

Lizarra-Garazi Accord

Note: The Lizarra Declaration was signed on September 12, 1998, by 23 Basque nationalist parties, labor unions, and grassroots groups, and Spain's communist-led United Left (IU).

Factors that propitiated the Peace Agreement in the north of Ireland

1. All parties to the conflict accepted the origins and its political nature and, consequently, that its resolution also should be political.
2. The British government and the IRA understood that one or the other could not be the military conqueror and, consequently, accepted that the conflict--if let as it was--could be endlessly prolonged.
3. Thanks to the reflection of all parties to the conflict, the confrontation yielded to a common effort (first to yield were those nearest the conflict; later on rivals; and finally, enemies), always attempting not to exclude anyone from these talks.
4. Among the variety of reflections made, it was highlighted as specially relevant that the previous conception of the Republican movement was to build and support a solution to the conflict that would include and respect all the existing traditions of the island. This helped to reduce resistance of those who previously promoted exclusive dialogue or politics of isolation.
5. Slowly, the dialogue and relaxation of tension that emerged from this network of relations became the main actor and priority, which until then had incorporated the use of violent force and the politics of isolation. Gestures of relaxation of tension came from both sides without the old conditions to begin dialogue.
6. The recognition of the right of the citizens of Ireland to self-determination brought depth to the content of democracy (creating new formulas of sovereignty) as well as the method (giving the citizens the last word). These political characteristics contained in the Peace Agreement appreciate the idea of negotiations, not with the intention to win but of solving the conflict, incorporating all the existing traditions of the island and placing all political projects as equals for achieving their political goals without any other limits other than the support of the democratic majority.
7. The presence of some international factors played a significant role: firm support by and direct participation of the government and the president of the United States in the resolution of the conflict; the support given by different institutions of the European Union (displayed by the promise of economic aid), the political support displayed and the advice offered by the government and the president of South Africa throughout the process.

Potential application in Euskal Herria

In accordance with the characteristics with which the process and the Peace Agreement in Ireland have been produced, we think that the conflict affecting Euskal Herria can find channels of resolution if the following guidelines and actions are observed:

Identification

The Basque confrontation is an historical conflict of political origins and nature, in which Spain and France see themselves implicated. Its resolution necessarily must be political.

Being that the different existing conceptions about the root and permanence of the conflict: territoriality, who should make the decision, and political sovereignty, constitute the nucleus of the fundamental issues to be resolved.

Method

A political solution can only be achieved through a process of open dialogue and negotiations, without excluding any of the implicated parties and with the participation of all Basque society.

Process

Preliminary phase

The process of dialogue and negotiations can be propitiated with no conditions imposed on the parties before multilateral talks begin.

Resolution phase

The process of negotiations and resolution, with the good will and willingness to compromise when dealing with the causes of the conflict, would be carried out under a condition of the permanent absence of all expressions of violence.

Character of negotiations

Negotiations must be global in the treatment of and the response to all the issues which constitute the conflict, as well as the its consequences. There are no limited agendas. In this sense, negotiations should not be understood as a process of separate gains, but as part of the attempt to resolve the conflict.

Keys of resolution

This means that negotiations for resolution bear no specific clauses; respects the plurality of Basque society; makes the political projects equal; makes democracy more profound in the sense that it gives the citizens of Euskal Herria the last word to decide the future, and the parties respect the decision. Euskal Herria must have the word, and make the decision.

Resulting scenario

The resolution agreement will not contain closed scenarios or narrow specific conditions, but it will make possible an open framework where new formulas responding to the traditions and desires of the citizens of Euskal Herria to achieve sovereignty could have a place.

Euskal Herria, September 12, 1998