



The XI ELA Congress was held on November 26th and 27th

José Elorrieta, re-elected secretary general

Over 1,000 people between delegates, invited and media were present at the two intense days on which the XI ELA Congress was held.

The delegates spoke about the struggles, motives and the instruments that the union has got to implement them, the strategies and goals behind them, which clearly reflected their slogan, "Countless reasons to fight".

Apart from reasserting its model based on greater demands, ELA showed that it is cle-

arly committed to a model of society and the fact that three long-term leaders are no longer at the head of the trade union is proof that it continues with its policy of gender and generational renewal.

Following the discussion and approval of the executive committee report, the keynote paper and the complementary resolutions, the new executive committee with José Elorrieta was re-elected with a clear majority.

THE LEADERS OF THE FIGHT

The leaders of the fight received an emotive homage during the final part of the congress. Dozens of men and women who had lived, been the driving force behind and suffered the strikes went up to the stage at the end of the "Beats of the Struggle". It is the first congress where the struggle has had its own space, where drama, video, dance and verses transmitted a clear message about the strike.



Resolutions

The congress approved 9 resolutions on areas of strategic interests. These were the most important:

● WHY ANOTHER EUROPE IS POSSIBLE, NO TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY

The XI ELA Congress called on the workers to show the rejection that the Treaty deserves in terms of class and people, by voting no in the Referendum.

- ✓ Due to its critical position on the EU construction process.
- ✓ As this EU model is subject to market dictates.
- ✓ As it declines any responsibility in the resolution of the national conflicts and backs states that crush the rights of millions of Europeans that are demanding their own political status.
- ✓ As the treaty was prepared behind the backs of the citizens and

against their interests, and as it considers that its acceptance would confirm this type of action.

● STOP TORTURE

The reiteration and plausibility of the reported abuse and tortures inflicted by the police forces to people under arrest confirm that abuse and torture continues. A conviction that has been backed by reports from Amnesty International, the World Organisation against Torture and the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on torture. ELA asks the public authorities that they adopt legislative reforms and establishes procedures that guarantee that the rights of the people under arrest are respected.

● TRADE ACTION AGAINST JOB INSECURITY

Job insecurity is currently the greatest challenge facing trade unionism. Our trade union model has



to make even greater demands in order to achieve positive results in the fight against instability.

● FOR A CHANGE IN SOCIAL POLICIES

Governments no longer are seeking social justice and are allowing the social differences to increase. ELA demands social expenditure to be greatly increased. Its aim is for the whole trade union to be active in denouncing neo-liberal policies and to demand other fiscal and social policies.

● THE GOAL: SELF-DETERMINATION

During the current phase, the main goal is to combine forces by establishing a minimum agreement between those parties that agree that Euskal Herria is entitled to decide on its future. Once this phase of declarations is over, agreement will have to be reached on how to implement the right to self-determination. This process and the use of violence are incompatible.

● GREATER PARTICIPATION IS GREATER FORCE

In order to encourage the participation of the workers, trade union has to start with the very work centre. All the members should participate in assemblies, have information about the negotiations, ratify the mobilisations and participate in the conclusion of the process.

● ELA DATA (*)

MEMBERSHIP

	OCTOBER 2000	SEPTEMBER 2004	FLUCTUACIÓN
Total membership	90,256	104,695	+16.00%
Employed members	76,106	92,316	+21.30%
Women	27,743	35,579	+3.24%
Men	62,513	69,116	-3.24%

(*) The membership data were subjected to an audit conducted by various members of the media using a method that guaranteed the confidentiality.

SELF-FINANCING RATE

ELA self-financing rate (fees + own income) 83,44% (+3.12%)

ELA REPRESENTATION (TRADE UNION MEMBERS)

1980	2004 (AUG)	FLUCTUATION
23.48%	36.07%	+53.62%

CONGRESS DATA

-Delegates: 736 (350 from professional federations, 350 from interprofessional structures and the 36 persons that make up the National Committee)

VOTING

- Management of the Executive Committee Unanimously approved
- Keynote paper Unanimously approved following the introduction of 159 amendments
- Voting of the Executive Committee 86.21% backing



NEW LEADERSHIP

The candidature of the Executive Committee received the backing of 86.21% of the delegates.

- JOSE ELORRIETA. Secretary general.
- GERMAN KORTABARRIA. Deputy Secretary General. Communications.
- AMAIA MUÑOIA. Treasurer.
- ALAZNE ALONSO. Legal-administrative services. Gender policies. Immigration.
- SEBAS ANDREU. Trade union action in the SMEs.
- LAURA GONZALEZ DE TXABARRI. International relations.
- TXEMA LAISEKA. Companies with over 50 workers. Membership. Elections. Confederal actions.
- MITXEL LAKUNTZA. Navarra coordination. Young people
- ADOLFO MUÑOZ. Collective bargaining. Economic-industrial action.
- MIKEL NOVAL. Social policy. Projects. Environment.



● LEIRE TXAKARTEGI. Organization. Basque Language.

● EUSTAKIO URANGA. Trade union training. Occupational Health. Institutional relations.

VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

International trade union representatives and trade unions from around the world were in Bilbao:

ICFTU, WCL, ETUC, ODSA, IG-Metall (Germany), CTA (Argentina), ÖGB (Austria), ACV-CSC (Belgium), Podkrepa (Bulgaria), CNTB (Burkina Faso),

LO-DK (Denmark), STUC (Scotland), USO, CCOO, UGT (Spain), CGT, CFDT y CFTC (France), CIG (Galiza), GSEE (Greece), K-SBSI (Indonesia), CGIL, CISL y FIOM (Italy), RENGO (Japan), LCGB (Luxemburg), PGFTU (Palestine), NSZZ-Solidarnosc (Poland), CGTP-IN y UGT (Portugal), CSN (Quebec), Cartel Alfa and CSDR (Rumanía), UGT-Sario (Western Sahara) and CDLS (San Marino). Entities such as the Friederich-Ebert-Stiftung and the British and German embassies also sent representatives.



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

On November 25th, the eve of the Congress, a collective bargaining seminar was held which was attended by the CSN trade union from Quebec; IG-Metall, from Germany; ACV-CSC, from Belgium; FIOM, from Italy; the ETUC; and ELA, the host trade union. The representatives of the different trade unions agreed about the need to strengthen collective bargaining "as an instrument to obtain a progressive distribution of wealth". Even with different collective bargaining models, all the speakers agreed that the fight against job insecurity and poor working conditions, outsourcing, part time work, flexibility, relocation... and neo-liberal globalisation are the main challenges facing trade unions around the world.



ELA newsletter

Solidarity of Basque Workers

JOSÉ ELORRIETA, SECRETARY GENERAL, TALKS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF TRADE UNIONISM

“We have to be a point of reference for those people that suffer discrimination”



–It is claimed that the trade union movement cannot take on a globalized labour market. What was ELA’s situation as it approached this XI Congress?

–The neo-liberal policies aim to limit the field of action of trade unionism. Our challenge is to be a point of reference for those people that join the job market, who are the ones that suffer most discrimination. Our membership and election data ratify that the option of a model of society and collective bargaining, and our political position has an increasing amount of support.

The following data should be mentioned: nearly 48% of

women and nearly 20,000 young people under 35 years old have joined since December 31st 1999, we have 2,000 more delegates than four years ago, which is over 20%, a figure that is not reached by any other trade union in our community. This indicates that a trade union that faces up to things, defends working conditions and reacts to the people’s needs, gets its rewards in terms of membership and at the urns.

–The congress slogan is that there are countless reasons to fight: there have been numerous conflicts over these four years, which have been increasingly hard.

–ELA is defending the general interests of the working class with dignity, which are incompatible with the interests of management, which currently

wants increased productivity only to result in larger profits.

The working place is deteriorating, with employers that take advantage of their relations with governments and labour legislation that allows them to lay people off cheaply or not to provide sufficient safety. They have enor-

mous power to manoeuvre which allows them to even threaten to relocate the companies.

–How does the keynote paper assess the evolution of collective bargaining?

–What is fundamental is to turn collective bargaining into an efficient instrument to defend the working conditions, above all with respect to the collectives that are in the weakest situation, such as women and young people, who account for nearly 50% of the working population and suffer untenable levels of discrimination with job insecurity, low salaries, flexibility regarding the working week...

There has been a resolution regarding the agreements in order to ensure that there is an active commitment to the participation of the workers in the proposals, and the decision taking in the trade union action in and out of the company.

Trade unionism based on demands is difficult, but it is the way to continue to be a point of reference for the working class.

–The social policies account for a large part of the keynote paper...

–The tax system, the social expenditure policy, housing are increasingly more important and this is reflected in our level of reflection, awareness and our capacity to act in society.

The congress has been preceded by the campaign denouncing neo-liberal practices: we want to identify these practices in collective bargaining and also in the budgetary policies.

**ELA has grown
because its
trade unionism is
based on demands**

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