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Euskadi

# A Basque majority demands engagement in dialogue

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**The electoral results of May 13 in the Basque Autonomous Comunidad has constituted a demonstration of the majority's rejection of the political forces that sought confrontation with and the political defeat of Basque nationalism and those in favour of dialogue. The PP and PSOE, in spite of their enormous and belligerent media and judicial support, have not been able to supplant the PNV-EA coalition, which figures as the hegemonic force, although EH has suffered significant losses for not demarcating itself openly from ETA. EB-IU, [1] in spite of the constant marginalisation and disqualification that it has suffered in recent years from the misnamed "constitutionalist" parties, sees finally recognized its efforts to build bridges from the defence of the respect of the free decision of the Basque people on its future and the proposal of a federalist option within that framework.**

A new stage is opening in Basque society that must be presided over by a new impulse in favour of a negotiated end to the conflict without exclusions and limits, by a popular outcry that ETA ends its killing and by the demand that the Aznar government take measures - like the fulfilment of legality concerning the return of Basque prisoners to Euskadi - that contribute to defusing the climate of tension existing until now. Also a radical change of attitude would be necessary on the part of the judiciary that, even in the midst of an electoral campaign, has continued to contribute to the criminalisation of sectors of Basque youth.

The strategy of the PP and the PSOE, who have been supported by the main representatives of the institutions of the state - including the Crown - the big mass media, the employer's association and, lamentably, the majority of trade unions in their antiterrorist pact, their obsession with criminalizing Basque nationalism as a whole and their reinvention of an excluding Spanish nationalism, has suffered a resounding defeat, which they should take note of and act consequently, taking a political turn in favour of the dialogue that the majority of Basque society has demanded.

Something similar has happened with EH, who will need to have a deep internal debate that we hope leads to an explicit distancing of themselves from the activity of ETA and support for non-violence and dialogue.

The recovery of EB-IU provides without a doubt a stimulus to an advance towards the reconstruction of a Basque left defending self-determination and an open federalist project, as well as a model of society strongly dyed in the colours red, green and violet. We are sure that its activity in the parliament will be based on a close alliance with the social movements that have supported dialogue, like Elkarri and Gesto por la Paz, as well as with the social unions, groups, organizations and professional sectors that, already as shown in their unity of action around the experience of the "Charter of Social Rights" demonstrated, aspire to link the defence of the Basque national identity to the fight against insecurity and for basic social rights.

Outside Euskadi, IU-Federal must assume the consistent defence not only of the basic discourse of EB-IU but the firm conviction that only by means of the recognition of the right of all Basque citizens to decide their future will it be possible to advance in the eradication of the violence and the solution of a conflict whose political nature has been amply corroborated in these elections. IU-Federal must unite that defence to the demand for recognition of the pluri-national reality of the whole of the Spanish State and, therefore, to the opening of a process of dialogue and convergence in action with other national left or nationalistic forces present in other autonomous communities.

*May 16, 2001*

[1] EB-IU - the IU's organization in the Basque country.