



Lokarri

Citizen network for agreement and consultation.



Founding document

March 2006

Presentation

Elkarri was born on the 20th of December 1992. The founding document approved that same day by the General Assembly established that its mission was “to transform the latent predominant social opinion in favor of dialogue and agreement into a determining social opinion, moving towards peace and normalization of the Euskal Herria.” For thirteen years, Elkarri has worked towards fulfilling this commitment through a five-part proposal: non-violence, dialogue, multi-party talks, agreement, and popular consultation. As of early 2006, the majority of society, political parties, and institutions have supported this proposal. Elkarri has fulfilled the fundamental goals of the mission with which it was born.

Between 2003 and 2005 an important sociopolitical change has taken place in the Basque conflict. Until 2003 dialogue was not an option but, after 2005, it had no alternative. This transformation came to pass due to different political and electoral events, but also, and above all, by the evolution of our own society, which at the beginning of the 21st century finds violence, exclusion, and political tension to be incompatible anachronisms with its vital priorities. We are witnessing a profound change of cycle. Until now, the dilemma was dialogue or conflict; from now on it is dialogue or decline. We are standing in the doorway of a peace process or, if this is not successfully achieved, a process of disintegration of the conflict. This is the dilemma.

On the 17th of December 2005, the VIII General Assembly of Elkarri made two decisions. First, to view as completed, as of March 2006, the itinerary of this social movement, because it has completed the mission for which it was born with a clean balance, clear and supported by the change in the political situation. Second, to promote the creation of a new social organization, adapted to the new situation and new challenges because, though Elkarri’s mission is complete, the struggle for peace should continue. Elkarri has contributed to the preparation of a peace process. The new organization will try to contribute to its development.

This two-part decision represents a commitment to making dialogue prevail over decadence, the peace process over the disintegration of the conflict. We have a historic opportunity to turn the page on violence and destructive confrontation in a civilized and constructive way. As a civil society, we cannot ignore this opportunity. With this intention, Lokarri was born in Bilbao on the 18th of March 2006—a new social initiative inheriting the best of Elkarri, its experience and human resources—and aspires to represent a renewed impulse that incorporates more people and new experiences in order to accomplish new objectives.

Mission

During its thirteen years of history, Elkarri has focused its activity principally on promoting non-violence alongside human rights, dialogue without exclusion alongside pluralism, and multi-party talks alongside democratic principles. These demands are still not totally guaranteed but they have been socially and politically conquered and can be considered as accepted preliminary needs for the peace process. It has been precisely the majority social will for non-violence, dialogue, and multi-party talks, which has allowed the creation of the current conditions for pre-conciliation. Upon this base, the social priorities are now situated around conciliation and reconciliation.

A desirable conciliation is that which is based upon a level of agreement sufficiently broad and plural so that it can be ratified by the society in a popular consultation. The inevitable conciliation, after so many years of destructive conflict, would be that in which the society itself would have to take a direct stand in order to avoid an infinite disagreement between political parties or an unstoppable deterioration of the situation.

Reconciliation requires conciliation and an additional effort to conduct a critical assessment of the past, reparation for the victims, and acceptance of the differences that exist. All of this will be necessary in order to recover political normalization and to live together, respecting each other and respecting human dignity.

Conciliation and reconciliation must fulfill an essential prerequisite: social and political inclusion. With a historical perspective, we can say that Elkarri, through dialogue, served to provide content to the struggle for peace. Lokarri should exist in order to unify, without exclusions and without conquerors and conquered, in the process of creating a solution. The mission of Lokarri is, therefore, be that which unifies, specifically to build unity and social and political integration from the proposal for agreement, popular consultation, and reconciliation.

This mission can be pursued in two possible scenarios that, in two different forms, create an orientational outline of its application:

Expressed positively and assuming favorable progress in the peace process, Lokarri's preferred mission is to contribute to an integrated channeling of the majority social will for plural agreement, popular consultation, and reconciliation.

Expressed negatively and assuming deterioration of the situation, Lokarri's alternative mission is to contribute to avoiding the failure of a process to create solutions through the presentation of an integrated proposal for society to take a direct stance, clear and democratic, regarding the way forward in overcoming the crisis.

This organization's name responds to the following meaning: instrument of unification. The mission, project, and denomination of this citizen network are a commitment reflecting the predominant social will for agreement, consultation, and reconciliation. Each trimester, Lokarri will make these demands by holding a single major mobilization so that this social message does not cease to be present in the scenario of political decision-making.

Foundations

Principles

Lokarri is a social organization, independent and plural, which struggles for peace and the normalization of coexistence in Euskal Herria. Its principles correspond to three overarching commitments, which it assumes from the moment of its creation:

The defense of non-violence, life, and human rights as an ethical absolute. No cause justifies the use of means that acts as an attack on human dignity. Fundamental rights and liberties, in their individual and collective expression, should be respected without exception.

Opting for pluralism and dialogue without exclusion as a foundation for living together. The diversity in our society demands constant effort towards dialogue and inclusion. Multilateralism, agreement, and the responsibility to pact are basic criteria for our coexistence.

Respect for the popular will and for democratic principles as a basic rule for politics. Our society is capable of and willing to decide its own future without vetoes nor impositions and using exclusively democratic processes. This will should be politically respected and legally channeled.

Priorities and objectives

The primary objective of Lokarri is to demand and promote a pluralistic agreement and a popular consultation as the axes of conciliation that our society requires and demands. Three others are added to this primary objective:

to contribute to preparing reconciliation through the defense of all-inclusive discourse and proposals.

to foment and facilitate citizen participation in the peace process.

and to defend our victories: non-violence and dialogue as conditions for pre-conciliation.

Duties

The duties that Lokarri takes on as a social organization can be described as four kinds of action:

First, to analyze and make proposals, which implies rigorous study of the status of the peace process at each moment and, as a consequence, presenting suggestions and alternatives.

Second, to inform and offer an opinion, which includes the transmission of the information to which it has access, and to implicate itself by publicly offering its evaluation of that information.

Third, to demand and denounce, which means insisting upon its principal demands and speaking out against backsliding and human rights violations.

And finally, to take initiative and mobilize, which means making a commitment to rigorous action and campaigns.

Description

Lokarri defines its general actions through general assemblies and coordinates its decisions through a Coordination Commission. Lokarri articulates its activity using three complementary structures: a social observatory for the process of peace and reconciliation, an exterior network of support for dialogue, and a citizen network for agreement and consultation.

Civil society monitoring for the process of peace and reconciliation

Following the proposal and request of Lokarri, a group of individuals with distinct sensibilities will form a commission for study and analysis that will be called the Social Observatory for the Process of Peace and Reconciliation. Its task will consist of producing a trimestral report on the status and evolution of the peace process that will include suggestions and recommendations. This report will look at five indicators: non-violence and human rights, dialogue and non-exclusion, agreement and pluralism, citizen participation and respect for the will of the people, and reconciliation and a culture of peace. The report will be publicly presented and Lokarri will be responsible for providing it with the maximum social, political, and exterior circulation.

Exterior network of support for dialogue

Lokarri possesses an exterior network of support for dialogue that consists of 30,000 people, state-level organizations, and international organizations, which have maintained a relationship with Elkarri over the past thirteen years. Lokarri hopes to maintain and broaden this network with three principle objectives: to offer information on the development of the peace process, to receive opinions, suggestions and proposals, and to promote initiatives of support or collaboration when they are considered necessary in an effort to defend dialogue, agreement, and the peace process. This network will be the direct recipient of the report produced each trimester by the Civil Society Observatory.

Citizen network for agreement and consultation

The foundation of this network is the 150,000 individuals and groups that have formed a community of participation with Elkarri. They will all be invited to voluntarily incorporate themselves into this new initiative. Lokarri hopes to broaden this network with the incorporation of new people and groups, in such a way making it even more fluid and operational. Participation in this network is free and involvement can take a variety of forms of participation and implication to be chosen voluntarily. All of its members will have the possibility of relating to each other and directly with Lokarri, principally by Internet, but also by telephone, mail, or directly through forums and assemblies. The principle goals of this network are to inform, build relationships, alert, mobilize, and encourage citizen participation. Those who make up this network will receive the report elaborated by the Civil Society Observatory on the process of peace and reconciliation. In the same way, they will be invited to participate in the mobilizations that, on a trimestral basis, will be convoked by Lokarri.

Organizational model

The organizational structure that Lokarri adopts is adapted to the way of life, the customs of relationship and communication, and the organizational culture and social activism of our time, characterized by its versatility, quick responsiveness, and functioning as a network. To achieve this goal, it is necessary, first, to diversify the forms of involvement and collaboration available and second, to distinguish and not confuse the means of participation with the organs of financing or decision-making.

The forms of participation in Lokarri are four:

Lagunak. The friends of Lokarri are all those people or groups that are members of the citizen network for agreement and consultation or of the exterior network of support for dialogue. They receive information, they have a direct channel for offering opinions and if they desire they may collaborate in whatever manner they choose.

Erkideak. Collaborators of Lokarri are all those people who have manifested their desire to collaborate in the functioning, campaigns, or initiatives of Lokarri. They decide what kind and what level of cooperation they desire to offer, responding to a personalized formula that offers distinct possibilities. They will be called to the trimestral Provincial Assemblies and to the General Assemblies and have the capacity to participate in the decision-making process.

Foroak. Forums of Lokarri are those entities that the collaborators of Lokarri desire to create at the local level or by issue, sector, or specific demand. These are integrated into the network in the same way as the collaborators and they will each have a point-person who is responsible for the forum who coordinates with the Coordinating Commission. Their members are called to the trimestral Provincial Assemblies and to the General Assemblies and have the capacity to participate in the decision-making process.

Bazkideak. Members of Lokarri. Independently of whether they are friends, collaborators, or members of Lokarri's forums, the members of Lokarri contribute monthly dues to finance the project. They receive periodic information, in addition to the journal *Elkarri* and all edited publications. They are invited to participate in all acts and assemblies of Lokarri.

Three decision-making and organizational bodies:

The General Assembly is the superior decision-making body. Its regular meetings will be held every two years and can be called additionally when the Coordinating Commission, the Provincial Assemblies, or the collaborators decide it. It approves the accounts, budget, and the major action agendas of Lokarri. Any change in the foundational base of Lokarri should have the support of an absolute majority of this Assembly.

The Provincial Assembly is the body which, following the proposals of the Coordinating Commission, develops the directives of the General Assembly and approves the trimestral action plans and annual budget. Regular meetings are held every three months and can be called additionally by the Coordinating Commission or the collaborators.

The Coordinating Commission is the executive body and has a permanent status. It develops and articulates the directives of the General Assembly in precise action plans, which should be executed and managed with the approval of the Provincial Assemblies. The Coordinating Commission will form a smaller coordinating group designed for day-to-day management and decision-making. Regular meetings are held every fifteen days and may call additional meetings whenever necessary.

Action Criteria

Lokarri's entire project is based upon two indispensable premises, without which this social initiative would be senseless: on the one hand, its full autonomy of decision and its independence of criteria when it comes to defining its positions and on the other, the plural nature of this citizen network together with the transversal vocation of its initiatives. Upon this base, Lokarri is guided by four criteria for action: priority and complementarity, self-organization and functioning as a network, independent discourse and communicative autonomy, and creative austerity and self-financing.

Priority and complementarity. Priority is represented by the demand for plural agreement and popular consultation and in the principals defined in this same document, which Lokarri is determined to maintain in all circumstances. This priority is combined with the will to develop a course of action that compliments social and political action and maintains equilibrium between the local and the global.

Self-organization and functioning as a network. From an organizational perspective, Lokarri hopes to bring together the best of classical forms of social organization with the best of newer tendencies. It proposes combining an assembly model of self-organization with new forms of participation and network communication. In this sense, taking advantage of new technology and the Internet will be a strategic axis of Lokarri.

Independent discourse and communicative autonomy. Lokarri is a space for reflection and the elaboration of ideas, thoughts, complaints, and proposals. This organization has the will to create its own discourse, which, with reference to the majority social will, attempts to contribute to the objective of peace. In addition to an independent discourse, Lokarri enjoys independent media resources for its dissemination. The journal Elkarri, website, email bulletins, text messages, monographic publications, social campaigns, and communiqués, press conferences, and public acts are all communications tools that this citizen network will utilize.

Creative austerity and self-financing. Lokarri will be guided by a criterion of austerity and rigor in its expenditure and in its own style of functioning. This austerity should be an incentive for the organization's creativity: doing more with less. To this expenditure criteria is added a fundraising criteria, that of self-financing. Lokarri should support itself fundamentally with its own economic resources. This is a necessary condition for guaranteeing its freedom. In this sense, the viability of Lokarri's project and its self-financing depend directly on the role of the members, who are the foundation of this organization.

Annex: priorities for 2006

2006 is a decisive year for Lokarri. It could be the year in which the peace process becomes consolidated or in which a process of decline and disintegration of the conflict begins. Furthermore, it is the year in which Lokarri should extend, share, and consolidate its initiative and its message. In this context, there are three priorities of this social initiative in 2006:

Promote plural agreement and popular consultation. Politically, the first act is to respond to the needs of the moment and of the evolution of the peace process. In 2006, Lokarri will develop constant activity oriented towards defending non-violence, dialogue, and multi-party talks as a pre-conditions of reconciliation, and to put forth plural agreement and popular consultation as a social priority and demand.

Organizational consolidation of the project. Internally, the priority is to consolidate the three structures that make up Lokarri: the social observatory for the process of peace and reconciliation, the exterior network of support for dialogue, and the citizen network for agreement and consultation; and especially, the avenues of incorporation, communication, and relationship-building between these networks. In addition to all of this, the avenues for participation and the structure of the distinct bodies of management and decision-making should become established.

Present, extend, and grow. Externally, the priority is to make Lokarri's project publicly known, carrying it to all our geographic corners, inviting participation everywhere, opening all its doors and adding on new citizen will and effort in order to make real our yearning for peace, political normalization, and reconciliation.
