



Statement from the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop Platform

Today we want to state the following with absolute clarity: **thanks to the work of the citizens, the Guggenheim Urdaibai project has been halted.** This victory is the result of the constant work carried out by numerous people.

From the very beginning, the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and the Basque Government **displayed a rigid and authoritarian attitude.** The authorities told us unanimously that they were going to build this museum "no matter what." They didn't care about the opinion of society, they didn't care about the debate generated among citizens. Now, however, we are here celebrating the decision that these same leaders and institutions have had to make, unable to ignore a reality revealed by science, the law, and society. Even so, they still cling to their explanations to the public.

After entrusting this decision, which has such a significant impact on the environment and the community, to a board of trustees of private interests, they now want to cover up their lack of reflection with simplistic arguments. They speak of bureaucracy and administrative issues; they say there are problems with pollution; they explain that the shipyard has refused to sell the land. Arguments that only demonstrate a lack of seriousness and irresponsibility. We, the citizens, knew from the beginning the reasons for rejecting the Guggenheim Urdaibai project. On the one hand, **this project would have caused serious ecological damage, something the scientific community has been warning about from the outset.** On the other hand, **with the laws protecting the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, this project cannot be viable, despite the authorities' repeated attempts to manipulate them.** Furthermore, a project of this nature will not revitalize the socio-economic situation of our region at all; rather, it would condemn us to precariousness and the loss of our identity.

These are the reasons why we have fought the authorities and the institutions, why we have taken to the streets time and again over the last three years. And this is what has stopped the Guggenheim Urdaibai project: **the pressure and opposition of the citizens.** Busturialdea has said no, we, the citizens, have said no. And this is the message we are going to convey to every corner of the Basque Country, and this is what we are going to tell our descendants. So that they know that those in power do not always get what they want, so that they know that the people also have a voice, and that we, the citizens, have the power to halt or abandon the projects they want to impose on us.

That is why today we want to offer **our sincerest thanks** to all those who have been fighting for three years. Thanks to the people's network (Herri Sarea) for spreading our message far and wide. Thanks to the propaganda group for contributing the people, strength, and spirit to this struggle. Thanks to all the collaborators who have helped us move forward step by step. Thanks to all the friends and family members who have been looking after us. Thanks from Busturialdea and from every corner of the Basque Country to each and every one of your

neighbours who have helped this platform. Thanks to your work, we are here today. The people have won, Urdaibai has won.

We are aware that this does not end here. **The task of defending our environment and the future of our region is never-ending.** We are not the owners of nature; we are part of it. And our obligation is to care for, protect, and improve what we have received and ensure that future generations also receive it alive and well. We will continue to do so. We also ask our institutions to implement and invest in serious, viable, and effective projects to improve the socioeconomic situation of Busturialdea, taking into account the opinions of the social stakeholders in the region.

Now, however, is the time for celebration. And for this, **we invite you to join us on February 7th in Gernika.** We will celebrate this great achievement in a festive atmosphere; and, with this, we will reaffirm our commitment to Urdaibai. Therefore, save the date: February 7th, everyone is invited to Gernika to the celebration. And let us proclaim, clearly and loudly, that if society is organized it is capable of confronting the excesses of institutions and those in power. We have won together, and we will celebrate together!