all types of measures, including

positive discrimination if necessary so that any situation of inequality and violence against women might be eradicated.

- **EUSKARA:** As Basque (Euskara) is the national language of the country and an element of our people's identity, as well as heritage for the generations to come and our contribution to universal culture, it will be primordial for the signing parties to promote the right strategy for it, committing to it in order to achieve a Basque-speaking Euskal Herria made up of multicultural and multilingual citizens. To achieve this, the right steps will have to be taken to develop a complete linguistic policy to obtain full official status for the Basque language throughout Euskal Herria.

- **EDUCATION:** Basque citizens as a whole have the right to receive good quality education, as well as continuous training in compliance with their wishes and skills. For this, it is necessary to defend their own educational model revolving around a Basque curriculum and a public, popular and participative model, compulsory between the ages of 3 and 16, that is an improvement on the current public system. In addition, a Public University will be promoted for all Euskal Herria as well as Vocational Training and Continual Training - both public and private - and especially Employment Training for the unemployed collective.

- **HEALTH:** We consider health to be a fundamental basic right for people that must be guaranteed and provided by public institutions, with the economic means that society makes available to it. We are committing to a good quality, universal and free public health service for all the population. This area should not prioritise economic benefit but should strive for people's health and physical and psychic wellbeing.

- **NATIONALITY AND CITIZENSHIP:** Nationality is a right and therefore all Basques have the right to this without anyone suffering discrimination for reasons of territoriality, developing active policies for this: EHNA, national symbols, external promotion of Basque identity, Basque sports teams, etc. On the other hand, all persons that are registered administratively in any Municipality of the Basque State will have Basque citizenship.

5.- Key aspects of implementing the agreement

5.1. Joining forces

We will prioritise relations with anyone that wishes to build the Basque state, working continuously with sectors that defend Self-Determination so that the sum of our forces means we can overcome the current scenario of negation and imposition.

For the signing parties, it is also primordial to work for social justice, and for equality between men and women. We are demonstrating our wish to join progressive forces. We are prioritising work with the country's trade union majority respecting their autonomy and initiatives in all cases.

The pro-independence movements' wish to accumulate forces requires specific expressions. We will join any popular initiatives that emerge in favour of independence, always respecting their nature and dynamics.

We also consider it necessary to boost electoral formulas that permit this accumulation of forces and developing objectives laid down in this agreement.

5.2.- Democratic confrontation

Even when we undertake strategic commitment with confidence and force, we know that we might find imposition and a lack of inclination to accept democratic rules and contents as accredited by Spanish and French nationalisms and their states.

For this reason, we commit to developing a strategy based on civic, pacific and democratic confrontation. Our greatest force will be people joining us and mobilising both to fight imposition and to move the democratic process forwards towards our political proposal to achieve independence for Euskal Herria. It is the people that should be subject to politics and in the path to build the Basque State, and it is the people that should always have their say.

5.3.- National construction

National construction is the activity guided towards raising the pillars of the future State and, consequently, we commit to join this. This will specifically be one of the priorities of our institutional representation.

6.- Measures for monitoring

The signing parties for this agreement will set up a Coordination Commission to comply with and develop it.

Euskal Herria, 20th June 2010