

The Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform and cultural agents of the Basque Country have collected more than 1,000 signatures against the Guggenheim Urdaibai project under the manifesto “Not in Our Name!”

The Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform and dozens of cultural agents from across the Basque Country—filmmakers, writers, artists, musicians, sculptors, actors and actresses, dancers, academics, and other arts professionals—have gathered more than 1,000 signatures in support of the manifesto opposing the Guggenheim Urdaibai project. Most of the signatories are Basque creators; others are voices from the cultural sphere in the Spanish state and from the international cultural scene.

The manifesto used in the signature collection, “*NOT IN OUR NAME!*”, emphasizes that nature cannot be harmed in the name of culture and demands that the institutions act responsibly and transparently.

Urdaibai’s natural environment: non-negotiable

The signatories have expressed their solidarity with the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop movement, recalling that Urdaibai is a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve that we must all protect:

“We cannot allow this privileged natural environment to be put at risk in the name of art and culture. As cultural agents, we must be the first to raise our voices.”

The project would pose an evident threat to the area’s diverse flora and fauna, generating broad and firm opposition within the cultural community.

Economic irresponsibility and lack of transparency

The signatories raise clear and fundamental questions:

- What will be the medium-term cost of the project? Construction and maintenance.
- From what government department will the money be taken from?
- How will it affect the cultural sector, especially those who do their work through Basque?

They note that the Basque Government already allocates around 8 million euros annually to the Guggenheim Bilbao, and they consider that financing a second museum would come at the expense of numerous cultural activities. For this reason, they demand that institutions publish the financial details and explain “honestly and clearly” the consequences of these decisions.

The project does not respond to the needs, desires, or proposals of the cultural community

Cultural agents have spent years explaining to institutions the real situation of the sector:

- the precarious conditions faced by creators,
- the lack of support for original creative projects,
- the absence of long-term public policies.

Despite major investments in buildings and infrastructure, they emphasize that the impact on content creation and on strengthening the cultural ecosystem has been virtually nonexistent.

“Culture is increasingly being directed toward tourism; it is not being understood as a tool for building critical and collective identities.”

For this reason, they denounce that prioritizing a museum that the cultural community has not requested is a “misguided and undemocratic strategy.”

Other relevant statements from the scientific and citizen communities

This press release also highlights two key references that institutions have so far ignored:

- The manifesto signed by 372 researchers on September 18, 2025, warned of the serious ecological risks to Urdaibai’s environmental balance and stated that the project goes “against environmental sustainability and conservation.”
- The listening process of 1,000 community narratives carried out by the Agirre Lehendakaria Center in Busturialdea, which—in its first report published on July 23—clearly shows that the public wants a different model for the future, one based on community well-being and territorial protection.

Opposition to the Guggenheim Urdaibai project is very strong. Both documents are unequivocal: this is not only an alarm call coming from the cultural sector, but a strong demand from the scientific community and from a broad and diverse section of the community.

Direct request: halt the project

Cultural agents and the platform share the same conclusion: the Guggenheim Urdaibai project must be stopped. And they issue a clear request: that public institutions listen to, respect, and take into account the arts community, the local citizens, and the academic researchers.

“We need policies that foster a living, rich, and authentic culture for those of us who inhabit the Basque Country—not a museum that is being pushed forward in our name.”