

The Assembly of Delegates of International PEN, meeting at its 71th International Congress in Bled, Slovenia, 14th-21th June 2005,

Recalling the resolution on Spain passed by the 70th Congress held in TromsÅ, Norway in September 2004,

Deeply concerned by the fact that there have been no new developments in the sense therein called for in the case of the Basque language daily Egunkaria and its editor-in-chief, Martxelo Otamendi as well as other persons working for the newspaper,

Alarmed by the fact that the special public prosecutor requests sentences totalling up to 449 years in jail for the 17 persons accused in the case against the daily newspaper Egin's the editor-in-chief, Jabier Salutregi, the sub-editor in chief, Teresa Toda, and 15 former members of the Administrative Council of the newspaper- on the same imprecise accusations put forward seven years ago when it was also closed down,

Considering that this first trial, for which there is still no date fixed, may open the way for similar requests in the case of Egunkaria,

Further considering that over the last seven years two dailies, Egin and Egunkaria, a radio station, Egin Irratia, and a monthly magazine, Ardi Beltza, have been closed down by the Spanish authorities on still unproved accusations of being controlled or having links with the Basque group Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA),

Fearing these proceedings may have harmed freedom of the press and freedom of expression,

Shares the concern that the links between these media and ETA appear to be tenuous and, in the Egin case, seven years after the closure no new evidence has been put forward by the judicial authorities and no trial has been held in Spain;

Refers to international standards that recommend that trials be held at the shortest period of time possible,

Calls upon the Spanish Government to summon an impartial and international board of inquiry to investigate these cases,

Urges the Spanish Government to stay the proceedings, or, at least, to hasten the Egin and Egunkaria cases, guaranteeing a fair trial and the protection of freedom of the press and of expression.