

# Bai Euskarari Ziurtagiria. The Bai Euskarari Certificate

by Roberto Gutiérrez

## Abstract

The Bai Euskarari Certificate is the symbol by which social agents transmit to the whole society their commitment to the task of revitalizing Euskera (the Basque language). At the same time, the public finds in this image a satisfactory response to its demands of revitalizing the language since it receives the commitment of the social agents to carry it out. The Certificate, thus, has managed to bring together the two keys of this process: the intention of the social agents and recognition of the public regarding this effort.

This certificate is framed in the commitment and agreement process of the Bai Euskarari Agreement and the consequent drawing up of a Strategic Plan for revitalizing Euskera. The characteristics of this process should be understood within its principles.

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## 1. Background of the Bai Euskarari Certificate

### 1.1 The Council of Social Organizations of Euskera, [Kontseilua](#)

Kontseilua –The Council of Social Organizations of Euskera- is the organization that is in charge of managing the Bai Euskarari Certificate. [It was founded in 1997](#) after some years of reflection and a confluence process with the objective of bringing together all businesses, federations, and non-institutional organizations that work in the field of revitalizing Euskera. Although the size of Kontseilua group is relatively small when it comes to personnel and budget, the group of organizations represented is quite important in the society. There are [50 members](#) that bring together hundreds of businesses and associations with a total of 6000 workers, 240,000 members, and a cash flow of around 300 million euros per year. Not all the organizations working for Euskera are represented in Kontseilua, however, most of them, like *ikastolas* (schools teaching in Basque), parents' associations, institutes for teaching Euskera to adults like AEK and IKA, the newspaper *Egunkaria*, and big Basque publishing houses and distributors. Even the Academy of Euskera *Euskaltzaindia* and the Society of Basque Studies *Eusko Ikaskuntza* participate as observing members.

From the start, Kontseilua has considered the revitalization of Euskera an especially worrying process. Assuming that things have advanced a lot over the last few decades, there is a criticism of the linguistic policies drawn up in the institutions as well as a self-criticism in the sense that the social movement of the language has not known how to develop more efficient revitalization programs nor have a proper impact on social and political-institutional sectors in order to stimulate the speeding up of things in the process. From this double consideration comes Kontseilua's activity: an [activity of reflection](#) is being carried out internally that is going to gain considerable momentum in the next few months; the Bai

Euskarari Agreement has taken an external position as a project to make an impact on social and political environments.

## 1.2 [The Bai Euskarari Agreement](#)

By signing the Bai Euskarari Agreement, social agents demonstrate the resolute determination of our society so that Euskera carries on and so that it develops over a third millennium, which is not guaranteed nowadays. The key to this process lies in involving each class of the society. The Agreement consists of the following commitments:

1. A commitment to participate in a process that directs the revitalization of Euskera for good.
2. A commitment to drawing up and applying a Strategic Plan of linguistic revitalization that will analyze the state of the language by sector and geographic area, determine the necessary measures, and put into practice specific and voluntary agreements on the part of each participating entity in coherence with the current institutional plans.
3. To extend an invitation to all social agents of the Basque Country to participate in this agreement and commitment dynamics.

Over the spring and summer of 1998, Kontseilua met three social agents, each of them a leader in its field: Athletic Club of Bilbao, MCC-Mondragón Corporación Cooperativa and the ELA labor union. The three organizations were fully prepared to participate in this initiative.

## 1.3 Agreement and commitment process

### 1.3.1. *Support of important organizations in order to complete the promoting group*

The approval expressed by the aforementioned entities created a much greater chain reaction than expected and 80 % of the organizations that were invited expressed that they were prepared to become part of the promoting group. This task was carried out alongside the [Bai Euskarari campaign](#) whose objective was to dramatize the majority support of the society for the revitalization of Euskera with the intent of creating an adequate social and media environment for the social agents. In culmination of the campaign, an unprecedented mobilization, 123,000 people (out of a total population of 2.9 million) simultaneously participated in an act held in five soccer stadiums in the subsequent Basque capital cities. The support rallied in a number of social and political sectors, the collaboration of certain institutions, and the involvement of Euskal Telebista (Basque public television that broadcast the event via satellite) were crucial. On the other hand, it would have been very difficult to attain such success if it hadn't been for a climate of easing of tension in September of that same year, and if it hadn't been for the agreement between the Basque nationalist parties that created a special predisposition in the society to participate in these types of initiatives.

On December 23, 1998, in the presence of the president of Linguapax Félix Martí, 23 organizations signed the Bai Euskarari Agreement in Pamplona:

#### **Sports Organizations:**

Athletic Club Bilbao  
Aviron Bayonnais  
Deportivo Alavés  
Osasuna  
Real Sociedad

#### **Unions:**

CCOO  
CFDT, French Democratic Work  
Confederation of the Basque  
Country  
EHNE (Agricultural union)  
ELA  
ELB (Agricultural union)  
LAB

#### **Business and Financial Organizations:**

ANEL, Navarrese Association  
of Labor Businesses  
ASLE, Euskadi Labor  
Corporations Association  
Caja Laboral - Euskadiko  
Kutxa  
Hemen (association  
supporting economic  
initiative)  
Herrikoa (venture capital  
company)  
Mondragon Corporación  
Cooperativa

#### **Universities:**

Mondragon Unibertsitatea  
University of Deusto  
University of Navarra

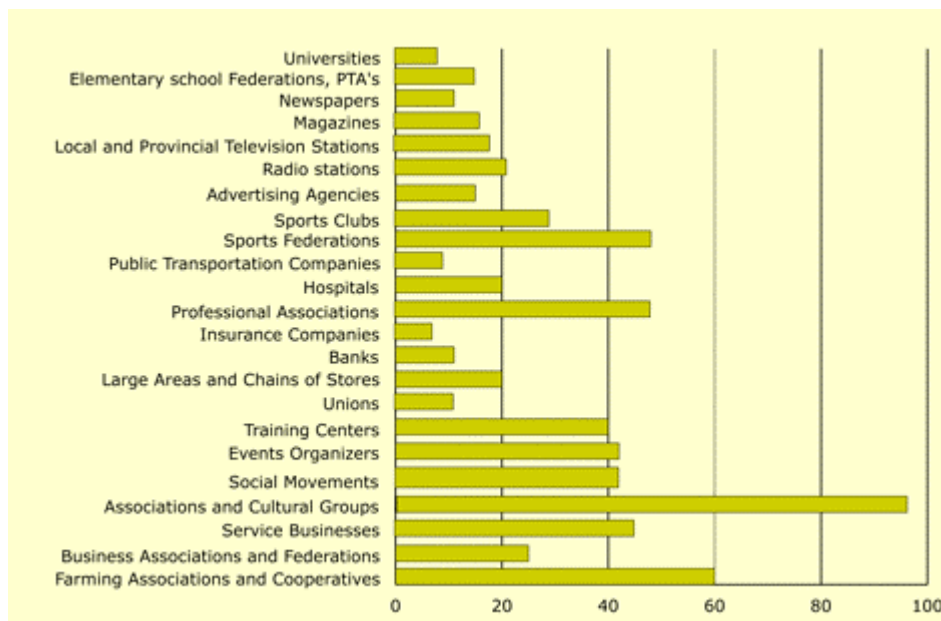
#### **Other Businesses:**

Diocese of Pamplona  
Federation of Regional  
Centers  
Kontseilua – Council of  
Social Organizations of  
Euskera

### 1.3.2. Invitation for other agents to participate in the process

From February to May of 1999 1,500 social agents from Southern Basque Country (in the Spanish state) were invited to participate in the agreement, and a few months later the same things were done with 600 agents from Northern Basque Country (in the French state). In each case we are talking about non-public entities (including private companies with public capital) that are provincial or larger since the involvement process of local agents was left for the second phase for reasons of organizational and communicational convenience. Although one third affirmative responses were forecasted, finally 899 agents responded affirmatively, 687 in the South and 212 in the North. The [complete list](#) of organizations that signed the Agreement can be seen on Kontseilua's web page; as the list below shows, they covered all areas of society:

### Sectorial Diversity of the Agents Who Signed the Agreement



Another campaign was being carried out at the same time as this one. The campaign was called "An hour of work in favour of the Bai Euskarari Agreement" and its objective was to obtain the initial financing needed for the process. Both unions and businessmen participated in the campaign in which there were thousands of companies and tens of thousands of workers. Actually, the entire process has been financed principally by social contributions. Along with the social agents, the [Agreement Follow-up Commission](#) was created to watch over the proper development of the process. The commission is made up of the following organizations: ANEL (Navarrese Association of Labor Businesses), Association of Women Directors and Businesswomen of Navarra, Athletic Club of Bilbao, BBK- Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa, Basque Regional Government Chambers, Basque Economist Association, Daily News, EHNE, ELA, Federation of Spanish Regions, MCC- Mondragón Corporación Cooperativa, and Kontseilua.

### 1.3.3. The Design of the Bai Euskarari Agreement's Strategic Plan

Over a period of six months, the 899 organizations that signed the agreement, organized in workgroups by sector, drew up a strategic plan whose objective in the final phase was to define the linguistic revitalization commitments that each organization must assume. The final result of the plan was published in the publications of each of the 33 workgroups (23 in the South and 10 in the North). You will also find [summaries](#) of the final result on the

internet. The types of proposed agreements vary from sector to sector, but many of them are very similar. They are:

- To promote motivational and awareness campaigns among the members of the organization among organizations in the same sector.
- To use Euskera in the organization's signing.
- To put all the organization's advertising in Euskera.
- To evaluate the knowledge of Euskera of new hires and provide incentives (economic or in work hours) to the workers that want to learn it.
- To take Euskera into account in the organization's plans for training.
- A greater use of Euskera in internal and external communications of the organization.
- To communicate with institutions in Euskera only.
- To establish the internal functioning of the organization in Euskera.
- To draw up and carry out an integral plan for Euskera.

In addition, each workgroup of social agents defined which set of commitments was of "minimal" character that would not defraud the process.

#### *1.3.4. Assumption of agreements*

Once the Plan was designed, each organization was given a period of a few months to decide, depending on their linguistic situation, which set of commitments they would voluntarily accept among those proposed by the workgroups. Therefore, each organization had sufficient time between February and June of 2000 to calculate the costs and organizational solutions before making their final decision known. During this time, Kontseilua laid out a plan of action determined to stimulate any sensitivity in favour of the language that might exist in the social agents.

529 of the 899 agents that initially participated in the process accepted important commitments (previously referred to as "minimal"). Of these 520, 85 were from the North and 435 from the South. The Bai Euskarari Certificate was offered to the organizations from the Southern Basque Country in June of 2000. The organizations in the North assumed the commitments in 2001 and will be awarded the certificate shortly.

## **2. The Bai Euskarari Certificate**

Nowadays, Euskera is a major social factor, being understood as a key element in advanced management of organizations, a competitive advantage, a factor for internal and external satisfaction for organizations, as well as an element of cohesion and broadmindedness. An important key to success for organizations is the internalization of factors that the society values, independently of the organization's structure or operating environment.

The Bai Euskarari Agreement establishes as a foundational premise the participation of every social field in the revitalization process and establishes the Bai Euskarari Certificate as an element to set it into motion. Getting this certificate underway is a fruit of the demand of the social agents that delegated the design of the certification system of the agreement process at Kontseilua, as the main exponent of the responsibility that each organization accepts. Kontseilua has established the conditions for the creation and awarding of the certificate, a proposal that was approved by the Bai Euskarari Agreement Follow-up Commission.

## 2.1 Objectives of the Certificate

The objective of the Certificate is to endorse the linguistic revitalization process that is bound to the application of the measures that were approved in the Strategic Plan of the Bai Euskarari Agreement whose intent was to:

- Provide the opportunity of accrediting the language revitalization work being carried out before the society,
- Respond to a growing social demand to be provided services in Euskera, and
- Enable the organization of a linguistic revitalization process in the heart of each organization.

## 2.2 Levels of Certification

Until December 31, 2001 the Certificate consisted of two levels which were:

- 1) The “*bidean*” Bai Euskarari Certificate (*in the process*), awarded to organizations that are in the process of linguistic revitalization.
- 2) The Bai Euskarari Certificate, awarded to organizations that have finished the revitalization process.

Since the beginning of 2002 and after a time of reflection and contrast motivated by the demand of the social agents, the Bai Euskarari Certificate now has three levels:



1. The “*bidean*” Bai Euskarari Certificate (*in the process*), awarded to organizations that have adopted and are carrying out measures to revitalize Euskera.



2. The Bai Euskarari Certificate “*Guk Zerbitzua Euskaraz*” (*Service in Euskera*), awarded to organizations that not only adopt and carry out measures for revitalizing Euskera but are able to provide services in Euskera in accordance with the following criteria: 1) the ability of the organization’s workers to express themselves in Euskera verbally and in written form, 2) the organization’s corporate image and language use, and 3) external relations of the organization.



3. The Bai Euskarari Certificate “*Guk Zerbitzua eta lana Euskaraz*” (*Service and operation in Euskera*), awarded to organizations that not only fulfil the requirements mentioned in the previous section, but provide services in Euskera and use it as the working language. Therefore, in addition to the three previously mentioned conditions, all internal relations, computer programs, and everything involved in operating the organization must be in Euskera.

### 2.3 Conditions for Obtaining the Certificate

As previously explained, once each organization analyzes their linguistic situation, they must accept a certain set of commitments aimed to attain revitalization of Euskera in the heart of each organization, and thus, in the sector and the rest of the sectors of society. The purpose is to apply the contents of the Strategic Plan of the Bai Euskarari Agreement and to unfold and carry out the objectives that are drawn out in it. By going into detail about how to put the defined strategies and objectives into practice and by spreading them to the social agents involved, the foundations are laid and means are assured to guarantee its implementation. During the unfolding process of the plan the necessary actions are specified and carried out in order to reach the objectives that were laid out. The necessary resources from each organization that are needed to promote the project are also evaluated.

With this objective in mind, Kontseilua asks that each organization draws up its own annual plan since it is the way to assure that, year after year, and day after day, we continue to make strides toward the revitalization of Euskera. Depending on the character and size of each organization, this could be designed and implemented by an external consulting firm or one of the organization's services or departments just as long as it works in conjunction with Kontseilua's help. The following aspects should be considered in the aforementioned plan for each organization:

- Proposed actions to carry out each of the commitments that are voluntarily accepted.
- A person responsible for the application of each commitment.
- Deadlines for each action in order to properly carry out each commitment.
- The resources needed in order to carry out the commitments.

In order to be awarded the Certificate, on any of the three levels, the plan must be approved by the organization's management and Kontseilua's planning team.

In addition, any organization that desires to obtain the second or third level Certificate, showing either that they can provide services in Euskera or that their services and internal operations are in Euskera, must fulfil the requirements that are laid out in the following criteria.

#### 1. Linguistic ability of the organization's workers

PARAMETER	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service in Euskera"	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service and operation in Euskera"
<b>Oral and written linguistic</b> training for the workers.	All workers that communicate orally or by written form with clients must have the proper linguistic ability for their job: a) 80 % of the employees of organizations with 1-10 employees must have the proper abilities. b) 75 % of employees of organizations with 11-50 employees must have the proper abilities. c) 66 % of employees of organizations with 50 employees or more must have the proper abilities.  The percentages of b) and c) are applied to all of the organization's departments.	All employees of the organization must have the proper linguistic abilities for their job, being able to express themselves in Euskera orally and in written form.
	* All communication must begin in Euskera.	
	* In certain cases the help of an external service will be accepted.	

## 2. The organization's corporate image and language use

PARAMETER	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service in Euskera"	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service and operation in Euskera"
<b>Corporate image and main sign</b>	<p>* The corporate image and main sign of the organization must be in Euskera or both languages.</p> <p>* The only exceptions that will be accepted are proper names and trademarks.</p>	
<b>Language Use:</b> - signs - schedules - plaques - notes - memos - service and/or product catalogues - prices - written texts that talk about the characteristics of products and/or services	<p>* Everything must be in Euskera or in both languages.</p> <p>* It will be accepted to have some elements only in Euskera and some others only in Spanish. Those that are in Euskera and/or both languages must appear as much or more than those in only one language.</p> <p>* When two or more languages are used, Euskera will have formal priority over the others (location, letter size, thickness).</p> <p>* When an organization uses signs, printed sheets, or elements that its supplier has provided that are not in Euskera or both languages, it will have to follow the steps below:</p> <p>1. The organization must provide the means to substitute or put the element in Euskera or both languages. If this entails an added cost, said element will be exempt.</p> <p>2. In situations where there is equality, the organization will give priority to the element that is in Euskera or both languages.</p> <p>3. The organization will inform its suppliers in writing that, from that point forward, only elements in Euskera or both languages will be used.</p>	<p>3. The organization shall write its suppliers asking for them to send all elements in Euskera. It will also inform them that they will only use elements that are in Euskera or both languages.</p>

## 3. The organization's external relations

PARAMETER	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service in Euskera"	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service and operation in Euskera"
<p>* Elements most often used in client relations: catalogues, guides, invoices, receipts, delivery notes, labels, business cards, bags and/or wrapping paper, answering machines...</p> <p>* Mediums used for advertising and sales promotions: web pages, vehicular signing, mail advertisements, and mediums prepared for sales promotions (mailing flyers, brochures...), advertising in newspapers, on the radio, and on television, other advertising mediums (calendars, cigarette lighters, t-shirts...).</p>	<p>* All elements must be in Euskera or both languages except when it is a proper name or trademark.</p> <p>* Regarding different elements, some can be exclusively in Euskera and others in both languages, or the same element may even be prepared in two different linguistic models, having a sample in Euskera and another in both languages.</p> <p>* In any case, the use of Euskera and formal treatment of it (letter size, thickness, location...) should be equal to that of any other language in each of the elements that are used in customer relations.</p>	
<p>* Relations with public institutions in the Autonomous Basque Community and Navarra.</p>		<p>* Relations with the public institutions in the Autonomous Basque Community shall be exclusively in Euskera.</p>

#### 4. The organization's internal relations

PARAMETER	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service in Euskera"	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service and operation in Euskera"
* Elements used in internal relations: - Procedures - Reports - Payroll - Management plans - Work reports - Balances - Audits	* All elements must be in Euskera or both languages.  * Formal treatment of Euskera (letter size, thickness, location...) should be the same as the other languages.	
		* Any suppliers or subcontracted services that influence in the organization's operation (consulting, management offices, lawyers, cleaners, transportation...) should be able to work in Euskera or both languages.
* Elements used in relations with public institutions in the Autonomous Basque Community and Navarra - Labor agreements - Requests for subsidies - Permits, licenses - Constitutional Courts		* The text that appears in all elements should be in Euskera or in both languages. In the event that the institution provides forms in Spanish only (INEM, Social Security...) but models exist in Euskera (Dotie, consulting agencies that translate...), the latter models should be used.  * Certain forms might have Euskera on one side and Spanish on the other. In any case, the use of Euskera and formal treatment of it (letter size, thickness, location...) should be equal to that of any other language.

#### 5. Computer programs

PARAMETER	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service in Euskera"	Bai Euskarari Certificate "Service and operation in Euskera"
* The organization's computer programs: programs and standard operating systems in Euskera that are on the market; texts that are used in these programs: accounting messages, names of files and directories...; programs that enable you to switch from one language to another: invoicing...		* The programs must be in Euskera. If the Euskera version of the program is outdated, it will be considered as an exception.  * Texts should be written in Euskera even though the programs are in another language.
* Computer programs outside the organization		* All programs that are outside the organization (for example, Telebanca) should be in Euskera or in both languages. If they are not, versions in Euskera will be requested.

#### 2.4 Following up and evaluating the commitments

Kontseilua will follow up and evaluate the degree of fulfilment of the agreements. Revising and improving the organization's annual plan makes it possible to make decisions concerning redirecting actions toward the established objectives. This is where the *Deming Circle*, otherwise known as the PDCA Cycle (*Plan - Do - Check - Act*), comes in. Organizations must plan the handling of the commitments they assume by laying out the actions, people in charge, deadlines, and resources available before carrying them out and before putting into practice that which they desire to do. It would be a good idea to record and document all of the actions taken because when the evaluation of the agreements is done; documental proof will be requested from each organization. The third milestone of this process consists of revising and checking to see if the results are in line up with what was planned. It is at that moment, after approximately six months, that follow-up is done by Kontseilua. This factor will not keep the organization from doing its own internal audits. If it is verified that all that was planned has been fulfilled, then the organization will move on to the next phase. If it is determined that what has been planned is not being carried out, the reasons will be studied and actions will be taken in order to introduce a series of corrective measures in the plan to be immediately applied thereafter. The purpose of this is to set up a



system that enables us to assure all that has been done by the organization, similar to a quality assurance system.

After one year, Kontseilua will evaluate the degree to which the agreements have been fulfilled and, in the event that they have been satisfactorily fulfilled, the certificate will be renewed for another year. Due to exceptional circumstances, the first evaluation was recently done on 203 organizations a year and a half after the certificate was awarded. From May on, 78 other organizations that were awarded the certificate in June of 2001 will be evaluated. After the first evaluation period, 81 % of the organizations renewed the certificate which was greater than our projections (75 %).

There are many possibilities when it comes to doing the evaluation. We always try to give each organization the lowest possible workload. The possibilities are as follows:

- a) Option one is to use qualitative and quantitative indicators that are defined by Kontseilua, Elhuyar, and Emun, businesses that are specialized in linguistic revitalization plans and members of Kontseilua.
- b) Option two is to document the balance of the Euskera revitalization plan (drawn up by the organization or with the help of an external consultant), signed and sealed by the organization's highest ranking officer.
- c) Any other type of documentation that demonstrates the level of fulfilment of the agreements shall need prior approval of Kontseilua.

All material will be examined by Kontseilua's experts in order to subsequently determine if the organization is deserving of the Bai Euskarari Certificate. No organization is forced to fulfil the agreements 100 % since they are allowed a certain amount of leeway that is laid out in the internal procedures of Kontseilua of which they are not notified.

## 2.5 Cost, use, and promotion of the image of the Certificate

The cost of obtaining the certificate varies depending on the size of the organization. The annual cost is 64.51€ plus 6.45€ per employee.

Organizations can use the certificate's logo on all advertising mediums and receive a follow up and evaluation service taken care of by Kontseilua's planning team. Throughout the year, they receive information and instructions on the techniques without it being a technical consulting service which is up to companies that are dedicated to the design and implementation of linguistic revitalization plans. Our web page provides information on the [grants](#) offered by public institutions and which [services](#) are available in Euskera.

Kontseilua promotes the certificate to public institutions, private companies, and the general population in such a way that society as a whole values the effort that each of the organizations that obtain the certificate makes for the revitalization of the language.

At the end of March, 225 organizations, including Tau Baskonia, Athletic of Bilbao, Real Sociedad, Vital Kutxa, BBK and Kutxa (Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa savings banks respectively), Eroski, the Basque Energy Organization, the Basque Foundation for Hobetuz Training, Mondragón Unibertsitatea, the Label-Kalitatea Foundation and the Basque Country Confederation of Cooperatives have received and publicly use the "bidean" Bai Euskarari Certificate. Forty-two other organizations, being mostly branches of the aforementioned savings banks, have received and publicly use the "Guk Zerbitzua Euskaraz" Bai Euskarari Certificate. Shortly, we will make it possible for different organizations to obtain the third level of the certificate, the "Guk zerbitzua eta lana euskaraz" Bai Euskarari Certificate.

## 2.6 The Bai Euskarari Certificate in the future

Ten pilot schemes of the Bai Euskarari Agreement have been performed in 72 cities (some on a countywide scale) in a way similar to what has been described herein and with the participation of 1,169 local and county businesses. Within the next few months, these schemes will be finished and we will consider extending them to more cities after examining the conclusions that are drawn from the results. It is important to note the potential that this plan has in those areas where the institutional effort in favour of linguistic revitalization is less and where the social commitment can be improved. It is also important to note the importance it has in developing and strengthening the Bai Euskarari Certificate since once the organizations in these cities accept the agreements by means of a strategic plan, they will be able to obtain the certificate.

On the other hand, we have begun to work again with the organizations that participated in the Bai Euskarari process and that, for one reason or another (economic reasons, internal problems, changes in the board of directors, etc.), did not obtain the certificate. We aspire to continue encouraging them to take the necessary steps to revitalize our language. In addition, we will continue working with the organizations that have the certificate and promoting its contents along with the philosophy of the Bai Euskarari process, a process that has been an inspiration in places like Brittany, where the Office of the Breton Language is promoting the "Yes to Breton" process ([Ya d'ar Brezhoneg](#)).

We should not scorn the involvement of this type of processes in political agents. As different sectors of the society that are constantly growing commit to adopting specific measures, it becomes much more difficult for the political class not to take action as a result. Over the next few years, we hope to have a greater impact on the parties and institutions in such a way that, in the face of pressure by important social sectors and even that of each party, a change in attitude and greater levels of involvement are considered.

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