



INSTITUTIONAL STATEMENT ON MARCH 21, INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

Unanimously adopted at the plenary session held on March 21, 2013

GETXO, AN INTERCULTURAL CITY

Today, March 21, 2013, the United Nations Organization is celebrating International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Getxo City Council has publicly affirmed its commitment to this commemoration since 2005.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration, without distinction of any kind, particularly on the basis of race, colour or national origin. The promotion of fundamental rights, the absence of discrimination and equal opportunities for everyone are key elements in achieving peaceful coexistence, citizen integration and the social cohesion of the communities that receive immigrants, as Getxo does.

Migrants are citizens subject to rights and duties. The right to be free, to be treated equally, to make choices, to express themselves, to receive health and social care services, and to receive the benefits of the wealth they help to generate. They form an integral and active part of our country. The challenge faced by Basque society and Basque government bodies is to organise coexistence in such a way that these rights are respected, the duties are accepted and a sense of community is created among all people. This task is the responsibility of institutions and of society as a whole: individuals, families, the school system, social services, the health care system and also the work, cultural and political spheres.

Currently almost 7% of Getxo's population is of foreign nationality and about 10% of its population was born abroad. We are talking about neighbours and residents who have become a part of Getxo, who have settled here and contributed to the municipality's rich and remarkable diversity, which can be seen in public areas and in the municipality's economic, social and cultural spheres, all of which are spaces in which new relations are being formed, just as on the private level, with the mutual enrichment resulting from contact between cultures. Getxo is therefore a place that lends itself to innovation, creativity and growth, a place in which everyone can contribute to the development of the community.

Responding to immigration poses an exciting challenge for host societies and for public authorities. It is up to all of us to work towards an inclusive society that encompasses all of Getxo's citizens, whether locally born or of foreign descent.

In consideration of the foregoing, the Getxo City Council:

- Recognises that the diversity of origins and cultures, a consequence of migration and settlement processes, constitutes one of the unique characteristics of 21st century Getxo, underlining to the city's population the extraordinary value of such diversity.

- Recommits to performing its municipal duties while upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination, so as to enhance intercultural exchange and social cohesion.

- Recalls that this is a dynamic, two-way process that requires mutual adaptation by all residents, whether local or foreign born, as well as the modification of and intervention by all public administrations with which citizens have contact.
- Undertakes to ensure that its policies and actions take into account the specific needs of the city's foreign population.
- Gives special priority, because of their vulnerability, to persons who have just recently arrived or joined other family members here, to children, to the so-called second generation, while also attending to the particular needs of women due to the gender factor. And it acknowledges that individuals in irregular administrative situations face a serious risk of social exclusion.
- Promotes community action that is conducive to positive interaction between people of diverse origins and cultures.
- Encourages all immigrants who decide to settle in this municipality to take part in the thrilling process that is underway to recover and promote Euskera, the language of Euskadi. Similarly, the City Council works to bring people together around Basque cultural manifestations, and also to incorporate the cultural manifestations of the migrant population in such encounters, facilitating collaboration by all individuals in the social and cultural pluralism of our society.
- Promotes the active participation of persons of foreign origin in municipal life, especially in its economic, social and cultural manifestations, and it defends the necessary extension of the right to political participation.
- Makes a special effort to prevent, denounce and combat situations of discrimination against people because of their sex, nationality, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

For all of these reasons, here at the municipal government, we express our firm commitment to continue working to achieve true equality among all people and we invite citizens to participate in the different events that the City Council organises throughout the year on the subject of citizen integration and the harmonious coexistence of cultures.