

## "Spain's terms of accession to the EEC with regard to agriculture will not be renegotiated" from El País (16 July 1985)

**Caption:** According to a report published in the Spanish daily newspaper El País on 16 July 1985, Frans Andriessen, Vice-President of the European Commission with special responsibility for agriculture and fisheries, warns of potential difficulties ahead when the terms for Spanish accession to the European Communities are applied.

**Source:** El País. 16.07.1985. Madrid. "No se renegociará la adhesión de España a la CEE en el terreno agrícola", auteur:Ortega, Andrés.

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## Interview

### ‘Spain’s terms of accession to the EEC with regard to agriculture will not be renegotiated’

#### Interview with Frans H J J Andriessen, Vice-President of the European Commission

Andrés Ortega — Brussels

Interviewed by *El Pais* in Luxembourg, Frans H J J Andriessen, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Agriculture and Fisheries since 6 January, says that he ‘does not have the impression’ that Spain’s terms of accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) with regard to agriculture will be renegotiated. Andriessen has been a member of the EEC’s executive body since 1981 and was formerly Commissioner for Competition Policy.

However, the 56-year-old Dutch Catholic Christian Democrat, who was his country’s Finance Minister from 1977 to 1979, thinks difficulties may arise in applying the complicated accession terms. Last Wednesday in Luxembourg Andriessen presented the European Commission’s Green Paper on the prospects for reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), which basically advocates a system of price restrictions (instead of production quotas) to limit surpluses. He believes that the oils and fats sector will be one of the main problems arising for the EEC from the accession of Spain and Portugal and will also cause problems *vis-à-vis* the United States.

**Question.** The system provided for in the Act of Accession to integrate Spanish agriculture into the EEC seems very complicated. Can it be applied, or will it prove too complicated and not be applied at all?

**Answer.** The arrangements that we have negotiated reflect the complicated situation with which we had to contend. The situation is complicated with regard to northern products, with a high degree of protection in Spain and price problems. We also have problems with fruit and vegetables and with oils. We have endeavoured to make the process of integration as smooth as possible in the circumstances. The system will be manageable, but we shall have to tread carefully. We must try not to make it any more complicated than it is already. A complicated system was, however, inevitable.

[Andriessen thinks that the huge amount of work that still needs to be done in order to finalise the technical details of the accession negotiations can be completed by 1 January 1986 (even if there is more time available for agriculture, where the deadline is 1 March).]

**Q.** Which sectors of Spanish agriculture will be most problematic in future for Spain and the EEC?

**A.** The oils and fats sector will be a very difficult problem. The approach to price increases in the first three years following accession is very moderate. A more radical approach will come with the change in the Community’s oils and fats regime. That will be a very difficult operation.

I am not saying that Spain will cause great problems in this respect. But it is a sector that will raise considerable difficulties for the Community of the Twelve.

#### Proposed levy on fats

**Q.** Has the proposal for a levy on fats to subsidise olive oil been dropped?

**A.** It has not been dropped. It is still on the table. But the Council [of Ministers of the EEC] is very reluctant to consider it. The Commission has not withdrawn its proposal. It will be taken into account in the discussions on the new regime. As things stand, however, the Community is unlikely to reach a consensus on the introduction of such a levy.

**Q.** This issue, which is indirectly linked to EEC imports of cereals substitutes (such as soya) and cereals, may lead to considerable problems with the United States within GATT.

**A.** The United States' reaction has been very hostile. Obviously, we shall try to take account of the external effects of what we are attempting to do internally in the fats sector. There will be repercussions both in GATT and in our bilateral relations.

**Q.** What attitude do you think Spain will take at the first meeting of Agriculture Ministers in 1986 when it comes to fixing prices for the 1986/1987 marketing year? Do you think that the terms of accession will be renegotiated, then or afterwards?

**A.** I hope that we have learnt something from previous accessions. We negotiated long enough to find solutions. There is no reason to believe that an attempt to renegotiate is possible. Nor do I have the impression that it will happen. The Spanish are very good negotiators — my congratulations to them — and they played an important part in the negotiations. Naturally, they did not get all that they wanted, since compromise was necessary. As I said, the outcome is complicated. Difficulties may arise in implementing the agreements, and solutions will have to be found. But I myself do not envisage fresh negotiations. When we begin price negotiations for the 1986/1987 marketing year there will certainly be problems of inflation and price levels in Spain. And the negotiations will have to take account of Spain's particular circumstances. That is an added complication, but it will not amount to renegotiation of the accession terms.

### **The Green Paper**

**Q.** Last Wednesday you presented your — or, rather, the European Commission's — Green Paper on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). To what extent is this reform made necessary by the accession of Spain and Portugal?

**A.** The problems we tackle in the Green Paper — surpluses, relatively low world prices, farm incomes, the need for other outlets or alternative land uses — already existed. They were not caused by accession. Clearly, Community agriculture will be more diverse after enlargement and the problems will become more acute.

Those problems already existed, but now they have to be tackled in a new context. Unfortunately, the data that we have is insufficient for us to take full account of the implications of Spanish accession. We are going to conduct detailed studies of the implications of the accession of the two Iberian countries for the CAP. For that reason, we have been unable to incorporate these aspects fully into our Green Paper.

**Q.** When Spain applied for accession in 1977, the CAP was very different from what it is today. Now there are quotas and quantitative restrictions all over the place. Has Spain missed out on the years of plenty?

**A.** If Spain had joined the Community in 1977 the problems would not have been very different. On the contrary, decisions on certain products would have had to be taken earlier. Wine, for example. The final decision on a new regime for wine — aimed at getting rid of table wine surpluses by means of compulsory distillation — was taken last February. Had Spain joined earlier, we would have had to deal with the problem earlier. I do not think that Spain has missed out on anything.

**Q.** The Green Paper does not appear to favour general application of the production quota system under the CAP. Instead, it seems to propose reducing surpluses by lowering prices.

**A.** Quite so. We have quotas for sugar, milk and processed tomatoes. People think that production quotas solve all the problems. But they do not. First of all, for political or national reasons, we have never set quotas at the right level; they have always been too high. Secondly, people think that because there are quotas, they can raise prices. But if a product is overpriced it will not find a sufficient market, even if it is subject to a quota.

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