

BASIS FOR A LANGUAGE POLICY FOR THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

TOWARDS A RENEWED AGREEMENT
Paper arising from the open debate process

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Prologue

Patxi Baztarrika Galparsoro

*Deputy Minister for Language Policy and President of the
Permanent Committee of the Special Committee
“Basis for a language policy for the early 21st Century”*

In reference to the results of the reflection process, “Basis for a language policy for the early 21st Century”, promoted by the new Consultative Council for the Basque Language, an advisory body to the Basque Government, I cannot express strongly enough my gratitude to the committee members and the public, both for their contributions and their full participation. I would likewise like to express my gratitude to the journalists and communications media that have disseminated and broadcast the **Euskara 21** debate, as their collaboration has been indispensable in bringing said debate into the public arena.

Promoted by the Sub-Ministry for Language Policy in order to meet its public commitment for the period 2005-2009, the objectives of the debate were clear: firstly, debate language policy without prejudice or limits; secondly, seek/ promote the participation of all possible sectors in said debate; thirdly, locate the references required to continue with the work of revitalising the Basque language, taking a close look at where we have come from, where we are now and where we want to go; finally, contribute towards social consensus, which is vital in revitalising what has been made a minority language.

Several months have passed since the members of the permanent committee “Basis for a language policy for the early 21st Century” drafted the Basic Paper and started the process of reflection and debate. In this time, in addition to contributions from special committee members, the Basic Paper has received more than thirty extensive contributions; likewise, more than three thousand comments have been received in relation to the themes under debate in the **Euskara 21** project. Likewise, thousands of citizens have received, through the website, updated information on progress made in the debate and many of these have also registered their opinions and contributions.

We have had one of the richest and most productive debates of recent years on the subject of language policy - a true cause for celebration. Without doubt, it is a joint achievement. Because it is only through contrasting opinions and a desire to reach an agreement that both the Basque language and community life can be strengthened.

The text in this book, the fourth one edited by the **Euskara 21** project, has been drafted by the permanent committee, which also wrote the Basic Paper. In this context, I should clarify that this paper does not replace the Basic Paper, which started the process of debate and the contents of which are still valid; instead, it is a supplement to it.

In any case, what is being surrendered to the public is the fruit of great effort to integrate the opinions, contributions and viewpoints expressed and collected both from the permanent committee and the most diverse forums. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that this paper represents an effort to integrate very diverse opinions, this does not mean that everyone is of the same opinion, instead, it is a contribution made with the intention of integrating the opinions of the committee members and those of the public, no more and no less, and that is its most distinguished value. Thus, this paper does not include all contributions and opinions that have arisen, nor does it end the debate. Numerous subjects have been discussed some of which have been clearly conflicting, which has made it impossible to accommodate some viewpoints.

Taking into consideration the fruits of the debate process, the greatest challenge in the near future is to renew the pillars of language policy. Now is the perfect time. In effect, the General Plan for Promoting Basque Language Use, which is in its tenth year, urgently needs to be renewed, so that it can continue to meet the needs of Basque speakers now and in the future. With this aim, I would like to invite all that have taken part in this debate to participate in this group undertaking. Likewise, I would like to invite those that have not yet become involved to

participate, and those that have held back, feeling in some way distanced from it, because their participation too is very important. In effect, reflection on the past, present and future of the Basque language is something that concerns us all, as does the task of finding new ways to revitalise it.

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29 January 2009

~ Translated from the original in Basque ~

I. INTRODUCTION

Drafted by the permanent committee of the special committee “Basis for a language policy for the early 21st Century”, the Basic Paper, which publicly launched the Euskara 21 reflection process, was published on 29 April 2008. This paper is not intended to replace same; instead, the members of the special committee and of the permanent committee, alongside the thousands of citizens that have participated in this reflection and debate through the Euskara 21 website, have worked with the aim of completing and enhancing that initial paper.

Consequently, opinions, viewpoints and proposals of all types have been expressed that have proved as diverse as the clarifications, complementary proposals and improvements made. Reflections and proposals made from opposing viewpoints have also been received. Before drafting this paper, absolutely all reflections have been given due attention by the permanent committee in a task governed by a strong desire for integration. Nevertheless, it has not been possible to include in this paper all the ideas that arose from the open process of reflection, as the objective was never to synthesise that which cannot be synthesised, but to lay a sound and valuable foundation for a renewed language policy that is appropriate to the beginning of a new century.

On the other hand, we should bear in mind, that this paper, titled “Towards a renewed agreement”, does not close the debate on language policy, On the contrary, we call on all that have participated in this process, and those that, for whatever reason, have not, to continue expressing their opinions, proposals and reflections. Because that, above all else, is what is needed to revitalise the Basque language: a true contrast of opinions that can lead us to an effective form of consensus. And this is the aim of the ideas, reflections and proposals expressed below.

II. OUR REALITY: WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM, WHERE WE ARE NOW, WHERE WE ARE GOING

1. Background

Institutional action in favour of revitalising the Basque language commenced at the same time the Autonomous Basque Community started exercising its power to organise its social life. Prior to this, the Basque language has endured thanks to the various initiatives that arose in the bosom of society and to the democratic commitment of a large section of the Basque community.

More than twenty five years ago, in a climate of ample consensus, what is known as the Basque Language Law was drafted (Law 10/1982, dated 24 November, Basic Law for the Normalisation of the Use of the Basque Language), an essential legal norm which, both then and now, constitutes a crucial factor in the process of revitalising the Basque language. Since then, the associated regulations have fostered, in one way or another, revitalisation of the Basque language on different levels and in different areas.

Yet, having arrived at this point, it is important to recall what was said in the basic paper that served as a starting point for this process of debate we know by the name "Euskara 21":

According to a widely accepted principle in the sociolinguistics field, it is essential that three factors exist to guarantee success when recovering any language: an appropriate legal framework, adequate to enable language normalisation; an effective language policy and resources for development; and public adhesion and commitment to the language.

Thus, being this the case, as we strive to discover how far we have come, it is essential that we look at how the third of these factors has developed over the past twenty five years. As far as commitment to the language is concerned, two attitudes have prevailed: on one hand, many citizens have made the effort to embrace Basque; and, on the other, a clear majority of parents are now choosing the most effective methods of teaching their children from the viewpoint of the Basque language.

Looking at another of the indicators of how a language is developing, the thriving qualitative and quantitative growth of cultural production is evident, largely due to the public protection system arbitrated to this end.

Our education system, with the exception of model A, enables students to acquire a minimum level of Basque. And that is a great achievement. In any case, models B and D do not guarantee, in themselves and by themselves, that children and youths will become Basque speakers, given the clear limitations of the education system. It is clear that efforts should also be made in other social areas: family, recreation, business etc. The education system, despite the exceptions, does not and cannot solve the problem of proper language learning. On the other hand, and with the facts on the table, we should bear in mind that the process of learning Basque involves factors other than education, which has considerable influence on the social success to which we refer: family language, socioeconomic level, living environment, language skill and teacher preparation, commitment of pupils, etc.

As regards commitment to the language, two attitudes have prevailed:

- Many people have made the effort to embrace the Basque language.
- A clear majority of parents have chosen the most effective teachings methods for their children from the viewpoint of the Basque language.

In any case, it should be borne in mind, in dealing with this question, that, in reference to the organisation of the education system, the language problem does not exhaust the education

issue. In summary, it is well known and commonly accepted that the education system alone cannot sustain the need to learn the language. Said issue should be dealt with in all its dimensions, and while it cannot be denied that the language has weight in this process, in no way has it been the only factor taken into consideration.

2. CULTURAL PRODUCTION: MARKET, PROTECTION AND QUALITY LAWS

The educational system cannot solve the problem of proper language learning by itself

There is ample consensus confirming the quantitative and qualitative growth of Basque culture. However, there is more reservation, or if not reservation, at least more calls for clarification regarding market growth.

It is true – and this is an issue that should be highlighted when prioritising– that we define indicators, established with rigour and precision, in order to understand the true magnitude of consumption in all areas of cultural activity, and it is equally true that the parameters that are valued when gauging production should also be defined. However, even at that, –that is, even starting from the current knowledge which could be improved upon –, we are all sufficiently clear that when we refer to Basque cultural production, we are talking about an offer dependent on the institutional aid policy. However, the fact is that the protection required to guarantee high quality cultural production in a weak language must not rob said cultural production of healthy exposure to market forces, lest the culture created in the Basque language be condemned to an eternal adolescence. Instead, when designing and implementing a policy for protecting Basque culture, the institutions should base their actions on a criterion of emancipation.

And in accordance with this same criterion, the second fundamental pillar of public policy on cultural affairs should focus on and preserve quality because, amongst other reasons, the ability to attract is even more essential for a language like Basque than for others, in the same way that commitment to excellence is more vital for the Basque language than it is for the other languages.

Of course, this is not to say that every Basque production should reach the level of a masterpiece, we are not fantasists. On the contrary, the issue is, that the average quality of Basque cultural production must never be less than that seen in our cultural setting, and we should aspire, without a shadow of a doubt, to ensure that it exceeds the average quality of cultural production in our setting. And it is this principle alone that the institutions should bear in mind when allocating public resources earmarked for cultural activity.

Ultimately, a dual objective is being pursued in this area: on the one hand, it is essential to influence consumption in order to compare and, at the same time, increase the growth of cultural production and the market, without alienating one from the other; on the other hand, and from the perspective of a culture in Basque which must be effectively introduced with an ability to attract in cultural circuits on a global scale, it is important to pay special attention to quality and ability to reach a broader audience - both within the Basque country and beyond it.

With regard to cultural production:

- Contrast production and market.
- Focus on and preserve quality.
- Help it reach a broader audience, both within the Basque country and beyond it.
- Establish emancipating aid criteria.

3. THE BASQUE LANGUAGE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE ATTRACTION FACTOR AS A KEY FACTOR

The Basque language needs to become a showcase. It is imperative that organisations and representatives acting in the public sector (rulers, administrations, political parties, syndicates,

business associations, communicators and opinion makers and, in general, social partners and public representatives of all these) lead the way in making the most solid commitments to language policy: above all, public representatives should commit to using the Basque language in public and in their areas of influence; secondly, each and every one of them should promote and facilitate, and under no circumstances become an obstacle to, the use of the Basque language in their area of influence or authority; and thirdly, it is essential that using the Basque language be portrayed as an absolutely natural and normal attitude to avoid that said language should ever again appear to be a problem.

Given that we are referring to an attitude based on language policy the objective of which is bilingualism, that is, to a language policy that aims to standardise public use of the Basque language and put it on a par with Spanish, and in no way a language policy that promotes, directly or indirectly, hostility towards one language or the other, it is clear therefore, that representatives and public servants should likewise express themselves naturally and normally in Spanish when they deem it appropriate.

It is entirely beneficial that co-existence of the languages been seen in the actions of public representatives, both using Basque in public and taking measures to ensure it is used in their areas of expertise and influence.

Finally, on the road towards obtaining the most balanced bilingualism possible, it is entirely beneficial that co-existence of languages be seen in all public acts, without fearing any necessary or unavoidable asymmetries, which should be vindicated as part of a progressive as opposed to a neutral language policy - that is, in favour of the Basque language.

4. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT NEGATIVE INERTIAS BE COUNTERACTED, IN ORDER TO INTRODUCE LANGUAGE POLICY AS A NUCLEAR COMPONENT AND TRANSVERSAL VALUE IN THE ACTIONS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Centrality also requires that language policy has transversality. In turn, linguistic criteria should be introduced into the core of general policy.

It would be difficult to put into practice what has been said up to now and what is yet to come, if this progressive language policy we have just defined were not instituted as a horizontal policy that embraces all areas of public activity.

In effect, we are coming from a philosophy that has often distanced itself from this direction and the damage is glaringly evident: public action in any area tends to develop in accordance with a certain unique logic and it is difficult, - if not impossible - to harmonise a *posteriori* this logic with linguistic criteria. When an effort is made to do so, any sign of concern for or responsibility towards the Basque language becomes, a problem, instead of constituting, as it should, an essential ingredient of public authority action. Likewise, the core of language policy does not involve making cumbersome interventions, but instead totally natural integration of the linguistic criteria in each and every process, initiative, reflection and decision. This obviously refers to a process that needs to be learned, in addition to flexible and responsive structures. But, does that not constitute a primordial and integral objective of every Administration? That is, the principle of centralising language criteria cannot be marginalised from the general objective of a modern and efficient Administration. Likewise, centralising language criteria must be considered a factor that is closely linked to quality management.

Said centrality, on the other hand, also inevitably requires that language policy has transversality, given that in no way is it proposed, in the name of centrality, that a separate language policy be introduced for each area, but rather one sole language policy, that is general and sustainable and that acquires a specific reflection and a specific profile in each area.

5. A COMMUNICATIVE AND PRACTICAL (PERFORMATIVE) PERSPECTIVE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS, BEYOND THE RIGID THEORETICAL MEASURING OF KNOWLEDGE

Factors of continuous training are:

- Performance training.
- Use.
- Power of attraction.

Coming from a school system that did not even teach the Basque language, in twenty five years we have achieved a system that teaches Basque to all students and offers the option of studying through Basque to those that so wish. In this process, qualifications have been introduced to accredit certain levels of proficiency in Basque, the decisive nature of which will diminish as advances are made in normalising the language. In effect, we are approaching a situation whereby the education system itself will guarantee normal proficiency, radically lessening the importance of qualifications.

From this perspective, it is also important to analyse the “market value” of the Basque language: a higher proficiency in the Basque language than that obtained in the education system or than that recognised for a person that has completed their academic studies through Basque should not be made a requirement for entering the public or private labour market. At the most, it would be sufficient to evaluate and act in the case of duties or positions directly linked with the language itself.

It is necessary to introduce the principle of permanent learning into the Basque language area and, from this standpoint; three factors should be closely interwoven: performance training (linked to specific practical tasks), use (based on communication parameters) and a continuous effort to make attractive a language that would only survive to the degree it is used. The power of attraction here is, a function of the “naturalness”; that is, those who have studied through Basque, are afforded an education in itself, including proficiency in Basque, by the system, that is by society, which “naturally” prepares the pupil for the skills that may be required in the labour market, and from this coherence comes, the attraction of education through Basque and use of said language.

In any case, the evaluation criteria should only be applied to communication criteria, and not to academic knowledge of the language. It would be inconsistent with the current sociolinguistic situation and that foreseeable in a more or less near future to place emphasis on “philological” knowledge, as though we were working with Latin or classic Greek, instead of with a non-standardised language that has survived and flourished through use alone.

From this perspective, it would perhaps be appropriate to clarify whom we consider to be *euskaldun* at the beginning of the 21st Century. We should consider as *euskaldun*, any person that has embraced the Basque language, even where said embrace has only been on a passive level. It is clear that the contribution this passive *euskaldun* makes to the Basque speaking community is limited, nevertheless, it does contribute to the Basque speaking community the added value of coexistence, and this contribution, in its humility, possesses an extraordinary symbolic and operational value, as it opens the door to said community’s growth.

Being this the case, we now consider as manifestly essential, concepts such as “cuasi *euskaldun*”, a term used in the past, for want of a better one: there are Basque speakers with superior or inferior language proficiency, as is the case in any language, albeit to a lesser degree. Today, on the other hand, in the Common European Framework of References for Learning, Teaching and Evaluating languages, we have found a suitable instrument for determining the various levels of proficiency.

Finally, if we act expediently we can expect that within 25-30 years, nobody should have to consider whether or not they should express themselves in Basque in any given context because of a suspicion or fear that they are among monolingual Spanish speakers. And this reality demarcates the progress made in revitalising the Basque language, or what is the same, the form of bilingualism desired for Basque society.

We should consider as *euskaldun* any person that has come in close contact with the Basque language.

Passive bilingualism is of extraordinary symbolic and operational value, as it facilitates use of the language to the Basque speaker.

6. WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SPEAK OF A BILINGUAL SOCIETY? LIMITATIONS, ASSYMETRIES, SUSTAINABLE DIGLOSSIA, VITAL NICHES OF THE BASQUE LANGUAGE: REVITALISATION OF THE BASQUE LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY

We must first look at the bilingualism *we can* achieve: most people will be bilingual, but not all to the same degree and geographic distribution will not be even.

What type of bilingualism do we want? In order to answer this question, we must first look at the type of bilingualism *we can* achieve. As a result, we need to clearly identify – and express in definite terms– the limitations of the Basque language in its true living space – instead of in the Never Never Land some dream of –:

- Fortunately, monolingual Basque speakers do not exist. That is, all Basque speakers are bilingual, and the other language spoken is also a local one, albeit more vigorous.
- The limited development of the Basque language relative to the languages alongside which it co-exists, is a fruit of the process of marginalisation suffered over many years. Likewise, this same process of marginalisation has paved the way for linguistic habits that do not favour use and consumption of Basque. This has directly affected the prestige of the language.
- We have a diverse sociolinguistic reality, both between the different territories and in the bosom of each of them.
- The bilingual population is in the minority.
- The different relative proficiency of Basque speakers limits the possibilities of using the Basque language in certain fields.
- The distance between the Basque language and the languages alongside which it coexists, means that special effort is required to learn it.
- We are small in size.

Bearing in mind these limitations, in the society we imagine in twenty five years time, the best part of the population will undoubtedly be bilingual, but not all to the same degree nor will geographic distribution be even.

Thus, we are approaching an asymmetry, without which it will be impossible to attain a bilingual society, and this asymmetry will be both geographical and functional. Let us be clear – as we all know within the Basque jurisdiction: the objective does not consist of merely imitating in one place or area that what has been done in others, in spite of the conditions and the reality, but achieving, with genius and wisdom, that each place or area gives what it can, no more and no less. The reality mirrors the image of the future: the Basque language and the Spanish language will have different functions, in accordance with specific functional differentiation and the same will occur with the territories we reclaim from Basque: by no means will the same number of speakers and users be obtained in all these, nor will the same levels of proficiency be attained.

Asymmetry: the objective does not consist of merely imitating in a place or area what has been done in others. An effective language policy starts from the reality of each location.

This asymmetry, however, is not in itself contrary to revitalisation of the Basque language, instead, the desires and plans of each individual will be realistic and feasible in relation to said revitalisation. That is: we can even accept this sustainable diglossia as an objective, as long as, an effective and dynamic language policy ensures that the geographic regions and areas that correspond to the Basque language enjoy the necessary quality and credence to function properly.

In order to develop, a language requires pre-eminent areas. It is in said vital niches, and in no other place, that the language to be revitalised should have sufficient hold, both in relation to intergenerational transmission, and the communicative functions of the language or its referential values. If said vital niches are not fostered, created and, if possible, extended, any other effort will probably fail. Consequently, the language policy of the early 21st Century should clearly prioritise attention to the vital niches of the Basque language.

From what has been said, it follows, inevitably, that it is essential to regulate the use of both languages in the public sector, and that said regulation must favour the weakest language, always in accordance with the sociolinguistic reality and bearing in mind that, although diglossia does not guarantee survival, in our case survival is not possible without diglossia, without some type of functional departmentalisation. And acceptance of said formulation involves our embracing the principle of progression, which should become a core part of the language policy of the 21st Century. Because, everything cannot be done at once, or indeed, overnight.

[Diglossia does not guarantee survival, and survival is not possible without diglossia. To be sustainable, diglossia must favour the Basque language.](#)

But efforts to revitalise the language are not limited to the vital niches of the Basque language. From this perspective, the focus is on providing an effective strategy to reduce monolingualism and increase bilingualism, and we should bear in mind that this must be the only valid form of screening when it comes to adopting or rejecting specific measures and policies: measures and policies must favour the coexistence of languages and speakers and expansion of the use of the Basque language. There should be no other authority in this regard.

Two tasks point in this same direction and by virtue of their obvious nature, they deserve a mention in this paper: 1) supporting use of the Basque language in informal environments (family, neighbourhood, friendships etc.), both on the part of new and other Basque speakers; 2) social recognition of the contribution of the new Basque speaker.

Closely linked with the above, public authorities, in collaboration with the social partners, should sow and nourish a new awareness or collective culture that favours effective multilingualism, making it a priority: a collective culture which positively values the commitment that motivates the greatest number of monolingualists possible to move towards the Basque language. In this area, however, it is evident that responsibility is person-based and cannot be delegated. A deciding factor is the will and attitude of everyone, based, as it were, on the free will of the individual.

In summary, in order that a diglossia that is favourable to the Basque language be recovered from within the asymmetrical bilingualism referred to, two parallel efforts should be co-ordinated and balanced: from the geographical viewpoint, foster, create and strengthen areas of use and transmission of the Basque language so that it enjoys a pre-eminent position (vital niches); and from the functional viewpoint, and already accepting functional departmentalisation of the languages, open access for the Basque language to an ever-increasing number of functions.

[Clear priority should be given to the vital niches of the Basque language. However, the language policy should not be limited to the vital niches of the Basque language.](#)

In this way, that is, working for this dual objective and closing the doors to fantasy and obstinacy, we are heeding the caution given some time ago by the master Mitxelena: "Just as our people needs to find a place among people, our language to needs to find its place amongst languages: an adequate place that ensures its continuity and development without maximalist adventures. As I said and wrote elsewhere, we should not fall into the inferno of ghettoism to escape the purgatory of diglossia. Integration is as necessary in the linguistic aspect as it is in any other".

7. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, A MODEL IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE LINGUISTIC RIGHTS OF CITIZENS

As we know, the Constitutional Tribunal has safeguarded knowledge of Basque, an official language of the Autonomous Community together with Spanish, as a requirement or of value, in accessing employment positions in public administrations of the Basque Autonomous Community, and in accordance with the tasks inherent to each employment position. Quite rightly, said measure has its origin in a responsibility that is clearly attributable to the public administrations of the Basque Autonomous Community: the public administration should be a model in all matters relating to safeguarding the linguistic rights of its citizens.

Today, knowledge of Basque, to varying degrees, is required to access 44% of employment positions in general administration in the Basque Autonomous Community, while in the remaining 56% it is considered a merit. These percentages are not the same across all the administrative areas: whereby, in the public education system, the percentage of employment posts for which the necessary linguistic profile must be accredited to teach through Basque rises to 80% of the teaching staff, in the police force (Ertzaintza) it is 40.74% and in the health service (Osakidetza) it is 15.52% (in this last area, it should be said, the indicated percentage of 15.52% does not specifically correspond to medical staff, but to the workforce, comprised of doctors, nursing staff and other groups and response rates have in fact been lowest amongst doctors. In addition, and despite the fact that the manipulation that is all too often resorted to in this regard aims to suggest otherwise, in the health service access has never been denied to an employment position for failure to accredit knowledge of Basque). It should also be pointed out, that 2006 was the first year that the health service has made knowledge of Basque mandatory. That year, the health service put out an employment tender for 3,000 positions, 20% of which included knowledge of Basque as a requirement.

On the other hand, outside the health service, the education system and the police force, 12,000 employees have already accredited the required linguistic profile: this data shows the true dimension of the effort made, and its fruits. Nonetheless, it is equally true that the actual incidence of this requirement has been greater in the group of persons accessing the labour market for the first time.

However, a clear void or deficiency has been detected and herein lies the problem that needs to be corrected: the effort made to ensure that 12,000 employees accredit their linguistic profile has not been continuous or connected to use of the Basque language. This gives rise to an imbalance between knowledge and use, and this distortion acts as an obstacle or block on the path towards adhesion to the language. Employees that have accredited the corresponding linguistic profile should use Basque as the working language and this should be achieved in a medium where use of both official languages has been regulated. When regulating use of the Basque language, it is clear that the percentage of Basque speakers in each Administration and the demolinguistic characteristics of the environment must be considered, given that uniform patterns cannot be applied that disregard the characteristics of the location in which each Administration is located. It is thus necessary to link the linguistic profile with use, both at the time of accrediting the linguistic profile as a requirement or merit, and relative to the criteria and procedures for evaluating the linguistic profile. At this point too, it is necessary to endorse what has already been said in relation to accrediting linguistic proficiency: the evaluation criteria should be performance based, rather than subject to knowledge of theory, so that a solid link can be established between the communicative ability of the speaker, the tasks of the employment position and practical use of the language.

Regardless how, the first of the priorities shall consist of all administrations having bilingual employees in first line posts in direct communication with the public. Without that, it is not possible to protect linguistic rights, given that we would be failing on the most elemental level of the language option: what allows citizens to use the official language they have chosen for relations with the Administration.

Worthy of special mention in this section is the actions of the State Administration based in the Basque Autonomous Community and of the Administration of Justice: in neither of these

have sufficiently effective measures been adopted throughout these twenty five years in order to guarantee the linguistic rights of citizens in their respective areas. However, the law equally obliges all administrations and it would be absolutely unacceptable that the aforementioned Administrations spend another twenty five years turning their back on the language policy of the Basque people.

Considering the characteristics of the different public Administrations, beyond knowledge of theory, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The speaker's ability to communicate.
- The duties of the employment position.
- Practical use of the language.

8. COLLABORATION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLEMENTARITY, BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS LINKED WITH THE BASQUE LANGUAGE, BASED ON RECIPROCAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE AREAS OF ACTION AND INFLUENCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT

First and foremost, we all agree that the "Basque link" concept is applicable to a wide range of structures that includes a variety of organisations, associations, companies, movements, groups and others, both public and private, and which are totally homogenous in relation to plan and structure. Some of said organisations are groups, companies and associations that publicise the ideas, contributions, projects, business and successes of pro Basque cultural groups, but, alongside these, there are others that use the Basque language as a pretext or element for political confrontation. Thus, it is not possible to recognise each as having equal value in the wide area of activity linked to the Basque language. The Basque language obviously needs all those involved in the first group (that is, the groups, companies and associations that publicise the ideas, contributions, projects, businesses and achievements of pro Basque cultural groups), while it does not need those of the second at all. Furthermore, those that use the Basque language as a banner for a political struggle are a serious detriment to revitalisation of the Basque language and to those that work loyally for said objective.

The Basque language needs all organisations that work without hidden agendas, whether these are public authority, social movements, associations or companies, yet it is equally important to be clear that the task and interests of all are not the same and, indeed, they are sometimes contradictory.

The public authorities must design and allocate resources to language policy; thus, it is not acceptable that the private sector movements establish priorities.

Be that as it may, in this matter there should be a very clear, basic democratic starting point: it is the public authorities that represent the public interest, as they are controlled by the citizens and their representatives.

Entirely incompatible with this reality is a myth inherited from bygone eras: the myth that presents pro-Basque work as a resistance movement, which serves to spur on destructive hypercriticism. Amongst those that still uphold said myth there is still a strong tendency to consider the public authorities as enemies of the Basque language or, at least, neglectful and lax in defending it. And, clearly, the stride from this to partisan use of Basque is but a small one.

Consequently, practices do exist that should be counteracted, within the administration, of course, and in social movements, as well as in relations between both, and the first step for this is that the role and scope of each be demarcated in accordance with the principle of complementarity. But not taking into consideration "egalitarian" type criteria. It is unacceptable, for example that the priorities of a language policy designed, resourced and evaluated by public authorities be set by a private sector movement, regardless of the type.

Thus, in accordance with the principle of complementarity, what is the area of action of the social movements, associations and companies that make up the private sector of Basque linked activity? The main ones are: collaboration with the public authorities in the actions provided for in language planning; promotion and extension of citizen adhesion in the process of revitalising the Basque language; proposals to improve the effectiveness of language policy.

In order to maintain current collaboration, it is necessary that the roles and scope of public and private partners linked to the Basque language are allocated in accordance with the principle of complementarity.

The public authorities, on their part, should promote continuous co-operation with the private sector of the Basque linked activity, and fulfil the commitment of maintaining the channels of communication required to review and correct the various initiatives and actions. There has been longstanding collaboration between the public authorities and the numerous organisations of the private sector linked to the Basque language in recent decades. It is necessary, as well as convenient, to promote this route and, as far as possible, strengthen it, always respecting, as has already been indicated, the areas of action of each and always with the objective of promoting free adhesion of the people to the Basque language.

Consequently, co-operation from both parties must be ensured, which inevitably requires mutual acknowledgement and respect for the respective duties of each sector (institutional, social, political, cultural) linked to the Basque language. These form the pro Basque activity as a whole, and all are essential to it.

9. REAL AND ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES SO THAT NEW BASQUE SPEAKERS USE BASQUE: ANTIDOTE TO FRUSTRATION

A dual objective:

- Increase the number of Basque speakers.
- Extend and strengthen the areas of use amongst Basque speakers.

Increasing the number of Basque speakers is beneficial, and in these twenty five years we have dedicated a good part of our efforts to increasing knowledge of Basque. However, not so much effort has been put into strengthening the Basque speaking community. The objective of the language policy of the early 21st Century cannot consist, solely, in increasing the number of people with knowledge of Basque, but in achieving that the greatest number of Basque speakers possible use Basque in the greatest possible number of situations, places and areas. Otherwise, the risk is evident: increased levels of knowledge of the Basque language, but, at the same time, a weaker Basque speaking community.

Consequently, the question that the language policy of the new century must answer is: how can a vigorous Basque speaking community be attained? We are starting from an unfavourable situation: the Basque language will never attain the internal power of other languages in certain areas (recreation, work, social position...); in our case, the fundamental value consists of the emotional life force and the key to accessing said value lies in will and private motivation, when all is said and done, these are the driving forces capable of bringing the Basque language into the informal, private and emotional areas.

Thus, we need plenty of strong Basque speaking networks: dynamic social networks that use the Basque language naturally, flexibly and habitually, and that, with the help of information technologies and communication, can rise above the risk of becoming language ghettos. Thus, those that have made the considerable effort to befriend the Basque language may perceive the benefits of bilingualism in practice. Because, when all is said and done, this practical acknowledgement is the bridge to a strong adhesion.

At the same time, social awareness needs to be raised so that the concept of the new Basque speaker receives the recognition and social prestige it deserves and needs.

However, the questions to be considered relative to the new Basque speaker do not end here. For example, there is a myth out there that is as ancient as it is damaging that must

urgently be abolished: that which advocates that those who embrace the Basque language should embrace its entire referential universe. But, is it really possible to import to the Basque language the referential world of those that live in Spanish speaking zones? Hardly at all, at least initially. We should exempt those that enter the Basque learning process from the obligation to take on the referential world of the Basque language. Because it is not language – Basque or any other – that possesses an emotional world: it is the people that possess it and, when expressing this emotional world, it is the language that each individual uses most naturally that will be encrusted in said emotional world. Many cultural and emotional identities co-exist in our society (and in all societies), but also inside each of us, at least in those of us that live in open environments. The need for a passport to go from one language to another must be abolished to facilitate flexibility, because it is this flexibility that can contribute tranquillity and tranquillity facilitates use of the language.

10. WHERE ARE WE GOING? IMAGINING THE LINGUISTIC REALITY OF 20-25 YEARS TIME

In essence, and as a fundamental characteristic, the demarcation lines between the languages that coexist in the bosom of our society (including English) will be more flexible and tenuous; above all, but not just between Basque and Spanish, our most important languages, but also in respect of English. The functional and geographic distribution of the languages will be much more natural than it appears now, and we will clearly see, both in practice and in use, the benefits of a sustainable diglossia.

In the interest of continued use, we must be flexible when it comes to changing from one language to the other, so that new Basque speakers do not pay an identity or cultural toll.

Obviously there will still be monolingual Spanish speakers, but not in enough numbers to significantly hinder the communicative activity of the Basque speaking citizens. In contrast, all citizens under the age of 50 will be Basque speaking, at least passively, and, through this generalisation, the Basque language will extend to new geographic and functional areas. Use of Basque, as a consequence, will clearly grow, except, perhaps, in areas that are currently predominantly Spanish speaking. This growth in use will be more evident in areas of formal use of the language.

Simultaneously, Basque will have more vital niches, and these will be more compact and solid, with consequent benefits for intergenerational transmission and the expressivity of the language itself.

As a consequence of growth in use—and, at the same time, as an incentive for this—, the production and consumption of culture through Basque will particularly flourish, in the bosom of a cultural market in which Spanish will continue enjoying a pre-eminent position. Together with this, the presence of Basque cultural creation and industries on international circuits will be more evident.

All citizens under 50 years of age will be Basque speaking, at least to a passive degree, and thanks to this generalisation, the Basque language will extend to new geographic and functional areas. At the same time, Basque will occupy vital niches and these will be more compact and solid.

III. MAIN LINES OF WORK

1. USE, MAIN CHALLENGE

As perfect as it may be from the theoretical viewpoint, the best discourse on linguistic rights would be in vain if it were not based on an effective perspective on practice. And it is, without doubt, the use perspective which confers effective content upon the discourse on linguistic rights.

In effect, recognition and protection of linguistic rights constitutes one of the two fundamental pillars of use. The other is, of course, the scale on which our size places us. These two pillars, however, are not independent; on the contrary, they are interconnected by a very precise directional vector: the scale that corresponds to our size and the limitations that follow from it condition us when it comes to practising linguistic rights. Likewise, linguistic rights are obviously not our only rights as citizens and, as often happens in the dialectic between rights, these are mutually conditioned, and on occasions, they even limit one another.

Three pillars of use:

- Recognition and protection of language rights.
- The power of attraction of Basque and culture through Basque.
- The scale on which our size places us.

By way of example, a Basque speaking citizen that resides in an area with a low density bilingual population may meet with difficulties when it comes to carrying out certain business with the local Administration in Basque, both now and perhaps in 20-25 years, at least in cases where the business being conducted requires intervention on the part of local administration that goes beyond the lines of customer care. Likewise, but in an exactly opposite direction, a monolingual person residing in one of the vital niches of the Basque language could see themselves needing to specifically request that they be served in Spanish and be updated in this language on the progress of the procedure in hand, if the administrative area in question uses Basque as the habitual language of work and service, and these cases will occur more frequently in 20-25 years.

Adding an example of a different type to this relation, we can contemplate from another viewpoint the conflict that arises as a consequence of this debate between rights and obligations: take the case of parents, moved by some type of linguistic objection, that do not wish that the educational system teach their children Basque and request an education without any Basque input – or with as little input of this language possible–, arguing that they have the right to choose the language used to teach their children.

Promoting use has clear limitations:

- Those derived from our own reality.
- Those inherent to harmonisation of diverse citizens' rights.

In such a dispute, the official languages system establishes very clear bases in our Autonomous Community. These bases, on the other hand, have a wide and solid consensus; a consensus that has been strengthened since its introduction until today. The fundamental axis is people's right to select the language they wish from the official ones. But this freedom was limited in mandatory education: all pupils, at the end of the mandatory education, must have acquired "sufficient practical knowledge" of the language other than that selected. This is, thus, the obligation of all pupils. We are facing a fundamental choice, as the objective is to guarantee social cohesion and equal opportunities on a linguistic level to pupils, without damaging in any way the linguistic freedom we should all enjoy. The most solid base of social cohesion is creating understanding among the citizens. In countries that are based on divided linguistic communities, such as Switzerland, they have adopted this course in order to alleviate the damages occasioned by the system in the area of social cohesion. We cannot risk losing what we have gained in this terrain.

Questions to be taken into consideration with regard to use:

- The need to regulate use of the official languages in the public area.
- A non-neutral language policy.
- Progressiveness, consensus and efficiency.

Consequently, there are clear limitations that cannot be surpassed through any type of determination and that have to be taken into consideration when designing a modern language policy adapted to reality, wherever the pursued objective is success and not a form of “heroic” failure.

Remember, albeit briefly, the limitations we have listed in the preceding chapter:

- There are no monolingual Basque speakers, the language that exists alongside Basque is very vigorous.
- The limited level of development of Basque itself, and the linguistic habits contrary to use and consumption of Basque, acquired as a consequence of the process of marginalisation that the language has suffered.
- The diversity of our sociolinguistic reality.
- The still comparatively small size of our bilingual population.
- The relative different proficiencies of Basque speakers.
- The difference between Basque and the languages alongside which it exists.
- Our small size.

If we add to these limitations arising from our reality those that are inherent to harmonising citizen’s rights we can find a sensible standpoint for the task of promoting the use of the Basque language, a fundamental challenge to the language policy of the early 21st Century. Finally, the aim is that the question of use is not settled in a game of theory, but in planned daily practice. Consequently the use of official languages in the public sector must be regulated given that the future use of the Basque language can by no means be abandoned to the mercy of the laws of supply and demand. The language policy designed should, thus, be a non-neutral policy that leaves no opening for *laissez-faire* type policies, which are clearly injurious to the Basque language and, at the same time, consecrate as golden rules, progressiveness, consensus and efficiency, shelving for eternity voluntarism, excessive haste, laxness, maximalism and illusive fantasy.

Areas and specific functions should be focussed on/ strengthened/ extended/ achieved, in order to improve use in accordance with attainable objectives.

And in the nucleus of a language policy that favours the use of Basque, a clear criteria should be engaged as top priority: specific areas and functions should be fostered/ strengthened/extended/achieved for the Basque language, with the understanding that we are starting from a reality defined by our demolinguistic and sociolinguistic characteristics, specifically to improve this reality, obviously, but to improve it in accordance with achievable goals and not to throw social coexistence and cohesion down the precipice of intransigence, at the hands of those that use Basque as a mere political banner.

We cannot say to the new generations, and even less so to those that make great strides to embrace the Basque language, that we are aiming to create a language policy that is uniform across all the Basque territories, whereby Basque speakers can live 100% in Basque in all circumstances, places and tasks. Out of loyalty to ourselves and to them, it must be explained with absolute clarity that the fundamental key to a democratic and prudent language policy for the early 21st Century consists of accepting and promoting a distribution of functions and, at least to some degree, geographic areas from the two official languages of the Basque Autonomous Community, given that Basque shall specifically obtain from that distribution the key to intergenerational transmission and its consideration as a social reference, both of these factors being absolutely essential.

Obviously, we are not speaking of a language policy that can be created on the basis of “all or nobody, all or nothing”; on the contrary, we are talking about a language policy with a path that needs clearing and levelling, removing unhealthy utopias forever. Because this is the continuation the fructiferous effort made thus far requires.

From acceptance and promotion of a distribution of functions between the two official languages, Basque will obtain the key to transmission and to its consideration as a social reference.

2. MAIN LINES OF WORK, IN LIGHT OF THE NEW FUNCTIONAL PRIORITISATION CRITERIA

A. Production and cultural market in Basque

- When it comes to protecting culture in Basque, the public authorities should focus on quality and on any threat to this quality. Consequently, a system of indicators should be drawn up that can reliably measure the quality, the risk and the market hold, both inside and outside the Basque country, of the cultural industries, to serve as a basis for subsequent evaluation.
- Public policies aimed at promoting the cultural system in Basque must pursue growth in consumption as the main objective. Development and growth of the market should occur naturally, alongside knowledge of Basque, and maintaining the greatest coherence possible in respect of the surrounding cultural markets. Consequently, the objective shall never be to perpetuate a system of subventions, but instead to remove oneself from the risks of servitude and organise a system of emancipating public protection guided by normalisation and competence. Nevertheless, the role of the market should not be underestimated either, given that high quality products will always be absolutely necessary, and protection and promotion thereof has to be considered by the public authorities as their duty, even above and beyond what market acceptance might apparently justify. Because we should not forget that referential character in cultural matters inevitably constitutes one of the most effective incentives for adhesion to the language.
- As regards growth in supply and consumption, product diversification should be prioritised, so that consumption extends to the greatest possible number of areas. In any case, it is necessary to remove from the objective group the complex that, for many years, we have produced certain cultural consumer items merely because they did not exist in Basque. It should be borne in mind, on the one hand, that public protection cannot distance cultural production from the market, and, on the other, that, even in the most optimistic demolinguistic and sociolinguistic hypotheses for the next 20-25 years, the critical mass of consumers of cultural products in Basque will not justify either the effort to produce absolutely everything in Basque. What may indeed justify the effort, however, is getting a good reception from consumers for what is produced in Basque, and increasing consumption areas, uniting good sense and audacity.
- Marketing techniques appropriate to cultural production in Basque need to be studied and put into practice.

B. INCREASE KNOWLEDGE LEVELS AND FOCUS ON THE VITAL NICHES OF BASQUE: BASIS OF A BALANCED LANGUAGE POLICY

Future challenges:

- Draw up a system of indicators that are capable of gauging dissemination in the market.
- Harmonise development of the market and quality.
- Extend consumption, avoiding imitations and seeking new areas.
- Study and put into practice marketing techniques.
- The effort to increase the number of Basque speakers is closely linked to the fostering of Basque speaking areas, and to achieving new functional areas, linked to the existing needs in each place. If we fail to do this, we run the grave risk of ghettoisation.
- Bilingual citizens should make an effort to promote Basque by using it, as we are the only ones that can do so. Said responsibility rests with each individual, and it cannot be passed on to

anyone, in the same way monolingual citizens cannot pass on their responsibility to embrace Basque. Simple as that.

- The future of Basque is more than ever before in our hands, in the hands of the free will and attitude of the people, that is, in the hands of our freedom. It may be easier, in linguistic matters too, to allow all the burden and responsibility of our own incapability to fall on the shoulders of others, turning our backs on our own failings. But we should say that, at least in our view, the masterly words of Joxanton Artze are fully valid and true: “A language is not lost because those that do not know it do not learn it, but because those that know it do not speak it”.

- In this area, likewise, collaboration between the public authorities and the social movements is of particular importance in promoting a social awareness or collective culture of commitment to Basque.

Bilingual citizens should take steps to promote Basque when we use it; in turn, it is necessary that monolingual persons embrace Basque.

- Whilst accepting the pre-eminence enjoyed (in the future too) by Spanish in certain areas and functions, other places and functions in which the Basque language is habitually used should be appropriated for Basque. Clearly, said distribution should occur in accordance with the characteristic demolingualistic and sociolingualistic reality in each place and functional area. Because the language policy for public service and procedure monitoring practised and thus, designed in, for example, a municipality of Urola or in Laguardia will not be the same; nor should the presence of Basque in the primary health service in different places be the same and, consequently, the linguistic criteria established for the provision of employment positions in each of these places.

C. PROGRESSIVENESS AND DIVERSITY OF PACES, A BRIDGE TO SOCIAL CONSENSUS

Progressiveness is based on congruence. Said congruence has two bases:

- The sociolinguistic situation.
 - Ample consensus amongst citizens (and amongst their representatives).
- A language policy that leads us from the current status of the Basque language to a bilingual society (multilingual more so), should focus on the concept of progressiveness together with a clear predisposition to accept different paces. Of course, progressiveness does not imply either excessive slowness or excessive haste. Likewise, diversity of paces does not mean that rapid advances are made in a certain place or area of use (or too quickly) and slowly in others (or too slowly). On the contrary, the philosophy of progressiveness and diversity of paces is based on congruence, and the basis of said congruence is, on the one hand, the sociolinguistic situation and, on the other, ample consensus of the citizens (and their representatives). In any case, progressiveness and diversity in paces should always pursue advancement; it is not enough to accept in the name of progressiveness a policy that imposes slow advancement in all places and areas of use, whilst constantly slamming on the brake in areas where conditions for quicker advancement are in place. A specific and, at the same time, very important application of progressiveness must be put into practice relative to the extracurricular activities of children and young adults (group or individual recreation, music, summer camps, sport...), in order to increase oral use of Basque in these informal areas.

D. BASQUE'S OWN AREAS, INDISPENSABLE REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

Recondition the offer aimed at children and young adults in informal areas:

- Create opportunities for use.
- Cultivate the power of attraction.

- Revitalising Basque means securing its access to all functions (both in formal and informal areas). However, it is important to remember once again in this context what was said in relation to progressiveness: as it is not possible to do everything instantly and at the same time, certain areas must be selected and prioritised, in accordance with the characteristics of the environment and of the diverse realities (demolinguistic concentration, linguistic idiosyncrasies of the different age groups...), in order to select those in which Basque shows greater sociolinguistic vitality. Consequently, it can also happen that languages are distributed in accordance with the diverse areas; or, otherwise, that the diverse areas are distributed in accordance with the language, possibilities, both of which the new language policy should accept in advance.

- At any rate and given that in this area too it is reasonable and expedient to give special mention to the young generations, we should recondition the existing offer in the informal areas, particularly that aimed at children and young adults: special effort should be made to ensure that Basque becomes a habitual language in this area, as opportunities for use depend on these and it is important to acknowledge once again that this and no other is the key to the power of attraction, which opens door to the adhesion of younger generations.

E. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL AND ITS ENVIRONMENT, ESSENTIAL BUT NOT SUFFICIENT IN ITSELF

The main contribution of school: harmonise the obligation that pupils achieve sufficient proficiency in the two official languages with parents' rights to select the language through which education is taught.

- We do not know if school has given all it can give, but its contribution to revitalising Basque and multilingualism is enormous. This statement is backed up by data in the fourth Sociolinguistic Survey recently published: 57.5% of people between 16 and 24 years of age are bilingual (including passive bilinguals, the percentage rises to 82.4%). Thus, Basque is the language of the young generation, as it was the language of adults and older generations twenty years ago, but with different characteristics. In effect, many of these young people have limited linguistic proficiency, among other reasons because Basque is their second language, because they live in Spanish speaking areas, because their relational networks operate fundamentally in Spanish etc. This sociolinguistic evolution which brings new challenges, is, of course, a fruit of familiar transmission of the system of embracing Basque used by adults and particularly, schools, and this should be further developed later. For this, the aspects that needs correction must be detected, and the opportune modifications be made in a climate of ample consensus, always in pursuit of a fundamental objective: school has embraced Basque, embraces Basque and should continue to embrace Basque, always harmonising the right of parents to choose the language through which their children are educated, with the obligation that pupils achieve, upon completion of compulsory education, sufficient proficiency in both official languages of the Basque Autonomous Community. Likewise and to a lesser degree, space should be allocated for teaching a third language, together with the two official languages.

- But we should not ask miracles of the school system: this can teach Basque to pupils residing in a Spanish speaking environment, but we cannot expect that this pupil's proficiency in Basque be to the same level as that of another that lives in a bilingual environment or family. In any case, special efforts should be made in Spanish speaking areas, to guarantee use of Basque in extracurricular activities. For this, co-operation programmes should be promoted between the school and local associations, town or city, in order to offer pupils suitable circuits to continue using Basque in informal areas.

- From the practical experience of these years it can be deduced that we have delegated to the following generations the task of revitalising the Basque language. We now know from

experience that the process of revitalisation of Basque is much more dynamic and that the factors outside school are clearly more decisive. An erroneous yet deeply rooted belief that school work should be enough to acquire Basque as a second language is attributable to a voluntarism driven by the best of intentions. Without doubt, it is totally possible to learn Basque in school as a second language and it is equally true that anyone can make the language learned their own but this calls for a very precise requirement: live and socialise in Basque outside of school too. And, of course, the most important requirement of all: the will to use Basque. This is the fundamental guarantee for the future of the language. In any case, we should always bear in mind that in many municipalities of the Basque Autonomous Community there will be a multitude of limitations and difficulties for this, because the sociolinguistic reality is very diverse and, consequently, the vital force Basque has in different localities varies greatly.

- In short, it is necessary that schools, at least as regards teaching Basque and through Basque, progress from the current model of transmission onto an active model in collaboration with the environment and prioritising congruence and communicative ability over the merely grammatical criteria. Thus, use is shown to be the fundamental key once again.

3. PRIORITY LINES FOR A LINGUISTIC POLICY FOR THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Certainties of Basque revitalisation:

- Basque can be taught in school but this alone is not sufficient.
- The key to expression is to live and socialise in Basque inside and outside school.
- The most important requirement of all: the will to use Basque.

1. Guarantee knowledge and use of Basque in the new generations.
2. Foster, strengthen and extend the vital niches and functions in which Basque is the habitual language, in order to guarantee intergenerational transmission of Basque and to strengthen its character as a social reference. In short, the objective is not just to extend knowledge of Basque but to produce Basque speakers.
3. Guarantee family transmission particularly ensuring that bilingual children that are under thirty in 25 years times use Basque as a family language. Herein lies the key to the future.
4. Strengthen the Basque speaking community, extending and strengthening present and virtual networks of Basque use.
5. Increase opportunities to use Basque in large cities, giving priority to Basque speaking families, youths and children.
6. Promote and lend prestige to passive bilingualism amongst adults –as a minimum objective.
7. Promote cultural consumption in Basque, from an emancipating perspective for the Basque cultural, production and creative industries.
8. Introduce immigrants to Basque and its universes in order to facilitate ample and enriching integration, and to bring Basque into areas of use that are demographically dynamic.
9. Make communication standards in Basque more flexible and develop them, as a method of favouring the expressivity of new speakers. Move from formal correction as a sole criterion to that of communicative and expressive quality.
10. Guarantee opportunities to use Basque on the road towards respect for linguistic rights, beyond mere acknowledgment thereof.
11. Make Basque attractive and project it in a suitable manner: Basque contains multiple universes and has room to take in the universes of those reach out to Basque. The Basque universe is more plural than the image we project would lead to believe and we should make it even more plural, so that it reaches the same level of plurality as society.
12. Lend prestige to the image of Basque, clearly publicising the cultural and communication achievements, on the one hand and, on the other, expressing in practice and integrating into discourse that Basque constitutes an essential component of Basque social adhesion.
13. Use language technologies and, in general, information and communication technologies to develop Basque, create contents on the net and properly use the virtual communication

networks to favour normalisation of Basque and an increase in its possibilities of use. In effect, Basque should use information and communication technologies as a prerequisite to reach its full development as a language.

14. Nourish and constantly strengthen the most ample consensus on language policy matters, following a renewed agreement that closely links revitalisation of Basque and social cohesion.

IV. TOWARDS A RENEWED AGREEMENT

The deliberations made throughout this document, both in the preceding sections and in those that follow, constitute the starting point and the groundwork that should be developed on the path towards a renewed agreement.

1. THE NEED FOR A LANGUAGE POLICY ROOTED IN CONSENSUS, PERSUASION AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH

Public authorities that design and manage language policy will have to make greater effort than in other areas to achieve the greatest possible agreement or consensus.

Language policy is necessary, precisely because equality of status between two languages has not been obtained anywhere nor will it be obtained in a spontaneous manner (or through the effect of market forces or the mere effort of speakers of either language). To achieve this objective, that is, equal opportunities between languages, political intervention is essential, which consequently renders inevitable the passing of laws, decrees and other standards.

Once this principle is accepted, it is easy enough to accept that language policy involves a certain degree of coercion or - what is the same - certain inconveniences, as herein lies the fundamental root of democracy: as well as legitimate, it is also necessary that all society fulfils the rules passed by the majority of this same society.

Nonetheless, and given that language policy constitutes an essential ingredient of life in a democratic society, the public authorities and governors that take on the responsibility of designing and managing language policy should make a greater effort than required in other areas in order to achieve the greatest possible agreement or consensus around the fundamental contents of said language policy.

And if anyone should still doubt the obvious need for a legal framework and a suitable language policy, a comparative study of the evolution of Basque in its three administrative territories should suffice: the results obtained in each have been very different, because the legal frameworks of each of the territories are different as are the linguistic policies applied.

But the legal framework, in order to be truly efficient in revitalising Basque in a multilingual society, must be born of a most firm adhesion of all citizens, given that it is this adhesion alone that allows us to cope with the inconveniences derived from language planning. Thus, the key is citizen adhesion, and the rest (legal framework, public policies, planning), are support instruments. With this attitude, there is no burden but instead a democratic agreement that society makes with itself on the path towards equal status. Labelling as a burden a project, regulation or any other element backed by a significant social majority subverts democracy.

Likewise, adhesion that requires the design and development of a legal framework is nourished, clearly, by persuasion and power of attraction, and these shall be the factors to which the Basque speaking community should pay constant attention and prioritise in all areas of language policy making aimed at revitalising the Basque language.

Adhesion of all citizens is required to overcome the inconveniences derived from language planning.

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF PROGRESSIVENESS, LINK BETWEEN ADHESION, FEASIBILITY AND PACE ADJUSTING

Progressiveness requires that priorities are established between the possible tasks and that areas of action are selected.

Above all, it is important to consider the social reality of the language when drawing up a language plan. It is not about showing audacity or ambition, because aspirations and intentions are not enough. In general, progressiveness is always an inseparable concept of language policy, things cannot be achieved overnight, nor is it possible to do everything at once, given that all areas have limitations and conditioners. Progressiveness is the principle that links citizen adhesion, what is possible and the paces, and at the same time, it is a guarantee that the process will be a success.

Progressiveness observes a golden rule: a slower pace is required for weaker conditions and situations; as conditions and situations improve it is more feasible to decide to up the pace, always in accordance with the general degrees of coexistence, objective and consensus.

That is, progressiveness in itself requires that priorities are established between possible tasks and that areas of action are selected. As a result, postponing something in certain circumstances or not pursuing an objective that is considered unobtainable cannot be considered errors of language policy, but indicators of pragmatism which should constitute an essential component of an effective language policy. No effective language policy exists that is based on other principles –such as voluntarism–. Voluntarism (substituting real possibilities with one's own desires) inevitably entails negation of all effective language policy, even where said voluntarism is born of the best intentions.

Language policy should constantly advance, but, in order to advance, the direction of advance must be properly identified and subsequently the step that best suits the selected direction must be selected, as the aim is not to organise a chaotic social regatta, but instead to ensure that the entire crew, both the weakest and the strongest reach the objective of a multilingual society, following the course of social cohesion. As a result, both excess haste and absolute lack thereof are equally injurious to the revitalisation of the Basque language.

3. BASQUE, NATIONAL AND POLITICAL ASCRIPTION: RELATIONS TO BE FOSTERED FROM A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PERSPECTIVE

To fulfil the aim of a multilingual society, it is necessary to adopt the pace that best suits the path. Attracting speakers from multiple backgrounds to Basque intrinsically strengthens a collective culture that is favourable to the Basque language.

Basque does not unite speakers belonging to one sole identity ascription. If this were the case, we would cross the barrier that leads not to a ghetto, but to a sect, causing irreversible damage to Basque and social cohesion. If we were to recognise any type of identity support for Basque, the only acceptable one would be that which is useful in building an open and integrative identity and, as a result, capable of strengthening participative awareness; that is, an identity system that does not require that the free ascription of each be rejected and which is, thus, capable of congregating in its bosom, and at the same level, all ascriptions, capable of naturally accepting the entire range of ascriptions, from those that feel they are Basque citizens only to those that feel they are Spanish citizens only.

In short, the fact of attracting speakers of multiple identity ascriptions to Basque intrinsically reinforces the collective culture in favour of Basque, which constitutes a treasure that revitalisation of the Basque language cannot afford to lose.

Basque obviously needs a policy, but a policy that is useful to Basque, not a policy that submits Basque to its service.

Likewise, Basque does not gain anything from being identified with a political position; instead, this identification alienates those that do not share this political position, whereby this practice is contrary to the language policy that pursues revitalisation of the Basque language in the bosom of a multilingual society, given that this injurious identification wholly denies the

general framework of the democratic legality of language policy itself: the commitment to social cohesion.

Identification of Basque with a specific position distances those that do not share said position from the language.

Even in the least favourable of hypotheses, the fact that some people do not embrace Basque, cannot justify that others fall victim to a partisan use of Basque, and even less so that Basque be made the private heritage of a political or ideological group; just as one person's use of Basque for their own benefit cannot justify others turning their back on the Basque language. Just as political reappraisal in favour of Basque is positive, in no way is it appropriate that the future of Basque be subject to the future of one or other political agenda.

Thus, to ensure coherent action, we must carefully avoid the emergence of biased political symbolism in pro-Basque activities. Nobody should exploit the acceptance and social attractiveness of Basque to obtain partisan advantage, as we have seen too often in initiatives that, despite originally favouring Basque, have been disfigured by political instrumentalisation.

4. REVITALISATION OF BASQUE FALLS WITHIN THE DECISION MAKING CAPACITY OF EACH CITIZEN, FROM THE ANTICIPATION OF AN AMPLE BASIC AGREEMENT

It is not possible to perpetuate the separation of the Spanish and Basque worlds: it is up to all people (including those furthest removed from Basque) to shape, agree and put language policy into practice. Because it is not a "Basque issue", but an issue of the coexistence of Basque citizens. Thus, nobody should be marginalised from nor should anyone marginalise themselves from this duty. Revitalisation of Basque in the bosom of a multilingual society constitutes a collective aim of all society and consequently, of all citizens, regardless of the ideology or political position of each. Thus, from this viewpoint we are dealing with a national objective.

Hence behold the direction towards which the renewed agreement should be pointing and upon which the language policy of the early 21st Century should be based: the consensus on Basque law needs to be renewed and extended from a basic perspective. That is, it is necessary to link consensus on language policy for revitalisation of Basque with the core effort to unite Basque society, including the subject of coexistence of languages, in the agenda of the main basic agreements, whilst distancing it from ordinary political confrontation.

It is necessary to include the question of co-existence of languages in the agenda of the main basic agreements, whilst distancing it from any political confrontation.

5. TOWARDS THE CONSENSUS REQUIRED ON THE PATH TO A RENEWED AGREEMENT

Two indispensable conditions to achieving consensus:

- Flexibility.
- Proactive attitude to Basque

Above all, let us be clear on the starting point, set forth in the preceding section: Basque is not a sectorial issue, instead it concerns all society, and it is an essential component of the basic objectives from the viewpoint of social cohesion. As a result, language policy cannot dislocate social cohesion, which is the fundamental objective of general policy, in terms of its own objectives and methodology.

As Basque is our joint heritage, we are all responsible for deciding on all matters concerning Basque. Thus, it is essential that we create a new collective awareness or culture relative to revitalisation of the Basque language, in order to reach a renewed agreement for Basque and for a multilingual society. And if we want said awareness to be integrative, then not only is consensus required and desirable, but it is also essential.

Consensus is an inseparable aspect of any democratic policy. The dimensions of this consensus do not have to be invariable at all times, but as far as language policy is concerned, in that it is an essential ingredient of social coexistence, the most ample consensus possible is required, both from a quantitative and qualitative viewpoint. And this ample consensus is essential for two reasons: because it is a basic element of a plural society, on the one hand and of efficiency and success on the other.

This approach of seeking consensus is based on two elements: flexibility and a proactive approach. Commitment that forces the will of the majority of the public would be totally unsuitable and precisely for this reason, we need flexibility; but in the same manner, nor is it acceptable to have a flexibility that turns its back on proactive attitude. And if we all have to mould our positions in the name of consensus, the socio-political sectors that have not yet approached the reality of the Basque language should take some steps. Be that as it may, relative to this task we should all be aware of where we are at.

Language policy is always open for discussion. What cannot be debated, however, is the need for language policy, because *laissez-faire* is in itself a language policy: contrary to the revitalisation of Basque and, as a result, opposed to the objective of a multilingual society. Likewise, it is obvious that there is more than one possible language policy, but it cannot be denied, by the same token, that language policy that serves to lay the groundwork for a renewed agreement that commits all socio-political partners of the Basque society must be a policy that favours normalisation of the Basque language.

As we have indicated on other occasions, the scope of this proposed language policy with a new direction is the Autonomous Basque Community, and, as has been said, each Basque community is responsible for designing, putting into practice and evaluating their own language policy, in a democratic way and in accordance with the will and wishes of the respective citizens, always ensuring that minorities are respected. In any case, the public authorities of our Community should persevere in strengthening co-operation and collaboration with the institutions of the other Basque territories, in developing language policy.

Under a renewed agreement of this scope, one inevitable objective is to obtain consensus on the review of the General Plan for Promoting the Use of the Basque Language (EBPN), so that this valuable instrument can be refined and adapted for the early 21st Century.

[On the threshold of a renewed agreement, consensus on the review of the General Plan for Promoting the Use of the Basque Language \(EBPN\) must be reached.](#)