

MEETING WITH ELIXABETE ETXANOBE

Yesterday, **September 10**, the citizens' platform **Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop** held a meeting with the **General Deputy of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, Elixabete Etxanobe Landajuela**.

We are grateful that this meeting was granted.

As a **broad and diverse citizens' platform**, we receive many concerns and fears from the public regarding the **Guggenheim Urdaibai project**. Likewise, we've heard various statements from representatives of certain administrations about this project.

We approached the meeting **with a sense of responsibility** and the **intention to obtain as much detailed information as possible** about the project.

Our goals were specific:

- On the one hand, we gave a **brief presentation of the platform**, clearly stating our objective: **to permanently abandon the Guggenheim Urdaibai project**.
- We also felt it was important to say that **we want to be treated with respect**. The platform **will not tolerate being misrepresented**, with statements attributed to it that were never made. Every step we take is **clear and publicly documented**.

We laid out all of our **concerns**, and shared some of the **questions** that arise from them.

These concerns can be summarized as follows:

- An **impositional style of governance**
- Actions that go **against the purpose of Biosphere Reserves**
- A project **not based on any kind of diagnostic study**
- The **nonexistence of a clearly defined project**
- Intervention in a **Special Protection Area** of the **Natura 2000 Network** (one of the most vulnerable zones)
- Clear **evidence of saturation** in the estuary
- **Disregard for planetary boundaries**

- **Waste of public money for private interests**
- A museum that **does not respond to the needs of the region**
- **Manipulation of the public** by linking the healthy future of the Biosphere Reserve to the project
- The launch of **whitewashed participatory processes**
- **Promotion of the loss of local culture**

Given the direction this project is taking, it is **vital to resolve the questions** we have raised. That was **not possible today**; we were told that the **technical nature** of our questions requires further consultation, and that **there will be time** to address them later.

We asked them to **propose a timeline**. Let it be so.

The General Deputy assured us that the project being developed **will be beneficial for the region**, even while insisting that the project is **not yet fully defined or decided**, and that there are still **various administrative steps** to be taken to make it viable.

In fact, the **lack of a concrete project** was the main reason they gave for not understanding why the Platform opposes it.

Our response was clear:

Even if we don't have a fully developed project, we **know its components** and the **steps already taken in each of them**, and it is evident that we **disagree with the objectives being pursued and the way they are being implemented**.

There is a **lack of genuine public participation**, a **lack of a shared diagnosis** of the region's needs, and **no consideration of alternatives**—all of which are essential for a truly participatory and inclusive governance model, **without imposition**.

Everyone should participate **on equal footing**, with the opportunity to **express their views and engage in debate from the outset**, always with the goal of improving both the situation of the citizens and the territory.

Decisions have already been made—to such an extent that **public participation has become meaningless**.

To conclude, we also expressed our **well-founded doubts** about who will **really benefit** from this museum project, given that the possibility of **not building it has never even been considered**.

The **private interests of the Guggenheim Bilbao Foundation** cannot be allowed to determine the **future of an entire region**.

This meeting **has not changed our view** of the project—**not in the slightest**.

Today we are **more convinced than ever** that this project is nothing more than a **misguided initiative**, proposed without any diagnostic assessment, that **requires changes to laws and protective regulations** just to be made viable.

Meanwhile, we are **being sold smoke and mirrors**.

September 11, 2024