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The European Association of Democratic Lawyers is concerned about the current legal situation in the Basque Country.

A serious symptom of this situation is the amount of legal procedures against Basque citizens for their activity in social, cultural or political areas. Concretely, the EDL denounces the lack of juridical justification for the detention of 23 persons connected with the political party Batasuna, while they were participating in a meeting on the 4th of October.

We can not avoid thinking that these detentions are connected to a political misuse of the jurisdictional power exerted from the Special Court, the Audiencia Nacional.

We understand this is as a flagrant limitation and denial of the most basic rights: the right of association, demonstration, participation in the public affairs and freedom of expression. It undermines the whole system of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The EDL would like to denounce the use and abuse of exceptional procedural measures in these cases, like the incommunicado detention, the secrecy of the procedures or the pre-trial detention without limit.

As lawyers involved in comparable cases, we would like to shed light on the difficulty to exercise a professional defence with all the necessary guarantees, as no criminal activity can be proven. We think we are witnessing accusations of a philosophical nature and abusive interpretations in opposition to the strictness and precision that the application of criminal law requires.

We request that all efforts be made to create a new scenario in the respect of all democratic guarantees that may drive the Basque Country to a political normalization.

Paris, 12th October 2007

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