

DECLARATION

We have come to the Basque Country today because we believe it is time to end, and it is possible to end, the last armed confrontation in Europe.

We believe this can now be achieved, with the support of citizens and their political representatives, as well as the support of Europe and the wider international community. We want to state clearly that we have not come here to impose anything or claim that we have the right or the authority to tell the citizens of this country, or relevant actors and political representatives, what they should do.

Rather, we have come here in good faith, with the hope of offering ideas drawn from our own experiences of resolving long conflicts that afflicted our own societies and peoples, as well as others we have helped resolve.

We know from our own experience that it is never easy to end violence and conflict and secure lasting peace. It requires courage, willingness to take risks, profound commitment, generosity and statesmanship.

Peace comes when the power of reconciliation outweighs the habits of hate; when the possibility of the present and future is infinitely greater than the bitterness of the past.

We also know from our own experience that when a genuine opportunity for peace arises it must be seized. The growing demand of the citizens of this country and their political representatives to resolve this conflict through dialogue, democracy and complete non-violence has created this opportunity.

Because of all of this, we believe it is today possible to end more than fifty years of violence and attain a just and lasting peace.

In light of this:

1. We call upon ETA to make a public declaration of the definitive cessation of all armed action and to request talks with the governments of Spain and France to address exclusively the consequences of the conflict.
2. If such a declaration is made we urge the governments of Spain and France to welcome it and agree to talks exclusively to deal with the consequences of the conflict.
3. We urge that major steps be taken to promote reconciliation, recognize, compensate and assist all victims, recognize the harm that has been done and seek to heal personal and social wounds.
4. In our experience of resolving conflicts there are often other issues that, if addressed, can assist in the attainment of lasting peace. We suggest that non violent actors and political representatives meet and discuss political and other related issues, in consultation with the citizenry, that could contribute to a new era without conflict. In our experience third party observers or facilitators help such dialogue. Here, such dialogue could also be assisted by international facilitators, if that were desired by those involved.
5. We are willing to form a committee to follow up these recommendations.

*Donostia-San Sebastian
17 October 2011*