
Elkarri's VII General
Assembly
Document 2 of the
Presentation-base

Elkarri's Action Plan 2003-2005

Zubi berri bati eraiki

Building a New Bridge

March 1, 2003

Presentation

On December 21, 2002, Elkarri celebrated its tenth anniversary. On this date, it finalized the validity of its Zubigintzan Strategic Plan, approved in June 2000, and initiated its seventh General Assembly, which ended on March 1, 2003. The mission of this Assembly was to sanction a new biannual strategic plan for the 2003 – 2005 period.

The context is especially complex. The atmosphere of extreme tension, threat, and agitation are unprecedented. The Popular Party, UPN, PSE-EE, PSN, and UA are directly threatened by the ETA. Batasuna is subject to a double process of illegalization and suspension of activities. Lehendakari, in the name of the Basque government and the three parties that compose it, has made a proposal for a new pact of coexistence that generated a tense debate. Within a few months, in May 2003, there will be municipal and autonomous elections. In March 2004, there will be general elections, and in spring 2005, autonomous elections.

Neither is Elkarri's moment ordinary. The Peace Conference just ended. This process represented an intense experience that brought the Bake-bidea proposal to a close. Additionally, the commemoration of its tenth anniversary always represents an occasion in which a profound exercise of balance and evaluation is obligatory.

It is in these internal and external conditions that an assembly process was developed. Elkarri's challenge has been to extract conclusions from its recent experiences, to elaborate and to apply a useful action plan for peace in this difficult moment and after its ten-year history.

The materials of the seventh General Assembly were distributed in two different documents: Document 1 with the Action Balance of the last two years and this Document 2, which includes the Action Plan proposal. This second document has three parts: 1) diagnostics; 2) bases and role of Elkarri; and 3) an intervention project.

The second part The Bases and Role of Elkarri

Apart from realizing the balance of the last two years and analyzing the present conjunction, a document of Elkarri's work plan must offer space for other reflection within two important sections. First, the revision of the bases from which this social movement acts at the margin of the distinct conjunction. Second, definition of the role that, in function of these presupposed theories and of this diagnostic, corresponds to what undertakings Elkarri will carry out in the period of validity of this new action plan. All of this constitutes the medium of reflection and the analysis of how to consolidate the intervention project. The structure of this second part has two sections:

1. The bases of this social movement
2. The role of Elkarri in the 2003-2005 period

1. The bases of this social movement

If the permanent evaluation and diagnostic of the situation constitutes the firm ground about which Elkarrri's action must be constructed, the bases or fundamentals are its cement. We present these presupposed theories of our social movement in five blocks. We take as a reference the fundamentals section of PAS3 that the National Workshop presented next to the Peace Conference project, in September 2001.

1.1. Analysis

This first block of fundamentals is directly related with the manner of interpreting and analyzing the problems on which we are acting.

1.1.1. The three central problems and their definition

For many decades, our society has been affected by three serious problems: violence, political conflict, and anti-democratic answers. On one hand, a form of organized violence that repeatedly threatens the people's lives, today perpetrated by the ETA; on the other, a profound and prolonged misunderstanding related to the models of political coexistence; and finally, the anti-democratic responses from the State that are articulated to give an answer to the violence and the political problem. This analysis is coincident with the expression and the reflection of the social majority perception.

-Violence. Actively rejected by the immense majority of society, it is defended by those who support it or justify it as a "legitimate armed struggle for the defense and the conquest of the national rights of Euskal Herria." The interpretation of this phenomenon, born during the time of Franco, refers us to multiple historic, biographical, political, social, and cultural factors. Today, coinciding with the social majority impression, the support for violence – and any other violation of human rights whatever their origin – represents, more than anything, a form of adherence that is dehumanized to the defense of ideas, which gives place to the use of cruel and unjust means. In the last three decades, this violence, to which must be added others of distinct types, has left more than a thousand victims dead and many citizens threatened, who need to be constantly protected by guards. This is a real consequence of this problem and its more irreversible and dramatic expression. In view of the debate if the ETA's violence is the consequence of the political conflict or simply one of the most serious expressions of intolerance, we affirm that the ETA's violence is one of the most serious expressions of intolerance that is fed, among other things, by the unresolved political conflict.

-The political problem. It is expressed principally in the serious disagreements maintained in the time of vertebral questions of political

coexistence as a political framework, territorial organization, the fields of decision and sovereignty, cultural identities, and the feelings about national membership, among others. Violence isn't a "natural" consequence of this political problem. It is, before all, a conscious decision of people and collectives that excludes the option of intervening through exclusively political means. What forms a part of this political problem is the fact that the present constitutional and statute framework doesn't coincide with the desirable sociopolitical consensus. Wide sectors of the population – the majority in the CAV and very significant in Navarre – present important disagreements with the actual framework. Moreover, ever since 25 years ago, around 15% of the vote rejects head-on the actual judicial-political legislation for considering this imposition.

-Anti-democratic responses. From the Transition until today the State has in distinct moments succumbed to the temptation to respond with anti-democratic methods to the phenomenon of the ETA's violence as a political problem. GAL, torture, and dispersion are some of the most serious and dehumanized examples of this democratic perversion. Now to all of this must be added a new form of "legal de-democratization" consolidated in four pillars: (1) monolithic control of the executive, legislative, judicial, media, and economic powers; (2) the reinterpretation of laws; (3) the creation of new ad-hoc laws; and (4) penal reforms. This strategy based on the premise of "anything goes against terrorism" is affecting the principles and liberties as basic as the division of powers, pluralism, equality before the law, ideological liberty of expression, of demonstration, of association, and even of the freedom to construct political parties. In fact, this offensive annuls the presumption of innocence, generalizes preventive detention, cancels provisional freedom, eliminates resocialization as an end to the pain, annuls reinsertion, and reinstates the ability to impose life imprisonment sentences. We witness a piece by piece dismantling of the guarantees and liberties of a democratic system. The immense majority of our society is against this democratic regression. The question of violence as much as the question of the political problem must solve itself on the basis of its principles, procedures, and democratic politics.

1.1.2. Seven criteria for not confusing violence and the political problem

The interrelation between violence and the political problems is a polemic question that requires clarification. The problematic part isn't analyzing its mutual relation, confusing it, or binding it perversely. It can turn out to be as erroneous to argue that the violence responds exclusively to an unresolved political conflict as it is to affirm that it doesn't have a relationship with other political problems. Neither can it unify itself, nor can it consider itself as completely unconnected. One of

the challenges of politics and of society is to search for this consensus that gives expression to and makes the relation of ethic and democratic superiority of politics with respect to violence effective. An agreement about the principles and democratic rules that today can be shared to overcome the present situation is a method for achieving it. The relationship between violence and politics, or between peace and normalization, can be understood in the light of the following criteria that Elkarri takes into account for the designs of its action plan.

- First.** Non-violence and the respect for human rights are urgent and a priority from the social, political, and ethic point of view.
- Second.** An end to the violence and political normalization must not be confused, nor mutually neutralized, nor negotiated indifferently.
- Third.** Peace and normalization are not unconnected processes, they present evident interactions: (a) the cessation of the violence would contribute to a resolution of political conflicts; (b) a dialogue between parties about normalization, with consensual rules for everyone, would contribute to the disappearance of the violence. Violence and normalization are vectors in an inverse relation to one another: the advance of one has an effect on the recession of the other, and vice versa.
- Fourth.** While the violence persists it is not feasible to establish or develop political agreements and compromises which uses it as a means of political action.
- Fifth.** Dialogue is necessary while the violence persists because without political dialogue it is not possible to identify the itineraries and scenarios of sharable solutions for everyone.
- Sixth.** A peace process cannot bind itself to a particular political-strategic project, it must trust in non-violence, in dialogue, in agreement, and in democratic principles.
- Seventh.** The axis of a normalization process is not a political content but an agreement about a democratic methodology for overcoming the political problems that take into account society and its plurality.

1.2. Motivations and objectives of Elkarri

In a time in which distrust, moral prejudice and judgment of intentions about the true intentions of the "Others" are at a premium, Elkarri can and must make explicit the

objectives that, after ten years, it has maintained over the conjunctions and the events. These bases summarize the profound aspirations that the people who form Elkarri share. They also constitute the fundamentals in which settle the perseverance of this social movement and its activity.

1.2.1. Motivations

The most serious consequence, of the strategies of violence as much as of the political misunderstandings, is the unjust suffering of many people and families that undergo radical, extreme, or irreversible violations of human rights and attempts against their lives. That is why Elkarri's most profound motivation in all of its action can be summarized in two ideas:

- The end of the suffering and of the violence against human rights that provokes it
- The active solidarity with all of the victims who suffer from it

1.2.2. Objectives

Elkarri's initiative from its birth until today has centered on contributing to the transformation of an unjust reality of violence and political division. The last reason and objective that explains Elkarri's existence is two-fold:

- Peace for our people
- Coexistence normalized in liberty, equality, pluralism, and basic consensus

1.3. The guiding principles

The trajectory of this social movement, its present, and its future projection come marked by four guiding principles.

1.3.1. Human rights and non-violence

The principle conceived of as an absolute ethic of compromise with human dignity and with the right to life. It implicates the defense of the rights of all individuals without distinction, whatever they think, whether they are free or in captivity, and of all human rights and fundamental liberties, through individual expression as much as through collective expression.

1.3.2. Equality and inclusion

The principle of equality has as its first application inclusion for those threatened or illegalized. All political and electoral options in our society have to have equality of political, democratic, and liberal conditions for the public audience, for the defense of its projects, and in this case, for materialization.

1.3.3. Dialogue and plural agreement

The principle associated with pluralism. It represents the compromise of promoting processes of negotiated solution guided by multilateralism. That is to say, for the search for plural consensus and with a sufficient integration of political traditions. Dialogue and pluralism are closely linked because to have authentic dialogue indicates acceptance and recognition of the other.

1.3.4. Democratic rules and freedom of decision

The principle connected to democratic rules with express acceptance of the non-immutability of legislation. What in a process of solutions implicates bringing about a space of freedom of decision that contemplates, without vetoes and with sufficient compromises, the expression of social majority will.

1.4. The method

Elkarri's history is bound to the principle of dialogue from the beginning to the end as a democratic, humanized, and effective method for conflict resolution, especially useful in societies with strong political divisions and affected by a phenomenon of violence. In any case, in this section of bases apart from reiterating this conviction, it is pertinent to set out the argument that this social movement presents to this method's critics and to go into depth about the background reasons that support Elkarri's full adhesion to dialogue.

1.4.1. Objections and responses

The objections that are presented to dialogue can be summarized in four points that are coincidentally used from antagonist positions and that find an answer in the exactly opposite assertion.

Arguments against	Arguments in favor
<i>“The dialogue proposal is false”</i>	<i>“The dialogue proposal is sincere”</i>
(This is the argument of distrust, prejudice, and judgments about secondary intentions.)	The authenticity of this proposal for dialogue is proved by the constancy of its principles, with the transparency of its attitudes, and in its flexibility of method.
<i>“The dialogue proposal is counterproductive”</i>	<i>“The dialogue proposal is constructive”</i>
(a) To agree to dialogue is interpreted as a weakness.	(a) To reject dialogue indicates weakness and fear of the other.
(b) Dialogue encourages those who employ violence because it finds profitability.	(b) To negate dialogue encourages those who employ violence because it allows them to justify it.
<i>“The dialogue proposal is naïve”</i>	<i>“The dialogue proposal is real”</i>
(a and b) Defense of dialogue is based on stubbornness.	To think of a solution (a) with violence or (b) without dialogue is stubborn.
<i>“The dialogue proposal is useless”</i>	<i>“The dialogue proposal is useful”</i>
(a) Dialogue does not serve any purpose because there is no will, “all forms of struggle” are necessary	(a) Violence, besides being unjust, is useless. It is not an alternative.
(b) An agreement of better coexistence is not possible because those who are situated outside or use violence do not want to change.	(b) Withdrawal does not change the present situation, it eternalizes it.
	(a and b) Without dialogue it is not possible to know the margin of possibilities that exist between will, interests, and circumstances of the “Others.”

1.4.2. The background reason that supports Elkarri’s full adherence to dialogue

Elkarri’s radical compromise with dialogue proceeds a conviction that precedes these discussions and that is convenient to explain:

-Dialogue is equivalent to real creating conditions so that the best of the human being can act

Fatality, violence, division, and cruelty are not omnipotent, nor do they occupy all of the individual or collective behaviors of the situation as disastrous as it is. If it were like this, the advances and progress of humanity would not have been produced. Elkarri's trust in dialogue is placed in the conviction that solidarity, desire for reconciliation, empathy, and the feeling of humanity also occupy a place in human behavior, as small as this may be.

Dialogue is a tool of transformation of situations of violence and collision because it offers an opportune framework in which the best of the human being can intervene and enter into a contract. It contributes to the finding or creating of options in which the distinctive interests can be taken into account. Dialogue consists of creating real conditions so that hope for the improbable will become possible.

Dialogue is based on the recognition of the "other" as a valid and interdependent speaker. Exclusion brings the ascent into conflict and impedes the search for solutions.

1.5. Conclusions

Apart from *analysis, motivations, objectives, guiding principles, and method*, this section of *Bases of Elkarri* must also dedicate a point to the definition of what are the priorities for a process of peace and solutions for this social movement. These priorities represent, in the last example, the conclusions that relate to the collection of Elkarri's bases and fundamentals from our recent experiences, in the present moment, and in future projects.

1.5.1. The urgent: the right to life

The number one priority for our society is the cessation of the attacks against life. The arguments that support this priority are endless and convincing. The reasons are ethical and moral, social and political, democratic and inclusive of utility. This society does not accept the recourse to violence, it is considered adult to deal with problems and want to resolve them peacefully, politically, and democratically. The end of the violence, along with dialogue, is the most firmly supported demand of our society. It forms a part of the urgent and pressing.

1.5.2. The important: dialogue for agreement and consensus of reciprocal guarantees

The second priority it is necessary to be seen through its importance, through the necessity of finding a framework of coexistence that reconciles with our internal relationship and with our relationship to the State. To achieve this objective, the priority is to create dialogue spaces without exclusions and to reach agreements and plural consensuses that permit us to conjugate the respect for majority decisions in our society with the effective guarantee of pluralism. Said in another way, to define these guarantees or game rules puts us in agreement about two things: (1) that all aspirations with majority backing count on democratic channels for their materialization and; (2) that the rights of the two important political traditions – whether now in a majority or in a minority – will be guaranteed through basic consensus that compromises both.

1.5.3. The necessary: non-violence, inclusion, multilateralism, and no veto

The third priority defines what, not even being sufficient, results in everything necessary. Necessary for a peace process and necessary in itself. A process of peace and solutions requires acting on factors that with more clarity provoke blockade and distrust: violence, exclusion, unilateralism, and veto. To create conditions that break the deadlock is a priority for producing a change in the situation. The absence of violence or threat and the humanization and respect of human rights constitute a necessity. It is equally necessary to avoid the exclusion that is already present because of threat and illegalization. It is also necessary, in order to make a definitive process of peace and solutions a reality, to achieve compromises of multilateralism and no veto. In this way, the four lines of necessary and priority interventions are defined.

2. Elkarri's role in the 2003-2005 period

In Document 1 of this presentation base we extracted the conclusions of the balance of a decade of Elkarri's history, and more concretely, the actions of the last two years with the Peace Conference process. In this second document, in its first part, we defined the conclusions from the diagnostics of this situation. In the prior section, we reviewed Elkarri's bases and fundamentals and set out three priorities in the way of conclusion. In the third part of this document, we will deal with Elkarri's intervention project that will basically try to respond to the question of "how" or "with what work plan" we must immerse ourselves in during this new cycle. But first, in this point in which we now are, we must respond to the question of "what do we have to do" or "what is our mission and our role in the 2003-2005 period." We will try to give a response to this question searching for the synthesis of conclusions obtained in the distinct chapters of the balance of a decade, an evaluation of the Peace Conference, and a diagnostic of the bases and role of Elkarri.

2.1. The role of Elkarri from a balance of a decade of activity

The study of our trajectory has led us to order this history of ten years in five stages: First (1992-1994) "Finding the base;" Second (1994-1996) "Supporting the project;" Third (1996-1998) "Proving its validity;" Fourth (1998-2000) "Preparing its stance;" Fifth (2000-2002) "Defining the method." Elkarri initiated its sixth stage from 2003 with its new biannual project. If this social movement could decide now what the definition of this new period would be, it would probably choose something like, "Dealing with the synthesis and solutions process." To make this decision is not possible but it is feasible to project the will.

-The objective. Elkarri's mission in the 2003-2005 period, following the stele of its trajectory, consists of synthesizing, concentrating, and making objective all of the experience accumulated during its ten years of history to culminate its project and its objective of driving a phase and a process of searching for solutions.

2.2. The role of Elkarri in function of the evaluation of the Peace Conference

From the adoption of the Zubigintzan Strategic Plan in summer of 2000, Elkarri's activity has been concentrated practically exclusively in the Peace Conference process. For this motive, to evaluate Elkarri's work in the last two years implicates evaluating this initiative concretely. The conclusions of this process left a stressed idea that, being projected in the immediate future, happen to form a part of the mission of this social movement in this new period.

-Project. Elkarri's mission in the 2003-2005 period, in function of the evaluation of the activity developed during the last two years, is to try to attempt to propose and to

drive a resolute peace process in which the conclusions of the Peace Conference and the Bake-bidea compromise constitute its starting point.

2.3. The role of Elkarri based on the situation's diagnostics

The diagnostic reading of the situation defines a very clear mission for Elkarri in the 2003-2005 period. The struggle between immobility (the inertia of the confrontation) and the powers of change are resolved for the moment in a way favorable to the blockade. In this context, Elkarri's priority is to reinforce the option of breaking the deadlock in all fields that have influence on our reality of violence and conflict.

-Base. Elkarri's mission in the 2003-2005 period, taking into account the conclusions extracted from the diagnostic of the situation, is to meet and to accumulate more social, political, and international forces for a process of change towards non-violence and dialogue, and to explore creative ways of using this inertia of conflict to rechannel them positively.

2.4. The role of Elkarri according to its bases and fundamentals

The section of bases of Elkarri included, among other things, the final objectives of this social movement. A perspective of progression towards these foundational objectives has permitted at this time to establish three clear priorities that constitute a part of the role that this social movement must play. In this way, these priorities represent another aspect from which Elkarri's mission must get content.

-Priority. Elkarri's mission in the 2003-2005 period, paying attention to its bases and fundamental theories, must be concentrated on the defense of the right to life, on creating a dialogue space without exclusions for an agreement of reciprocal guarantees between political forces, and on creating conditions of non-violence, inclusion, multilateralism, and no veto.

2.5. The role of Elkarri in synthesis

The role of Elkarri in the 2003-2005 period, from its competence as a social movement, consists of:

- A.** To summarize the experience accumulated in the last ten years, the conclusions of the Peace Conference, and the contents of the Bake-bidea proposal in the objective of moving a resolute peace process forward;
- B.** To center the priorities on the defense of the right of life, in creating a dialogue space without exclusions for an agreement of guarantees

between political forces and on creating conditions of non-violence, inclusion, multilateralism, and no veto.

- C.** To meet more social, political, and international forces to provide this project and the defense of its principles with an effective support.

If we would have to summarize in one phrase all that we would say about the mission of Elkarri in this period, it would be that it is to construct a new bridge: "Zubi berri bat eraiki."