

'Spain, too, has applied for association with the Common Market' from Corriere della Sera (10 February 1962)

Caption: On 10 February 1962, the Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera comments on Spain's application for association with the European Economic Community (EEC).

Source: Corriere della Sera. 10.02.1962, n° 35; anno 87. Milano: Corriere della Sera. "Anche la Spagna ha chiesto l'associazione al M.E.C.", auteur:Stefani, Umberto , p. 6.

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Spain, too, has applied for association with the Common Market

In the next stage, it would like to achieve full integration

From our correspondent

Brussels, 9 February, night.

Spain, according to an announcement made by the Spanish Embassy in Brussels, has applied for association with the European Common Market, intending to achieve 'full integration' at a later date.

The Spanish ambassador to Belgium, who is also accredited to the EEC, this morning delivered a letter to this effect from his government to the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community.

In Brussels, Spain's application has caused surprise, pleasure and a degree of perplexity. Surprise, because of the speed with which the Spanish ambassador has acted upon last week's rumours in taking today's step towards the European Economic Community. Pleasure, because it concerns the European vocation of a country which, after joining the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has met with indisputable success during the implementation of the first stage of its 'economic stabilisation plan', thanks to which Spain is in the process of creating a solid industrial infrastructure and now has a reserve of 850 million dollars.

Furthermore, Spain's territorial contiguity with the other countries in the Community, its geographical position and its independence represent a significant contribution to European cohesion. 'And all this,' writes the Brussels popular liberal newspaper, 'at a time when Europe is continually having to deal with Afro-Asian blackmail and the threats posed by the high-level bargaining between Russia and the United States. The experience of Yalta has taught us the price to be paid for such bargaining, and who is expected to pay it.' Perplexity, finally, for economic and political reasons: the former centred in Italy, the latter in Belgium.

Spain has a predominantly agricultural economy and it grows Mediterranean crops, which therefore puts it in competition with our Italian fruit and vegetable produce. Eighty per cent of Iberian production is already exported to countries within the Common Market. Spain is obviously making its application on condition that its current outlets within the Community are protected. Very conveniently, today's application by the Spanish Government anticipates a gradual integration of Spain into the Common Market over a period of time still to be decided, within which there will be scope not only to adapt but also to help orientate Spain's economic policy and social structure to the political and social policies of the countries within the Common Market. In any talks with Spain, however, Italy must be in the forefront of the search to reconcile its acquired interests in agricultural matters where the Community is concerned with those sought by the Spanish Government in the same area.

The political considerations and issues are centred in Belgium. The aftermath of the Spanish civil war has opened a painful chapter in that nation's history, to which can be added the shelter that Spain granted to Léon Degrelle, who led Belgian collaboration during the last war. Paul-Henri Spaak, the current Foreign Minister and influential member of the Belgian Socialist Party, has on several occasions levelled criticism at the regime that emerged following the Spanish Revolution. The marriage of the Belgian King Baudouin to Fabiola, a Spanish aristocrat, has attenuated much of the criticism, but the impression is that today's application by Spain to align itself with the democratic countries that form the Common Market could cause the same issues to be aired once more. Belgium, and in particular Mr Spaak, will very probably set political conditions on Spain's membership of the Common Market, which perhaps Spain will now be inclined to accept.

Umberto Stefani