

The accession of Spain and Portugal

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Like Greece, Spain and Portugal were two Mediterranean countries that were emerging from dictatorship and seeking to consolidate their newly restored democracies. Having long been marginalised in Europe both economically and politically, Spain and Portugal also suffered from outdated industrial and agricultural sectors compared with the Member States of the European Economic Community (EEC). Membership of the EEC appeared to be the ideal solution to the problems facing these countries in transition.

On 1 January 1986, Spain and Portugal acceded to the European Economic Community, which thus became the 'Europe of the Twelve'. The accession process for Portugal and Spain was more lengthy and difficult than that for Greece because of the considerable economic interests involved and the weight of the Spanish economy.