

BASQUE NEWS

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The majority of the 250 local councils in the Basque Autonomous Region were formally constituted in a climate of relative calm. The photo' shows Getaria town hall.

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Basque local councils are constituted without the presence of the radical left

In the majority of cases it was the electoral list with the most votes that gained control of the town hall

As had been planned, on Saturday the 14th of June the Basque local councils were formally constituted, on this occasion without the participation of the outlawed Batasuna party. The day was relatively peaceful and it was only in Ortuella, Otxandio and Amezkata that there were delays due to discrepancies over vote-counting. However, there was some tension when counsellors were sworn in, in those local councils where the void votes (an action that had been promoted by the radical left) were greater in number than those obtained by all the other parties who had presented candidates to the elections. Despite the Basque Government having asked both political leaders and the public in general to constitute the local councils

in a normal and participative fashion, in some towns in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, there were serious disturbances and for safety reasons some counsellors from Gipuzkoa had to be sworn in at the Gipuzkoa Provincial Government, in San Sebastian, whilst others required police protection. In addition, ETA wanted to participate "in their own way" in the day's events by leaving a car-bomb with thirty kilos of explosives right in the centre of Bilbao next to the Trade Fair. Fortunately, after a telephone warning, the police were able to defuse the bomb without any harm to the population or damage to buildings.

With no major surprises

As far as everything else goes, there

were no major surprises during the day and, except in some instances when an agreement was reached between the PP-PSE to take the town hall away from the nationalists, it was the lists that had been most voted that gained control. All of this followed the criteria stipulated by the Basque Government according to which, when electing mayor, the list with the most voted candidate should be respected.

In the main cities of the Basque Country, it was the nationalist Iñaki Azkuna who was re-elected in Bilbao, with the support of Izquierda Unida (the United Left), which will allow him to govern this time with ease, since with the support of IU he has an absolute majority. ►

(from page 1)

In Vitoria-Gasteiz, the PP candidate, Alfonso Alonso, was also re-elected as mayor thanks to the support of the socialist party which provided him with the necessary votes to have the majority, despite the fact that the nationalist candidate had obtained the same number of seats as the PP. In San Sebastian, the socialist, Odón Elora was voted in mayor for the fourth time running and to do so relied on the support of votes from the PP, despite having publicly rejected any possible support from them. Looked at on a province-by-province basis we can say that PNV and EA have strengthened their position in Bizkaia and won three more town councils (Abanto, Ortuella and Sestao) which had previously been in the hands of the socialists; in Alava, the two nationalist parties (who presented joint candidates at the elections) have obtained 38 out of the 51 town halls (including the larger ones such as Llodio, Amurrio, Salvatierra and Alegria).

The PP keep Laguardia, Armiñón, Navaridas and Baños de Ebro and, thanks to the support of the PSE, they obtain Labastida, Yécora and Oyón, the last two of which had previously been held by nationalists. The socialists gained two town councils (Elciego and Ribera Baja) and Unidad Alavesa disappeared completely from the local political map. Gipuzkoa is the place where the socialists have obtained the best results. In addition to the capital, the PSE maintains its traditional domains of Irún, Rentería, Lasarte and Eibar and also gained the town councils (previously in nationalist hands) of Andoain, Zumarraga and Pasaia.

In Navarra the surprise was that the town councils of Estella, Sangüesa, Tafalla, Burlada and Barañain gained socialist mayors, thanks to the support of the nationalists which thus toppled UPN from these posts. This has created a divide in the socialist party which has announced that it will open an inquiry into those socialist counsellors who obtained the post of mayor using this support "which goes against our line of agreements".

The Basque Country has a biodiesel production plant

The Bionor plant, which converts waste vegetable oil and other renewable materials into biofuel has been operating in Berantevilla, Alava since June. This new plant is the largest in Spain and the first of its kind to be set up in the Basque Country. Its production capacity is 20,000 tons per year of biodiesel. The whole project has required an investment of 7.2 million Euros, 25% of which were provided by the Basque Government via the Basque Energy Agency (EVE) and

the AZTI Institute. The rest of the shareholders are oil collection companies and companies from the recycling sector.

The new plant is of major environmental importance since it makes use of used vegetable oil (meaning that this will be removed from the fodder production chain) and will enable farmers of the area to grow oil-producing crops on set-aside land which can be used as a raw material in the manufacturing of new fuel.

The Port of Bilbao opens a new container terminal

It is considered as the most modern in the world

The Port of Bilbao has recently opened a container terminal which its promoters believe to be one of the most modern in the world. The project has meant an investment of around 75 million Euros from private companies and is in reply to the growth prospects in the traffic of goods in containers, an activity which actually increased last year despite the decrease in port activities in general.

The new terminal is highly automated. A GPS is used to identify the location of each container and in a few months a computer system will be operational that will allow clients to obtain all the information on the movement of goods on a web-site. Thanks to the installation of cameras at the terminal, they will also be able to use this web site to view loading and unloading operations.

News in brief

■ **The Basque group ITP** will design and manufacture part of the engine of the European military transport plane, which will probable mean a turnover of 800 million Euros in the coming years. For this project, the company will have the Rolls Royce (U.K), MTU (Germany) and Snecma (France) as their partners. Specifically, ITP will be in charge of developing the engine's low-pressure turbine as well as the external ducts and other components.

■ **The Gipuzcoan company Intagsa** will be building six water purification plants in Irak and will also be repairing existing ones that have been damaged. Intagsa, a company that works in the field of water treatment, has been working in Irak since 1994 and up until the recent outbreak of war had build over 100 containerized plants. In addition to Intagsa, a total of 10 companies from Gipuzkoa have shown an interest in the reconstruction of Irak. These companies are mainly from the machine-tool, water-pump and railway sectors.

The Basque Country, right on your doorstep

Nature, culture, gastronomy and music make up the Basque Country's summer tourist menu

The Basque Country has a wide variety of quality tourist resources available throughout the year. And yet it is in the summer when the possibilities the Basque Country can offer to visitors increase so much that it would by no means be exaggerated to say that the Basque Country becomes a huge party or "fiesta". From the June celebrations in many Basque towns of San Juan, San Pedro and San Marcial (the centre of which is the incredibly noisy parade in Irun) you move on to July fiestas including El Carmen, held in coastal towns such as Plentzia and Santurtzi, the "Alarde del Moro" in Antzuola, the Magdalenas in Rentería and Bermeo, the Día del Blusa in Vitoria and San Ignacio in Azpeitia and Getxo. Then August arrives with the festivity weeks in the main Basque cities and we end up in September with the San Antolín fiesta and el Día de los Gansos in Lekeitio.

Music and films to suit everyone

In addition to its fiestas, in summer the Basque Country has a special love of music and music festivals. In July, jazz-lovers can cover a three-location jazz triangle. The first is in Getxo, with its European jazz competition, the second in Vitoria-Gasteiz, which has the most complete programme and where the greatest number of stars come together, and the third in San Sebastian where Jazzaldia provides the attraction of open-air jazz concerts. Those who enjoy other kinds of music have the annual International Folklore Festival to enjoy in Portugalete or the classical music fortnight in San Sebastian. In September, for just a few days San Sebastian also becomes the world capital of cinema thanks to its renowned International Film Festival which has been running for over 50 years and has enjoyed the presence of the most famous international film stars.

For art-lovers, you have the visit to the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum (which has become the Basque Country's most important tourist product) or the recently-opened Basque Museum of Contemporary



Many tourists come to see the sculptures at Chillida-Leku.

Art – Artium, which houses one of the most complete, original and dynamic art collections that can currently be seen. And without even having to change city, visitors can go and watch the reconstruction and archaeology work being carried out on the Santa María Cathedral in Vitoria, which is

being awarded many prizes. Another, more recent creation are the museums dedicated to the two Basque sculptors with greatest international projection: Eduardo Chillida (the Chillida Leku in Hernani) and Jorge Oteizar (in memory of whom a Museum in the Navarre town of Alzuza has just been opened).

And all of this without forgetting the beautiful countryside the Basque Country can offer to those who enjoy the great outdoors. Wide-open plains, mountain ranges, green forests, spectacular cliffs, a wealth of marshlands and relaxing beaches go to make up just some of its most attractive assets. This has meant that there has also been a mushrooming of many marinas along the coast of Gipuzkoa and in Getxo. They are very well-equipped infrastructures that are located in the main tourist sites.

Useful addresses

- √ **Oficina de Turismo del Gobierno vasco**
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The Real Sociedad almost reaches glory

After a brilliant season the team makes second place in the league



The Basque President organised a reception at Ajuria Enea for the whole of the Real Sociedad to congratulate them for their magnificent season.

At the last minute things didn't go according to plan. The Real Sociedad did not win the league but in the hearts and minds of everyone they are the real champions. The team played a magnificent season in which it remained unbeaten in its home ground of Anoeta. The

fans have always been there (in good times and bad) but this year have gone even further and really got behind the players. On the last day of play (when the championship was to be awarded either to Real Sociedad or Real Madrid) the whole of San Sebastian was out

partying. From first thing in the morning thousands of fans decorated the streets in blue and white and then in the evening crowded into the Anoeta stadium. The match ended with a 3-0 win over the Atlético de Madrid and then the fans invaded the pitch in a burst of enthusiasm and the wish to touch their idols. By nightfall, the party took to the city streets and reached delirium-point when the open-topped bus with the players inside drive through the city before going to the hotel where a celebratory dinner was organised.

This time the Real Sociedad almost reached glory, but at least they can enjoy the satisfaction of all this season's work - a season which has been unforgettable for many: the players, the French trainer Denoueix and the fans.

Thanks to this year's feat, next year the best teams in the world will be coming to Donostia to play the Champions League. Anoeta will be awaiting the same players that gave so much hope to the people of San Sebastian this year.

Basque films making a name for themselves in Japan

During the first days of June, the Japanese city of Tokyo became the capital of Basque films, since it was there that the 1st Basque Film Week was being held, bringing together many Basque directors, actors and producers. This initiative, sponsored by the Bizkaia Provincial Government, was aimed, in addition to promoting Basque films, also at the promotion of the Basque Country as a tourist destination, in a country such as Japan which has a potentially very important tourist market. Apart from seeing films, the Japanese were able to taste txakoli (young wine) and wine from the Rioja and a selection of traditional "pintxos" (nibbles) prepared by the young chef Aitor Elizegi, con-

sidered the most progressive and avant-garde chef in Bizkaia. Sculptures by Jesús Lizaso and the presence of the Guggenheim Museum rounded off the sample of what Japanese tourists can find when they come to the Basque Country.

Several Basque film-producers showed their work during the event and some of the most popular and successful films were shown such as "Torremolinos 73" by Pablo Berger. Together with him Eloy de la Iglesia presented his most personal film "Los novios búlgaros" which has brought him back to the film world after an absence of over fifteen years. Finally Javier Rebollo went to Tokyo with his fourth film "Marujas asesinas" which

had been a box office success. The representation of Basque cinema was completed with the presence of other directors such as Alex de la Iglesia and Ernesto del Río, actors such as Alex Angulo, Loli Astoreka, Najwa Nimri and Elena Irureta, dancers such as Maida Zabala, Elisabet Alberti and Edu Muruamendiaraz and the designer Miriam Okariz.

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