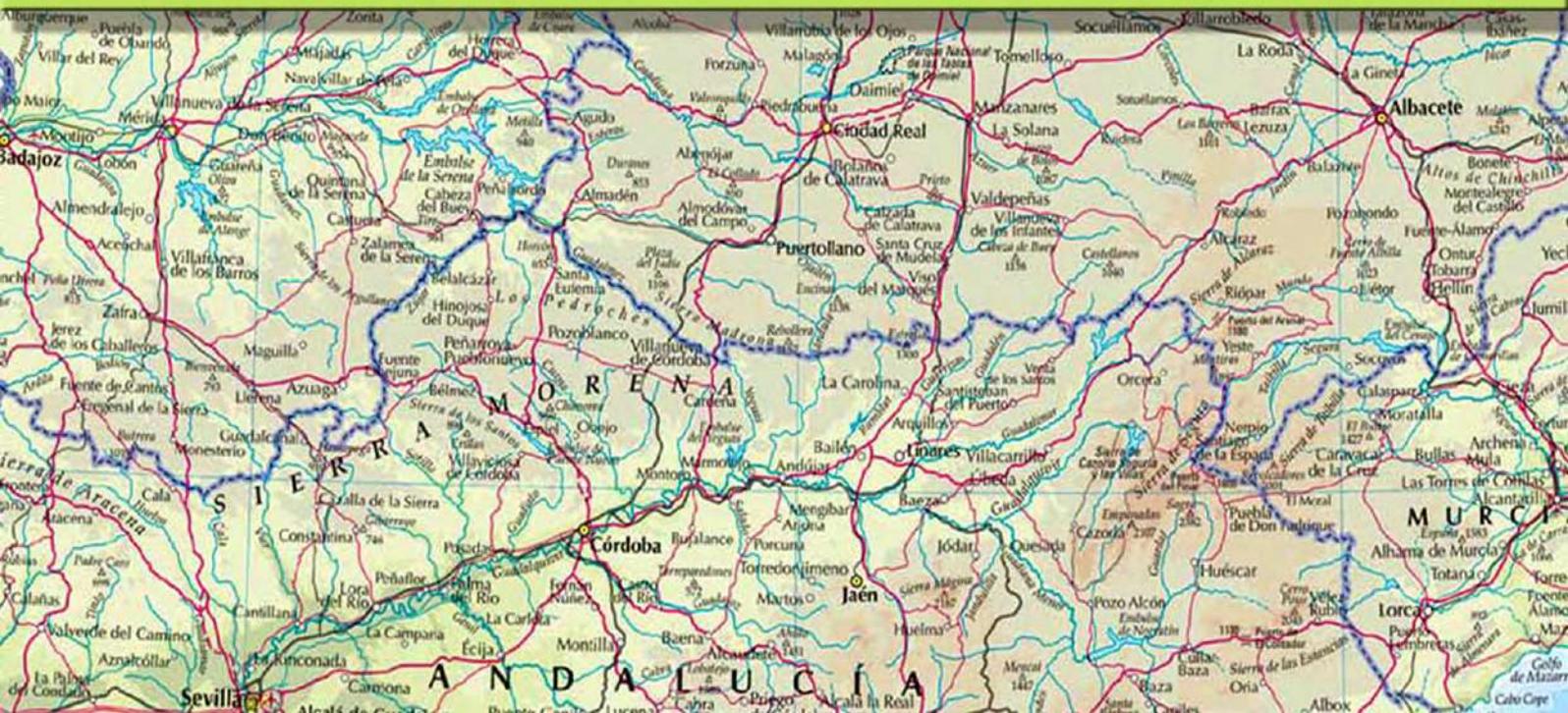


PRISONER DISPERSAL POLICY

The cost of visiting a relative

Etixerat Elkarteia



Introduction

It is now 26 years since the prisoner dispersal policy came into being in a general and systematic manner. In perspective, the true goals of the prisoner dispersal policy have revealed their entire devastating dimension on the relatives of Basque political prisoners. We, relatives and friends, like the prisoners themselves, are the actual targets of this set of exceptional measures. This policy has been kept in place indefinitely, violating rights and generating suffering, and remains one of the main political pillars of Spanish Government's approach to the Basque issue (meekly mimicked by the French government).

Four years after the end of ETA's armed campaign, neither the situation of our imprisoned relatives nor ours has changed in the least. We are still made to pay a heavy price, in suffering, for not giving up on our family and love bonds. The difficulties and constraints affecting the family and social environment of any incarcerated person are thus aggravated by the consequences of an exceptional policy intent on inflicting pain upon us. The consequences brought about by the current penitentiary policy take a heavy, destructive toll at all levels on our lives: economy, physical and mental health, love life, work, social interaction...

The dispersal policy puts a dire economic strain on all of us that can hardly be withstood. Furthermore, travelling in pre-established, set conditions (days, time, schedule, distances,...) results in physical and psychological deterioration, as well as an en route death toll of 16 to date. It also entails uncertainty, continual stress and degrading treatment along with the inevitable emotional drain spawned by the absolute lack of privacy given that all communications are recorded. This is another source of emotional stress, since prison guards and even the media can easily gain access to our lives and our feelings, so much so that they may be broadcast publicly. Lastly, the pressure derived from the attempts at criminalization and persecution of our initiatives, public as well as anonymous threats, and harassment (we have been subject to aggression and stoning a number of times) should be noted.

Governmental officials, political representatives, as well as other advo-

cates of the dispersal policy attempt to justify its continuation pointing to the alleged fruits born by this penitentiary policy. However, these fruits are never identified, quantified or explained. By contrast, we bear witness to them first hand: the dispersal policy seeks to cause suffering and achieves precisely that, suffering. That agony and 16 fatal victims, along with an accident record of hundreds, some of them extremely severe, constitute the alleged fruits. We bear witness to this.

A majority of political and civil society in the Basque Country, showing full awareness of the situation, demands an end to dispersion. Regardless, the Spanish government's effort runs in the opposite direction, while at the same time attempting to prevent the consequences of its untenable stance from being disclosed. It does so by stopping citizens from getting access to data that attest to our situation not as collateral damage, but as a fully-fledged goal inherent to the penitentiary policy, i.e. striking the relatives and closest environment of the Basque political prisoners. Hence the urge shown to discredit our job aimed at information and denunciation.

In addition, the penitentiary policy does not remain stationary, with new regulations constantly coming into force in an attempt to counter aspects that we may have been able to circumvent relying on our coordination and mutual help, as well as the solidarity shown by society.

We consider it our duty to expose and raise consciousness in society about our situation is, about what the current penitentiary policy's extent and consequences are.

This document pursues the exposure of one of these consequences, i.e. the financial costs imposed on us, relatives, friends and closest environment of the Basque political prisoners, purely due to having a relative prisoner and making use of the right to visit them. However, we cannot consider financial costs detached from the psychological and physical toll triggered by the journeys that take place under aggravating and distressing conditions and circumstances.

The toll of dispersal

For a start, we should bear in mind that Basque prisoners, whether subject to dispersal or not, **have always been held far away from their homes**.

Since 1978 and up to the implementation of the policy of dispersal, they were sent to prisons in Madrid, Soria, Herrera de la Mancha and Puerto de Santa María, whether on remand, awaiting trial, or convicted. Apparently, the right to visits and communication was observed. Regardless, the exercise of that right entailed an uncalled-for economic expenditure and detracted from what should normally be anyone's weekly rest time.

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The dispersal policy came to raise the stakes to **unsustainable** levels.

As pointed out above, the cost of dispersal is not limited to the considerable economic expenditure. In addition to the hundreds of kilometres we have to travel and the conditions we face in doing so, other factors should be taken into account, as follows:

- Stress before the trip, always in a race against-the-clock, worried about not making it to the visit on time. Also, stress on arriving at the prison, always dreading that the visit arranged "does not appear" on computer records and we may have to travel back without visiting our relative or friend, always worried about body searches, the attitude of the wardens, or the requirements we may be subject to all of a sudden. There exists the uncertainty of not knowing whether we may manage to visit our relative or just find out that s/he has been transferred to another prison.
- Physical exhaustion as a result of having to hit the road without rest after the working week, travel, and back again to work.
- The physical and psychological burden exacted by these trips when we have babies or minors, as well as the impact it has on the children.
- The ordeal these journeys are for the elderly and/or disabled people, who are also exposed to long waiting hours and variable weather conditions.

- The lifestyle imbalance resulting from having to organize our lives around prison rules (schedules, regulations, permissions, sanctions, journeys, parcels...) and rearranging it, from scratch, on transfer of our relative to another prison.
- Impossibility of visiting our incarcerated relatives as soon as health conditions prevent us from facing up to a journey in such conditions. It is a situation in which time runs against us and therefore it happens more frequently over time, since we get older and are more liable to get ill.

This situation, with which we have to deal week upon week involves a physical and psychological deterioration resulting in serious consequences. It is to be noted that we are not about temporary circumstances, specific time periods that may be tackled with by means of an occasional extra effort. Just the opposite, these situations may last not for years, but decades, and can hardly be addressed from a worker's life and economic conditions.

The fact that solidarity is a fundamental value in Basque society has always contributed to relieve that burden. The readiness to visit our incarcerated relatives, economic contributions, individuals willing to voluntarily drive long-distance journeys, as well as other forms of support and solidarity, have prevented our situation from being dramatic.

Sadly, that burden and the damage it causes are actually one of the aims of the current penitentiary policy. As far as our collective is concerned, that is not an overstatement: not only are our relatives scattered throughout Spain and France, but also impositions and regulations are put in place aimed at undermining and even infringing the exercise of our rights. These grievances are further aggravated by the criminalization, defamation and persecution of all forms of assistance and solidarity. The design of the dispersal policy is intent on leaving no leeway for the mitigation of the harm it brings about.

Without a doubt, the most relevant piece of data is the map of dispersal itself. It demonstrates that dispersal does not consist of "distributing" Basque political prisoners across the geography of Spain and France. By contrast, it attests to the fact that the prisons furthest from the Basque Country hold the highest number of Basque prisoners, and concentrations dwindle as distances get shorter.

Added constraints, difficulties and impositions.

In the light of the information above, it is undeniable that the policy of prisoner dispersal seeks, among other goals, to damage the family and social environment of Basque political prisoners, to drain their economies.

The cost of monthly visits to one of the prisons nearest to the Basque Country, the prison in Logroño (La Rioja, Spain), is over 200 € per month, given fuel costs, road tolls, and minimum costs of breakfast or lunch, given the times allocated for visits. If we take this number as our starting point, it is easy to start imagining the costs that may accrue from journeys to prisons of over 200 Km and 36 hours there and back.

When we attempt to quantify the costs of dispersal, it is necessary to bear in mind the constraints and impositions we are subjected to and which add difficulty to what are already long and costly trips. It is difficult to reflect these constraints fully. In addition to the exceptional rules systematically applied to all our relatives, each prison has its own internal functioning rules and regulations: some may affect every prisoner in a given jail and others, under the pretext of "security", affect only our relatives.

In this section we shall attempt to summarize the rules and constraints in a way that the reader can begin to understand the visiting regime and, at the same time, the added difficulties we face..

Visit regime

- In Spain, prisoners have one 40 minute weekly visit. Up to 4 relatives or authorized people may attend these visits. They take place in a visit booth where glass completely separates the prisoner from his or her visitors. Sound is carried through a telephone.

Once a month, prisoners are granted two physical contact visits: one family visit and one conjugal visit (which last for one or one-and-a-half hours, depending on the prison). Two family contact visits may not be

carried out in one month even if there has been no conjugal visit and certain prisons will not allow a prisoner's partner to carry out the family visit on her/his own, unless they are accompanied by another relative.

In the Basque context, these three types of physical contact visits -family, conjugal and cohabitation- are usually known as *vis a vis*, where as ordinary non-physical contact visits are just referred to as visits. Therefore, in this document we shall use the terms "visits" and "ordinary visit" to refer to the 40 minute, non-physical-contact, weekly visits and, *vis a vis* or "contact visit" to refer to the other three types.

- In France, weekly visits last up to 3 hours in booths without a glass partition. However, they are constantly watched in order to prevent physical contact. Prisoners are allowed no intimate communication with their partners whilst they are held on remand (which may last up to 6 years: 4 until the investigation phase is finalized and a further 2 until the trial actually takes place).

- Dispersal and separation of our relatives throughout the various wings of any given prison mean different visiting days and times for each of them. This makes difficult or even impossible for us to organize travel (sharing a car, for instance) in ways that allow us to mitigate economic and physical costs.

- In those cases when visits do take place on the same day of the week and we are actually able to share means of transport, the different visiting times mean we have to wait for hours before or after our own visit. For instance, the first visit of the week may be at 09:00 on Saturday and the last at 18:00. Therefore, the use of a chartered bus or vans with a driver, whilst achieving the aim of reducing costs and not requiring us to drive, mean arriving at outside the prison at 06:00 in the morning and not being able to begin the return trip until 19:00.

- We believe this added dispersal of Basque prisoners into prison wings is intentional and arbitrary and that its main aim is to add difficulty to our attempts at organizing shared travel. This is proven by the fact that prisons refuse to allow our relatives visiting times to be the same, under the pretext that there cannot be contact between them. Nevertheless, wing changes are constant, so that prisoners who were not allowed "to have contact" yester-

day may be in the same wing today and those who were in the same wing until yesterday will not be allowed to have contact as of today.

- In order to be allowed to visit a prisoner, both in Spain and in France, we must be at the prison reception area one hour before the allocated visiting time.

- Any delay that prevents our arriving at the prison one hour in advance means we lose the visit. Therefore, we must allow any number of extra hours in our travelling schedule, in addition to the time the journey actually takes; to ensure we are not only at the prison one hour in advance, but to nullify any possible unexpected delays we may come across on the road (breakdowns, traffic jams, delayed trains, problems with connections, or the very usual expressly set up police checkpoints).

- In Spain, authorization to visit for anyone who is not a first-degree relative is granted (or refused) by the Government Prisons Department - *Instituciones Penitenciarias*- and is invariably arbitrary. When a person is refused permission to visit, it is either not reasonably justified, or general reasons are used ("for security reasons"). Friends and other relatives are only allowed access to ordinary, non physical contact, visits.

- Basque political prisoners are only allowed to receive visits from up to 10 people who are not relatives. They must present a list of 10 names which can only be renewed every 6 months. Certain prisons allow the addition of a couple of reserve names in case one of the 10 people on the list does not receive authorization. In other prisons, if this happens the list is reduced and there is no possibility to add more people to make up the allowed maximum of 10. Thus, a small number of people is made to do all the visits over a long period of time and, therefore, a given person will cannot leave longer between visits, and the cost is more concentrated in a given period of time.

- In France, authorization for visits, whether for direct relatives or anyone else, is the remit of the investigation judge while they are held on remand; of the prosecutor once the case is ready for trial and, finally, once convicted, of the prison head warden.

Waiting time for authorization is unlimited. Up to three months may go by between remand in custody and our first visit. Replies to visit requests are late, with big gaps between them and some never arrive. It is difficult to get authorization or friends, but for relatives too and there are long periods of time when all visits must be distributed among a very small group of people.

There are cases when the relative who wants to go on a visit has previously been imprisoned in France and a paradox occurs: they are authorized for visits but they are refused entry to French territory, even though they are first degree relatives (father, son, brother).

- In several prisons in Spain, contact visiting times are allocated on weekdays. Only in some of these, when relatives have obtained and presented a work certificate, they are allowed to visit on weekends. This, of course entails more journeys in a month, more cost, more danger on the road, etc. and causes difficulties for relatives as employees, whereby they may have to use their annual leave days in order to travel for visits.

It is even worse when families are only granted cohabitation vis a vis on weekdays, as this means children miss at least one school day and then return to class after often gruelling trips and being overtired.

- We must travel according to allocated visiting times. Visiting times are never allocated according to travelling possibilities. It is practically impossible to coordinate visiting times with the public transport connections required to travel to a prison. This entails complicated transfers and connections between trains and/or buses (remember any delay in a train arrival or departure can mean we lose the visit), and so many other difficulties and hours waiting for the return leg.

- Although ordinary visits (non-contact) always include a Saturday or Sunday, this does not prevent certain visiting times being extremely difficult and adding danger to road travel. Here, we shall mention Basque prisoners held in jails in Valencia, who can only receive visits first thing on a Friday morning late on Sunday evening. Because it is not possible to combine train timetables with normal working hours, visitors must travel by car, driving all Thursday night or well into the early hours of Monday.

To all these difficulties and the damage they cause, we must add those

that result from having two family members in prison (father-son; two brothers; couples). In this respect we would like to reiterate a complaint we have been insisting upon: the situation of couples who were held in the same prison and have been separated and sent to distant prisons over recent months, in yet another instance of the tightening of the penitentiary screws. For us, their families and friends, the tiredness, the expense, the difficulties and the danger is double. For these couples' children, the damage is irreparable.

Prisoner dispersal as an economic punishment

Transport options vary with the location of each of the prisons and the visiting timetables for each prison –or even for each block in a prison. Therefore, travelling costs also vary. Despite our best efforts we do not always have the choice of the least expensive mode of travel.

Nevertheless, in this report we have tried to compile data to document the economic punishment caused by the policy of prisoner dispersal. Since the information in this report may be viewed as general, we hereby undertake the commitment to complete it with any detailed data the institutions and organizations concerned may see fit to request, such as receipts or transaction slips.

Basque political prisoners are currently dispersed in 76 prisons throughout Spain and France. Due to the wide range of locations and visiting hours, we have only been able to organize travel to 21 of these prisons (to 16 jails in Spain and 5 in France) and, again, much of this organized travel is not even weekly:

- Bus to Andalusia. Organized by Etxerat. Every week it travels to the following prisons: Puerto I, Puerto III (in Puerto de Santamaría, Cadiz) and Botafuego (Algeciras, Cadiz). Relatives of prisoners held near Seville also travel on this bus to the Seville and then have to take a bus to Moron de la Frontera or drive there in a rental car if their visit is first thing in the morning.

- Vans belonging to Mirentxin, the Solidarity Drivers' Group. This group is made up of volunteers who, in order to help prisoners' relatives, drive these vans on trips that are hundreds or thousands of kilometres long. Journeys begin on Friday evenings and finish in the early hours of Sunday. There are 9 vans, 3 of which travel weekly to the prisons in Huelva, Almeria and Granada. The other 6, on alternate weekends, travel to Córdoba, Murcia I and Murcia II, Alicante, Valencia, Castelló, A Lama (Pontevedra) and Herrera de la Mancha (Ciudad Real) and Lyon, Roanne, Poitiers and Saint Maur in France. A van travels to Clairvaux, also in France, once every two months..

An example of the difficulties caused by geographical dispersal and different visiting hours happens in Valencia, where relatives of the Bas-

que female prisoners cannot use the volunteer van service because, whilst the men have visits on Saturday morning or afternoon, women prisoners may only receive visits on Friday morning or Sunday afternoon.

- Depending on the specific trip, the Price of these journeys varies from 65€ to 120 € per person for the vans and between 110€ and 125€ on the bus. In order to lessen the economic burden for relatives with children, minors are not charged. If relatives did not have this option and had to travel by train or air, the cost would be unsustainable
- Given the fact that seats on both the bus and the vans are limited (the latter have 7 seats for relatives, plus two for the drivers); priority is given to physical contact visits¹. In other words, the seats needed for people going on physical contact visits are allocated first and then the remainder is allocated, looking to ensure the maximum possible prisoners get a visit. Because of this usually only one relative/friend per prisoner gets a seat and- as we said earlier- not, every weekend.

Below, we have set out various distances, routes and means of transport – reflecting several of the alternatives we often use- in an attempt to document, insofar as possible, one of our causes for complaint: the economic drain caused by the policy of prisoner dispersal. Missing from this report are, as well as the travelling costs to many of the prisons, the costs occurring in special situations (small children, elderly people, ill people...) which require other travelling conditions: travelling over a longer period of time, more stops and rest, regular mealtimes... or preclude certain modes of travel. For instance, for people with blood circulation problems –a very common ailment after a certain age- a round trip of over 25 hours on a bus is, as well as sorely punishing, a threat to their health.

It is difficult to establish the price of rail or air travel, as ticket prices for the same route vary depending on various circumstances, including, of course the number of seats remaining on a given plane or train.

When counting the cost, in addition to fuel, road tolls and public transport tickets, we have set a cost of 10 € for lunch, 8 € for dinner and 3 €

¹ For an explanation of the types of visits, see the previous section "Visit Regime"

for breakfast as an average for the kind of prices we may pay on the road. Usually prices for meals are much higher than these, but we try to minimize these costs by taking as much food as we can from home. Still this is never easy and it is often not possible to carry the weight or bulk required by the food required for such a trip, or the food would go off, or it is just not possible to carry food in addition to our own bag and the parcel for our relatives. There are also times when we must make time waiting and, so as not to spend this time out in the open, one must one's custom to a number of establishments. It must be taken into account that these prices refer to trips in Spain. Prices in France are considerably higher.

A further cost is accommodation when we have to spend the night on the way to a visit or on the way back.

We have not included the cost of vehicle depreciation of for the times when we use our own cars.

Algeciras Prison (Cadiz, Spain). Distance: 1.100 km

Visiting times: Ordinary (see footnote 1) on Saturday mornings; Vis a vis, Saturday morning or afternoon..

Reference: Two relatives travelling together, from Iruñea (Pamplona) to the monthly vis a vis (10:30 on Saturday morning) and the weekly visit

OPTION 1 Bus (Organized by Etxerat).

Route: Lopidana petrol station- Puerto de Santa María Prison - Botafuego Prison, Algeciras.

** The bus first drops off relatives outside Puerto I and Puerto III prisons and then goes to Algeciras prison. It drops off the relatives outside the prison and then heads for Algeciras (the town), where the drivers sleep and fulfil their mandatory rest hours, until 19:00 hours on Saturday, when they begin the homeward leg of the journey.*

- Departure time from Lopidana petrol station: 20:00 on Friday
- Arrival at Algeciras: 06:00 on Saturday
- Departure from Algeciras: 19:00 on Saturday.
- Arrival at Lopidana petrol station: 06:30 on Sunday
- Price of the ticket: 125 € X 2 = **250 €**

Connections / transfers:

1: Iruñea (Pamplona) - Lopidana. 100 Km.

- Departure: **17:30 Friday afternoon.**
- Duration of drive: 1 hour.
- Fuel: 11, 95 €.
- Motorway toll: 2.15 €
- **Total: 14.10 €**

2: Botafuego Prison – Algeciras Town: 6 Km.

Prison bus / Shared Taxi.

3: Lopidana- Iruñea (Pamplona). 100 Km.

- Duration of drive: 1 hour.
- Fuel: 11, 95 €.
- Motorway toll: 2.15 €
- Total: **14.10 €**
- Time of arrival in Iruñea (Pamplona): **7:30/8:30 hours on Sunday**

Duration of the trip: 39 hours

Other expenses: two dinners, one lunch, one breakfast = 32 € (X2) = **64 €**

Total cost of the trip for 2 people, (one visit and one contact visit): **342.20 €**

OPTION 2: Train

Connections / transfers:

1: Iruñea (Pamplona) - Zaragoza, by train.

- Departure: **07:43** on Friday morning
- Arrival in Zaragoza: 09:50
- Lowest price: **15.30 € per person**

2: Zaragoza - Malaga, by train.

- Departure: 10:20 h.
- Arrival in Malaga: 14,25
- Lowest price: **49.50 €**

3: Malaga-Algeciras - Algeciras Malaga, by rental car

- Rental and insurance: 70 €
- Fuel: 27.00 € (x 2) = 54,00 €
- Motorway tolls: 18.10 € (X 2) = 36.20
- Total: **160.20 €**
- Approx. Arrival time in Algeciras: 17:00 h

4: Malaga-Zaragoza, by train

- Departure: 15:35 on Saturday
- Arrival in Zaragoza: 19:35
- Lowest price: **98 € per person**

5: Zaragoza-Iruñea (Pamplona), by train.

- Departure: 21: 00
- Arrival in Iruñea (Pamplona), **22:45 on saturday**
- Lowest price: **18 € per person**

Duration of the trip: 39 hours

Other expenses: 2 lunches, 1 dinner, 1 breakfast (x 2) = **64 €**
- Twin room, one night = **45 €**

TOTAL COST OF THE TRIP for 2 people, one ordinary visit and a contact visit:
630.80 €

OPTION 3: BY PRIVATE CAR

Route: Iruñea (Pamplona) – Botafuego Prison, Algeciras - Iruñea (Pamplona)

- Departure time from Iruñea (Pamplona): **08:00 on Friday**
- Duration of the trip: Not including stops, 25 hours there and back
- Fuel: **260 €**
- Motorway tolls: **57.90**
- Time of arrival back in Iruñea (Pamplona), approximately:
03:00-03:30 Sunday.

Other expenses: - 1 breakfast, 2 lunches, 1 dinner (x 2) = **64 €**
- Twin room, one night = **45 €**

TOTAL COST OF THE TRIP for 2 people, one ordinary visit and a contact visit: **426.90 €**

COST of the remaining monthly visits, 1 person per visit: (185.20 € X 3) = **555.60 €**

MONTHLY COST for 4 visits and 1 contact visit: **897.80 €**

Bapaume Prison (Nord Pas-de-Calais, France). Distance:1.100 Km

Visiting times: - Friday from 13:30 to 17:30 h
- Saturday from 08:00 to 12:00 h and from 15:30 to 17:30 h
- Sunday: from 08:00 to 12 h.

Reference: Two relatives, for the Saturday 8:00-12:00 h visit.

Route: Orozko- Hendaia / Dax - Paris - Bapaume - Paris - Hendaia/Dax-Orozko

- Departure time: **07:30 Friday**
- Arrival at Bapaume: 20:00 h

Connections / transfers:

1: Orozko-Hendaia 130 Km / Orozko - Dax 210 Km

- Mode of transport: private car.
- Duration of the drive: 1h 15' / 2h 30'
- Fuel: 15 €.
- Motorway tolls: 12 € / 22 €
- Total: 27 € / 40 €. Return = **54 / 80 €**

2: Hendaia/Dax - Paris

- Mode of transport: Train.
- Ticket price: **150 €** return, per person.

3: Paris - Arras

- Mode of transport: Train
- Ticket price: 2,60 €; **5.20 €** return, per person

4: Arras - Bapaume

- Mode of transport: public bus or prison minibus
- Ticket price: 4 € / 7 €; **8 / 14 €** return, per person

Duration of the trip: **24 hours actual travelling + 1 night.**

Other expenses: - 1 breakfast = 10 € (X2) = **20 €**
- lunch and dinner are packed and taken from home
- Twin room one night, **85 €**

TOTAL COST OF THE TRIP for 2 people, 1 visit: **478 - 515 €**

COST OF THE TRIP for one visit by one person: **287 - 320 €**

MONTHLY COST for 5 people, 4 visits = **1.340 - 1.475 €**

Almeria Prison (Almeria, Spain). Distance: 922 km

Visiting times: Ordinary (see footnote 1) on Saturday mornings.

Reference: One relative travelling together, from Iruñea (Pamplona)

Mode of transport: Mirentxin volunteer van

Route: Lopidana petrol station (Araba) - Almeria

- Departure time: **20:00h (Friday)**
- Arrival in Almeria:
- Arrival back in Lopidana: **06:00h (Sunday)**
- Ticket price: **85 €**

Connections/transfers: Iruñea (Pamplona)-Lopidana, Lopidana Iruñea

- Mode of transport: private car
- Departure time: 18:30h (Friday)
- Fuel: 11.95 € x 2
- Motorway tolls: 2.15 € x 2
- Total: **28.20 €**
- Arrival time back in Iruñea (Pamplona): 07:30h (Sunday)

Other expenses: Lunches, dinners, breakfasts: **21 €**

Hostel room: **25 €**

COST OF TRIP for one visit by one person: **159.20 €.**

COST OF TRIP for 3 people (Parents and sister) , visit and vis a vis (contact visit):
421.20 €.

TOTAL MONTHLY COST for 4 visits, 1 vis a vis: **898.80 €.**

Liancourt Prison (France). Distance- 1000 Km

Visiting times: - 3 hour visit, on tuesdays, wednesdays or saturdays.

Reference: Parents and sister one visit per week

Mode of transport: Train

Route: Iruñea(Pamplona)-Hendaia-Paris-Liancourt-Paris-Hendaia-Iruñea

Connections/transfers:

1: Iruñea - Hendaia, Hendaia-Iruñea

- Mode of transport: private car.
- Departure time: 16:30 Friday
- Duration of the drive: 1h
- Fuel: 20 €
- Motorway tolls: 7 € x 2 = 14 €
- Total: 27 €; Return: **54 €**

2: Hendaia - Paris, Paris- Hendaia

- Mode of transport: Train.
- Departure time: 19:30 Friday.
- Arrival at Paris: 7:30 Saturday
- Ticket price: **140 €** return, per person

3: Paris - Liancourt, Liancourt - Paris

- Mode of transport: metro
- Ticket price: 1.50 €; **3 €** return, per person
- Taxi (10 km): 20 €; return **40 €**

Other expenses: Two rooms one night: **120 €**
(lunch and dinner and breakfast are packed and taken from home)

TOTAL COST OF THE TRIP for 3 people, 1 visit: **643 €.**

And even more expenses...

In addition to the costs mentioned, which have to do with visits, we must also insist that prisoners are not "kept by the State" (contrary to what is so often and lightly said). Prisoners are kept by their families. It is not true that their basic needs are covered, or that they do not need money, just because they are in prison. Prisons only ensure the most basic food and hygiene:

Lunch and dinner. Rations have been considerably reduced. The diet is far from balanced or adequate. Food usually contains too much fat and few vegetables. For example, breakfast is just a malted drink and four biscuits or one cupcake.

Every month, the prison hands out a parcel containing:

- 4 toilet rolls
- 1 set of plastic cutlery
- 1 tube of toothpaste
- 1 bottle of shower gel
- 1 bottle of bleach
- 6 condoms (to the men) and a packet of sanitary towels (for women).
- Twice a year the parcel contains a hair comb, one sponge and one plastic cup.

Prisoners must buy their own rubbish bags, soap, scouring pad, caning cloths, shampoo, tampons, shaving foam and any other cleaning or personal hygiene product. In addition to this prisoners have to also pay for postage stamps, envelopes, writing pads, pens, paper, plus dairy products, cold cuts, coffee and the very few authorized food items they can get in order to supplement a deficient diet.

A further point that most people do not know is that prisoners are made to purchase certain articles through the prison administration itself. Among these we can list, computers (no internet connection, of course) TVs, radio sets, handicrafts materials, etc. This means we cannot buy more expensive items (TVs, computers...) by instalments, so this obliges families to large

one-off payments which we cannot always afford and to transfer the money into the prisoners account at the prison so that he or she can purchase the said item(s). Prisoners do not have access to cash. The money must be transferred to an account run by the prison administration. We view this as a form of business by the state, which we are made to maintain.

The prison allows weekly expenses of 80 euro (not counting, special purchases like the ones mentioned above: radio, TV...). If we take account of the fact that authorized 'phone calls cost at least 40 euro a month, a prisoner needs a minimum of 200 euro per month for the most basic expenses.

Then we must add clothing and shoes, handicrafts and Reading material, books and any material required for studies, including matriculation cost; glasses; dentists and, of course, a trusted (non-prison) doctor and legal counsel.

We are not talking about treats or luxuries. We are talking about a dignified life in prison. We are talking about rights: the right to hygiene, the right to healthcare, the right to legal assistance, the right to study, the right to communicate orally or in writing... All these rights have a cost which a jailed person cannot pay. It is us, their relatives and friends, who must take care of these costs.

Despite the large monthly cost caused by the prisoner dispersal policy, we have found nothing but obstacles whenever we have tried to apply for grants or economic aid as enjoyed by other groups of people. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of how the policy of dispersal is aimed at us relatives is the fact that on the very few occasions when we have actually managed to get a grant or some form of economic support, it has been contested at court, usually by the Delegation of the Spanish Government in the Basque Country.