

20 February 2003

EGUNKARIA Declaration

This situation is incredible. It's like a nightmare. But it is real, even if completely unjust. The Basque society is suffering yet again from police and legal injustice.

In the name of the EGUNKARIA Board of Directors, of the management and workers, we must strongly deny the accusations made by the High Court of Sixth Instance and by the Spanish Home Minister in order to justify the arrests and searches made. It is a lie that EGUNKARIA has in any way been capitalized upon «within the terrorist strategy». EGUNKARIA does not have and never has had any relationship whatsoever with accusations of this kind. Ever since its foundation, EGUNKARIA has been an independent newspaper, independent of any kind of political, institutional or other organism. EGUNKARIA has one single commitment: to the Basque language and to the providing of true information. Although we are all perfectly aware of this, it is currently necessary to recall this fact.

We would also like to loud and clearly state that those at the head of EGUNKARIA in the past and present who have been arrested have absolutely no connection with «a terrorist strategy of any kind». This said, each and every one of these people has an extensive public and personal background in the fields of Basque culture, communication and education. Upon their shoulders lies the tremendous amount of generous work carried out over the years. Their arrests, completely unfair, make no sense at all. They should be free, with us, going about their daily work. We would like to state our concern regarding this situation. We would like them to know at these difficult times that we, the members of the extended EGUNKARIA family, support and have affection for themselves and for the members of their families.

On the other hand, we would like to make a modest reflection on what has happened to EGUNKARIA over the last few hours. Several of those currently responsible, and others who were responsible in the past for EGUNKARIA have suffered very serious attacks, given that they are now under arrest in solitary confinement. The workers of EGUNKARIA have also suffered a serious attack, given that they have lost the jobs they had been doing with dignity. The readers/consumers of and advertisers in EGUNKARIA are the victims of the same attack, given that the doors have been closed on the newspaper which they had chosen on exercising their right to information and freedom of expression. They have attacked the Basque language and people by endeavouring to neutralize one of the main newspapers produced in the said language. Freedom of expression has likewise suffered a serious setback, given that the intention of these actions has been to close the mouth of an independent voice.

We moreover consider that this constitutes an attack against the Basque society in general, given that EGUNKARIA is the heritage of this people, is part of this people, is open to the plurality of this people and because it has always striven to serve as the newspaper of all Basques.

Finally, the work of the last 12 years must continue. We cannot accept a break in activity imposed from the outside. The work of the workers, executives and collaborators must continue to bear the same fruit as it has until now. We, the subscribers and readers, need EGUNKARIA. The Basque citizens need a newspaper like EGUNKARIA. We, the members of the Board of Directors, executives and workers, ratify our undertaking to continue working on this communication project. We are doing everything we can to ensure that the method of communication existing until now continues. We

therefore need the collaboration and undertaking of social agents and citizens. Our doors are open to all potential cooperation, whether with respect to the success of the EGUNKARIA project or to changing the situation suffered by our people.

We would also like to make the most of this opportunity to thank all of those who have in some way shown us their support during these difficult moments: authorities, institutions, politicians, associations, unions and citizens. We are counting on them for the future. Because we will continue to progress.