

Newsletter



EUSKAL SINDIKATUA

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ELA celebrates 50 years of transformation, struggle and independence

On 3 July, ELA celebrated the history of the past 50 years. In 1976, during Spain's transition from the Franco dictatorship, the union held its 3rd Congress in two sessions, where it adopted new principles that resumed the path interrupted by the dictatorship and updated the project initiated with its founding charter in 1911.

Those principles defined the identity that continues to guide ELA today: a Basque pro-sovereignty, socialist, independent trade union financed by

its membership. Last year, coinciding with its 16th Congress, the union updated these principles with an eye on its 50th anniversary.

Under the slogan "Oinarri sendoak etorkizunerako (Strong Foundations for the Future): 50 Years of Transformation and Struggle," the event highlighted ELA's development over the past five decades. Today, the union has more than 104,000 members, including 50,000 women. It also has an increasingly diverse membership, with growing

participation from migrant workers, and remains the leading trade union, holding more than 40% representation in the Basque Autonomous Community and 23% in Navarre, with a presence across all regions of the Southern Basque Country.

The event included a tribute to members who have belonged to the union since 1977, the screening of a [documentary](#) on the 1976 Congress, and speeches by Mitxel Lakuntza, Amaia Muñoa and Leire Txakartegi.



“FIFTY YEARS LATER, ELA REMAINS STEADFAST, STRONGER AND MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER”

Mitxel Lakuntza, ELA's General Secretary, thanked those honoured for their commitment and said that “the union you dreamed of half a century ago has become a reality.” He stressed that “50 years later, ELA remains steadfast, stronger and more determined than ever to continue organising the working class,” thanks to decisions such as its commitment to political and financial independence and to maintaining a cohesive organisation. Looking ahead, he argued that ELA must continue bringing together the struggle for labour rights, feminism, anti-racism, social justice and the construction of a Basque-speaking Euskal Herria within a single shared project.

Deputy General Secretary Amaia Muñoa reviewed five major transformations promoted by the union over the past two decades: consolidating feminist trade unionism; strengthening its national vocation through the work carried out in the Northern Basque Country (Iparralde); incorporating a just ecosocial transition into trade union action; advancing towards a Basque-speaking Euskal Herria; and advocating for a Basque Republic as a tool for both national and class emancipation.

For her part, Leire Txakartegi, Head of Organisation, emphasised the legacy inherited from previous generations. She underlined that, beyond being a strong organisation and a leading force in Basque trade unionism, ELA has inherited a culture based on collective commitment, teamwork, mutual care and the responsibility to preserve and pass on the project to future generations. “The most important thing,” she concluded, “is the joy and pride of belonging to ELA. May the chain never be broken.”



ELA takes part in the international ecosocialist gatherings in Brussels

From 15 to 17 May, the International Ecosocialist Gatherings were held in Brussels, bringing together trade unionists, environmental and feminist movements, land defenders and researchers from different continents to discuss the strategies needed for a just ecosocial transition. ELA participated mainly in the trade union strand, sharing its experience of

incorporating the ecosocial transition into both collective bargaining and its political demands, while also contributing to discussions on geopolitics and the defence of land.

The workshops addressed issues including the ecological transformation of industry, trade union opposition to increased

spending on remilitarisation and arms production, alliances against green colonialism, the impact of extractivism linked to the energy transition, and the situation of migrant care workers. In this latter area, ELA presented the experience of the 2023 General Feminist Strike in Euskal Herria as an example of cooperation between the trade union and feminist movements.



ELA participates in the 20th Conference on Critical Economics



ELA took part in the 20th Conference on Critical Economics, held at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of the Basque Country (EHU) in Bilbao, one of the leading academic forums for reflection on today's economic, social and environmental challenges. The union contributed both to the sessions for early-career researchers and to the main programme, delivering six presentations on industrial policy, wage developments and the analysis of several labour disputes that have taken place in recent years.

ELA also used the occasion to present its report, *For an Industrial Policy of and for the Working Class*: Diagnosis and a Comprehensive Proposal from an Ecosocial Perspective. The report argues that public subsidies should be conditional upon maintaining employment, promoting a just ecosocial transition, ensuring workers' participation and increasing public



control over strategic sectors. It advocates an industrial policy that serves the public interest rather than socialising risks while privatising profits.

For ELA, the Conference on Critical Economics is an essential forum

for strengthening the links between academia and social movements, producing rigorous analysis in the service of the working class, and building alternatives to an economic model that deepens inequality, precarious employment and environmental degradation.