

## Spain and the European integration process

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### Spain: European misfit

Spain was distanced from the process of international cooperation in Europe as a result of the international condemnation of Francoism; that condemnation started with the Potsdam Declaration (2 August 1945) and became more significant with the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution 39(I) (12 December 1946) recommending Spain be debarred from international agencies and conferences until there was a change in the political regime in the country. At European level, the condemnation of the regime was evident both in the vetoing by the European countries of participation by Spain in the Marshall Plan (1947–48) and in the resolution adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe (10 August 1950), demanding the end of the dictatorship as a prerequisite to Spanish membership of European institutions. The upshot of this was that at the end of the first half of the 20th century, Spain was the most marginalised country in Western Europe. Indeed, Spain would be the very last European country to establish formal institutional links with the cooperation bodies that had emerged in Europe at the end of the Second World War. The cause of all this was the Axis Stigma.

Nevertheless, the Franco regime's concern, by means of various bilateral and later multilateral diplomatic initiatives, to find a place in post-war Europe and to overturn the negative image it continued to have in European public opinion, would be manifested in a conscious effort to develop channels of communication with any European regional organisation, but especially those focusing on military, technical and economic aspects, in which Spain might become involved, the ultimate aim being to try to force full membership or otherwise secure some kind of association that would be advantageous to Spain in bodies of greater political importance, namely NATO, the OEEC or the Council of Europe. Those initiatives would meet with varying degrees of success: although Spain joined the OEEC in 1958 as an associate member and would sign technical agreements with the Council of Europe such as the European Convention on the International Classification of Patents for Invention in 1955, or the European Cultural Convention in 1956, it would not achieve membership of the Council of Europe until 1977 or of NATO until 1981.

The culmination of those efforts to adjust to the international environment was a request on 9 February 1962 for negotiations to be opened with the EEC; the application was based on an economic rationale to ensure the survival of the regime, however obvious the limitations of the adjustments both from the economic and, more especially, the political point of view. Those limitations were patently clear in the Council's response: an acknowledgement of receipt.

The Spanish request admittedly forced the EEC to adopt an official position towards Franco's regime. The ensuing debate on the appropriateness or otherwise of opening negotiations with Spain quickly became a political campaign against association run by the European left, a campaign which was given voice in the Birkelbach Report to the European Parliament on the conditions of association and accession. European Foreign Ministries and European regional bodies which had either parliamentary assemblies or a political bent were identical in their assessments: domestic liberalisation, both economic and political, had to be the 'cause' of membership of Europe and not its 'effect'. That would be the 'European red line' that the regime came up against: the half-hearted efforts it had made in order to align its economic policies with those conducted in Europe were regarded as a 'necessary' but 'insufficient' condition.

The second step in Spain's attempts at rapprochement with the Communities would occur on 2 June 1964 when the President of the Council of Ministers, Paul-Henri Spaak, formally responded to Spanish requests with a compromise solution, namely authorisation of a study into the problems which the Community posed for Spain.

There was no question that the principal obstacle continued to lie in the view taken by the EEC of Spain and its political regime. Spain was a secondary issue in economic terms; it was above all politically awkward.

Overlying all this was the bilateral nature of relations between Spain and the Member States of the Community, which would take Spanish diplomats into very difficult situations: it was a complex matter to transfer the level of understanding at bilateral level with certain governments to a multilateral framework where there was a wide range of interests and attitudes.

Furthermore, the attempts of the Franco regime to establish closer ties with Brussels meant that monitoring Spanish political development became increasingly demanding. Indeed, once the relationship between Spain and the EEC became part of the institutional fabric, the Community institutions had the moral legitimacy to denounce the regime and require it to undergo an explicit process of political development which would bring about its liberalisation.

Francoist Spain reached a degree of accommodation through a complex but inconclusive negotiating process which opened following the signing on 29 June 1970 of the Preferential Trade Agreement. Relations would remain practically deadlocked from the latter part of 1972, when negotiations to insert an Additional Protocol concluded, until the end of the Francoist dictatorship. The Additional Protocol would be signed in Brussels on 29 January 1973. Initially, the problem essentially lay in the fact that Spanish agricultural exports to the EEC countries would be under threat if the new members relinquished their traditionally liberal import practices to fit in with the common agricultural policy, as required by the Community acquis and the Treaties of Accession.

The 1970 Agreement had three salient features: 1) it was the result of lengthy exploratory dialogue begun in 1964 and ending in 1967, but above all it was the culmination of negotiations which had been fraught with political and technical difficulties requiring two mandates from the Council of Ministers, in July 1967 and October 1969; 2) it was a ‘telescopic formula’ which provided for two stages of development, although the move from the first step to the second would not occur automatically as it involved the deepening of relations and was consequently to be the subject of further negotiations; 3) for the EEC it was strictly a trade agreement of minor importance, but to Spain it was essential both from the political perspective (it was presented as a victory for the regime in its relations with Europe) and in economic terms, as to some degree it allowed Spain to sneak into the Community, even if only by the back door.

In short, although the attempts to establish closer ties with Brussels resulted in increasingly strict monitoring of Spanish political development that would come to be reflected in a gradual harshening of Community negotiating positions, the lack of unanimity in the various Community fields on the issues raised by Spain would have a determining influence on the stance adopted by the EEC.

### **Negotiation, accession and membership of Europe**

Following Franco’s death, Europe would become a key aspect of the developing democratic political culture and would act as a uniting factor for the emerging political class. At that point Europe would attain its zenith as a blueprint for the Spaniards’ system of harmonious democratic relations. To be accepted and approved of by Europe became one of the principal banners of political socialisation in the nascent democracy. The vehicle for that approval would obviously involve membership of the European regional organisations, namely the Council of Europe and the European Communities. All democratic political forces interpreted membership of the European Community as a crucial safeguard for the young, fragile Spanish democracy.

Spain joined as part of what has been referred to as ‘the southward enlargement’, the result of the processes of transition to democracy which occurred in three countries in southern Europe: Greece, Portugal and Spain. The enlargement occurred in two phases: Greece made its membership application in 1975 and on 1 January 1981 it became the tenth Member State of the Community, while the two countries occupying the Iberian Peninsula would have to wait until 1986, despite the fact that they had made their application for membership in 1977.

The reasons for the delay lie both in the fact that negotiations for Spain’s membership of the European Communities were not easy for either side: the length of the negotiating process (1979–1985) gives an idea of the economic, political and technical complexities raised by Spanish membership, and in the fact that the

Spanish application occurred at a particularly difficult time for the EEC, following a twofold crisis, an economic crisis — eurosclerosis — and an institutional crisis — Community stagnation — which was itself the result of the impact of the first oil shock in 1973–1974 and the disputes generated in the Communities following the first enlargement in 1972. The main consequence was that the negotiation between Spain and the EEC placed a number of new issues on the overloaded Community agenda which, at the beginning of the 1980s, was determinedly trying to relaunch the process of European integration.

### *The beginning of the negotiations*

On 15 June 1977, Spain held its first free elections since 1936; on 6 July the European Parliament welcomed the conduct of the elections and reaffirmed ‘its political resolve to see Spain take its place in the European Community as soon as possible’. Some weeks later, on 28 July 1977, democratic Spain formally submitted its application for accession to the Communities, strengthening its position some months later when it joined the Council of Europe even though the 1978 Constitution had not yet been approved.

The Community’s reaction to the Spanish application was positive but cautious and formal; no specific date was given either for the commencement of negotiations or for their duration. As a result, the Spanish application was supported by a number of visits to European capitals by the Prime Minister, Adolfo Suárez. During these visits the Prime Minister set out the difficulties posed by the process: French opposition to an enlargement that would not be in its farmers’ interests, especially French farmers growing Mediterranean crops; the Netherlands required democratic Spain to recognise the State of Israel; Denmark sought a clear decision on the Atlantic Alliance; Italy viewed Spain as a potential ally in the forthcoming renegotiation of the CAP. Political veto was clearly not the only obstacle in the way of Spain’s joining the EEC.

On 20 April 1978, the Commission sent a document to the Council setting out considerations on the problems raised by the enlargement of the Community of ‘Nine’ to a Community of ‘Twelve’ members (‘General considerations on the problems of enlargement’). However, only on 29 November 1978 would the Commission give its approval of, and deliver a favourable ‘Opinion’ on, Spain’s application for membership of the Community.

In autumn 1977 Spain had begun its economic policy preparations for accession. Indeed, the Moncloa Pacts should be regarded both as part of the process of structural reforms likely to bring the Spanish economy into closer alignment with the European economy, and as a necessarily rapid response to the economic crisis threatening the success of the political transition. It was only on 5 February 1979, after the referendum on the Constitution on 6 December 1978, that the session officially opening negotiations for the accession of Spain took place.

That date marked the beginning of two parallel processes: an examination of secondary law and an overall analysis. The former consisted in a joint review of all Community legislation, and the latter constituted the first stage of negotiations proper, in which each party set out in writing its opinion on the form by which each candidate country was to adopt the Community acquis.

### *The first problems: the French deadlock, 1980–1982*

The first problems in the negotiations became evident at the beginning of 1980, when the Community failed to present the overall analysis on agriculture. Behind the delay was French reluctance to engage on agricultural matters related to Spanish membership amid full renegotiation of Community structures. However, the attempted coup of 23 February 1981 and Spanish pressure in its aftermath encouraged a view in several Community quarters that the deadlock in negotiations should be broken. This gave rise to a slight recovery in the process, facilitated by a trip to Brussels by the Prime Minister, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, which meant that six of the sixteen chapters in the negotiation could be concluded, namely: Movement of Capital, Harmonisation of Legislation, Transport, Economic and Financial Issues, Regional Policy, Freedom of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, at a governmental session of negotiations on 22 March 1982.

For political and economic reasons, the prime foreign policy objective of the first González government was accession to the EEC. Moreover, it tackled the negotiations from a different perspective. The essential objective of the negotiation remained unchanged, however: in order to achieve accession based on the principles of balance, progressiveness and reciprocity, the technical negotiations were supplemented by political measures which paved the way for them to progress.

Nonetheless, three major political problems had to be addressed in the final stages of the negotiation: as a price for breaking the deadlock in the negotiations with Spain, the British were making demands which could have a negative impact on the link between Community enlargement and the increase in Community resources earmarked for CAP reform; the attitude of France, which at the Athens European Council of December 1983 threatened to block new accessions, a stance it maintained until the Fontainebleau European Council of June 1984 when Mitterrand decided there should be a thaw in negotiations; and the ‘calculated ambiguity’ of the Spanish position towards NATO (accession to the Community and continued membership of the Atlantic Alliance were linked for the purposes of Spanish public opinion and in dealings with Europe), provoking a reaction on the part of the United States.

In any event, the *technical* negotiations generally made good progress. When the Commission presented its positions on agriculture to the Spanish government in January 1984, the final straight in the negotiations came into view. That phase included packages of major topics, and it was on those packages that the greatest difficulties became apparent: the transitional periods. The final unclosed chapters were concluded on 26 March 1985, when the principal obstacles had been overcome both from the political and economic points of view.

The Treaty of Accession signed in Madrid on 12 June 1985, and ratified by the Congress of Deputies at the end of that month with 309 votes in favour and none against, provided for a process of immediate incorporation which would become effective on 1 January 1986 but at the same time established a gradual process of integration in stages over a lengthy, complex transitional period, a period which would subsequently be shortened as a result of the establishment of the Single Market.

The signing of the Treaty of Accession of Spain to the European Communities unquestionably marked a turning point in relations between Spain and Europe, which now became normal in every respect. Where the Community was concerned, there was a move in the first few years away from support for EC entry for predominantly political reasons, and towards using the accession as a means of modernising the economic structure and the social fabric. The main consequence of the change in objective was the development of a strategy in which the defence of Spanish interests was based on amending the Community *acquis* so as to allow Spain’s position within the Community to improve.

Domestically, alongside the huge effort made at all levels to adjust to Community requirements, Spain — like most European democracies — experienced the impact of the dual process of restructuring the State ‘from the top down’ and ‘from the bottom up’. However, it may be that the Spanish experience was more intense, because the creation of a State composed of Autonomous Communities coincided almost precisely with entry into the Community. Nonetheless the major challenge of the first few years was economic reform, and accordingly special note should be made of the completion of retrofitting (especially in sectors of heavy industry), the structural improvements in agriculture, fisheries and telecommunications and the formulation of new policies on technological innovation, professional and vocational training, the environment, etc.

Indeed, the results of Spanish involvement in that period were unanimously hailed as positive by all sides. Domestically, democracy was strengthened and the country benefited under the European funds and policies (environment, R&D policy, regional development, infrastructure and competition) and achieved significant results in the redistribution of wealth. At Community level it managed to overcome its historical isolation and was accepted by its European partners, and in some years even played a burgeoning leadership role in certain matters at Community level.

### *Formulation of European policy following accession, 1986–1989*

On 1 January 1986, Spain (alongside Portugal) became part of the Community and thereby concluded an eight-year negotiation process. The Spanish accession was formalised under an extensive, detailed Treaty containing 204 articles, which was unprecedented in previous negotiations. Perhaps the protracted negotiation process prepared the Spanish government to take on significant challenges.

Strategically, during the first few years, national interests were protected by backing the standpoint on the Single Market adopted by the European Commission. In other words, the establishment of the internal market would increase the gap between rich and poor, a tendency which had to be countered via measures which would promote greater ‘cohesion’ within the Community. Accordingly, the search for a North–South balance that would counter the greater competitiveness of the northern countries would emerge through measures encouraging *economic and social cohesion*. The aim of formulating a foreign policy and playing a greater international leadership role using the resources available under Community policies manifested itself in the effort to transfer some of the individual aspects of Spain’s international agenda onto the agenda of the Community.

Generally speaking, Spain was relatively quick to gain the image of a country that was politically and administratively serious, stable and efficient and able to inspire confidence in potential investors. However, the radical change experienced in international society following the fall of the Berlin Wall had a significant negative impact on its room for manoeuvre. The end of the Cold War posed a real danger, as it once again left Spain on the periphery, away from the heart of European integration, barely three years after its accession.

### *Formulation of the Spanish model of European integration, 1989–1991*

It was precisely this period that was identified with the formulation of the Spanish model of European integration — ‘Europe as an area of solidarity’ — and for its determination to achieve a distinguished international profile against the background of the transformations that Europe had undergone in the wake of the Cold War. Both objectives relied to a certain extent on a unanimous pro-European attitude among the political forces and public opinion.

Changes in the European policy of Spain occurred as part of the intergovernmental negotiations between 1989 and 1991 that were to give rise to the Treaty on European Union, and accordingly those changes should be interpreted both as an attempt to adjust to the political, institutional, social, economic and monetary implications of the establishment of the Single Market and the dovetailing of the four Community freedoms (free movement of persons, services, goods and capital) planned for 1992, and as an attempt to adjust to the manner by which the negotiating process was conducted; namely, two simultaneous intergovernmental conferences, one focused on a study of Economic and Monetary Union and the other on Political Union, culminating in the Maastricht European Council in December 1991.

The Spanish strategy throughout those years centred on one basic premise: the protection of national interests, featuring an impeccable pro-European rhetoric in combination with strong measures of pragmatism, exemplified in the tabling of politically and economically significant proposals. The strategy would crystallise in the formulation of a model of the European Union whose prominent feature was the defence of a major objective, *economic and social cohesion*, a prestige objective, *European citizenship*, and a prime pro-European objective, *the CFSP, including European defence*.

### **Spain and the Europe of Maastricht: the new European agenda, 1991–1996**

For several reasons, this period can essentially be described as a difficult stage in the European policy of Socialist governments. Within the EU, the new Community agenda and the economic crisis of the first half of the 1990s posed difficulties which were aggravated by the enlargement to Fifteen, when the Socialist governments’ political influence within the Union fell, despite the fact that they continued to have a power of veto within the Council; problems also arose through difficulties in meeting the convergence criteria

provided for in Maastricht. Domestically the anti-Maastricht offensive, which extended Europe-wide, naturally had an effect in Spain, where there was political exhaustion and recession: in some sectors Maastricht was synonymous with economic crisis and threatened to break domestic consensus on European integration ('yes' to political union; 'no' to its monetarist aspect).

That situation was a result of various factors: the changes arising from the post-Cold War period and the economic crisis in Europe post-Maastricht; criticisms of the model advocated by Spain which had become apparent in the course of the ratification processes for the Treaty on European Union; the changes in the Community priorities of its allies in Maastricht; the inevitable enlargement of the Community to Fifteen and the upsetting of the delicate balance between North and South; the eastward shift in the Community's centre of gravity; a new agenda dominated by the conflicts which had sprung up in post-Cold War Europe and led to the failure in the Balkans of a stuttering CFSP.

Similarly, because of the exacting conditions established in Maastricht, and more specifically because it coincided with the economic recession of the first half of the 1990s, the process of convergence towards the third stage of economic and monetary union (inflation, cost of money, public deficit, debt, membership of the European Monetary System) became a vehicle for criticising the economic policy of a government worn down by corruption scandals.

The government's reaction to the relentless pursuit to which it was subject domestically was to increase its commitment to the convergence policy and redouble efforts to remain at the *centre* of European integration under the slogan 'More Europe'. However, the economic priorities were confirmed by social agents who questioned the appropriateness of Spain making the sacrifices required to be part of the leading group in EMU; those doubts pervaded Parliament and more than once threatened to overturn the pro-European unanimity that had been in place since the transition. The debate within Spain over that period was phrased crudely in terms of pro-Europeanness *versus* national interest.

Because of the domestic situation, the Socialist Government gave priority to European policy, perhaps looking beyond its borders for a resolution to domestic problems. Paradoxically that policy, alongside the difficulties that arose from failing to meet the convergence criteria in the most decisive years of the crisis, fed the perception of Spain as a southern, outlying country. The Spanish response to that situation at Community level was to insist that Spain had to be regarded as a large country in the Community decision-making process and to advocate maintaining the principle of economic and social cohesion.

There is no doubt that European policy in this period was distinguished by both pragmatism and willingness, and accordingly Spain made economic and social cohesion the foundation stone of its pro-European discourse. The basis for attaining that objective was the protection of the Community *acquis* and rejection of any initiative which could lead to the introduction of a 'two-speed Europe' or a Europe with 'variable geometry'. However, these positions gradually became more flexible in the course of the broader negotiation process, which included the financing of the Delors II package, under which resources were provided to the Cohesion Fund, the main priority of Spain's European agenda at the Edinburgh European Council of December 1992.

Those priorities would be intensified during the northward enlargement, which was to be postponed until 1995, when the ratification process would be complete. Spain did not hesitate to point to the treatment it had received during its accession negotiations, and pushed for a better position in matters which were particularly sensitive to public opinion, such as fisheries. It also dusted off its intention to retain the role of a large country when it defended the population criterion during the re-weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers following the enlargement to Sweden, Finland and Austria, at the Ioannina Council in 1994. The perception of a fall in Spain's importance in the European Union may well go some way towards helping to understand the changes in European policy during that period:

- Spain was among those countries defending the distinctly anti-European rationale of objections (retention of the right of veto);
- Spanish positions were clearly defended in terms of the national interest;
- Spain began to change the thrust of its Community alliances and frequently stood alongside the United

Kingdom.

Finally, it should be noted that under the Spanish Presidency of the second half of 1995, preparatory work for the Intergovernmental Conference to review Maastricht began, the content of the new transatlantic agenda was formulated and a name was found for the single currency: the euro. The focus of the Spanish Presidency, however, with its pragmatic, managerial profile, perfectly exemplified both the gradualist approach which held sway at the time over its European policy objectives and the efforts to capitalise politically at home on the success of the six-month Presidency of the European Union.

In short, throughout this period the stated resolve to be a *key country* expressed itself principally in two areas: first, in the efforts made to be one of the first countries to reach the third stage of European Economic Union and be part of the ‘hard core’ of the single currency; and second, attempts were made to overturn the perception that Spain was once again on the *periphery*, following the northward enlargement of a Union which was now also beginning to look eastwards. This was managed through political initiatives targeting the south and the Mediterranean, the best exponent of which was the EuroMediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November 1995.

### **Spain at the ‘hard core’ of Economic and Monetary Union, 1996–2000**

The arrival in power of the People’s Party (PP) following the general election of 1996 opened a new phase in relations between Spain and the European Union, which coincided with negotiations to review the Treaty of Maastricht.

Politically, however, the principal issue (apart from the entry of Spain into the third stage of Economic and Monetary Union in 1998) was whether there had been a partial or complete change in the model for European integration as compared to the previous period, when domestic weakness and the need to adjust to the changes under way in Europe marked the point where the plans that had been in place in the early 1990s began to be nibbled away.

In any event, the legacy González bequeathed to Aznar can be expressed in three basic challenges which the PP generally sought to respond to in their own style, namely:

- to be part of the core of countries to adopt the single currency in 1999;
- to ensure that eastward enlargement occurred without major cost to the cohesion countries;
- to improve Spanish positions within the European institutions in terms of power and influence.

The relative continuity in the objectives was tempered both by the appearance of new items on the European agenda — reform of the CFSP, the European security and defence identity, the Helsinki Council of December 1999 and the Lisbon Council of June 2000 — and by a different degree of political and ideological sensitivity on certain Community matters — the neoliberal aspect of European integration and the Social Summit in Luxembourg in 1997. Those changes were particularly noticeable in the diplomatic arena (abandonment of traditional alliances with Germany and France), security (much greater focus on the Atlantic than on Europe) and domestic political debate (worsening of fault lines on economic policy and social policy).

The domestic aspect of European policy was also evident in the stubborn defence of Spanish positions on the Cohesion Funds at the Berlin Summit in March 1999 (Agenda 2000 and the financial framework for the period 2000–2006), which ended with the retention of the budgetary allocation to the Funds and the domestic controversy over whether Aznar had secured more or less than González had in Edinburgh.

There is no question that the accession to power of the PP in 1996 gradually revealed the fact that there was another concept of Europe in Spain that had no truck either with the Socialists’ interpretation of Spain’s recent history or with the role they claimed Europe had played in it. However, ambiguity in the way that PP European policy changed meant that, especially at first, it appeared that the consensus on Europe essentially held firm and continuity would predominate over change; this was despite the transformations in discourse and in the agenda which heralded a Conservative approach founded on a nationalist economic and political tradition in the defence of national interests.



The relative continuity in objectives and approaches would undergo a drastic and abrupt change upon completion of the third stage of EMU and joining the euro, especially following the victory by overall majority in the election of 2000 and the about-face in the overall structure of foreign policy.

Indeed, from the time when the PP gained an overall majority, there was a gradual break away from the priorities of foreign and European policy which had previously been established; this was visible in the handling and priorities of the European agenda of the Aznar government. Two aspects stood out in this: cohesion and the fight against terrorism.

With regard to cohesion, suffice it to say that the traditional Spanish discourse in defence of the Community acquis (namely the Spanish right to continue to enjoy agricultural aid and benefit under the Cohesion Fund, even after enlargement to the East) continued, but the implementation and especially the approaches taken had significant consequences. On the one hand there were confrontations with Chancellor Schröder, both in the negotiations of the budget framework 2000–2006 as part of Agenda 2000 and in the eastward enlargement. On the other hand, there were the difficulties posed in the negotiations by the prospect of maintaining those funds following eastward enlargement. That was an issue on which the Aznar governments adopted an ambiguous and sometimes (depending on the situation) inconsistent attitude.

The second major matter on Aznar's European agenda was the fight against terrorism. In that regard the Spanish government adopted measures such as extradition between European countries. By all accounts the process was lengthy and difficult, and the first steps towards it were taken in the PP's first term. Indeed all that was achieved in Amsterdam was a protocol on political control by the Council of the Union on the right of asylum; the issue was the subject of special study at the Tampere summit in 1999, where the development of an area of security, liberty and justice was proposed, a proposal which was met with misgivings by some Member States, especially where extradition between Member States was concerned; this was also one of the objectives of the Spanish Presidency of 2002. Contrary to all expectations, that objective was attained even before the start of the Presidency as a result of the 9/11 attacks, when the Fifteen approved the European Arrest Warrant (making extradition virtually automatic in terrorism cases). Finally, during the Spanish Presidency, the government achieved one further step forward: seven countries, including Spain, undertook to implement the European Arrest Warrant one year ahead of schedule. In any event it should be noted that 9/11 acted as a catalyst to the Aznar government's demands and enabled the Spanish agenda to become part of the international (European) picture.

Another area where the fault line in European policy can be noted lies in the reformulation of the Spanish model of European integration, whose consequence was the emergence of striking differences between the political parties, which, in practice, implied a break in the Parliamentary consensus on European policy, especially in the areas of liberalism and the Atlantic relationship.

The submission of a liberal economic and social programme for European integration by José María Aznar and Tony Blair at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000 involved the formulation of a new economic and social model for Europe to make Europe more competitive internationally, to achieve full employment through flexibility in the labour market and liberalisation in sectors such as transport, energy and telecommunications. This programme was widely criticised for clashing with the traditional European social model that was the legacy of the social pact of the post-war years.

The constant clashes between the French and Spanish positions and the German and Spanish positions on the interpretation and implementation of the stability pact should be interpreted in a similar manner. Despite this, the major disagreement was over transatlantic relations.

The pro-US attitude of the Spanish government evidenced in the Spanish alignment with the US position implied a move away from the traditional Spanish stance, which had been close to that of the French since Spain joined the Community in 1986. This change in attitude became evident as early as the crisis of November 1997 and February 1998, which brought most European countries into conflict with the United States over the latter's bombardment, with British participation, of Iraq ('Operation Lasting Freedom'), in

which Spain supported the US decision. The same can be said of the NATO bombardment of Serbia in 1999.

That attitude became stronger following the arrival of Bush in the White House. Here it should be noted that the moves for greater alignment between the two parties increased. It should be mentioned that on the US side, the first visit to a European country by the US President was to Spain in June 2001. Aznar for his part supported the deployment of the antimissile shield and rejected the ABM Treaty; such positions were at odds with those of most European countries.

The corollary to this situation occurred in the first few months of 2003, first when Spain supported US arguments on Iraq and then when it supported the war, a situation which led the European Union into a very serious crisis which served to further undermine the credibility of European foreign policy; the consequences of that crisis were made plain in the outcome of the work of the Convention for a European Constitution.

Finally, *antifederalism* may be observed in the stance taken by Spain at the Intergovernmental Conference of December 2003, consisting in the rejection of anything that represented a reduction in Spanish power in the Council compared to that achieved in the Nice reform, and the refusal of any possible progress toward federal European integration which might involve undermining the role of the States, even at the risk of deadlock in the Community and a break-up of the Union.

### **Spain from Nice to Lisbon, 2001–2010**

There have traditionally been three main strands to the foreign policy of Spain: Europe, Latin America and the Mediterranean basin; the dominant feature of the European strand specifically had been support for the Franco-German axis. However, José María Aznar's government had moved much closer to the United Kingdom and the United States where the transatlantic relationship was concerned. Indeed, a tendency to attach greater importance to relations with the US, to the detriment of Community links, was increasingly a feature of the period subsequent to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. That approach was strengthened considerably by Spanish participation in the Iraq war in 2003, when Aznar supported the proposals made by the administration of George W. Bush to the United Nations Security Council and participated in the Azores summit alongside his opposite numbers from the UK and the US.

However, before we analyse the implications and course of those events, we should turn our attention to the third Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which occurred in the first half of 2002 and was preceded by the Laeken Declaration, a document which marked a turning point in the EU political debate on the future of Europe. Consideration must also be given to the preparations for the accession of ten new Member States, especially the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) following the reaffirmation of their sovereignty with the end of the Cold War, and the introduction of the single currency. Given the importance of the structural changes implicit in those events, this period is noteworthy for an increase in the vigorousness of the debate on European issues without diminishing the importance of the conflicts and concerns arising out of the international situation as sketched above.

The slogan for the Spanish Presidency of 2002, 'More Europe', was explained by the Prime Minister, Mr Aznar, as first an expression of a desire to afford Europe a greater role and importance in international relations, and second a statement that the European project had been taken on board and was consciously supported by the Spanish public. In short, the express aim of the Presidency was to associate the process of Europeanising Spain with an increase in the visibility and influence of the European Union on the international scene — an idea also set out in the Laeken Declaration, where the EU was regarded as a stabilising body worldwide. In any event, the 'More Europe' motto had already been used by Felipe González when he was Prime Minister: since the 1990s he had advocated European integration as an ideal which could contribute towards the embedding and consolidation of democracy in Spain and the country's international profile. Meanwhile the PP viewed the process as an opportunity to attain a number of economic and foreign policy targets under the broader slogan of 'more Europe in the world', the aim of which consisted in creating a dynamic Europe that would be listened to in major world debates.

The introduction of the single currency would signal the success of a policy which was set in train in 1989 and culminate in the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2002. Additionally, the accession of the CEECs was still very much at the negotiation stage; indeed, the Spanish Presidency oversaw the negotiation of the chapters of the *acquis* relating to financial matters such as regional policy, institutional development, agriculture and budgetary and financial forecasts. It also saw the official inauguration of the European Convention, during which the Praesidium of the Convention, chaired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, presented its findings on the idea of a Constitution for Europe.

The third Spanish Presidency of the EU Council was also distinguished by important national events such as the antiglobalisation demonstration in Barcelona on 15 March 2002 and the general strike of 20 June shortly before the Seville European Council. However, the event with the greatest impact on one of the key priorities of the Presidency, namely the internalisation and 'Europeanisation' of measures to tackle terrorism, was unquestionably a foreign event with global implications: the 9/11 attacks.

At the same time, under the Spanish Presidency the Euro-Mediterranean strand focused on the Middle East and underlined the need for mediation in the Arab-Israeli conflict while reactivating the Barcelona Process. On relations between Latin America and the European Union, a commitment was reached to negotiate political agreements with Central America and the Andean Community of Nations, and an Association Agreement was concluded with Chile. On immigration policy, Aznar submitted a very restrictive proposal to the Seville European Council which consisted in limiting Community economic aid to countries which did not take measures to counter 'unlawful immigration' and in establishing a European Border Police; the proposal was rejected by most EU Member States, led by Jacques Chirac, who was supported by a large number of non-governmental organisations. A commitment was finally reached to soften the proposal, and the idea of automatic penalties was replaced with financial support to the countries in question for the formulation of joint border control plans.

Additionally, the enlargement of the EU to the CEECs was presented as a challenge to Spain's European policy both in terms of the economy and for the production structures and labour markets of the candidate countries; these had, since the inception of the process, been perceived as clear competitors to Spain in matters such as intra-Community trade and direct flows of foreign investment. From the point of view of the Spanish government, the eastward enlargement of the European Union would mean that only two of the eleven regions in receipt of structural funds would continue to qualify for them; Spain would no longer receive cohesion funds and would subsequently become a net contributor to the Community budget. Despite the reluctance prompted by budgetary concerns, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, Carlos Westendorp, sought a more constructive way for the Spanish government to be involved in the project — a topic which he had been working on since 1995 as part of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe. A school of thought emerged around that time which appealed to Spain's 'special sensitivity' towards CEEC aspirations to join the EU, and it made allowance for the experiences of transition from authoritarian/totalitarian regimes to democracy in Spain and in the CEECs and the parallel processes of a 'Return to Europe'. Since then there has been unanimous support for enlargement from all Spanish political parties and most of the public. Indeed, the Spanish Presidency of the Council in 2002 identified 'support for enlargement' as the fourth priority of its programme after 'the fight against terrorism in an area of Justice, Freedom and Security', 'the successful introduction of the euro' and giving 'special impetus to the Lisbon Process'.

The Aznar government had strong reservations about revising the treaties, as evidenced in the debates on the formulation of a Constitution for Europe. During those debates the Aznar government, along with Poland, backed the vote-weighting system set out in the Treaty of Nice, which to some extent confirmed those countries' places among the key countries in the EU, with 27 votes in the Council (compared to 29 for Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom) and one Commissioner for each of them, although the trade-off was a significant fall in the number of seats in the European Parliament. In that regard the adoption of the project to draw up a Constitutional Treaty represented a turning-point in the role of Spain in the EU.

Another feature of that period was the return to power of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in the general election of 2004 following a campaign which criticised the Aznar government's foreign policy

(which was distinctly pro-Atlantic in its approach) and instead advocated a new rapprochement with the Franco-German axis as the backbone of European integration. The national and international background, distinguished as it was by the attacks of 11 March 2004 and the new government's opposition to the war in Iraq, was a decisive factor in the new administration's first decision, namely the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq within 24 hours of the assumption of office by the new, Socialist Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The decision symbolised the return to multilateralism and international lawfulness (by putting the democratic principle and public legitimacy at the forefront of its political strategy) and a new 'return' to Europe and its traditional diplomatic line, to the detriment of the pro-Atlantic attitudes which had cast Spain alongside the CEECs for a time under the preceding government.

Disagreement about these two views of the international role of Spain and its place in Europe was to emerge again in 2005 during the referendum campaign on the Constitutional Treaty. Despite the difference of opinion between the parties, both the PSOE and the PP argued for a 'yes' vote, and Spain became the first country to adopt the text of the Constitutional Treaty in a plebiscite. The 'no' votes in France and Germany, however, brought the process to a standstill despite the attempts by the Spanish government to salvage the text in 2005, when José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero made himself head of a group of Member States who hoped to be able to re-introduce the text and overcome the reluctance of their counterparts. The signature of the Treaty of Lisbon on 13 December 2007 was regarded by the Zapatero government as unblocking European integration following two years of impasse. Zapatero was re-elected in 2008 and declared his intention to work for an effective, politically integrated EU, with his prime focus being the prospect of the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council during the first half of 2010.

Despite its determined support for European integration, the Zapatero government was no different from its predecessors where the protection of Spanish interests within the Union was concerned, and this was illustrated during negotiations on both the financial framework 2007–2013 and European immigration policy, which resulted in the government following a strategy worked out jointly with the African countries covered by the policy.

On enlargement to a Europe of 27, a process which was completed in 2007 with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, the Zapatero government, like its predecessors, feared that enlargement would result in the geopolitical marginalisation of Spain and Mediterranean considerations as well as a loss in the transfer of funds under cohesion and regional policies, with the funds concerned being diverted to the new Member States. However, as on other occasions, Spain viewed the situation as an opportunity to act as a 'bridge' between the various aspects of 'potential Europe', in other words, to act as a link between the new countries and the founder countries, between countries in receipt of Community aid and net contributors, between Mediterranean countries and CEECs, and between countries in favour of supranationalism and those which advocated an inter-governmental model. Its role as a mediator once again gave it a very important part to play in bringing about transnational consensus to help ensure continuity and stability in the integration process.

The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009 brought about substantive changes in the way the Union operated, such as the appointment of a permanent President of the European Council, the establishment of the post of High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, the establishment of a European External Action Service and the formalisation of the 'trio of Presidencies', or three consecutive Presidencies working as a team and cooperating in a joint programme of Council activities over an 18-month period. The Spanish Presidency of the EU Council will be followed by the Presidencies of Belgium, Hungary, Poland and Denmark in 2011 and 2012. The Spanish Presidency of the first half of 2010 is taking place amid a worldwide economic and financial crisis and therefore has to focus its efforts in finding a way out of it. This prime objective overlaps with the work being undertaken by the Reflection Group horizon 2020–2030 for the EU, under the chairmanship of the former Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe González, which is due to present a report containing the results of its deliberations during the European Council in June 2010.

The prime objectives, described by the government as the priorities of the fourth Spanish Presidency of the EU Council are, specifically:

- Full and rapid implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon;
- Economic recovery and job creation;
- A Europe of citizens' rights and freedoms;
- Developing the role of Europe as a responsible, supportive player on the international scene

The Zapatero government has also attached high priority to the European Commission proposal for accession to the European Convention on Human Rights; the Convention complements the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which became legally binding under the Treaty of Lisbon.

Other priority objectives include the taking of decisions on developing the European solidarity clause and the popular legislative initiative. The solidarity clause provides for joint action on the part of the EU and its Member States in the event that one of those States is subject to a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster. The citizens' initiative consists in a petition by at least one million Union citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States for a legislative proposal to be tabled on matters regarded as appropriate for regulation under the Treaties. Furthermore the Presidency has also expressed its commitment to combat gender violence in Europe by introducing a European protection order and a handbook of good practices. The implementation of those objectives is based on two cross-cutting principles, equality and innovation. This is reflected in the motto of the Presidency, 'Innovating Europe'.

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that the Lisbon objectives can be achieved in such a way that innovation and investigation become the cornerstones of sustainability and well-being which generate opportunities for an increasingly diverse, genuinely interdependent European society, a society which is encouraging of and open to the benefits of cooperation and implementation of joint projects that transcend national borders.