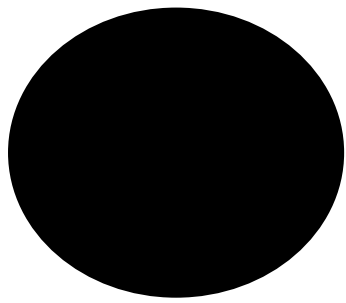


EUSKADI'S MESSAGE AT THE CANCUN CONFERENCE

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The fight to redirect the climate crisis is long-winded. As Ban Ki-Moon said, the way humanity deals with climate change will decisively define the 21st century. Redressing the situation requires reducing total emissions by 2050 to half those of the reference year, 1990, while the human population will have reached 9 billion people on that date. The challenge of decarbonising the world economy to avoid serious anthropogenic interference with the Earth's climate system is so great that a **new industrial and technological revolution** is required. In my opinion, the

political and social movement necessary to make this profound transformation viable in the way we generate and use energy is comparable in scope to those that in the past led to the end of human slavery or the emancipation of women. in modern societies.

In a few days the **Conference of the Parties (COP 16) will meet in Cancun** to try to move towards an agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The situation does not invite optimism, although concrete steps can be expected in aspects such as deforestation, economic aid to less developed or technology transfer. The **probability of having a formally binding emissions mitigation agreement** involving the large emitters - China, the United States, the European Union, India, Russia, Japan, Brazil and Indonesia - and in force at the time of finalizing the aforementioned Protocol is, today, very small, since neither China nor the United States have fully assumed their responsibilities.

The **Kyoto Protocol** approved in 1997 entered into force in 2005. The United States never ratified it. China, India and Brazil did not accept mitigation commitments because they are developing countries. However, at present, more than half of the world's emissions originate in emerging and developing countries. Thus, China has been the first global emitter since 2008. In 2009, its 8,000 million tons of CO₂ almost equaled the sum of the United States and the European Union, EU-15 (see report *No growth in total global CO₂ emissions in 2009*, from the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency). With 6.6 tons per person per year, it has exceeded the average for France and is about to surpass those of the European Union, 7.9 tons. China has set ambitious energy efficiency targets for the 2020 horizon but refuses to consider emission mitigation in absolute numbers.

The **United States** government, for its part, has not been able to move forward with the climate change law proposed by Congress. Between 1990 and 2008 its net emissions have increased by 15% and in historical terms it continues to be the main responsible. Its per capita emissions double those of Europeans. In his recent book *Our Election*, Al Gore explains how billions of dollars from oil interests have been used over the years to confuse American public opinion, making them believe that climate science has no still a definite position. Its strategy has consisted of equating scientific knowledge and published opinion in the collective imagination, achieving that half of the population today has a denialist opinion, far from that which emerges from the scientific consensus. The recent change in the composition of Congress has undermined any chance of leading action by that country on climate change in the immediate future.

The **European Union** is the only relevant region in the world that, in the last 20 years, has made an honest and ambitious effort to mitigate its emissions. In the Kyoto compliance period (2008-2012), the EU-15 will reduce its emissions by around 14% compared to the reference year 1990, beyond the 8% committed in the Kyoto Protocol.

The current **emissions reduction target for 2020 is 20%**, an unambitious target if one takes into account that in the EU-27 mitigation has already reached 17%. In fact, the environment ministers of Germany, the United Kingdom and France have asked the Council of Europe to approve the 30% target. Europe has led the fight against climate change and the development of clean technologies over the last 15 years. If you want to continue being the main actor in the international transition towards a low-carbon economy, you must promote the regulatory framework that sends the right

signals with the right force to the business world, international investors, technological and scientific agents and the whole of society and that requires going to 30%.

In this context, the **Basque Country** is preparing to be the first community in the State and the second European region - the first was Scotland - to have a **specific climate change law**. If the Basque Parliament approves it, this country will have taken a very important step towards counting among the regions called upon to lead the transition towards a low carbon economy. Between 75 and 80 percent of the precise actions to address the climate crisis must be implemented at the local and regional levels, so the proactive position of cities and regions is essential.

Through its companies, technology centers, institutions, universities, research centers, organized civil society, the Basque Country meets the conditions to be one of the driving forces in this great transformation. As the Basque Government itself has pointed out, transmitting this message and participating in the joint effort of the regions committed to climate change will be the mission of our representatives at the Cancun conference.

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