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Tourists not impressed by increase in the rate of the tourist tax: See Full Report Inside Today



35,000 people visit Palma Boat Show: See Full Report Inside



British driver fined after Portals village crash: See Page Three Inside



Prince Harry and Meghan choose their royal wedding carriage: See Inside

THE END OF ETA

Madrid.—Basque separatist group ETA has completely dismantled all its structures, ending a 50-year guerrilla campaign, it said in a letter dated 16 April and published by online newspaper *El Diario* yesterday.

The group had been expected to announce its final dissolution later this week, after its ultimately unsuccessful drive for an independent state in northern Spain and southern France that killed around 850 people.

“ETA has completely dissolved all

its structures and ended its political initiative,” said the letter, which *El Diario* said had been sent to several Basque organisations.

ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, or Basque Country and Freedom) declared a ceasefire in 2011 and handed over weapons in April 2017, bringing Western Europe’s last major armed insurgency to a close.

These decisions were aimed at “shaking off the situation of the last decades and building a future from a

new starting point,” ETA said in the letter published yesterday.

Anger in the Basque region of northern Spain over political and cultural repression under the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco prompted the founding of ETA in 1959.

Violence escalated in the 1960s and Franco’s regime responded in kind, as the group assassinated politicians and officials as well as bombing public places.