

JANUARY 2026

M17 General Strike for an own minimum wage: + sovereignty + social cohesion

ELA, together with the unions LAB, ESK, Steilas, Hiru and Etxalde has announced a general strike in Hego Euskal Herria on March 17 to demand an own Interprofessional Minimum Wage (IMW) that is set in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (CAPV) and Navarre. The unions denounce the “anti-democratic aggression” perpetrated by the political institutions of Hego Euskal Herria, which have not even admitted to debate on an own IMW.

While the Parliament of Navarre used legal reports as a pretext to refuse the debate, in the Basque Parliament, the votes of the PNV, PSE, PP, and Vox parties blocked it, disregarding more than 138,000 signatures in support of the Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP¹). It should also be noted that the unions have filed a complaint against the Basque employers in the High Court of Justice of the Basque Country (TSJPV), because they refuse to negotiate an own IMW for the CAPV. The ILP defended by the Pensioners' Movement to guarantee a minimum pension equivalent to the SMI (Minimum Interprofessional Wage) was also rejected by the institutions, and has not even been debated.

1. The ILP is a mechanism of direct democracy that allows the citizenship to propose the creation or modification of laws directly to the legislature.



Therefore, ELA, along with the other unions, has agreed to give a strong response to the Basque Government and the Government of Navarre, as well as to employers' associations, by calling a general strike for March 17. "It is very serious that political representatives are denying society the only way to propose legal changes; they are severely limiting democracy." Furthermore, the calling unions emphasize that "an exercise of self-government and sovereignty that seeks to defend the rights of the working class has also been disregarded; both the Basque Government and the Government of Navarre, as well as employers' associations, want to impose Spanish labor legislation to further precarize the Basque working class."

In this regard, the unions calling the strike are initially proposing a minimum wage of €1,500 (the Spanish minimum wage is €1,184), which should be set by the Basque Parliament and the Parliament of Navarre after the necessary amendment to Article 27 of the Workers' Statute in the Spanish Congress of Deputies to empower the autonomous communities to create their own minimum wages. Therefore, Basque political parties are urged to bring this demand to Madrid and negotiate its approval. Similarly, the demand remains for employers' associations to sign inter-professional agreements setting their respective minimum wages at €1,500 per month.

If this demand, the central focus of the general strike on March 17, were to materialize, the minimum wage would become the basis of a social protection system that is currently very insufficient. Achieving a minimum wage of at least €1,500 will have a direct impact on the most vulnerable groups (young people, migrants, women, and people with disabilities), and at the same time, it will demonstrate solidarity from broad sectors of society. This €1,500 should also become the minimum pension, fulfilling one of the main demands of the Basque Country Pensioners' Movement. As is well known, an increase in the minimum wage would influence collective bargaining, contributing to higher wages in other sectors, making this general strike an essential event for the entire working class.

The central demand of this strike involves an exercise in social sovereignty: a better distribution of wealth and greater social cohesion through new powers for Hego Euskal Herria.

17M HUELGA GENERAL

M17

GREBA

OROKORRA



**GUTXIENeko
SOLDATA
HEMEN ERABAKI!**

SMI 1.500€

Mejorar salarios para repartir la riqueza

ELA
EUSKAL SINDIKATUA

Congresses of the three federations of ELA



The three ELA federations convened a total of 724 representatives for their respective assemblies: on November 13 (Gizalan), 20 (Zerbitzuak), and 27 (Industria). These three meetings are a continuation of the Confederal Congress that ELA held on June 2 and 3, 2025, in Bilbao.

At the Congresses, the work plans for each federation were approved, and their respective general secretaries and Standing Committees were elected. The leaders of the three federations agreed that the distribution of wealth as the central focus of collective bargaining and the fight against precarious employment and the gender gap are priorities for the coming years.

At the **ELA-Gizalan** (public services) Congress, a federation with 34,416 members, Igor Eizagirre was re-elected as general secretary (with 90.78% of the vote). In his speech, Igor Eizagirre highlighted the federation's work in recent years. "The previous congress left us with a mandate: there is a strategy underway to dismantle public services that we must combat. And we have fulfilled that mandate; we have not looked the other way, as demonstrated by the strikes and mobilizations we have promoted in almost all areas of the public sector. We want to continue along the path we have begun. We will continue to confront this strategy of dismantling public services. We will continue fighting. We have tried to summarize the roadmap for the coming years in five resolutions": 1. Defense of public services as a bulwark against fascism; 2. Organization and mobilization as a means of improvement; 3. Normalization of Basque and defense of linguistic rights; 4. Occupational health and decent working conditions; and 5. Real publicization of care work.

At the **ELA-Zerbitzuak** (private services) Congress, the 181 delegates representing the 30,992 members elected Ane Alberdi as the new general secretary with 90.61% of the vote. She succeeds Maricruz Elkoro in the position. In her first address as the new general secretary, Ane Alberdi noted that these are “not easy times: fascism is on the rise, gaining ground physically, politically, and in the media, and its discourse is spreading. Antifascist organizing is more necessary than ever. And ELA has a crucial role to play.” “The Zerbitzuak federation has made a clear commitment to deepening its organizing efforts in favour of equality. Organizing for equality is not just a slogan. It is a decision, the compass for our work in the years to come. Our greatest strength lies in the workers, and the role of this union is to put their needs at the forefront. We want to deepen the fight for anti-racism, feminism, the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities... We must fight, organize, and broadly politicize the working class in favour of equality.”



At the **ELA-Industria eta Eraikuntza** (Industry and Construction) Congress, a federation with 38,996 members, Unai Martínez was re-elected as general secretary (with 92.02% of the vote). Martínez emphasized in his speech the importance of organization: “We, as union members, have a duty to generate collective power. We are organizers, and we must empower the working class to take ownership of their future. We must build strength, because otherwise, we will manage consultations, clarify legal doubts, win some cases, and perhaps even sign some decent agreements... But capitalism will lead us, day by day, to become increasingly poor and dependent.” The re-elected general secretary of IEF made the federation’s stance for the next four years clear: “We will not take a single step backward in collective bargaining, nor in the defense of jobs. We have a message for employers and governments: We will fight for the redistribution of wealth; we will defend the jobs of our people: Down with the neoliberals!”

