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## Setback for Basque Self-Determination

Posted by InfrequentAllele - 2008/09/12 19:12

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Today the Spanish Supreme Court ruled against a plan put forward by Juan JosÃ© Ibarretxe the Lehendakari of Euskadi, (the Basque First Minister). The government of Euskadi had planned a referendum, not on independence, but on whether the Basques have the right to self-determination. According to the Spanish Supreme Court the plan was illegal because only the central government has the power to hold a referendum, because "there is no such entity in Spanish law as the Basque People", and because the Spanish constitution states that Spain is one indivisible nation. Ibarretxe has announced he will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. It's quite a contrast with the referendum debate in Scotland.

Ibarretxe wanted to put two questions to the Basque people,

1. Are you in agreement with supporting a process of a negotiated end to the violence, if ETA previously demonstrates in an unequivocal form its willingness to put an end to violence forever?

2. Are you in agreement that Basque political parties, without exclusion, start a process of negotiation in order to reach a democratic agreement regarding the exercising of the right of the Basque People to decide, and that this agreement be submitted to a referendum before the end of the year 2010?

Although the government of Euskadi has a lot more power than the Scottish Parliament (they have control of broadcasting for starters...), the campaign for Basque self-determination lags some way behind that in Scotland. They've just been told they can't hold a referendum about whether they have the right to hold a referendum on independence. Basques and Catalans follow Scottish politics closely and with great interest.

Ibarretxe's government is led by the PNV, the main Basque nationalist party. He is supported by a number of other Basque nationalist parties of both the left and right. The PNV and its allies are opposed to violence, unlike some other Basque political organisations which openly support ETA. This blow to Ibarretxe's plans will only strengthen support for violent nationalism amongst the "abertzale" (Basque nationalists).

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## Re:Setback for Basque Self-Determination

Posted by Meg - 2008/09/13 22:21

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Could they hold a referendum 'unofficially', perhaps through local councils in the way that there was the SRC water referendum?

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## Re:Setback for Basque Self-Determination

Posted by InfrequentAllele - 2008/09/14 01:09

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One of the key rulings of the Spanish Supreme Court was that only central government in Madrid has the right to hold any sort of referendum. In Spain, the basic unit of local government is the municipio, each town or village has its own municipal government. Each one would have to hold what would legally be an opinion poll. The town councils controlled by the Partido Popular or the PSOE (the 'Unionist' parties) would refuse to hold them, and the PP and PSOE would tell their voters to boycott the vote.

All of this is happening because of a clause in the Spanish constitution

Section 2. The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards.

This clause was put into the constitution as a sop to supporters of the dictator Franco. After Franco's death in 1975, many in Spain feared a new civil war unless democracy was restored. The only way to get the generals out of power was to offer them certain guarantees - one of which was that Basque Country and Catalunya wouldn't be permitted to secede from Spain.

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## Re:Setback for Basque Self-Determination

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2008/09/14 09:21

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I suppose that making self-determination too easy would be like putting all one's Basques in one exit. :laugh:

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## Re:Setback for Basque Self-Determination

Posted by TLJ - 2008/09/14 10:33

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Robin T Cox wrote:

I suppose that making self-determination too easy would be like putting all one's Basques in one exit. :laugh:

Very punny, Robin, very punny !

:laugh: :laugh: :laugh:

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