



Signatures in Defense of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve

- SEO/BirdLife and the citizens' platform Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop have launched an international petition to ask the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation to renounce the destruction of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve.
- The goal is to gather **1,300,000 signatures**, a symbolic number representing the annual visitors to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

Gernika/Madrid, 2024/07/15.

Basque institutions are once again trying to impose a new Guggenheim museum franchise in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve — without providing any justification for its necessity and without the participation of local residents.

For this reason, **SEO/BirdLife** and the citizens' platform **Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop** have launched an **international petition** asking the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation** to renounce the destruction of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve.

Urdaibai is, in itself, a living museum — a stunning landscape rich in biological diversity, culture, and history. The decision to build two museum facilities, one of them right in the heart of the estuary, poses a threat and will cause **critical and irreversible impacts** on the values of the reserve — in a region where tourism is already overflowing.

The **Urdaibai estuary**, in addition to being designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA), is recognized under the **European Natura 2000 network**, the **Ramsar Convention**, and the **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve** framework, with the highest levels of international protection: Special Protection Area for birds (SPA) and Site of Community Importance (SCI).

Placing a museum facility there and channeling thousands of tourists through a so-called “eco-friendly” walking trail — as currently planned — does **not** seem compatible with meeting the **conservation goals** required by regional, national, or international legislation.

In fact, recreational activities place heavy pressure on bird species that seek refuge and food in the wetlands.

The **Provincial Council of Bizkaia**, the **Basque Government**, and the **Spanish Government** have repeatedly ignored the fundamental goal of this protected area: to **maintain a favorable conservation status** for the species and habitats it harbors, while ensuring that this is compatible with **sustainable and orderly regional development**.

The principle should be to **conserve, protect, and restore** — rather than consistently enabling the mass public use of highly fragile areas.

European regulations call for seeking out **alternatives** that are shared with and participated in by local populations. That path is being entirely dismissed here.

SEO/BirdLife and **Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop** wish to convey to the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation** that citizens oppose this irreversible transformation of a protected area of great beauty and fragility. They ask the foundation to **withdraw from establishing the project** in such a valuable space, for the sake of the **environment, culture, and society**.

 **Sign the petition:**

- <https://seoactua.org/peticion/urdaibai-bosfera-erreserba>
- <https://seoactua.org/peticion/urdaibai-biosphere-reserve>
- <https://seoactua.org/peticion/reserva-urdaibai>