



Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform files appeal against the change in the Coastal Law promoted by the Bizkaia Provincial Council

On January 19, the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform filed an appeal with the National Court regarding the review of the limitation on the public maritime-terrestrial domain. The Ministerial Order of October 19, 2023, reduces the protection of the coastal strip where Astilleros Murueta SA is currently located from 100 meters to 20 meters.

For this reason, the platform opposing the project has submitted an appeal against this Order to the Administrative Litigation Chamber to annul it and restore the 100-meter protection, as established in the Coastal Law 22/1988 of July 28.

It should be noted that the Bizkaia Provincial Council is modifying several regulations to allow the two museums planned in the Guggenheim Urdaibai project to be located within the Biosphere Reserve since the current legislation does not permit advancing with this museum project.

On November 21 last year, we learned of the decision regarding the request to reduce the protection zone: the Ministry of Ecological Transition (MITECO) gave permission for the reduction of the coastal protection zone to 20 meters, as requested by the Provincial Council on October 8, 2021. This opened the door for the location of the second building of the macroproject in the current shipyard site.

However, that was not enough; to build one of the museums, changing the land classification was essential. This step was initiated on October 9 with the publication in the Official Gazette of Bizkaia (BOB) of the proposal for the new General Urban Planning Plan (PGOU) of Murueta. According to this proposal, the shipyard lands would change from industrial land to equipment land.

If this change were achieved, the project promoters would fulfill the two essential conditions to move the project forward: having the necessary physical space and the appropriate land classification.

To prevent meeting this second condition, the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform submitted legal objections against this land classification change on December 11 last year.

The platform clearly states that with the current legislation, it is impossible to carry out the Guggenheim Urdaibai project, and therefore, they consider the project illegal.

Today, January 22, as we write this press release, fresh news has arrived. The General Deputy of Bizkaia, Elixabete Etxanobe, and the Lehendakari Iñigo Urkullu have announced they will take two years to assess the viability of the Guggenheim Urdaibai project.

The platform is clear: a project imposed through authoritarian governance, without citizen participation, is not viable. A project that intends to bring in 144,000 visitors over four months in a Biosphere Reserve that has already exceeded its carrying capacity is neither viable nor acceptable.

A project that sidelines early citizen participation and leaves all decisions in the hands of a private foundation is not viable. A project that ignores the real needs of the region and prioritizes a private museum is not viable.

The region deserves a serious socioeconomic project. In this regard, the Guggenheim Urdaibai platform proposes recovering the Program for the Adaptation and Development of Socioeconomic Activities (PADAS), which was unanimously approved by the Basque Government and it is time to take it up and fully develop it.

A two-year halt is not acceptable and is not enough.

The platform will continue working until the project is definitively stopped, taking necessary steps both on the streets with citizen support and in the courts, as long as the law permits.

Meanwhile, everyone should fulfill their responsibilities: clean the lands contaminated by the shipyards and return the area they have occupied without concession for five years to the marshland.

The administrations, as often mentioned, must promote the restoration and naturalization of the Biosphere Reserve and return to nature what it is owed.

With responsibility, something that has not been done in 40 years.

Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop!