



**Especial España en Europa 1996-2004**  
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**Thinking Locally, Acting in Europe**



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"Thinking globally, acting locally" is an essential slogan in the current political discourse. Yet, in view of the policies on the European Union carried out by the two governments of the People's Party (PP) headed by José María Aznar between 1996 and 2004, we could coin a quite different slogan: "thinking locally, acting in Europe". Indeed, José María Aznar's policy-making during the last eight years has been characterised by turning his domestic concerns into the 'exclusive factor' of his European strategy, regardless of the context and the need for fitting in national objectives with Europeans'. Hence, it was natural that the electoral campaign preceding the general elections held on Sunday, 14 March, did not deal with any of the topics prevailing in the EU's current agenda. Neither enlargement nor the Constitution, nor the process of shaping a core group within the EU, seem to have room in Spain's political debate.

Throughout the electoral campaign, the People's Party revealed two of the 'obsessions' marking its performance in Europe: being a reference for the modern right, and being a united and strong state. First, being modern has meant making clear in Europe its choice for the efficiency discourse, the Anglo-Saxon model (economic liberalisation, a strong friendship with the United States through the Hispanic population of that country), as well as rejecting continental Europe (the French-German axis, the social-democratic model of welfare and criticisms on the French right). Second, being a united country has meant rejecting the federalist nature of Europe, for it might strengthen the decentralization process in the post-Franco Spain. Finally, being a strong country has been reflected upon its European and international choices - trying to attain a big country profile through a privileged relation with the United States.

Sunday's legislative elections ended Mr Aznar's responsibility leading Spain's European policy. What has marked such policy? To what extent can we speak of a Spanish model of European construction after nearly twenty years participating in its formulation? Can we speak of a substantial change between the European policy carried out by the Socialist Party and that of the People's Party?

The recent electoral campaign and, above all, an analysis of policy-making during Mr Aznar's term of office enable an identification of some general ideas on Spain's role in Europe. Looking at the agenda ('the what') and the alliances ('the how') formed by Mr Aznar are useful guidelines.

The European agenda of the Spanish government between 1996 and 2004 has been affected by the context (i.e. enlargement process) although in general terms it has been a constant agenda with perfectly fixed objectives. There have been three key topics on the agenda: the Lisbon agenda, the Tampere programme and institutional reform. The goals have been big.

The Lisbon programme, which was inspired by Mr Aznar and Mr Blair, and the general objective of economic liberalisation, has been coupled with specific objectives causing Aznar's break-up with other political forces and European partners. In the domestic domain, the first break-up between the Socialist Party and the People's Party on Europe had to do with the Socialists' opposition to labour

flexibility introduced by the People's Party. In the international domain, relations between Spain and France have been tarnished by France's reluctance to liberalize its energetic sector.

As for the Tampere programme, which is to create a space of freedom, security and justice, PP's policy-making followed the first steps taken by socialist governments to have European support on the fight against ETA. The development of the Tampere programme, particularly after the attacks of September 11, has highlighted the differences between both Spanish parties as well as the differences between the Spanish government and some of its partners, such as France and Sweden. Throughout the electoral campaign, the Socialist Party has insisted on integration policies for immigrants versus the conservative discourse revolving around the fight against terrorism and the special relationship between Aznar and Bush.

Regarding institutional reform, the People's Party has expressed to the EU one of its main worries - the strengthening of the Spanish state. Thus, after the People's Party won the elections by absolute majority in 2000 we can speak of Spain pledging its firm commitment to the intergovernmental model (a Europe of states). This is why Spain is very worried over the distribution of power within the Council, and not over the seats in the European Parliament. The Socialist Party once defended the "greatest possible power for Spain" within the Council, yet maintaining a much more solid Community logic. We can even talk of Spain being afraid of any reference to federalism and seeking a downgrading of the role played by Spanish regions in Europe (the loss of seats in Parliament especially affects regional parties; Spain's denial to accept regional presence in the Council; the adding to the Constitution of a reference to Member States' territorial integrity).

Spanish government's alliances to implement its policy in Europe completely distance Mr Aznar from the steps followed in the past by Felipe González. Indeed, Socialist Party's campaign to March 14 election has largely consisted on demanding a reversal of the three functioning principles setting up the Spanish model between 1986 and 1996: domestic consensus on the formulation of European policy, the reestablishment of good relations with the Franco-German axis, and a reorientation of Spain's transatlantic relations.

The consensus on European and international affairs to which Spaniards were used to vanished into thin air at the end of the 1990s, once the euro test was passed and after the People's Party won an absolute majority. Over the last year two key issues on the agenda – relations with the United States and the model of European construction to be included in the Constitution - have brought the conservative government face to face with the majority of Spanish political forces.

During Mr González's term of office, Spain's European model was built upon robust and permanent relations with France and Germany. Mr Aznar's period is more complex and is not based upon any permanent relation in Europe. In 1997, Mr Aznar said, referring to European affairs, that "it is not about being alone or accompanied, but to defend Spain's national interests". That is perhaps why Spain has created a utilitarian image of Europe following British tradition. Mr Aznar's confrontation with France and Germany has been permanent over the period -economic liberalisation, financial perspectives, etc. Iraq was the tip of the iceberg. However, the pro-active role displayed by Mr Aznar's government leading the Eight's pro-Bush letter in 2003, or the letter by Six EU Prime Ministers calling for the stability pact to be respected are a sign of fear for being out of the "core group", in case such a group emerged at a moment of profound change (an EU with 25 members).

Finally, the most significant change in Spain's policy has undoubtedly been its attempt to establish a privileged relationship with the United States. The triangle Europe-Latin America-the Mediterranean, which was Spain's map of the world, has been altered by the US factor. In this respect, Spain's drift in some sensitive topics for the European agenda (Iraq, the Kyoto Protocol) have placed the country in a difficult position for acting in the future as facilitator of agreements between Europeans. The end of Mr Aznar's era, election results and the policy of other states in the near future (i.e. United States, United Kingdom) will be decisive for Spain's role in Europe.

This is an introduction to a set of essays written by the research fellows working at the Observatory for European Foreign Policy (Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus). These essays intend to review, albeit not in an exhaustive manner, outstanding topics relating to Spain's performance within the European Union under Aznar. Since European foreign policy is the focus of this group of researchers, most of such essays address issues where state's foreign policy, Union's economic dimensions and the incipient CFSP become blurred. Just before general elections are held and when restless Europe is to have 25 members in a few weeks, it seemed the right moment to carry out this collective piece of work. Despite the variety of both authors and styles, some fundamental questions lie in all these contributions. To what extent has Spain influenced EU agenda? To what extent has Aznar's government changed Spain's policy-making on each particular research topic, in case this ever existed? To what extent has People's Party's policy-making generated consensus or divergence among Europeans?

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**Lion's Tail or Mouse's Head?:  
Aznar's Atlantist Bet**



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2003 was a difficult year for European efforts in the realm of foreign policy and also for the Trans-Atlantic relationship. During the Iraq crisis, Europe divided itself in two, one side in favour of the United States, and the other against, eliminating all possibility of speaking with a single voice in the first great conflict of the post Cold War world that did not involve its own backyard. The division among Europeans in foreign policy issues is not rare; however, it is unusual that such disagreement is so loudly voiced on an issue that the United States considers "vital" and, even more so, that the pro-American side is led by Spain.

Beyond whatever the future holds for the "Trans-Atlantic family" as a whole after Iraq, it is worth examining, in light of what had been Spain's European policy since her admission to the European Community in 1986, the possible consequences of developing a closer relationship with the United States, even in spite of her relations with her European partners, particularly France and Germany. What perhaps started only as a flirtation with the hyper power, that intended to differentiate the new conservative government's policy from that of its socialist predecessor, today is an unconditional relationship, based above all on the friendship that Bush and Aznar have established, to which Spain's relationships with the rest of her European partners, her relations with the Mediterranean and Latin America, the domestic foreign policy consensus and public opinion in Spain are second to. It is a real change in Spain's European policy, whose full implications are yet to be seen.

**Spain rebels**

Spain lived through the end of the Cold War shrouded by Europe, willing to contribute to its construction with the most profound Europeanism, particularly in the area of foreign policy. That was Felipe González's socialist government's modus operandi: a Spain that defended its interests within that greater and more complex thing that was Europe, but that also wanted to contribute to make of it a more important actor in the international scenario, in the understanding that such a strategy would also help Spain project itself abroad. It was, in other terms, a positive-sum game. Within Europe, Spain quickly learned how to play the European game, allying itself with the most powerful member states, France and Germany, to advance its interests, figuring tacitly as one of the Great powers without actually being one, and became an important ally for the Franco-German axis, which was going through one of its best stages.

With the arrival of José María Aznar, Spain started to change her attitude within the EU. Aznar's disagreements with the French and German leaders in different issues, considered vital for the new government, were many. Apparently, Spain was not willing to live under the aegis of the Franco-German axis anymore, and wanted to emancipate. At the same time, Europe was about to change, perhaps in detriment of Spain's position that, according to some, would again become part of the periphery after the enlargement to the east, and the Franco-German axis was lacking its previous vigour. Aznar's interpretation was that he had to look for other partners that would

strengthen Spain's role in the "new Europe", even if this endangered his relationship with France and Germany. If when Spain entered the EC it was said that "it had come of age",<sup>1</sup> in the clash between Aznar and the Franco-German axis one cannot help but think of some sort of mid-life crisis, like those that lead many to leave their life-long spouse for a twenty-something secretary, or, even better, of a late adolescence crisis during which opposing the elders is a matter of principle. Therefore, the change of Spain's relations with Europe, specifically with France and Germany, has been one of form, but also of content, or maybe it is a case in which form is content.

Then 9-11 and Iraq took centre stage, a new watershed that today seems equivalent to the end of the Cold War. After the overwhelming declarations of solidarity with the United States after the terrorist attacks, there came the bitter discussions au tour Iraq. Given the clash between France and Germany, who traditionally have represented the "European position", and the United States, it is not strange that the British readied their "special relationship" to appear as Washington's unconditional allies, even if that meant going against their European partners. What did surprise everyone was that Aznar's Spain found a place for herself in that Anglo-Saxon family portrait. It was some sort of political and diplomatic somersault that intended to take advantage of an alleged "window of opportunity" that would allow Spain to develop her own "special relationship" with the Americans. It was, indeed, a very personal interpretation of the Spanish president according to which his country must rub elbows with the hegemon at any price.

#### **Transfers and projections: Aznar assigns himself the leading role**

The unprecedented outreach to George W. Bush's Washington is clearly a personal decision of Spain's president that, moreover, goes against tradition, Spain's interests and Spanish public opinion. In a previous text,<sup>2</sup> I had avoided explaining the reasons behind Aznar's rapprochement with Washington by saying that "his position is inexplicable without turning to Freud". Today I still believe there is some truth in what I said then; however, it is also true that there is some coherence in the Spanish president's strategy, although that, of course, does not necessarily mean it is adequate or that it is going to bear fruit as expected.<sup>3</sup>

Aznar had begun approaching the United States since the beginning of his mandate in 1996, based on an alleged community of interests and values.<sup>4</sup> The definite change of course in that direction was ordered once Aznar had an absolute majority in Parliament and, therefore, could shape Spain's foreign policy at will. He did not need to consult with the opposition and get to the traditional foreign policy consensus that had preceded Spain's external actions during the socialist government. Moreover, the rapprochement with Washington seemed to help appease three of his personal demons, as he transferred them to Spain: terrorism; being considered a Great power within Europe; and being recognized as a world leader of great importance.<sup>5</sup>

After 9-11, Aznar concluded that Bush's obsession with terrorism coincided with his own, and that such a coincidence opened a window of opportunity to approach the hegemon and thus try to look for a better international role for his country, turning it into a Great power overnight, perhaps

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<sup>1</sup> See C. Alonso Zaldivar y M. Castells, *España, fin de siglo*, Madrid, Alianza, 1992, p. 233, as quoted by Esther Barbé, *La política europea de España*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1999, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Érika Ruiz Sandoval, "La discordia trasatlántica: ¿fabricación o realidad?", en Rafael Fernández de Castro (coord.), *En la frontera del imperio (México en el Mundo 2003)*, México, Ariel, 2003, pp. 57-69.

<sup>3</sup> Andrés Ortega, "La coherencia del giro de Aznar", *El País*, February 15, 2004, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> The change of position regarding Cuba is illustrative in this sense, as well as the search for American support to advance Spanish interests within NATO.

<sup>5</sup> According to Aznar's own interpretation, perhaps the other two historical problems of Spain, democracy and modernization, had been solved or his leeway in those areas was not enough to make changes. Therefore, it was time to take care of his country's international projection. (E. Barbé, *op. cit.*, p. 20).

believing literally that proverb that says “it does not matter who you are, but who you know”.<sup>6</sup> Trapped by a simplistic historical revisionism and a personal rancour against the French, he decided to switch Spain’s foreign policy strategic axis, naturally based in Europe since the end of the dictatorship, to centre it in Washington.<sup>7</sup> The other classical objectives of Spain’s foreign relations, the Mediterranean and Latin America, were also subordinated to the new priority.

Aligning himself unconditionally with Bush in Iraq,<sup>8</sup> Aznar wanted to be the fisherman that gained the most from that turbulent river. But since all foreign policy is, above all, domestic politics, with the change of course Aznar also wanted to win over the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), the main opposition party, clearly against the war in Iraq, in the belief that France would in the end support Bush, and that would leave the PSOE alone and against the “European consensus”.<sup>9</sup>

Even when this did not happen, against wind and tide, in Spain and abroad, Aznar did not budge. First, he lobbied his own public opinion using the argument of the perils that weapons of mass destruction in Iraq entailed, and then changed for the one about the need to fight international terrorism in all its forms. But he did not manage to convince the Spaniards, who had shown their opposition to war as never before. Likewise, he offered Bush to make use of the so-called influence Spain has over Chile and Mexico, also non-permanent members of the Security Council at the time, to convince them of supporting the American position. Like was the case with his own public opinion, he only managed to alienate them.

But nothing mattered. Aznar was already a part of Bush’s circle and felt he had finally put Spain in better company than that of her European partners, France and Germany, to whom she would always be inferior. Now he shared with Tony Blair, the one that enjoyed the “special relationship” of yore, the hyper power’s attention and could perhaps use his new alliance to improve Spain’s position within the European Union. Even today, when Iraq is still burning and even Bush and Blair have had some explaining to do to their own Congresses on the weapons of mass destruction fiasco, Aznar has not moved an inch from his initial position and feels the change of course in Spain’s foreign policy has been a success that will make him be remembered as a great national hero.

### **Better to be a mouse’s head than a lion’s tail**

That’s how a popular proverb goes. And maybe it has something of truth in it. Beyond what happens with Mr. Aznar, it is fit asking what will be the repercussions of his decision in the medium and long terms. The pertinent question might not be what does Spain gain, something difficult to gauge as of now –even for Aznar’s administration, so prone to measure everything in terms of “efficacy” and “benefits”—but what does Spain lose. By asking the second question instead, it is easier to see how risky his bet was.

The effort made by Aznar’s Spain to appear as Washington’s unconditional ally was not rhetorical or reactive; on the contrary, it was proactive and led to evident initiatives, epitome of which was the president’s participation in the Azores Summit. It is difficult to evaluate what was the degree of convergence or divergence between the EU and Spain during the Trans-Atlantic crisis prior to Iraq’s invasion, or what has been the level of coherence and coordination between European and

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<sup>6</sup> If before there was talk about Spain being the “fragment of a superpower”, by allying herself with Washington and separating herself from Europe, she becomes a fragment... of what? (The original phrase belongs to Francesc Granell. See the discussion in this regard in E. Barbé, *op. cit.*, p. 18).

<sup>7</sup> Soledad Gallego-Díaz, “Historia de un presidente satisfecho”, *El País*, January 26, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> With Bush’s Washington, there is no other type of alliances.

<sup>9</sup> Assuming a proactive position, instead of a reactive one, is, in and of itself, a sort of preventive war within diplomacy and domestic politics for Aznar. Miguel González describes the PSOE case in “Esto se nos ha ido de las manos”, *El País*, March 11, 2003, p. 20.

Spanish policy, because, to begin with, what Europe and what European policy? The agreement of minimum common denominators reached within the CFSP framework can hardly be considered a “European policy” on Iraq or on the broader issue of the Trans-Atlantic relationship. However, by leading the pro-American side and promoting the Letter of the Eight, Aznar clearly boycotted any principle of agreement among the Europeans, placing himself as a relevant actor, but evidently against the European position, even if the latter was not sufficiently forceful or clear enough. It was hardly an elegant way of showing his contempt for the French and German leadership, and of defying it. It only gave the world too much information about the family disagreements in Europe, thus affecting Spain’s credibility, first, and Europe’s, second. Instead of contributing his leadership within the Union, until a consensus was reached, Aznar was willing to do anything for Bush, including some lobbying, with the afore-mentioned results.

On another note, the unprecedented rapprochement with the United States is a personal decision of the incumbent and not a policy based on a consensus reached by the different political forces that, even worse, pretends to lead a society that is primarily anti-American. Thus, it seems that this policy does not have much chance of surviving, even if Aznar’s Partido Popular wins the next elections. It is very hard to alter the course of a foreign policy without having a previous national debate, and such an effort may thus backfire.

Moreover, just as Spain’s new foreign policy is based on Aznar’s personal style, the US proximity to Spain is also based on the utterly particular way of thinking and acting of George W. Bush, who has privileged his country’s relationships with those whose leaders have “chemistry” with him, leaving aside nonsensical things such as the national interest.<sup>10</sup> Besides, also because foreign policy is above all domestic politics, it may well be the case that Bush believes his closeness to Aznar will win him votes among the Latino population of the United States, which would only reinforce the temporary and short-termed character of the rapprochement.<sup>11</sup>

But the biggest problem lies not in Aznar’s looking for a way to improve the relations between his country and the United States, but in his doing so by going against Europe, and even the Mediterranean<sup>12</sup> and Latin America. The Bush-Aznar alliance has supposed a hard blow on

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<sup>10</sup> See Miguel González, “El presidente tiene una visión”, *El País*, March 10, 2003, p. 20. One must remember Bush came to the White House without much knowledge of foreign policy and saying that Mexico –the only thing he knew beyond his own state of Texas—and her president, Vicente Fox, were his country’s most important relationship. Given Fox’s reluctance to support him in his war against Iraq, Bush has found himself other “friends”. Aznar and Bush coincide in that they are both messianic presidents, men of “mission” and “vision”, belonging to conservative parties, and Bush feels comfortable with him. Nonetheless, having a “special relationship” with the United States implies competing with the rest of the world. The relationship that traditionally is described as such is the one between Americans and British; however, today there are more than twenty countries that assume they have such type of relationship with the United States, and, given the list, believing it is just not enough. See Alan Knight, “US-Mexican Relations, c. 1900-c. 1945: A Special Relationship?”, manuscript presented at the CMS-COMEXI-ITAM Workshop “Closeness and Asymmetry: The Anglo-American and Mexican-American ‘Special Relationships’”, St. Antony’s College, Oxford, Feb 9-10, 2004, notes 32 and 33.

<sup>11</sup> Aznar seems to believe it too and I think they are both misunderstanding the complexity of ethnic politics in the United States. To begin with, Latinos call themselves like that, against the term *Hispanic* that was used before in the ethnic categories of the US census, because they consider it implies the Spanish colonial oppression of which their countries of origin were victims. Thus, the relationship between Latinos and their “mother country” is really one of antagonism and it seems difficult that the rapprochement between Washington and Madrid yields benefits for either party, be it in terms of votes for the republicans or sales of Spanish products among the Latino population in the US.

<sup>12</sup> American mediation to solve the crisis of Perejil with Morocco does not seem to be the beginning of a new and better stage in Spain’s relationship with that country, or something that contributed to smooth things out with France.

Spain's Europeanist image within Europe, and has translated into the reduction of her leeway and relative importance in the Community. To make things worse, this change of perception takes place at a delicate moment, just months before the enlargement, when all equilibriums are in flux.

The consequences are starting to reveal themselves, not only with the negative of the Great powers to modify within the European Constitution the number of votes to follow what was agreed upon in Nice, as Spain and Poland were demanding, but also with the summit convoked during the third week of February among the British, German and French leaders, the three Great, to which Aznar was not invited, despite his nascent "special relationship" with Washington.<sup>13</sup> If Aznar thought he would be the one to make Europe more of an "Atlantist"<sup>14</sup> or that his Atlanticism would gain him points in Europe, he seems to have been mistaken, with the added problem that the affaire with the United States can be short-lived, since it depends on imponderables such as the "chemistry" between Rajoy and Bush, if they are to win their respective elections. Instead, Europe would have been a safer bet, since Spain's destiny, whether Mr. Aznar likes it or not, is linked to the European project. So far, Aznar's Spain has bet to be the tail of the American lion instead of the head of the European mouse. The search for a "special relationship" at any price, when what lies between Spain and the United States, besides an ocean, is a great asymmetry and few coincidences beyond the friendship between their present leaders, might be a futile effort with grave consequences for a middle power that has become one, above all, thanks to the fact that it belongs to the European Union.

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<sup>13</sup> Ricardo Estarriol, "Austria y España, contra el tripartito de Berlín", *La Vanguardia*, February 22, 2004, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> It is interesting in this sense, to look at his speech before the US Congress, in which he clearly positions himself as Europe's spokesman vis-à-vis the United States (4-02-2004, as reproduced by *El País*).



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**Spain and Latin America: a Forging Bridge**



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Vital, strategic and permanent are some of the adjectives Spanish diplomacy has used during the last decades to describe its relationship with Latin America. This region is considered to be the third axis of Spain's foreign policy, after Europe and the Mediterranean. The importance of this relationship is not only explained by the historical and cultural bonds Spain shares with the American subcontinent, but by two relevant aspects: Spain's international weight gained through its relationship with Latin America<sup>1</sup>, and Latin America's importance for Spain's economy<sup>2</sup>.

With respect to the first issue, it must be remembered that during its first years in the European Community, Spain presented its special relationship with Latin America as a sort of 'dowry' before its new partners<sup>3</sup>. José María Aznar has tried to do something similar during his last year in office by using his influence on Latin America as a facilitating tool for a rapprochement with the United States.

In any case, it is a complex relationship that we shall analyse by focusing on three main policy areas: the participation of Spain in the EU, the Ibero-American community and bilateral relations. This analysis shall be done considering the consequences of Aznar aligning himself with Bush's foreign policy.

As for the impact Spain's accession to the EU has on its relationship with Latin America, it should be underlined Aznar's continuity with his socialist predecessor, for he –just like Felipe González– tried to include Spain's policy priorities towards the region on the EU agenda, thereby both obtaining some undisputable yet limited<sup>4</sup> achievements.

Under Aznar's government, EU's relations with Latin America reached their highest rhetorical point when, at the first EU–Latin America Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1999), it was agreed to establish a 'strategic partnership' grounded in issues such as trade liberalization, democratic

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<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to point out that many of the first important actions taken by democratic Spain on foreign policy took place during the peace processes in Central America. Parallel to this, Spain was leaving behind for the first time in decades its role as object of international relations and was becoming subject of them.

<sup>2</sup> From this standpoint, the importance of Latin America in the process of transforming Spain into a global power is undeniable, for the main Spanish companies (Telefónica, BBVA, BSCH, Repsol, etc.) become transnational through their strong investment in South-American economies.

<sup>3</sup> Within the European Political Cooperation mechanism, Spain assumed it was participating with its own 'capital': the privilege relations with Latin America. In this respect, see: Barbé, Esther: 'EPC: The Upgrading of Spanish foreign policy' in *Democratic Spain: Reshaping external relations in a changing world*. Gillespie, Richard; Rodrigo, Fernando y Story, Jonathan (Eds.). Routledge, London, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> As for the limitations encountered by Spain to turn its relationship with Latin America into a priority for the EU or, at least, to increase the importance given by its European partners to the region, see: Kennedy, Paul. 'Spain' in: *The foreign policies of EU Member States*. Manners, Ian and Whitman, Richard G (Eds.). Manchester University Press, 2000.

consolidation, and agreement on common positions on matters of global interest. The ambitious statement was commensurate with the new strategy for the region drawn up five years earlier by the European Commission, whose main objective was to anticipate and counterbalance the project of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)<sup>5</sup>.

However, in Rio it was already clear that the EU rapprochement with Latin America was running into the ground. The latter was evident from the difficulties encountered in obtaining the negotiation mandate with Mercosur, which had been approved just one week prior to the Summit. It should be added that the EU –together with Spain– had steered its attention towards the East already in 1999. Two years later, the September 11 attacks took place, thereby placing the international focus on security issues and Islamic countries. Consequently, Latin America has virtually fallen off the map of European interests.

Yet, the setbacks to move forward to the bi–regional ‘strategic partnership’ have not prevented the signing of two association agreements with Mexico and Chile<sup>6</sup>, the latter being signed in the second EU–Latin America Summit (Madrid, 2002), during the Spanish presidency of the European Council. Apart from Chile, only Colombia, which was seeking the FARC to be included in the EU’s terrorist list; and Mexico, which hosted the third EU–Latin America Summit, obtained gains. The other Latin American countries and regional groupings (Andean Community, Central America and Mercosur) only obtained minor benefits<sup>7</sup> and the promise to negotiate or conclude future trade agreements at the end of the current WTO round.

On its part, Spain came out partly right as the agreement with Chile allow it to put on a brave face and, at the same time, achieved one of its national objectives– to include in the Madrid Commitment (the final document of the Summit), a reference to the decision of the signatory countries of combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

In this final document, both Latin Americans and Europeans rejected all measures of unilateral character and with extraterritorial effect, thereby clearly referring to the United States post–Sept. 11 policies. Such rejection was not later ratified by Spain, which backed up US unilateralism. This is the reason why Latin American countries lost their interest in Spain, which promotes itself as the gateway to acceding to the EU<sup>8</sup>, as well as their hope for the EU to become an alternative to the ‘Northern colossus’.

It is necessary to highlight that belonging to the EU has provided Spain with useful alibi – at least formally– for justifying measures of national interest damaging Latin American countries. Two examples of this are the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the restriction on the entry of immigrants. The latter has been applied against citizens from Ecuador and Colombia (the two countries with more immigrants in Spain) during Aznar’s term of office, and might undermine Spain’s ‘soft power’ in Latin America, where it is looked unfavourably the fact that Spain forgets that hundreds of thousands of Spanish citizens were welcomed in those lands when fleeing war and hunger.

The Ibero–American dimension of Spain’s foreign policy is expressed in the Ibero–American Summits of Heads of State and Government, which are held annually since 1991. On this

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<sup>5</sup> See: Sanahuja, José Antonio. ‘Contigo en la distancia: los lazos con la Unión Europea tras la Cumbre de Madrid’ in *Vanguardia Dossier* 4, March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> The agreement with Chile is considered to be one of the most advanced signed by the EU, for it even embraces such ‘sensitive’ products from the trade point of view as wine.

<sup>7</sup> The main interest for these regional blocs was to open the door to trading with the EU. In exchange, though, they only obtained cooperation agreements in the education field, such as the setting-up of the Alban programme consisting of high-level postgraduate scholarships, enhancing the ALFA programme of higher education, and strengthening the @LIS, a new programme on Information Society for Latin America. In this regard, see: Soriano, Juan Pablo, ‘América Latina: entre la esperanza y la desilusión’; in: *España y la política exterior de la UE: entre las prioridades españolas y los desafíos del contexto internacional*. Barbé, Esther (Ed); Quaderns de Treball no 40 in Institut Universitari d’Estudis Europeus, Bellaterra, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> The idea of Spain helping open the door to the EU is still accepted in Latin America, as it was worded by the Chilean President Ricardo Lagos during his visit to the Spanish senate in June 2001: “Spanish America wants to be placed in the world and in Europe through Spain”.

forum, which was initially a mechanism for dialogue and multilateral agreement, Spain has exerted hegemonic leadership<sup>9</sup> since 1997, when it started using these meetings for seeking – and actually finding– support for its particular problems. Before that year, the mechanism had gone through a weakening period mainly owing to a dearth of substantial content.

The politicization of the Ibero–American Summits' agenda, which can be put down to Aznar's government, may have positive effects in that it arouses Latin American countries' interest in this forum, before which they can submit their own worries and problems<sup>10</sup>.

However, this forum also shows a bitter aspect for Spanish diplomacy, as it was seen in the Bávaro Summit (Dominican Republic, 2002), when 19 Latin American countries signed a separate document from the final declaration in which they reproached Spain and Portugal for Common Agricultural Policy's protectionism.

Another success for Spanish diplomacy is the institutional reform of the Summits mechanism, which virtually constitutes a new foundation<sup>11</sup>. Spain managed to get approved, during the Santa Cruz de la Sierra Summit (Bolivia, 2003), the setting–up of an Ibero–American General Secretariat based in Spain, and obtained Latin American countries' promise of tackling immigration problems in the source countries.

As for bilateral relations, the outcome of Aznar's eight years in office shows greater contrasts. The main achievement is Brazil, a country with which Spain was for some years ago seeking to establish a closer relationship. The latter was finally accomplished last year, when Lula and Aznar signed a bilateral strategic association agreement. Furthermore, there has been some progress with Colombia, whose government has relied on Spain's good offices to include in the EU's terrorist list the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN). In his farewell trip to Latin America as Prime Minister, Aznar fully supported President Alvaro Uribe's security policy despite strong criticism received for constant violations of human rights when he visited the Commission and the European Parliament three weeks earlier. Before that, though, Aznar had struck a deal to sell to Colombia 46 AMX–30 tanks.

The relationship with Central America has been extremely favourable. This has been clearly shown in both Aznar's presence and support in the summits on the integration process in this region, and the fact that around 1,200 soldiers from Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic are participating under Spanish command in the occupation of Iraq.

As for Argentina, the relationship worsened in the wake of the economic crisis underwent by this country since 2001, during which Spanish companies were accused of neo–colonialism. The current President of Argentina, Nestor Kirchner, strongly (and publicly) wrestled with Spanish companies providing public services. Yet, the situation seemed to calm down during his last visit to Spain, when Mr. Kirchner made up with Aznar, and obtained the promise of further investments. In exchange, Spanish companies have started to be allowed to gradually set the tariffs of public services.

In his speech before the US Congress on 4 February 2004, Aznar stated: "We have built a very close relationship among our nations, which has an Ibero–American dimension. Ibero–America is a key continent for my country. Spain is the second largest investor in the region after the United States. Over the last decades, Ibero–American nations have made a tremendous effort to consolidate democratic regimes and free market economies. Hence also our interest in strengthening the relations between Europe and Ibero–America. The Atlantic relationship shall

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<sup>9</sup> The term was borrowed by Celestino del Arenal from Raúl Sanhueza to use it in the text 'La política española hacia América Latina en 2002', published in *Anuario Elcano 2002-2003*, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid. Retrieved from: <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/publicacionesinsti.asp>:

<sup>10</sup> Malamud, Carlos and Mallo, Tomás. "La XIII Cumbre Iberoamericana de Santa Cruz de la Sierra: algunos pasos significativos en la consolidación del sistema iberoamericano", Analysis by the Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid, 2003. Retrieved from://www.realinstitutoelcano.org.

<sup>11</sup> Arenal, Celestino. *op. cit.*

not be complete until including the American continent as a whole. In the medium and long run, our common commitment must be the creation of a real community of values and common interests, including a large free trade area. Spain is ready to work for it". This quote is relevant since it refers to what we consider to be the most important change in Spain's foreign policy during the eight years of People's Party's government– the alliance with the US, an issue that has already began to impinge on the relations with various Latin American countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile.

Regarding Cuba, since Aznar came to power, Spain's policy towards Cuba has completely changed, and the strategy of cooperation and pressure –which was followed by Felipe González– was substituted by a harassment strategy, which brought bilateral relations to a serious crisis overcome after Spain rectified in 1998. Yet, over the last year Spain – together with the whole EU– has taken a tougher line against Castro due to the imprisonment of dozens of opponents as well as the execution of three people who were trying to flee the island after hijacking a vessel. The latter has worsened the relationship, so much so that Aznar himself has publicly made his wish that Castro's regime comes to an end.

The ties with Venezuela were affected after US and Spain's ambassadors to Caracas met the interim President, Pedro Carmona Estanga, during the short and failed coup against Chávez in April 2002. This is a perfect example of alignment with US policy, which has fuelled reproaches and attacks, so much so that Chávez went so far as to remind Aznar that Fernando VII's time is over. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that prior to those clashes, Aznar managed to persuade Chávez's government to help extradite to Spain alleged members of ETA.

Mexico and Chile, albeit the latter to a lesser degree, were annoyed at Aznar's lobbying for the vote of both countries within the United Nations Security Council to approve a favourable resolution to the war on Iraq. As for Mexico, Aznar's visit to Fox was categorically condemned both by the ruling party and by opposition parties, which described it as an unacceptable interference<sup>12</sup>. The outcome of this action showed the real limits of Spain's influence over two of the most important countries in the region, and bore witness to Aznar's failure at using Latin America as a bridge for bringing closer Spain and the United States.

In order to assess the medium–term results of the new Spanish policy, it shall be necessary to wait until Aznar's successor ratifies or not the alignment policy with the US. It is clear that Latin America continues to be a region of strategic interest for Spain and vice versa, despite the fact that none of them currently features high on the other's agenda. In any case, and with a view of Spain increasing its value for the region, it would seem more advisable that Spain insists on becoming the gateway to the European continent –offering a European alternative to the United States–, instead of playing at using its influence on Latin America to win the approval of the US. Latin American countries do not seem willing to accept Spain benefiting at their expense.

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<sup>12</sup> It is necessary to highlight that both leaders had until then had an excellent relationship, as well as a close cooperation both in the EU-Latin America and in the Ibero-American fields. Besides, Aznar had received Fox's support regarding ETA members living in Mexico.

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Esther Barbé once described the Spanish foreign policy of the democratic period as a triangle whose superior vertex is the policy towards Europe and the other two are the policies towards the Mediterranean and Latin America, respectively, since both are important regions but definitely come second to Europe. With the victory of José María Aznar, in May 1996, one of the questions was if these priorities would remain intact or if the conservative administration would adopt a different approach regarding foreign policy. This article analyses the Euro-Mediterranean and bilateral relations, both equally important and that influence each other. The purpose is to answer two questions: first, whether the Mediterranean, after eight years of conservative government, is still a priority and, second, to what extent has this policy converged with the EU one.

The government of Felipe González and especially its performance during the last EU term Presidency in 1995 has been lauded for contributing decisively to the EU's Mediterranean Policy. In fact, the Euro-Mediterranean Conference and the Declaration of Barcelona are the founding stones of the Euro-Mediterranean process. Thus, this event culminated the efforts of Spanish diplomacy since the restoration of democracy to change a policy of "traditional friendship towards the Arab countries", full of rhetoric but empty of content, into a global policy that links the Spanish interests to the global challenges of Southern Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean region. Following this logic, besides trying to reinforce its bilateral relations, Spain took part in multilateral frameworks such as the 5+5 Group (Western Mediterranean) and collaborated with other European countries to generate new initiatives (e.g. the Hispano-Italian proposal of creating a Conference of Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean). Furthermore, the Spanish diplomacy as well as the Spanish commissioners Abel Matutes and Manuel Marín had a notable role in strengthening the EU's Mediterranean policy.

Then, it would be simple to argue that during the eight years of PP government, they have not reached the level of previous governments in this specific field. However, a rigorous comparison must take at least two supplementary factors into account: A) it is simpler to acquire prestige when initiating a process than when one is restricted by consolidated dynamics; B) The context of the first half of the nineties favoured optimism regarding the rapport between Europe and the Mediterranean. In fact, the Conference of Madrid in 1991, the agreements of Oslo in 1993 and those of Taba two years later, set a propitious framework for dialogue and understanding in the Mediterranean. On the contrary, during these past years the recrudescence of conflict in the Middle East and an increasing pessimism on the feasibility of a multilateral framework in the Mediterranean has affected the vitality of the Euro-Mediterranean process. Thus, both factors should be taken into account to analyse the Aznar's administration Mediterranean policy.

In the electoral program of 1996 the People's Party qualified the Mediterranean as a natural scenario of Spain. The first conservative Minister of Foreign Affairs was Abel Matutes, a personality engaged in the EU's Mediterranean Policy and with proven expertise in this area. In spite of these positive elements, the reform of the Ministry's structure indicated that the Mediterranean was to be downgraded among the external priorities. For example, the Northern Africa and the Middle East Cooperation Unit were merged with those of Asia and Africa, thus diluting the personality of the *Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe (ICMA)* --currently *Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe, el Mediterráneo y los Países en Desarrollo (ICMAMPD)*. Moreover, Aznar maintained a hostile position towards Morocco when he was the

opposition leader, criticizing some aspects of the Friendship and Good-Neighbourhood Agreement of 1991 and defending Ceuta and Melilla's 'Spanishness'. However, Aznar preserved the tradition of making his first official visit abroad to Rabat and did his best to transmit a political message based on Morocco being a priority and Spain's policy continuity. Hence, during the first four years of government there was some sort of continuity in Spain-Mediterranean relations, although with a lower profile, partially due to the reinforcement of other priorities (particularly Latin America) and also to an increasing disillusionment with the Euro-Mediterranean process after the fiasco of the Second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Malta.

In the 2000 elections the People's Party won again, but now with an absolute majority and a new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Piqué. As far as the Mediterranean policy was concerned, during this second legislature two significant episodes took place: in the bilateral field, the deterioration of the relations with Morocco, and in the multilateral one, the maintenance of Spain's engagement with the Euro-Mediterranean process, mainly during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Valencia in April 2002.

Regarding the first episode, different misunderstandings and conflictive issues appeared in the horizon since the end of the nineties: everything started with the Spanish irritation vis-à-vis Morocco's attitude in the negotiation of the UE-Morocco fishing agreement of which Spain was the greatest beneficiary. Afterwards, other controversial issues were raised, such as Spain's position towards Western Saharan self-determination or Morocco's inefficient control of clandestine immigration and drug trafficking. The tension increased with the withdrawal of the Moroccan ambassador to Madrid, Abdeslam Baraka, in October 2001 and, later, with the dispute for the Perejil/Leyla islet in the summer of 2002. Although at the end of that year Hispano-Moroccan relations gradually improved, partially thanks to the pressure of external actors, the previous deterioration showed, first, a lack of a dense-enough network of shared interests and, second, the reconfiguration of Spain's alliances in the Magreb, through the reinforcement of its relation with Algeria.

As far as the Euro-Mediterranean policy was concerned, Spanish efforts, although they were not only made during its tenure of the EU Presidency, were particularly visible during that period. The Presidency tackled the Conference of Valencia as one of the most important activities of the semester and Spanish diplomats were determined to revitalise the process; this aim was complicated by the hostile context of the Palestinian conflict and the possibility of an attack against Iraq. It was precisely during Spain's Presidency that an agreement was reached on an Action Plan, which, among other elements, suggested the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Civilizations. These new institutions, together with the failed plan to create a Euro-Mediterranean Bank of Development, had the same goal: creating auto-sufficient dynamics so that the Euro-Mediterranean process need not depend on the impulse of any presidency. Taking the adverse context into account and comparing the results of the Valencia's conference with previous conferences, it can be stated that Spain's image as a country committed to the Euro-Mediterranean process was reinforced. The efforts of the conservative executive were worthy but the compromise of the diplomatic staff was even more crucial.

Hence, a pondered balance of the Mediterranean policy during the eight years of government of José María Aznar shows positive aspects such as the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Valencia as well as very negative ones, such as the severe deterioration of Hispano-Moroccan relations. It is now time to answer the two questions posed in the first paragraph. First, has the Mediterranean been a priority? The answer is yes, but only second to a new Atlantist dimension (which shapes all Spanish external priorities) as well as an emerging interest for Asia, especially in economic terms. Thus, Spain's Mediterranean policy is not more powerful today than it was eight years ago. The second question was to what extent Spain's policy towards the Mediterranean converged with the EU's. In the multilateral field there was a noticeable convergence during Spain's EU Presidency during the first semester of 2002. In the bilateral field, the synchronisation has been less significant, although there are some exceptions such as the parallel improvement of relations with Algeria. It should be finally pointed out that the Mediterranean, and especially the Magreb, had traditionally been a competitive arena for both Spain and France who tried to present themselves as these regions' privileged European partners. In this sense, the relations between *l'Élysée* and Aznar have been more tense than

normal and that has had effects on the North African policy of both countries and on the scarce coordination of their diplomacies. Good examples for that are what happened during the European Council of Seville of June 2002, where France rejected a Spanish proposal for fighting clandestine immigration that would have punished Morocco, or the crisis au tour the Perejil islet. In short, after eight years of conservative government it is quite urgent to reinforce Spain's Mediterranean policy concentrating on three basic points: maintenance of the multilateral compromise, re-establishment of a privileged relation with Morocco and, finally, avoidance of competition with France on this issue, as well as trying to unite efforts with her in order to face their common challenges.

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**Special issue: Spain in Europe 1996-2004**

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**Spain and the Middle East Conflict: from perspectives of  
peace to crisis**



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When the Popular Party first took the reins of the government in 1996, Spain was a highly active player in European Mediterranean policy, including the Middle East conflict. In the Socialist period, Spain had come a long way from the former one-sided pro-Arab policy - designed to alleviate country's international isolation during the Franco dictatorship - and the lack of diplomatic relations with Israel that this policy was believed to entail. The overall normalisation of Spain's foreign relations that accompanied the adhesion of the country into the European Community (EC) and NATO had called for a balanced relationship with all countries involved in the conflict, one that would fit into the frame of the 1980 Venice Declaration by the EC countries and the resolutions of the UN. In 1986, hence, Spain recognized Israel and, a year later, bilateral co-operation with the Palestinian territories began.

The Middle East policy that the Socialist governments moulded not only assigned a fair parity between the conflicting parties. It also aspired to put into the service of peace Spain's new relationship with Israel and the traditionally good ties to several Arab countries and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Just and durable peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours had become a necessity both for Spain and the other EC countries that, after the oil crisis, had begun to focus on challenges arising from the Mediterranean region.

The first Spanish presidency of the EC in 1989 illustrated that Spain could play a global role in Mediterranean and bridge between its different countries. In the Middle East, Spain reacted actively to the changing dynamics of the conflict, brought about the first Palestinian uprising. As a result, the Madrid declaration set the new basis of the European stance in the conflict. Also, from the initiative of the Spanish Foreign Minister, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, the European collective leadership - or troika - began to visit the region. After the 1991 Gulf war, Madrid hosted the conference that initiated the Middle East peace process.

During the following years, the US became the principle mediator between the parties, a circumstance that left an economic role for the European Union (EU). It also assumed an active role on multilateral cooperation and gradually became the main partner of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Within the EU, Spain continued to promote a global orientation towards the Mediterranean and, in 1995, the EU launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative that brings together the EU countries and 12 southern and eastern Mediterranean states. A year earlier, Jordan and Israel had signed a peace agreement, and talks between Syria and Israel were under way.

If the prospects of peace in the Middle East had favoured the global Mediterranean policy of the Socialist governments, the arrival to power of the Popular Party coincided with a slowdown and stagnation in the peace process. Consequently, the visibility of Spain decreased even if the new government reaffirmed its commitment to the Mediterranean as one of the natural foreign political scenes of Spain. The fact that President Aznar, Foreign Minister Piqué, the King, and the leaders of the opposition parties received the Yasser Arafat during his visit to Spain in 1996 illustrated that Palestinian Authority and people still enjoyed special attention in Spain, as long as this did not endanger cordial relations to Israel. The same year, a Spanish diplomat and

specialist in Middle East issues from the Socialist period, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, was appointed as the Special Envoy of the EU for the Middle East Peace Process.

During the subsequent years, low profile and lack of new political initiatives characterised the Spanish policy towards the Middle East. Indisputably, increasing difficulties in the peace process contributed to this. In 1998, on a trip to Egypt, the Palestinian Territories and Israel, Mr Aznar reaffirmed the four pillars of Spain's Middle East policy: the UN resolutions, the peace agreements, territorial integrity and security of the two states, and the rights of the Palestinian people. He also gave his support to the US mediation efforts and reiterated the offer to organise another Middle East conference.

While the visibility of Spain's national Middle East policy decreased, the role of the EU increased. Through the Special Envoy, the EU gradually consolidated its position in the area. The creation of the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the appointment of Javier Solana to the post further strengthened the actorness of the EU in the Middle East. In the course of years, the support of the EU to the Palestinian Authority and people has continued and intensified, and Israel has had a preferential trade and association agreement with the EU.

The end of a series of peace talks in 2000-2001 without an agreement and cabinet changes in Israel and the US were followed by increasing violence under the name of second Palestinian uprising or al-Aqsa intifada. The all the more evident breakdown of the peace process in the shadow of Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli military repression activated the European diplomacy. In 2001, Mr. Aznar travelled to the region, yet the results remained modest. In November, however, Spanish efforts contributed to a short meeting between Arafat and Peres in Foro Formentor, a Spanish-sponsored Mediterranean forum for exchange of ideas and opinions. As a sign of good diplomatic relations, the new Syria president, Bachar al-Asad chose Spain as his first visit to Europe.

When Spain assumed the presidency of the EU in January 2002, it had two objectives with respect to the Middle East. It aimed to increase efforts to stop the unprecedented violence that reigned in the region and to give peace talks another opportunity. Stability and security in the area were considered essential also to succeed in the struggle against terrorism that had become a Spanish priority. Further, Spain aspired to unite the positions of the US, the EU, the UN, Russia and the Arab countries affected by the conflict.

In practice, the management of the events that unrolled during the presidency severely tested the Spanish and the European diplomacy. Already in early January, Spain faced an uneasy situation when Israel discovered a Palestinian ship that carried Iranian weapons. While the US and Israel attributed the responsibility to the PA and its leader, the EU remained silent until the end of the month when it requested the PA to clarify the case. Also when Israel, with implicit support of the US, began its attack against Palestinian infrastructure and the PA, the EU in the person of Mr Piqué expressed support to the PA and defended Yasser Arafat. With Ariel Sharon, Piqué insisted on re-launching the peace talks. These standpoints become consolidated in the course of the months. The escalating conflict, however, tried the capacity of Spain to co-ordinate positions within the EU as well as with the US. A meeting between Piqué and the American State Secretary Powell in which the two welcomed the Saudi peace plan re-established trans-Atlantic understanding. Also relations between the EU and Israel deteriorated to the point that the Sharon administration neither received Mr Piqué and Mr Solana nor allowed them to meet Yasser Arafat during their visit to the area.

The incapability of outside parties to halt violence led to a new UN resolution that, for the first time, referred to an independent Palestinian state. As a result, the positions of the EU, the US, the UN and Russia began to approach and, in April, a Quartet was created with the objective to coordinate peace efforts. Although its immediate impact was minor, the Quartet has steadily become part of Middle East peace diplomacy. On the other hand, the Spanish and European diplomacies were able to resolve the problem of Palestinian activists encircled in the Church of Nativity. Despite the initiative of the Quartet to organise a new Middle East conference, the lack of Bush administration's support has put, for the time being, the idea on halt. The

indecisiveness of the US on how to re-launch the peace talks and occasional, yet destructive violence and subsequent precession have increased uncertainty on the future of the process.

To conclude, the Middle East peace process illustrates a policy area in which national policies are giving way to a common European stance as this takes form. During the Socialist period, Spain actively contributed and shaped the common policy, and the Popular Party governments have kept the commitments assumed by their predecessors. The salience of their Middle East policy, however, has been minor, except the 2002 presidency when Spain demonstrated that it could bring together the Quartet. Along with EU diplomacy, Spain also handled exceptionally acute developments in the area. It has become increasingly clear that a durable solution to the conflict requires a coordinated effort from the international community, as a whole. Within it, Spain, independent of the political colour of its cabinet, enjoys a position that permits it to favour resolution efforts.



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In his first investiture speech as Prime Minister delivered on 3 May 1996, José María Aznar referred to the need of 'intensifying in defence of Spain's interests our direct presence, and *through the European Union*<sup>1</sup>, in the Asian Pacific Rim, primarily in the economic and trade fields'. This was the first time in Spanish democratic history that a Prime Minister alluded, at the investiture session, to Asia-Pacific as an important region for Spain's influence abroad. Never before had it been made the wish, not even in a rhetorical manner, of embarking on what Ion de la Riva has described as the 'return to the Pacific'<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, over the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature (1996-2000), the ruling People's Party hardly changed the course of its foreign action on Asia-Pacific; for it could not (nor did it perhaps try to) transform its declared interest in this region into a real change of content in the political and economic domains. Neither bilaterally nor through the EU as it had announced was there made significant progress appropriate to what the new discourse suggested.

However, in his second investiture speech in March 2000, José María Aznar insisted again that 'the process of internationalisation of our economy shall not be deemed complete until we achieve a greater presence and involvement in all domains in the Asian Pacific Rim'. And, immediately afterwards, he added: 'This will be one of the goals of foreign policy for this term of office'. Two clear messages emerged from this statement. First, Spain had to make an effort to attain a greater involvement in Asia-Pacific in accordance to the economic weight of this region, which gathers 56% of world population and 25% of the world Gross National Product (GNP). Second, the Prime Minister seemed resolved to turn Asia-Pacific into one of the central issues of Spain's foreign policy.

This time, though, the rhetorical determination to pass the 'always postponed matter pending'<sup>3</sup> was finally coupled with the undertaking of a number of measures and actions conducive to lessening the blatant absence of Spain from the region having greater demographic and economic growth in the world. The cause of Spain's qualitative leap forward into this region is to be found in the four-year action plan commissioned by the Prime Minister after the closing of the meeting of Spanish ambassadors to Asia-Pacific held in Manila in June 2000. Such commission resulted in the drawing up of the 'Asia-Pacific Draft Plan 2000-2002'<sup>4</sup> (from now on, 'the Plan'), which was presented by the Minister of Economy, Rodrigo Rato. The latter undoubtedly reflects the profound economic nature underpinning Government's interest in this vast region of the world.

The Plan contributes, for the first time, to establish some goals in the political, economic, development and cultural domains. Moreover, the Plan spells out, in a detailed manner, a set of strategies, instruments and actions through which the abovementioned goals are to be accomplished. Yet, the Plan does not provide a specific budgetary heading to achieve the

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<sup>1</sup> Italics by the autor.

<sup>2</sup> De la Riva, Ion (2002): «Retorno a la cuenca del Pacífico» in *Política Exterior*, Vol. XVI, Num. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> This is the first biannual phase of the Plan.

described goals. This led some people to challenge the Plan's ability for Spain to face the challenges and opportunities in such a wide region. But, beyond that criticism, the truth is that the very publication of the Plan has been useful for an increasing number of Spanish firms to focus their attention on Asian markets. In addition to that, thanks to the Plan, some goals having widespread repercussions to improve the influence of Spain on Asia-Pacific have been attained. In this respect, 'Casa Asia' (Asia House) was opened in Barcelona in 2002, which is to become the main forum for the understanding and rapprochement between Spain and Asia. Furthermore, as foreseen in the Plan, a Spaniard, the ambassador Delfín Colomé, has been appointed as Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). In addition to that, the first official Bachelor degree in East Asian Studies has been recognized and a new 'Instituto Cervantes' (an organisation similar to the 'British Council') will soon be opened in Beijing...

After the necessary explanation on the turn towards Asia-Pacific made by the Government in its foreign policy, we should now examine the role played by Spain within the European institutions in relation to this region of the planet.

The European Union has multiple mechanisms for dialogue with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, the EU cooperates with ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) since 1980, keeps a dialogue process with SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and is involved in the recent ASEM process (Asia-Europe Meetings). The fact that Spain has not had, until the Plan came out, a more or less defined strategy makes our scrutiny on the role of Spain in Europe with regard to Asia-Pacific focus on the activities carried out from the publication of the Plan onwards.

In this respect, the Presidency of the EU Council during the first semester of 2002 afforded Spanish diplomacy a unique opportunity to pledge, before its European partners, its commitment to the Pacific Rim. And, judging by what happened, it does not seem that Aznar's government missed such opportunity. Thus, Spain was extremely active and promoted a considerable number of initiatives, particularly in the framework of the ASEM process<sup>5</sup>, which is one of the main channels for dialogue (despite its informal nature) between the EU and Asia.

This way, Spain promoted and hosted a Ministerial Conference for Cooperation on the Management of Migratory Flows between Europe and Asia in Lanzarote on 4-5 April 2002. This conference issued the Lanzarote Declaration. Organising this conference was part of the Plan, which reveals the Plan's impact on the development of the new Spanish strategy towards Asia-Pacific.

Spain also hosted the Fourth ASEM Meeting of Foreign Ministers, which was held in Madrid on 6-7 June 2002. Moreover, the Spanish Government promoted other initiatives in the framework of the ASEM process. Thus, a meeting between directors-general of migration was co-sponsored by Spain and China. Furthermore, the "ASEM Anti-terrorism Seminar" was co-sponsored by Spain, China, Germany, Denmark and Japan. Finally, the "Workshop on the Future of Employment and the Quality of Labour" was also co-sponsored by Spain, Ireland, China and Germany

Besides, Spain headed an EU delegation to the meeting "Intersessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures", which was held in the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF<sup>6</sup>) in Hanoi in April 2002. In addition to that, Spain co-chaired the Tokyo Donors Conference in January 2002 as well as the meetings of the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group.

All these activities reflect that, at least during the rotating Presidency, the Spanish Government showed an outstanding ability to set the European agenda as far as political relations between

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<sup>5</sup> The interregional ASEM process, whose first meeting was held in Bangkok in 1996, gathers the 15 EU Member States and 10 Asian countries: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan and Korea.

<sup>6</sup> The ARF was set up in the framework of ASEAN in 1994 and is the only multilateral forum for official consultation on security issues in Asia-Pacific.

the EU and Asia are concerned. Nevertheless, such activism is in line with the commitment made by all governments during Council Presidencies to act as driving forces shaping Community policy-making.

Yet, regarding economic and trade presence in Asia-Pacific, Spain has not been able to bridge the gap with its EU partners. We must remember, though, that this was the main argument causing the turn towards Asia-Pacific. Thus, in 2001 Spanish exports to Asia were still far away from the European average: 6% versus 13.1%. These figures have hardly changed in the last few years<sup>7</sup>, which calls into question the Plan's effectiveness to make Spain reach EU levels in the economic and trade fields.

In sum, it is indisputable that Aznar's Governments have tried hard, not only in a rhetorical but in a political manner, to add on an 'Asian dimension' to Spain's foreign policy through the Draft Plan Asia-Pacific. The role played by Spain within the EU regarding this region has been mostly limited to the Spanish Presidency in 2002, when our country did play a relative leading role and was the architect of a number of initiatives and conferences allowing for closer ties between the EU and Asia. However, in the economic and trade domains, Spain continues showing a considerable gap with regard to EU Member States. That is why accomplishing the economic goals set for this multifaceted region of the world shall demand, in the future, a "continuous and renewed effort"<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, please see: Bustelo, Pablo (2003): «El comercio exterior de España con Asia Oriental: tendencias adversas» (<http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/327.asp>) in *Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos*.

<sup>8</sup> Avello Díez del Corral, Arturo (2004): *Informe de seguimiento del Plan Marco Asia-Pacífico 2000-2004*. Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, p. 17



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When the Popular Party (PP) won the elections in March 1996, the Eastern enlargement was still an equation full of unknown factors: How many countries? How to negotiate? What budget? To what extent should the Union be reformed previously? And, of course, When? Nevertheless, eight years later, at the moment when Prime Minister José Maria Aznar concludes his second legislature, the enlargement process hails at a point of culmination as ten new member states will incorporate themselves 1 May 2004. This paper will explore what the position of the Spanish government has been, throughout this process of finding the unknown factors, by putting two of the most recurrent criticisms to the Spanish government's policy towards enlargement to the test. The first, proceeding from some member states and candidate countries, is that the Spanish position has tried to hinder the enlargement. The second, coming from the main Spanish opposition parties, has been the lack of strategy of the conservative government to develop closer relations between Spain and the candidate countries.

1. *Has the Spanish position been a hindering factor in the process of enlargement?* Taking into account that in the Spanish case the possible costs/inconveniences of enlargement seem to be bigger than the foreseeable benefits/opportunities, an affirmative answer to this question might be expected. Clearly, there are some areas in which the material and political interests of Spain compete directly with those of the candidate countries. An illustrative example of such competition is the distribution of Communitarian structural and cohesion funds. Another recurring example is the fact that the Eastern enlargement seems to imply a shift of EU's geopolitical interest towards the east, and thus, away from the Spanish priority of the Mediterranean. Moreover, although the enlargement may also entail in general some benefits for all EU countries, Spain is one of the member states that would gain the least from the coming accession, bearing in mind that the CEECs have never figured among the Spanish economic nor geopolitical priorities.

These facts notwithstanding, the governments of Aznar have favoured enlargement. So much so that, neither the Spanish Government, nor the main opposition parties, have emitted any declaration against the enlargement in the period sparring the years since 1996. On the contrary, from the official speeches it is possible to grasp two main arguments to justify this support. The first is a feeling of solidarity with CEECs, in the sense that Spain has a particular sensibility towards these countries that, as Spain itself did in the past, look for a place in the EU as a way to consolidate their economic progress and democratic stability<sup>1</sup>. Whether this is simply a rhetorical argument or not, this feeling of solidarity towards the eastern candidates is widely held in the Spanish public opinion: Spanish citizens have always appeared among the most favourable to the Eastern enlargement despite being aware of its possible costs for Spain, whereas paradoxically, in the case of the fourth enlargement towards Scandinavia and Austria - all of them net contributors to the Community budget- the Spanish public opinion was the least favourable in EU<sup>2</sup>. The second argument claimed by the government to justify its support to the enlargement, although in a more timid and belated way, has been that it offers great opportunities for business and the creation of new political links, thus demythologizing the idea

<sup>1</sup> Speech by José María Aznar, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados* (Plenary), 17 December 1997, number 127, p. 6660.

<sup>2</sup> Spanish support to the northern enlargement was 70% while the community average was 79% (Barbé, 2000). In contrast, the support to the enlargement in the East, in autumn 2003, was 62% in Spain versus 47% of community average (Eurobarometer 60).

of enlargement as a threat for Spain. Therefore, in 1999 the government even qualified the enlargement as "strategic interest" for the country<sup>3</sup>.

These arguments of solidarity and strategic interest, however, are only fully understood when considered in the context of the Luxembourg European Council (December 1997), when the enlargement seemed beyond the point of return. Thus, in view of the inevitability of the events, the conservative government chose to adopt a positive stance towards enlargement and focus on influencing the process in the most convenient direction for Spain. The enlargement model defended by Aznar's cabinet, in line with that already traced by socialists, has been the "regatta" option, that is to say, an inclusive approach (to open negotiations with all candidates at the same time), but differentiated (accession depending on the candidates readiness). The explanation for why this model was opted for is that the Spanish interest never forced it to choose among candidates for economic or security reasons, like countries such as Germany, Finland or Austria. Rather, in contrast, Spain has only attempted to maintain its position in the EU (Barbé, 2001). That is to say, when negotiating reforms in the light of the enlargement, the Spanish government has jostled with other Member States, mainly Germany, to defend its position in the enlarged EU. The three main Spanish battle fronts linked to the enlargement have been, in first place, to ensure that the community budget for 2000-2006 was increased above the 1,27% established by the Agenda 2000; Spain wanted a guarantee that enlargement was not to be financed at the expense of the net recipient member states. Once this possibility was ruled out after hard negotiations at the Berlin European Council of March 1999, the second battle front for the Spanish government consisted in negotiating a soft transition in the withdrawal of some of the community funds after the enlargement, insisting on the so-called "statistical effect", that is to say, Spain would not be richer because other poorer countries entered the Union. Finally, the Spanish government has also fought to obtain a status of "medium-big sized" in the institutions of the enlarged Union, a struggle that is still on-going due to the Spanish government's determination to maintain the distribution of power agreed by the Nice European Council of 2000.

But despite these attempts to influence the enlargement process, it would not be fair to state that the conservative Spanish government has been a hindering factor to the development of enlargement negotiations. On the contrary, for example during the Spanish EU presidency (first semester of 2002), Spain managed to give an important impulse to the negotiations and did its best to close all the technical aspects that it could in order to respect the negotiating calendar; in fact, the lack of progress in the political questions was due to the reluctance from Germany to talk about the delicate budgetary issues before its parliamentary elections, rather than any Spanish shortcomings (Torreblanca, 2002).

Then, why has it been so difficult for the Spanish government to make the defence of its national interest compatible with a visible alignment in favour of enlargement? Without discounting the possible deliberate use of this image by some member states as strategy to delegitimize the Spanish demands, we note here that perhaps the main reason is to be found in the Aznar's governments' European policy, and not for its content, but for its form. That is to say, in a context of intergovernmental negotiation every State defends legitimately its national interests, but the form of defending it is not a minor issue. In this sense, the pragmatic disposition of the President Aznar on alliance policy, his utilitarian discourse and the little pro-European ambition shown in the successive EU reform processes have given the rest of members a motive to exaggerate Spain's image as a selfish partner. In this sense, there has been a change relative to the previous socialist government. Although Felipe González also fiercely battled questions of national interest, such as the Communitarian funds, his arguments were wrapped in a deeply pro-European discourse and his demands were based on the argument that the social and economic cohesion was a core principle of the Union (Barbé, 1999). Although certain incidents, such as the Spanish stance on the Cohesion Funds in 1992, would raise criticism from some member states, in general, González's will to be part of the core of the European construction and support for the Franco-German axis prevented his credibility as a responsible member to be damaged. Thus, paradoxically, Aznar's vision of the European

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<sup>3</sup> Vigueira, Enrique "Las negociaciones para la ampliación: la posición española". *Boletín Económico del ICE*, nº 2629, 27 September - 3 October 1999, p. 24.

policy as a game in which "it is not a matter of being alone, or being accompanied, but of defending the interests of Spain"<sup>4</sup> has ended up by rendering such a legitimate defence of national interests much more difficult.

2. *To what extent has the strategy of the conservative governments managed to narrow links between Spain and the Eastern enlargement candidates?* According to the opposition parties, the answer to this question in 2002 was that "when we talk about the relations with the candidate countries shortages are paramount. The feeling of being very far in economic, technological, social, cultural, political, military and legal relations with countries that within shortly are going to be full members of the EU is really surprising"<sup>5</sup>. The government, however, despite recognizing that the level of relations with the candidates is still far from achieving its full potential, has preferred to see the "glass half-full", claiming its policies to have obtained very positive results, especially if one considers that the point of departure was a situation where hispano-CEEC relations were virtually inexistent.

The main concern of the first Aznar's government in relation to the enlargement countries undoubtedly was to increase the economic presence of Spain in this area. With this aim, already in 1998 the government commissioned the *Secretaría de Estado de Comercio y Turismo* to elaborate an Enlargement Plan (*Plan Ampliación*), which has become considered as an "offensive strategy of opening of markets and creating a two-way flow by eliminating the obstacles to Spanish exports to these countries, and of promoting trade and invests"<sup>6</sup>. This Plan has produced both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, the most favourably viewed result is the increase of trade flows. The CEECs have become the area where the Spanish exports have increased the most since 1999 (30%), so that nowadays commerce with this area represents more than 4% of the total Spanish world sales. However, on the negative side, at commercial level, the government itself recognizes that there is still a long way to run, taking into account that the Spanish average market share in the candidate countries continues to be one of the smallest in the Union<sup>7</sup>. The same holds true for investments, where "the Spanish companies are situated in a scandalously low position in the ranking, with only 1,1% of the total" of the invest in the east<sup>8</sup>. Thus, in spite of the relative increase of the Spanish presence in the eastern candidates, the government has been criticised for "having played its cards badly or even worse, having discarded the card game"<sup>9</sup>, for having "thrown the towel in"<sup>10</sup> or for being "out of the game"<sup>11</sup>, especially with reference to Romania and Bulgaria where the business opportunities are still notorious.

The lack of impetus of the Spanish policy towards the Eastern candidates is all the more important in the political domain, where the measures taken by the government have been late and have lagged behind the Enlargement Plan. The case of the Eastern policy towards the CEECs is thus a further example of the "economization" that has characterized the general design of the foreign policy during the Aznar's term. In this sense, it was not until in 2001 that the *Secretaría de Estado de Asuntos Europeos* elaborated a Framework Plan (*Plan Marco*) in the spirit of reinforcing the bilateral relations with the candidate countries in all dimensions, in

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<sup>4</sup> Speech by José María Aznar, op.cit, p. 6688.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Ignasi Guardans, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, (Foreign Affairs Committee), 12 February 2002, number 413.

<sup>6</sup> Secretaría de Estado de Comercio y Turismo. *Plan Ampliación. Actualización 2000-2001*, p.4. Up to now, 3 Enlargement Plans, the first in 1999 and its subsequent updates for 2000-2001 and 2002-2004, have been elaborated.

<sup>7</sup> Subdirección General de Estudios del Sector Exterior. "La posición comercial española en los países candidatos". *Boletín Económico del ICE*, nº 2744, 21- 27 October 2002, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Martín, Carmela; Herce, José A.; Sosevilla-Rivero, Simón y Velázquez, Francisco (2002), *La Ampliación de la Unión Europea: efectos sobre la economía española*. Servicio de Estudios de La Caixa. Cited in "La competencia para España de los países de la ampliación" *El Exportador Digital* nº 59, December 2002. <<http://www.el-exportador.com>>

<sup>9</sup> Cases, J.I; Ruiz, F.J. "¿Qué ampliación beneficia a España?" *El País*, 16 April 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Ignasi Guardans's speech, op. cit, p. 13415.

<sup>11</sup> "España está fuera del tablero", *El País*, 23 November 2003.

particular political links, as well as defence and safety matters and justice and home affairs<sup>12</sup>. This new more integrated approach has had a quantitative reflection during the second legislature (intensification of the official visits<sup>13</sup>, increase of the institutions representing Spain abroad<sup>14</sup>, increase of the number of bilateral agreements, etc.), but, also qualitative. In the latter case, the imminent entry of the new member states has placed at the fore the need "to create networks of common interests and to encourage the convergence of points of view on the great matters of the EU to guarantee a future harmonization and defence of mutual interests"<sup>15</sup>. The most self-evident examples of this Spanish search of new alliances and complicities are the initiatives such as the "Letter of the Eight" in relation to the transatlantic link, in which Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary appear as signatories; the Hispano-Polish agreement to defend the institutional chapter of the Nice Treaty; or even more recently, the so-called "Letter of the Six", in which Estonia and Poland joined the Spanish and other member's claim for a strict application of the Stability Pact.

Certainly, with the Enlargement Plan and the Framework Plan, the government established for the first time an integrated strategy to guide Spain's relations with the candidate countries. Throughout the two last legislatures the lack of links with the countries of this area, practically non-existent until then, has started to be straightened out. Likewise, it is also worth noting that, to some extent, the poor increase of the relations is attributable to the little interest of the Spanish business community itself (for instance, the difficult eastern languages are often considered as an important barrier), and not to the government's lack of efforts to promote Spanish business in the East. But the pros do not mean that there are no cons. In this sense, the lack of an integrated strategy has been the reason for the Spanish performance being late, little systematized and short of confidence, which implies the missing of numerous opportunities in terms of business and new political and cultural influence areas.

Picking up the questions raised in this analysis, one can point out, firstly, that despite the challenges and risks that enlargement entails for the Spanish interests, Spain has been one of the countries of the Union where there has been notable consensus among the main political parties to support the process. However, the Spanish Government has been lacking in skills –or will– to defend its national interests, while at the same time, avoiding being perceived as against enlargement. In this sense, one might infer that, in a highly normative context such as the EU, the formal aspects (discourse, alliances) are essential to legitimize one's own preferences and behaviour as well as to prevent one's own credibility as a responsible member before the other member states and the candidate countries from suffering damage.

Secondly, with regard to the Spanish strategy towards the accession countries, we conclude that, in spite of relative progress in Spanish-candidates relations, the level of interaction with the members-to-be is still very low relative to the other member states. The essentially economic approach has been to the detriment of the establishment of political-institutional bases for the creation of common interests with the candidate countries. Developing such common interests with the new members will be all the more essential in order for Spain to keep its status in the enlarged EU. Spain needs to seek replacement for its depleted alliances with the current members –specially now that new modes of community coexistence seem to proliferate, whether in form of groups of letter signatories or new directorate attempts, axis or triangles.

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<sup>12</sup> Secretaría de Estado de Asuntos Exteriores. *Plan Marco de los países candidatos a la Unión Europea, 2001-2004*.

<sup>13</sup> From 1999, the José Maria Aznar has carried out between 4 and 10 visits to the enlargement countries as a group. Likewise, the number of visits of the Heads of State and of government of the candidate countries has also increased (for example, 25 visits in 2002). *Monografías de la OID*, Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry website <<http://www.mae.es/>>

<sup>14</sup> New embassies in Slovakia, Slovenia and Cyprus (at the present, the three Baltic countries and Malta remain without embassy), new commercial and tourism offices, or new *Aulas del Instituto Cervantes* in different universities of the CEECs.

<sup>15</sup> Speech by Ramón De Miguel, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados* (Foreign Affairs Committee), 12 February 2002, number 413, p. 13411.

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**A Spanish model for the European 'near abroad'?  
The legacy of Aznar to EU's foreign policy toward  
neighboring non-candidate countries**

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Since coming into power in 1996, the Aznar government has increasingly tried to set Spain apart from its past as 'the smallest of the large', or 'the largest of the smaller or medium ones' in Europe. Under the stewardship of José María Aznar, and his center-right Popular Party, Spain has repeatedly tried to break the glass-ceiling which separates it from the large and influential countries in Europe. And in the aftermath of the Nice Treaty (December 2000), with the Spanish delegation having ensured Council votes which placed it very near those of France and Germany, it almost seemed as if four years of dogged pursuit had finally paid off. The then government's spokesman, Pío Cabanillas, certainly thought so in that, during a press conference in Madrid, he reportedly confidently declared: "We're [now] one of the big guys."<sup>1</sup>

As an alleged 'big' country in Europe, one would thus certainly expect a Spanish imprint on most of the current European issues with high salience; may they relate to the internal EU construction process (Convention, IGC), or the settlement of a 'wider European' order come 1 May 2004 (i.e. relations with Russia, Ukraine, Mediterranean or the new European neighborhood policy). However, although Madrid has forwarded proposals in the first respect;<sup>2</sup> in the debate regarding a post-enlargement European architecture Spain's voice has been lamentably absent. One could thus infer that the internal functioning of the Union is more of a priority to the Aznar government, than Europe's relationship with its neighbors.

Nevertheless, by piecing together the actuation of Madrid in these years past, may one discern a Spanish model for Europe and its neighborhood, a model to which we will return to at the end of this essay.

If the Socialist governments under Felipe González (1982-1996) were characterized by a great interest for transposing Spanish problems with its immediate near abroad (the Mediterranean) onto the European agenda; the Aznar legislatures have largely abandoned this traditional geographical fixation in favor of a more thematic (cross-issue) agenda.<sup>3</sup> Madrid has instead

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<sup>1</sup> "Spain Makes Big Case for More Clout in Europe" *International Herald Tribune*, 28 March 2001.

<sup>2</sup> See Aznar's speech at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 2002; or , the Hispano-British joint proposal in 2002, for more see "Blair and Aznar reveal future of EU vision" *EUObserver*, 28 February 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Spain's traditional role as a European broker for Mediterranean interests (especially Maghrebi) has thus seen a dramatic reduction in the years of the Popular Party. One could even argue as Nuñez (2001) and Martín (2003) do that Spain, under the leadership of Aznar, has not taken advantage of the role it created for itself as a Mediterranean leader in the lead-up to the Barcelona Process (with the brief exception in the interlude of Mediterranean revival during its EU Presidency; see Eduard Soler i Lecha in this collection); nor has it tried to exercise its influence in European institutions in favor of mobilizing communitarian resources for the Mediterranean region. Jesús A. Nuñez Villaverde "The Mediterranean: A Firm Priority of Spanish Foreign Policy?" in Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs (eds.) *Spain: The European and International Challenges*. London: Frank Cass, 2001; and Iván Martín "La nueva política de vecindad de la Unión Europea: ¿una oportunidad para relanzar las relaciones España-

largely concentrated on the pursuit of a few concrete issues in Brussels in recent years. The Spanish priorities in Europe have circled around topics at the very core of a traditional right-wing agenda such as citizen's security, justice and defense.<sup>4</sup> And although these issues are above all expressions of Spain's domestic political reality (terrorism, immigration), or as a means to enhance Spain's international standing (Iraq coalition), they have also served as a way for *la Moncloa* to season the EU foreign policy agenda towards Europe's neighbors with a distinctively Spanish flavor.

The international turn of events following the al-Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 have provided an important boost for Spain's European agenda in terms of citizen's security. Terrorism and illegal immigration have become the two major mantras of the Spanish representatives operating in Brussels in recent years, although other Spanish concerns have also been pushed with some insistence by the government such as asylum, money laundering and drug trafficking.<sup>5</sup> However, it should be noted that in essence Madrid has consistently pursued the same policy-issues since the formation of the first Aznar legislature in 1996. For example, Spain, in the IGC leading up to the Treaty of Amsterdam and the following European Council in Vienna (1998), made maximum use of its power of persuasion to ensure the gradual harmonization of police and justice activity among EU member states. Moreover, heavy Spanish political capital would also be invested in the posterior development of a European area of freedom, security and justice (Tampere, 1999). Indeed, Madrid's vigorous actuation on these JHA-related issues would soon earn it the qualification of being a leader at the European level.<sup>6</sup>

During its EU Presidency (first semester 2002), Spain was to dedicate its turn at the European helm to issues such as of international terrorism and illegal immigration with a view to forge European unity around these matters.<sup>7</sup> In the lead-up to the European Council in Seville, for example, the Spanish EU Presidency's vigorous shuttle diplomacy between different European capitals would result in the adoption of anti-terrorist measures as yet another task among the Petersberg missions for the European Union's nascent security and defense policy (ESDP).<sup>8</sup> Spanish activism would include such specific measures in relation to third countries such as adopting antiterrorist clauses, mechanisms to forge mutual antiterrorist collaboration, and study how to make use of EU's military capacity to protect the civil population against terrorist attacks.<sup>9</sup>

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Marruecos? *Real Elcano Análisis* ARI N° 137/2003. The reason for Spain's seemingly disinterest, one might argue, can be explain by the fact that with the launch of the 1995 Barcelona Process, Spain's interests were largely fulfilled in this area. Spain in 1995 saw its fundamental objective for the Mediterranean region realized, "namely that the EU should assume the responsibility of increasing the resources destined to Mediterranean co-operation (through the MEDA programme)." Esther Barbé, "Spain and CFSP: The Emergence of a 'Major Player'?" in Gillespie and Youngs, op. cit, p. 53

<sup>4</sup> At a rare occasion where José María Aznar laid out his political project, he announced his interest in strengthening the classical functions of the state, such as security, justice and defense, and added that these should be the key in the center-right parties across Europe. "Aznar defiende la familia ante el PP europeo y se opone a las sociedades multiculturales," *El País*, 23 April 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Spain continues to be a major European base for money-laundering as well as the principal doorway for drugs heading for the European market.

<sup>6</sup> Esther Barbé, "La política europea de España 1999-2000," *Observatory of European Foreign Policy Working Paper* 1/2003.

<sup>7</sup> In terms of domestic terrorism, Aznar saw his government's ambitions largely satisfied in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001, an event which speeded up the adoption of the European arrest warrant under the Belgian EU Presidency (second semester 2001), in spite of the initial opposition of the Italian government of Silvio Berlusconi. The warrant foresees automatic extradition of individuals claimed by the courts in another EU member country.

<sup>8</sup> Speech by the President of the European Council, José María Aznar, at St Anthony's College in the University of Oxford, 20 May 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Esther Barbé, "La política europea de España 2002-2003," *Observatory of European Foreign Policy Working Paper* 48/2003.

This forward stance on terrorism, together with Aznar's unvarying support for Bush's Iraqi policy, has been quite unsettling to Europe's neighbors from Minsk all the way to Rabat. George Bush's and the neoconservatives' pre-emptive military doctrine has many implications, such as for example, international interventionism to remove dictators, even in situations where such interventions do not count on the legitimizing support of a UN Security Council resolution. This phenomenon is worrying for the public in general in the light of the forthcoming evidence of sloppy Western intelligence work and the non-solid evidence that served as the pretext for the intervention. However, perhaps this new doctrine is especially worrisome for more than one non-democratic (or dubiously democratic) leader in the vicinity of the European Union who feel that they might be the next target. Spain has in this case added fuel to fire to the fears of some neighboring governments by being very activist both within NATO and in the European Union's ESDP to promote the possibility to use military capacities/rapid reaction force in Europe's periphery, in general, and in the Mediterranean in particular. The Spanish support for Bush's 'war on terrorism' is also a cause for concern in the view of how some countries are turning the pre-emptive doctrine to its favor. The prime example in this respect is Israel, which already has a speckled history of heeding UN resolutions. Ariel Sharon's administration can now justify its actions as part of its own program of 'pre-emptive diplomacy' against the Palestinians, thus seeming to gain the upper hand against any critique from the international community.

In terms of illegal immigration, the Aznar government would use its EU Presidency as a platform to attempt to coordinate member states on a range of issues related to this particular Spanish headache. Benefiting from his personal friendship with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, José María Aznar managed to secure high political support for his efforts to control illegal immigration in the Mediterranean. In a joint Hispano-British proposal – which in an early (non-public) draft allegedly even contemplated military fleets patrolling the Mediterranean – the British and the Spanish premiers laid out the idea that EU development assistance should be conditional on if neighboring third countries' (e.g. Turkey, Ukraine or Morocco) willingness to assist European efforts to reduce illegal immigration.<sup>10</sup> However, due to Franco-Swedish resistance, this particular proposal would not prosper at Seville. The same faith would await another Seville initiative, this one proposing the establishment of a common border police. This time, however, a wider group of member states were opposed, not at the least for the additional strain on the communitarian budget that such an undertaking would have entailed. These Spanish initiatives might have been a bit too ambitious for the majority of the member states to handle at the time. However, the very success of the Popular Party's strategy is well illustrated by the fact that immigration now occupy a fairly central place on the European agenda as a security concern.

Popular concerns about uncontrolled immigration run deep in Spain, which still has not got used to the idea that it has past from being an emitter country to a receptor country in terms of migration flows. The Popular Party has picked up on this fear and promised strong measures at home and abroad to resolve this problem. The Aznar legislatures have thus gone far out of the way to 'securitize' the relationship between immigration and citizen's security. Aznar has even explicitly touch on a raw nerve in the public's concern when it comes to immigration, in stating: "It is not surprising that a citizen from a developing country, who enters Europe illegally and fails to find work or a means of satisfying his needs, should resort to crime in order to survive."<sup>11</sup> Elaborating at another occasion Aznar held that –

"We are a borderland country, a country which from the outside is seen as a land of opportunities. This makes us proud and aware of our responsibility to of receive those who seek to carve out a better future for themselves; but we also know that integration becomes much more difficult if one starts off from a situation of illegality, or if a country's

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<sup>10</sup> First published in *The Guardian*, later republished in "Blair planea usar aviones y buques de guerra para detectar y deportar a los 'sin papeles': Londres quiere sancionar a los países que no acepten la repatriación de indocumentados," *El País*, 24 May 2002. For a more detailed discussion, see Elisabeth Johansson "The distant neighbors — EU, Middle East, North Africa and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership," *Observatory of European Foreign Policy Working Paper* 37/2003.

<sup>11</sup> Aznar Speech at St. Anthony's College, op. cit.

real receiving capacity is surpassed. We desire an integrated and pluralist society, and that requires hindering illegal immigration in all of Europe.”<sup>12</sup>

The Spanish outlook is far from unique. Indeed the PP's quest to deal forcefully with the matter of immigration during Spain's EU Presidency was much helped by the electoral successes which right-wing parties across Europe (some on xenophobic election programs) have had in recent years. However, perhaps the leading role which the Aznar government has played in terms of putting this issue on the European agenda – as well as the fact that Madrid has neither been afraid to fall out with third countries that are deemed to not be in compliance (the 2002-2003 Spanish-Moroccan dispute)<sup>13</sup> nor of enacting tough domestic laws<sup>14</sup> – have contributed to Spain being seen as a particularly strong advocate of a model of Europe closed to the world and third country citizens ('Fortress Europe').

Spain under PP has, in sum, seemingly positioned itself as a bulwark of European security favoring a 'Fortress Europe', by Europeanizing its domestic political agenda on terrorism and immigration. Located in the European periphery, Spain is much more exposed to neighborhood instability than many other European countries, which might on the one hand justify such Spanish initiatives. However, PP's strong language on issues related to citizen's security, goes against the logic which the European Union traditionally has stood for: a Europe 'open to its neighbors' where dialogue and engagement ('carrots') have always taken precedent over negative measures ('sticks'). The Spanish model for Europe's relations with neighboring countries has in consequence, and as we have seen, created some tension in Europe's neighborhood and even raised some critique in Brussels.<sup>15</sup> However, although Aznar's legacy to the European foreign policy might endure in terms of its substance (illegal immigration and terrorism); beyond March 2004 the style is bound to change, paving the way for less confrontational discourse towards EU's neighboring third countries. The Wider Europe/New Neighborhood policy, for which negotiations are under way (Spring 2004), seems to favor a more cooperative attitude and swing the pendulum away from a fortress-mentality and in favor of greater openness.

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<sup>12</sup> Author's own translation. Speech by José María Aznar, upon awarding the "Gran Cruz de San Raimundo De Peñafort" to EU's JHA Commissioner Antonio Vitorino, Palacio de la Moncloa, 24 February 2003.

<sup>13</sup> The 2001-2003 Hispano-Moroccan spat was set off by the fact that the Moroccan ambassador to Spain was called up to the Spanish Foreign Ministry to be held answerable for why Rabat was not doing more to stem illegal immigration destined for Spain and Europe and passing through or originating in Moroccan territory.

<sup>14</sup> Immigration became a hot issue of the internal political debate in Spain when the PP government tried to modify the laws regulating foreign citizens in Spain (previous reform had been in 1985) in 1999, winking the Tampere European Council decisions as creating obligation for reform. The Spanish government proposed the Parliament with a draft law making the Law visibly tougher, however, it would have to retreat and modify its content as a result of the heavy critique from the opposition. The modified *Ley de Extranjería* was, however, passed by the Spanish Parliament in 1999 as the government ensured support from its coalition parties. The Law has since been further reformed in the light of the absolute majority which the PP has enjoyed, from March 2000. Barbé, *La política europea de España 1999-2000*, op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> "Prodi y Amnistía Internacional exigen medida a los Quince en las medidas contra la inmigración ilegal," *El País*, 13 June 2002.



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Has Spain managed to become one of the large Member States of the Union? Undoubtedly, Spain's position in the European Union or, in other words, Spanish representation in the EU institutions, has been the subject of the most intense battles fought by its government during recent years. However, not only has the government of the Conservative Party (PP), under the leadership of José María Aznar since 1996, used its negotiating advantages to obtain a better representation in the institutions, but also the government of the Socialist Party (PSOE) worked to maintain Spain's relative weight vis-à-vis the other Member States as it had been settled at the moment of its accession in 1986.

What is Spain's weight within the European institutions? How should Spain act, given the traditional cleavage between small and big States? Along the almost twenty years it has been a member of the European Union, Spain tried to be considered by its peers as one of the large States, together with France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. 'To become a large State' means to have the capacity to influence the decision-making process of the Union, but at the same time, to have greater capacity to veto any decision that goes against the national interest.

Faced with the prospect of the Eastern enlargement, with twelve potential Member States already at the gates of the European Union, Spain felt that its status of large State in the EU institutions was in danger. In fact, despite not having the same number of votes in the Council of Ministers (Spain had 8 votes, while the other big Member States had 10), its two commissioners had granted Spain this role since 1986. The 1995 enlargement and the potential of Northern countries to dominate the Union seemed to threaten Spain's influence. This is why the Spanish government demanded to maintain the blocking minority threshold in 23 votes, the so-called Ioannina Compromise. For the first time, Spain used a discourse based on the defence of the national interests, which ended up distancing Spain from the Franco-German axis, while at the same time it helped to get closer the United Kingdom's position<sup>1</sup>.

Traditionally, the ultimate demand of Spain in the revision of the relative weights of Member States had been the rebalancing of population and votes in the Council of Ministers. In the review of the Treaty of Maastricht, during the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), Spain expressed the need for a real institutional reform. However, the lack of agreement among the Member States prevented them from giving a definitive solution to this question then and forced them to put that debate on ice until the following treaty reform, foreseen for 2000. Finally, the Spanish government succeeded in adding a Declaration to the Protocol of the Treaty of Amsterdam<sup>2</sup> which put emphasis on the special case of Spain and the need to maintain its current weight in the European institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Powell, Charles (2002), 'Spanish membership of the European Union revisited', *Working Paper of the Real Instituto Elcano*, 17 June 2002.

<sup>2</sup> See Declaration n° 50 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on 2 October 1997, where it was agreed that until the entry into force of the first enlargement the decision of the Council of 29 March 1994 ('the Ioannina Compromise') was extended and, by that date, a solution for the special case of Spain was to be found.

The Nice IGC and its consequent agreement on the new EU weight distribution among Member States were considered by Aznar as one of the main successes of its government. This agreement, based on giving a commissioner to each Member State, a different weighting of votes in the Council and a new distribution of seats in the European Parliament (EP), fulfilled Spanish expectations. Through complex arithmetic rules, Spain managed to maintain its role of 'small State among the large States' thanks to the votes obtained for the Council (Spain would have 27, while the "big four" would have 29). Furthermore, those votes gave Spain the same veto power as that of the large Member States. Nevertheless, the reconsideration of the negotiation method as well as the decision to open a debate on the future of Europe with the aim of drawing up a Constitutional Treaty dampened Spain's conquests at Nice.

Within the works of the European Convention regarding institutional reform, Spain worked to preserve the agreement reached during the 2000 Intergovernmental Conference that concluded the Treaty of Nice. According to Ana Palacio, the Convention had to abide by the Treaty of Nice and had to subject itself to the strict mandate of the Laeken Declaration<sup>3</sup>. In other words, it could not modify any of the agreements, such as the voting system of the Council, accorded in Nice.

In this sense, the proposal of the European Convention, defended especially by France and Germany in the IGC, establishes a system of "double majority", that is, the majority is only achieved with the votes of the majority of Member States if, and only if, such votes represent at the same time at least 60% of the Union's population. This controversial issue prevented the IGC, inaugurated on October 4, 2003, from reaching a final agreement on the new Constitutional Treaty. Nowadays, the process remains paralyzed and is now in the hands of the Irish Presidency, who has to deal with all the misunderstandings before any agreement is possible. The threat posed by Spain and Poland to block the Constitution as well as the reduced mediation capacity of the preceding Italian Presidency ended up being the main obstacles to reach an agreement during the Brussels European Council (12-13 December 2003).

This succession of events suggests the need for some clarifying points on the role of Spain in the consecutive institutional reforms. It is worth noting that these institutional reforms affect the capacity of every State to influence the decision-making process within the Union's institutions. First, it is true that Spain's defence of its role as a big State in the EU institutions has been a constant feature of its European policy. Nevertheless, this attitude has only been adopted when the calendar has required an institutional reform and a new distribution of power among the Member States. It is only in those moments that the Spanish government, regardless of which party presides it, has negotiated to obtain, maintain or consolidate its status of large Member State.

Second, the Spanish government, whether held by the PSOE or the PP, used the national interest as an argument to defend Spain's role as a big State in the Union. However, one may draw a distinction between the socialist governments and the conservative ones. Although the Spanish socialist government used the national interest with force regarding the distribution of power --the best example would be the introduction of the Ioannina Compromise before the imminent enlargement to Fifteen<sup>4</sup>--, the same government had been more reticent to prioritise the Spanish national interest over the European one in the negotiation of specific Community policies. However, the government of the PP has defended the Spanish position based on the national interest more regularly. As the statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Palacio, illustrate, "the Convention proposals attempt directly against Spain's interests, interests which are not temporary and which the Spanish Government has maintained for a long time"<sup>5</sup>.

Therefore, the will to keep Spain on equal footing with the large Member States and the use of the national interest in the institutional bargaining have been, with nuances, constant features of

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<sup>3</sup> Conference of Ana Palacio for the presentation of the 'Anuario Internacional CIDOB 2002', Barcelona, 18 September 2003. See: "Palacio rechaza el sistema de voto propuesto para el Consejo de la UE", in *El País*, 19 September 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Barbé, Esther (1999), *La política europea de España*, Barcelona: Ariel.

<sup>5</sup> Ana Palacio, *Diario de sesiones de las Cortes Generales (Comisión Mixta para la Unión Europea)*, 7 October 2003, nº 151, p. 3706. Available from: <http://www.congreso.es>

Spain's European policy. However, there are other elements that clarify the differences between the socialist and conservative governments.

The defence of Spain's position regarding its relative weight in the EU has experienced an interesting evolution. Whereas for the PSOE, the representation in the European Commission was a symbol of being a large State, the PP has preferred to give priority to its weight in the Council, sacrificing at the same time the number of Spanish Members of the European Parliament. Spain's Treaty of Accession, negotiated in its last phases by the Socialist Party, granted the role of large State to Spain through its two representatives in the European Commission. However, as a consequence of the enlargement, the reform of the Commission has been a necessity. In Nice, it was agreed that the Commission would include only one national of each Member State. Later, within the IGC-2003/04, it was agreed that there would have to be a rotation of the representation of the Member States in the Commission, which made Spain demand other payments in the rest of the institutions. Particularly, in the 2000-IGC the Spanish government fought in order to get a greater weight in the Council of Ministers, at the expense of losing representatives in the European Parliament (Nice establishes that Spain will reduce its European representatives from 64 to 50). While the People's Party's definition of the European Union is a "Union of National States"<sup>6</sup>, the Socialist Party, during its term in office, "characteristically intoned a federalist discourse, including proposals favourable to Spanish interests. This could be described as wrapping the national interest in a federalist discourse"<sup>7</sup>. This differentiation in the way of understanding European integration also explains the different priorities of both governments in the EU institutions.

On the other hand, Spain has defended in all EU negotiations on power distribution among Member States the importance of the population criterion. That is, the demographic criterion had to be the rule for the weight assigned to each Member State in the Council. However, before the proposal of the European Convention on the double majority system -population and Member State votes-, Spain gave up the defence of this criterion requiring the preservation of the weighting voting arrangement of Nice. At present, the prospect of the Spanish government seems to be the following one: the European Parliament is the institution that represents the citizens and the European Council is the one where the Member States are represented, with a weight according to their size in the international scene and not strictly according to their population. Therefore, the demographic weight must not be the only criterion in the definition of the qualified majority. The defence of the demographic criterion, used previously by the PSOE as well as by the PP in their demands during the 1996-IGC was pushed into the background, because it was not useful anymore for the defence of the national interest.

In short, the balance of relative weights in the European institutions has been one of Spain's priorities in the successive treaty reforms. Its attempt to be considered as one of the large States in the EU has led Spain to put the national interest above the European one. However, up until December 2003, the Spanish national interest had not hindered the European construction. Today, Spain and Poland are held responsible for the current paralysis. Will Spain finally become the *enfant terrible*<sup>8</sup> that the founder Member States had feared during the first years of its accession?

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<sup>6</sup> José María Aznar, Speech on the Future of Europe, Saint Anthony's College, Oxford University, 20 May 2002. Available from: <http://www.la-moncloa.es>

<sup>7</sup> Closa, Carlos (2001), 'The domestic basis of Spanish European Policy and the 2002 Presidency', *Groupement d'Études et de Recherches Notre Europe*, Research and Policy Paper n° 16, December.

<sup>8</sup> Regelsberger, Elfriede (1989), 'Spain and the European Political Cooperation – No *Enfant Terrible*', *International Spectator*, vol. XXIV, n° 2, April-June, pp. 118-124.

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During his two periods of government (1996-2004), Aznar progressively modified the position of Spain in relation to the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which progressively became an instrument for the self projection of Spain in the international scene and for the internationalisation of its domestic problems. This position intensified in the last three years, and very specially in 2003, when Spain led, within the European Union, an alternative movement to that of the franco-german axis which had, as its only referent, the United States of America.

In spite of becoming the leader of the "new Europe" defined by Rumsfeld, Spain never showed itself contrary to the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Which were, then, the reasons that led Spain to search an alternative to the model proposed by France and Germany in relation to the ESDP? One of the reasons, as we analyse below, is very much related to its need to demonstrate that, in spite of having been continuously excluded from the directory of countries of the Union whose military capacity is essential for the effective development of the ESDP, Spain still remained a leader as far as defence was concerned.

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In spite of the change experienced during his eight years of government in relation to foreign policy, in his first period (1996-2000) Aznar's attention in relation to the CFSP focussed, basically, in the areas that had traditionally been linked to the Spanish foreign policy: Latin America and the Mediterranean, to which he added a new and more intensified dimension of the transatlantic relations. In a first evaluation of the CFSP, due to the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, Aznar's government considered that the transatlantic relations or the 1995 Barcelona Conference were proves that important achievements could be reach under the "present dispositions" of the Treaty of the European Union that should allow the EU to become an actor in the international scene, "conscious as we are, though, of its limitations"<sup>1</sup>.

In the same period, and as far as defence is concerned, Aznar was in favour of a progressive development of a European Identity in Security and Defence that allowed the Union to carry out military operations in response to a crisis. This is why the Spanish position to the 1996 IGC supported the integration of the Western European Union (WEU) to the EU parallel to the development of a EU's operative capability. It is important to point out that the socialist government, in a document presented in March 1995, had been in favour of keeping the status quo in relation to the WEU by preserving the autonomous but interrelated character of both organisations<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, the Spanish will to integrate the WEU to the EU was not included in the Treaty of Amsterdam (which rather preferred to respect the wishes of the neutral countries, some of them

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<sup>1</sup> Elementos para una posición española en la Conferencia Intergubernamental de 1996, March 1996, <http://europa.eu.int/en/agenda/igc-home/ms-doc/state-es/espana.htm#ch4>

<sup>2</sup> The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference: Bases for Discussion<sup>1</sup>, Spanish position, March 6, 1995. <http://europa.eu.int/en/agenda/igc-home/ms-doc/state-es/discussn.html>

new Members at the Union). However, the Treaty included, among others, the wish expressed by Spain that the new European Identity of Security and Defence served to reinforce the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance, the preservation of consensus in relation to defence issues and the introduction of the constructive abstention.

But the real push to the development of the ESDP was given at the franco-british summit at Saint Maló, the results of which were supported by Spain, in spite of not having been invited to the summit, at the European Councils of Cologne and Helsinki (June and December 1999). In both Councils, Spain also made clear its will to be part of the hard core of countries ready to develop a European defence with the final objective of increasing the credibility and capacity of action of the Union. In the same direction, one year later, Spain supported the decision of the WEU council celebrated in Marsella (November 2000) to integrate, from the 1 of July 2001, the operative crisis management organisation of the WEU to the EU.

Since it started its second mandate (2000-2004), Spain carried out an important change in its foreign policy agenda and developed a new strategy in relation to the ESDP with a double characteristic: the introduction of Spanish domestic issues in the European agenda (fight against terrorism, transatlantic relations); and the need to demonstrate that Spain was able to speak its own voice in the international scene by leading an alternative directory to the franco-german one.

The 11 September terrorist attacks allowed Spain to internationalise one of its main domestic problems, the fight against terrorism and Aznar led the Union's reaction against the attacks towards the United States. Aznar took advantage of the Spanish Presidency of the Union, first semester of 2002, to intensify this task and succeeded in including the fight against terrorism as a field of action in the framework of the second pillar of the Union. In this sense, in the Seville European Council, 21 and 22 June 2002, the Spanish Presidency adopted a declaration that established that both the ESDP and the CFSP were to play an important role to fight against "this menace for the security of Europe"<sup>3</sup>.

During the European Convention, the Spanish government persevered in the internationalisation of terrorism by presenting a contribution in which required the need of putting into practice the security and defence aspects of the Seville mandate<sup>4</sup>, as well as the possibility of developing a military concept on defence against terrorism and other new threats. Besides, the Spanish contribution also made reference to the need of establishing a broader definition of the Petersberg tasks that included other tasks that implied the use of military means as it is the case of terrorism.

In the same document, Spain was in favour of increasing the capacity of the Union to contribute to the peace and international security by progressively being able to assume more demanding military operations of crisis management, reinforcing the command and control assets and capabilities available for EU operations, and establishing a flexible framework for different mechanisms of closer co-operation open to all Member States willing and able to move forward.

In spite of his will to contribute to the development of a unified ESDP, always on the basis of unanimity, Aznar searched alliances among EU Member States and candidate countries in order to present alternative to the French and German positions in relation to the ESDP and the European Union's position towards international conflicts (as it has been the case during the Iraq crisis). The Spanish behaviour responds to a feeling of exclusion for being considered a country of inferior category as far as military capabilities is concerned (in Ghant, for example, France, United Kingdom and Germany met some hours before the celebration of the European Council of 19 October 2001 in order to co-ordinate its military action in Afghanistan).

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<sup>3</sup> Declaración del Consejo Europeo sobre la contribución de la PESD, incluida la PESD, en la lucha contra el terrorismo, Anexo V de las Conclusiones de la Presidencia, SN200/02, Sevilla, 21 y 22 de junio de 2002

<sup>4</sup> Contribution submitted by Ms Ana Palacio, alternate member of the Convention: "European Security and Defence Policy", CONTRIB 314, CONV 706/03, Brussels, 29 April 2003.

This exclusion led Spain to search alliances outside the Union and, more concretely, in the United States of America and the Candidate countries. Consequence of it was the letter signed by Spain in support of the USA attack in Iraq (which was also signed by the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary), and which later found the support of some more Eastern European countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia).

During the attacks and the immediate aftermath of the war, Spain counted with the support of the United Kingdom, which equilibrated, to a certain extent, the European forces in favour and against the attack. However, with the return of the United Kingdom to the project of European defence (in the 2003 winter European Council the United Kingdom supported the development of a hard core of countries for the development of a European defence), Spain was left alone leading a group of countries without enough military capability. France and Germany welcomed the United Kingdom back to the European project, conscious that no European military force is possible if it excludes one of these three countries. Spain, again, is not essential.

To conclude: in spite of the fact that in his first years of government Aznar led a humble Spanish foreign policy, his second period has been characterised by an attempt to lead a European foreign policy independent from Berlin and Paris and more reliable in other alliances such as the main partner of the United States in Europe, the United Kingdom, or the future Member States, what has led to an important division of the EU. However, after more than one year of attempts, Spain has not succeeded and continues occupying a second position in the European military scene. In other words, Aznar has been able to go to the Azores to declare a war but he is still lacking the necessary military assets to being an indispensable actor in any of the operations that take place.



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The analysis of Spain's contribution to European Union's co-operation for development policy (from now onwards CDP) during the government of Jose Maria Aznar necessarily requires an inquiry about Spanish bilateral development policy. The low profile that has been one of the main characteristics of Spain's co-operation for development policy has negatively conditioned its participation in the CDP of the EU. During last two legislatures, and independently of the different Foreign Affairs Ministers, we can distinguish three periods:

Popular's Party electoral victory raised hopes of improvement of Spanish CDP. While candidate, Jose María Aznar had compromised, during 1994 massive demonstrations in favour of 0,7% ODA/GNP, to reach that amount and modernise Spanish co-operation for development system.<sup>1</sup> Greatest success of this phase is the approval of the International Co-operation Law in 1998, including an article explaining Spain's contribution to the European Union's co-operation policy.<sup>2</sup> The approval of the law ended the process of standardisation of Spanish development policy that had begun on 1991 with membership to DAC. During this period government focused on better management of Spanish co-operation for development system and logically its contributions to Community's policy were not significant.

Initial momentum after new government lead to languish and a second phase: amounts did not grow nor substantial reforms were put forward. Respectfully to Spain's contribution to Union's CDP there was never an initial momentum, except for the Cuban case,<sup>3</sup> so Spanish participation is nothing more than testimonial. Clear symptoms of Aznar's government indifference towards this policy are the facts that Foreign Affairs Minister never assisted to Development Council meetings, humbly Spanish State Secretary for International Co-operation also considered several occasions that such institution could carry on its activities without his participation.

The absolute majority reached by Aznar in 2000 meant, as on many other policies, a substantial change of development co-operation policy. From a formal point of view complaints on government focused on the aversion to dialogue with other political or social forces, that is what Vera points out "*Probably the most grave of past period of office which is about to end has been its (in)disposition. From a dialogue spirit of past legislatures, we have changed to interference, threat, black lists and finally the disdain for the opinion of social organisations and academics*

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, while Prime Minister, Aznar was not able to translate his promises in facts, with the only exception of 2001 Spain's percentage of aid has been well bellow previous governments or community average (1996-0,22; 1997-0,24; 1998-0,24; 1999- 0,23; 2000-0,22; 2001-0,30 y 2002- 0,26).

<sup>2</sup> Article 6.2 "*Spain will impulse the coherence of community policies, the progressive building of the co-operation for development policy of the European Union and will contribute to its efficient application and execution*".

<sup>3</sup> Most significant change in Popular's Party foreign policy was the attitude towards Cuba, including the proposal and final approval of a European Common Position compelling Cuba for a change on their democracy and Human Rights record if it wanted to continue receiving European aid. Such initiative allowed Aznar to pronounce on of his famous sentences "*It's Fidel's turn*".

*linked to co-operation*" (2003:73). Civil society response came on February 2002 by a manifesto titled "For the dialogue and participation" signed by more than a hundred DNGO's.

Following Alonso contents of DCP have also been changed "*the reforming effort is abandoned and a new conception of co-operation is defended directly linked with Spain's interests – commercial or cultural- on Foreign Policy*" (2003:254). Despite of reserves expressed by State Secretary for International Co-operation to community's aid,<sup>4</sup> it is this context of exploitation of development policy were we should place the Aznar government will to participate in the DCP of the Union. Synthetically we can resume Spanish contribution in three concise initiatives:

- **Prioritising aid to Middle Income countries:** During last decade Union's DCP has established, following most donors, poverty reduction as the primal objective. The Spanish Government has maintained that such fight against poverty should not leave aside co-operation with middle-income countries, as these countries include approximately half of planet's poor. Despite this fact, according to a recent study that does not seem to be the case of the Spanish poverty reduction strategy "*In the case of Spain it is clear a prevalence of an aid more linked to the interests of the donor (economic and cultural presence in the country) rather than authentic motivations of fighting against poverty*" Alonso et al (2003:102). There are other reasons that explain this prioritisation. Firstly most of these countries are included on Spanish foreign policy geographical priorities: Latin America and North of Africa. Secondly this policy justifies Spanish continuous non-fulfilment of the international agreement, assumed by Spain, of destining 0.15% ODA/GNP to Least Developed Countries.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, as the Minister clearly pointed out, it tries to reach a change on geographical orientation of EU's aid.
- **Reaching a European compromise for the UN conference on Financing for Development:** Barcelona compromise was reached during Spanish presidency, comprising each member state would dedicate 0,36% ODA/GNP, this would allow to bring the community average effort up to 0.39% ODA/GNP. Aznar's government insisted in many occasions that it had the intention of reaching an agreement and once it was concluded it congratulate for it. Despite this fact contrary to post agreement enthusiasm British press on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2002 or French Le Monde 11<sup>th</sup> of March signalled Spain as one of the countries forming part of the group that wanted a lower profile agreement.<sup>6</sup>
- **Migration Conditionality:** During European Council held in Seville, and with United Kingdom backing, Aznar proposed a reduction of Union's aid to those countries incapable of controlling satisfactorily the migration fluxes. Fortunately the rest of member's opposition allowed softening this initiative. There are at list two basic problems with such policy: firstly the ethic dilemma of equalising the other kinds of conditionality (democracy, good governance, Human Rights or reduction of military expenditure) which evidently search universal objectives with the will of some European leaders of building a fortress Europe. Secondly the efficiency of the initiative is rather doubtful. Most of the countries that generate migration fluxes are Least Developed Countries, whose boundary control capacity is low, and for whom co-operation aid represents a necessary but insufficient element of their development policies. Despite this fact, far from abjuring his proposal, Aznar has shown once again his obduracy that his inconditionals signal as on of his virtues "*If we want Union's aid for fighting illegal immigration to be efficient and trustful, we should be capable of evaluating and revising*

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<sup>4</sup> "*It is sarcastic asking for more money for the European Union's Commission when it's execution levels are the lowest of the world; firstly it should spend its assets and do it well*". M.A. Cortés, State Secretary for International Co-operation, Spanish Congress, Commission of International Development Co-operation, 12 march 2002.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, Brussels, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> One symptom of government's lack of enthusiasm is the fact that, contrary to other member states, Spain has not approved any higher compromise other than Barcelona's. France 0,5% in 2007; Netherlands 1% in 2005; Ireland 0,7% in 2007; United Kingdom 0,4% in 2006; Sweden 1% in 2006 or Luxembourg 1% in 2005.

*it, depending on the results obtained, so that we can react in front of evident lack of co-operation in trying to stop illegal immigration".<sup>7</sup>*

To conclude we should probably thank Aznar government for not intervening more decisively in European Union's co-operation for development policy, specially according to the forceful appreciation of Spain's DCP made by Rodriguez and Sotillo "*It is more than evident the lack of coherence between the principles and compromises assumed and the reality of our co-operation policy. This situation far from getting better has been worsening in the last few years*" (2003:169).

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<sup>7</sup> Aznar during his farewell speech at the European Popular's Party meeting, Brussels, 12th February 2004.



**Special issue: Spain in Europe 1996-2004**  
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**Spain's European Policy in relation to the accelerated extradition procedures establishment under the Aznar administrations**



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If there is a field in which Aznar's European policy has stood out, it is without doubt in the field of judicial co-operation and, more specifically, in the development of an extradition policy within the European Union (EU). Spanish attempts to establish an accelerated procedure in relation to extradition have their origin in previous governments, however. The socialist governments, led by Felipe González, had already actively supported the development of a co-operation mechanism in justice and home affairs within the framework of the European Union. Due to persistence and the international situation, it was under the mandate of José María Aznar's conservative Popular Party, however, that the main steps were taken towards the elimination of national borders for the execution of sentences.

Obviously, Spain's interest in accelerating the extradition procedures was very closely related to the fight against terrorism, which had become not only the main political priority of Aznar's mandate but also an excellent electoral opportunity.

One of the best examples of the interest shown by Spain in this field can be found in the declarations made by the then Spanish Interior Minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja. At the First European Conference on Terrorism, held at the beginning of 2001, Mayor Oreja stated that the free movement of people should not become an "ally of terrorists", which is why it was necessary to implement a European arrest warrant. "Terrorism", he said, "poses a very serious threat that affects the political, social and moral principles on which we base our state of law and on which the European Union is constructed".

The strategy of the Aznar administrations has been successfully implemented at two levels. Firstly, it succeeded in intensifying both bilateral and multilateral contacts outside the framework of the European Union in order to, secondly, defend a joint action within the European Union once the political situation allowed.

Spain and Italy, for example, signed a treaty on 28 November 2000, and France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium attempted to suppress the extradition procedures between their States in order to accelerate surrender for serious offences such as terrorism.

Shortly afterwards, in the Watson Report of 5 September 2001, the European Parliament supported Spain on the adoption of these measures within the framework of the European Union. It should be remembered at this point that some months earlier, Spanish political representations had intensified at European level. Two examples of this are, firstly, the European Popular Party's demands in the European Parliament at the beginning of 2001 that Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, include its legislation package in the European arrest warrant, and, secondly, the interviews held with the Belgian Interior Minister in July of the same year by Javier Arenas, the General Secretary of Spain's Popular Party, and Javier Caldera, the Spokesperson for Spain's Socialist Party, with the aim of making the European arrest warrant one of the main objectives of the Belgian presidency of the European Union.

The political pressure exercised by Spain met with an unexpected ally: the attacks on New York's Twin Towers on 11 September. The Extraordinary European Council meeting held on 21 September 2001 to prepare the European Union's reaction to the attacks included in its

conclusions and Plan of Action a proposal for adopting a European arrest warrant that preserved "the rights and fundamental freedoms of the affected". This last sentence was in fact a demand from Italy.

Six days later, the Justice and Interior Ministers of the European Union adopted a roadmap for a series of measures in the fight against terrorism that the representatives of the Member States were committed to carrying out "as soon as possible". This roadmap included the harmonisation of national measures to improve judicial and police co-operation within the European Union to fight against terrorism. The first measure in this "antiterrorist roadmap" was the European arrest warrant for the arrest and surrender of alleged criminals and terrorists. It is important to mention, however, that though the agreement included a catalogue of measures for fighting terrorism, the European arrest warrant includes many other cases of extradition apart from terrorism.

On 13 June 2002, after some intense work under the Spanish presidency, the Council of the European Union adopted a Framework Decision related to the European arrest warrant and procedures for surrender between Member States. This decision required Member States to adapt their national legislation before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 and allowed for its earlier application for those Member States that wished it.

The adoption of the European arrest warrant did not end Spanish aspirations, however, and Spain became the Member State that was most interested in its immediate transposition. Only Spain, Portugal and Denmark were able to transpose the decision before its entry into force. These were followed by Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Portugal and the United Kingdom. France, Holland and Luxembourg are currently completing the national adaptation of their legislation and Austria is committed to completing it before May 2004. Germany has not yet completed its domestic legislative reform, and nor has Italy, where there is strong internal opposition to the European arrest warrant. Greece will not be able to complete its reform before June since its Parliament has been dissolved due to the March general election. Undoubtedly, therefore, Spain has so far become the leading country and the main user of the European arrest warrant. Between its entry into force, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, and 19<sup>th</sup> February, Spain received nineteen requests for extradition, ten of which have been executed. Of its seventy-two requests, only one, with Portugal, has been executed.

In the last few years, Spain has clearly become the European Union leader in the adoption of measures for establishing accelerated extradition procedures between its Members. For the Spanish government these measures represent the European dimension to its fight against terrorism, and against ETA in particular. They are therefore a continuation of the Spanish internal policies in the judicial and police fight against terrorism.



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Spain's relationship with the European Union in the economic field has been determined by three factors: the wish to comply with and maintain the economic convergence criteria fixed for the EMU, the firm decision not to lose the important income which Spain obtains from the European Union, and to make sure that the positioning of the liberal economic policy applied in Spain did not come up against any obstacles amongst its partners.

In trying to achieve these objectives the Spanish leader has faced up to his European partners on more than one occasion, following a policy of occasional support rather than alliance and demonstrating that Spain was capable of being in confrontation with everyone if it considered that it was defending its "national interest". Consequently the proximity with the Franco-German axis disappeared halfway through, although it is also true to say that liberal theories that Aznar has followed and defended have produced a response from the British leader. Nevertheless, and in the economic field, it would be more appropriate to describe Blair and Aznar as having "mutual understanding" rather than to speak about alliances.

Aznar's attitude, pragmatic and looking for solutions to immediate and concrete problems rather than addressing Europe, has meant a new direction for Spain's role.

Several European summits have been especially difficult for Spain in its battle to defend its economic interests. However it is important to point out that the Lisbon summit, which gave rise to the "Lisbon Strategy", was prepared for within the framework of the aforementioned mutual understanding between Blair and Aznar and which produced a programme whose objective was to place Europe by the end of this decade at the forefront of the world's economy.

Starting with Aznar's economic priorities it is possible to distinguish three different periods in his European conduct.

The beginning of Aznar's first government was marked by his wish to comply with the convergence criteria and to place Spain in the first group of the euro and the decision not to confront (for the moment) his European partners in his firm decision to maintain the income received from the EU, income which was in danger especially with the enlargement of the European Union. Faced with the uncertainty of meeting the convergence criteria Aznar requested flexibility for the Southern countries, however as soon as it was certain that Spain would meet the criteria, our country has become one of the avid defenders of the inflexibility of the criteria.

As we have seen, the task was done promptly and well: Spain entered the single currency in 1999. As early as May 1997 Ecofin gave the go-ahead to the Spanish convergence plan which prioritised the fight against economic deficit and against inflation disregarding several social issues.

The good economic results achieved by Aznar encouraged the government towards a new period in which, marked by the decision to place Spain up with the leaders, resolute positions in the negotiations of its top priorities were prevalent.

The economic growth that Spain has seen since 1995 has been mainly based on the increase on employment but without an increase in public spending, which has brought Aznar to defend such growth as an employment generator instead of the active policies promoted by the Union. This defence provoked confrontation in the Luxembourg Summit (November 1997) between Spain and the rest of its partners when it refused to accept that the Union should be allowed to control its employment policy. The result was an "opting out" clause for Spain.

The financial repercussions of the enlargement, a top priority for Spain, was a contentious object of debate in the Berlin summit in March 1999, when the financial terms for the period 2000-2006 were to be laid out.

In the previous Financial Perspectives (1988-1992 and 1993-1999) under the government of Felipe González, Spain had obtained positive financial balances and the Financial Perspectives 2000-2006 had to pave the way towards the enlargement in a context of greater budgetary severity. And even though the national economic policies directed by Aznar had produced good results Spain still needed the European funds to maintain the levels of growth it had already reached.

The negotiations carried out by Aznar in this summit were difficult and provoked an important change in the traditional relationships with the community partners. Especially with the Franco-German axis. Aznar followed a strategy of intransigence and rejection of each proposal which implied a possible economic loss for Spain, threatening to block the finance reform, and faced with the German thesis of the reduction of its contribution and the disappearance of the Cohesion Funds for those countries agreeing to the euro.

After softening his position Aznar accepted an agreement which increased the endowment planned for the Cohesion Fund, he was willing to accept an agricultural reduction, a progressive decrease in the Structural Funds between 2000 and 2006 and the compliance of the Stability Programme for the deficit reduction.

The tension with Germany was not the only one and Spain's relationship with the Commission was no better, with accusation of not sticking to the conditions of the treaties. Relations with Italy were strained, having requested for the calculations for the financial contributions to be based on Gross National Product and not on Value Added Tax. Even relations were difficult with Great Britain by not accepting the British cheque.

The joint perception of Aznar and Blair concerning the need for liberalising measures in the employment market and the reform of the welfare state, allowed them to project a European Council whose aim was to establish the social and economic model that Europe needed to follow in order to become the most competitive economy in the world. The promotion of the Lisbon Summit is one of Spain's contributions to Europe in a moment when the battle for Spanish priorities was distancing it from its partners. Aznar's proposal in the Lisbon Summit (March 2000) meant transferring to a European level those policies that were giving such good results on a national level.

With this, Aznar added to his request that the European funds be maintained (an internal need that confronted Germany and Holland) a request for a European model based on financial balance, economic liberalisation and employment reform. These proposals were generally accepted by the fifteen members and especially by Great Britain and Italy, although without bringing about an argument regarding Europe's social model and especially further confrontation with France who was reluctant to implement liberalisation in its energy sector or in its employment market.

In short, our country was placed amongst the ten most important countries of the world thanks to its favourable economic situation and the economic model of our country was reciprocated in Europe. However Aznar had not managed to avoid the policy of "hand-outs" (in the sense, if not in the form) of which he had accused his predecessor, for those funds which had offered such beneficial effects to economic growth, investment and employment in Spain.

With the 2000 Agenda marked out and the Lisbon Strategy under way, although at a slower pace than wished for, Aznar's government entered a new period whose main priorities were internal problems, the halt in the national economy and international security.

With important fronts open in different areas, and while preparing the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013, the negotiations carried out regarding the economic repercussions of the enlargement have been described by Aznar as satisfactory. However this is an issue that has not been resolved as has been demonstrated by the presentation of the Sapir report in 2003 - critical with the CAP and the Regional Policy and strongly criticised-, and the request for an increase in the financing from the countries of the enlargement, a request that most of the current members rejected.

The results in the field of agriculture and fishery are also to be seen, although there is the satisfaction of having secured in Vigo the headquarters of the European Fishing Agency. In June 2003 the latest reform of the CAP was passed, in September the Trade Commissioner was prepared to accept the claims from the African cotton-producing countries in the Cancún Conference and the EU-Morocco agreement has started to move in agricultural affairs. These are areas which have a direct influence over Spanish agriculture (especially Mediterranean crops, sugar and cotton) and which have worried certain sectors<sup>1</sup>. Forecasts predict a 23% reduction in agricultural expenditure between 2004 and 2013<sup>2</sup> and with consequent important repercussions in the Mediterranean sectors.

Therefore, considering the process that has been followed and despite the negotiations that still have to take place, a realistic vision would allow us to consider that Spain will be affected by the distribution of the EU funds amongst its 25 members (as well as the "new employment market of 25 members"), in addition to the increasing commercial liberalisation urged by the OMC and closely followed by the EU.

The solutions to these challenges facing Spain are already inspired in the Lisbon Strategy. To meet the Lisbon objective, converting the EU into an economy based on the most competitive and dynamic knowledge of the world, capable of growing economically in a steady fashion with more and better jobs and with greater social cohesion means that Spain must focus its attention on its shortcomings in R&D, in stable employment and training, increasing its rates of productivity and completely entering the society of information.

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<sup>1</sup> -"Contra el acuerdo de la UE CON Marruecos". *El Mundo*, 19 November 2003

- "La negociación de las nuevas OCM mediterráneas, una de las claves de 2004". *La Razón*, 5 January 2004

-"Bruselas castiga al campo español al destinar menos dinero para agricultura hasta 2013", *La Razón*, 10 February 2004

<sup>2</sup> "Fischler estima que el gasto agrícola comunitario bajará un 23%". *Cinco Días*, 21 January 2004

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**Special Issue: Spain in Europe 1996-2004**  
EE 14/2004  
**Spanish environmental foreign policy:  
From reception to opposition**



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The accession of Spain to the European Community in 1986 is frequently considered the origin of a substantial part of its environmental policy. As Núria Font has sustained, "Spain's membership of the EU has been a key factor for the deployment [of its domestic environmental policy], as it has involved the transformation of the institutional, substantive, legal and operative framework within which such area of public intervention develops". In short, Spain has been, since 1986, "a receptor (a policy-taker) of the Community's environmental policy" (Font, 2001: 384).

This strong European flavour of Spain's environmental policy has multiple expressions, two of which will be analysed here. First, the accession of Spain fostered the incorporation at the domestic level of a "huge quantity of regulations and directives [...] lacking internal correspondence" (Font, 2001: 380). The lower level of economic and social development, as well as the task of creating a democratic and decentralized state had so far attracted the attention of the political actors<sup>1</sup>. Thus, before 1986 an environmental policy was nearly inexistent in Spain. Second, "the decision *locus* moved to Brussels", where an important number of the environmental policies to be applied by the Spanish administrations is decided (Font, 2001: 380).

Thus, Spain's incorporation to Europe has accelerated the emergence of the institutional and normative frameworks that shape its environmental policy. This notwithstanding, this text sustains that a revision of the relationship in the reverse direction is urgently required, and a draft of such an analysis is proposed here. What is Spain's contribution to the Union's environmental policy? The evolution towards pragmatism of Spain's attitude within the EU (by giving up its earlier "naïveté"<sup>2</sup>); the achievement of European standards by its domestic environmental administration; and the emergence of new issues that were not present in the environmental agenda during the eighties have forced/allowed Spain to abandon its traditional role of passive receptor of the communitarian environmental legislation and to seek to influence it.

To have a better understanding of Spain's profile regarding its environmental foreign policy, two cases that share some interesting features are dealt with. Both are issues pertaining to the environmental agenda born in Rio 1992; both have been debated and negotiated in the international arena; and, finally, both have been perceived by the EU as opportunities to appear as an international actor with leadership skills and committed with multilateralism and

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<sup>1</sup> As Núria Font recalls, the lack of attention towards the environmental policy was so widespread that "the Spanish negotiators of the accession to the European Community did not include the environment in their agenda", because of its assumed "lack of relevance". Indeed, the Spanish Treaty of Accession "did not contain a single safeguard provision to relax the implementation conditions of the environmental directives, which entered into force in January 1986" (Font, 2001: 384).

<sup>2</sup> Barbé (1996).

sustainable development. The first one is the genetically modified organisms (GMO) issue and, the second, the climate change problem.

Many political and social actors assert that GMOs involve a number of risks serious enough to limit their use. Normally, the risks underlined are those linked to the product itself, associated with human health, as well as those linked to its production (its cultivation, mainly), which imply dangers of environmental (biodiversity loss, species invasions and emergence of resistances) and social (contamination of the conventional crops and, in parts of the south, an increased dependence of the poor farmers *vis-à-vis* the northern rich companies) nature. Additionally, it has been pointed out that GMOs are but the more recent expression of a productivist and industrialist logic that many consider unsustainable and is believed to favour the concentration of agricultural activities in a group of very few but extremely powerful companies. Thus, the opposition to GMO's grew during the second half of the nineties, reaching its highest level within the EU.

In November 1994, Ciba-Geigy (the company which would be afterwards named Novartis and is nowadays called Syngenta) requested the French government to authorize the commercialization of maize with the Bt 176 genetic modification. The French authorities, in turn, asked the Commission to approve at the European level the cultivation of this variety of transgenic maize. The Commission showed its conformity with the French petition and transferred an authorization proposal to the competent regulatory committee and to the Environmental Council. They both showed their disapproval. Indeed, during the meeting of the Environment Ministers held on June 25, 1996, only France supported the application, while the rest voted against it, except for Spain, who abstained. In spite of their opposition, the European Commission finally asked France to grant the authorization for transgenic maize commercialization on February 4, 1997<sup>3</sup>.

This triggered a chained reaction among some EU countries. During 1997, Austria, Luxemburg, Italy, Denmark and Sweden banned the cultivation and importation of Bt 176 maize into their own territories. The French *Conseil d'État* cancelled the ministerial order authorizing the mentioned varieties in 1998, and Germany followed suit in February 2000. Thus, from 1997 to 2000 the communitarian Europe shifted to a reticent behaviour with regards to GMOs. This move culminated in 1999, with the declaration of a *de facto* moratorium on the cultivation of new GMO varieties within EU borders. During this period, the Union led the international negotiations that lead to the adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2000. This legal text conferred states the right to veto the importation of GMOs. The Protocol entered into force in the fall of 2003, without the participation of the United States<sup>4</sup>.

Spanish behaviour sharply contrasts with the evolution of the other EU member states' policies. Spain decided in March 1998 to include two varieties of Bt 176 maize in its National Register of Commercial Varieties, which is equivalent to allowing its commercialization. Thus, Spain is the only state in the EU that cultivates GMOs at a commercial scale. Additionally, it must be noted that the Spanish government is actively promoting GMOs before the communitarian institutions. So, in the Environmental Council held on March 4, 2002, in which the Commission's proposal for a directive on environmental liability<sup>5</sup> was discussed, Spain aligned itself with the United Kingdom in its opposition to the possibility that GMOs were subjected to European norms on environmental liability. Equally, on March 26, 2003, the Agriculture Minister, Miguel Arias Cañete, appealed for the end of the communitarian moratorium, in response to pressures coming from the US. According to Liliane Spendeler and Juan-Felipe Carrasco, "there are

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<sup>3</sup> This authorization was accompanied by the French government's announcement of a moratorium on other GMOs.

<sup>4</sup> The main GMO exporters (the so-called Miami Group, which includes the US, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Australia) sustain that the Cartagena Protocol provisions are contrary to WTO rules, given that they preclude the free commercialisation of some agricultural products.

<sup>5</sup> "Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Environmental Liability with regard to the Prevention and Remedying of Environmental Damage", 2002/0021 (COD) Brussels, 23-1-2002, [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2002/en\\_502PC0017.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2002/en_502PC0017.pdf)

rumours pointing to the fact that some officials from the Ministry of Agriculture are pressing the EU to allow high contamination percentages (presence of transgenic seeds) in conventional seeds" (Spendeler and Carrasco, 2003: 13).

The Spanish approach to GMOs coincides with the position adopted with regards to climate change. Climate change entered the agenda of communitarian environmental policies during the nineties, fundamentally because of the international negotiations that lead to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere risks to significantly step up the Earth's average temperature, to augment the frequency of extreme meteorological events, to raise the level of the sea and, consequently, to seriously stress natural and human systems. This is true especially in poor countries (always lacking the resources required to face such difficult changes) and those that, like Spain, are especially vulnerable to the extension of aridness and concentrate an important part of their output on climate-dependent economic activities.

Global warming was recognized as an international political problem in the late eighties, leading to the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, and, afterwards, to the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol, which was open for signature by states in 1997, becoming from then on the only available tool to face the problems caused by climate change. The subsequent negotiations have successively watered down the Kyoto commitments, under pressure from the US, Russia and some other states. In March 2001, the United States announced that they were not ratifying the Protocol, leaving its entry into force in the hands of the Russian Federation and the EU's leaderships skills. The Union has attempted to take advantage from such circumstances in order to appear as a responsible and multilateralist international actor.

This notwithstanding, the leadership of the EU has been undermined by the behaviour of some of its member states, which have shown to be incapable of maintaining their international commitments. The Union must reduce its greenhouse gases emissions in 8% for the 2008-2012 period, based on 1990 levels. In order to achieve this goal, the Environmental Council agreed on June 16, 1998, a specific burden-sharing formula according to which Spain was to limit its emissions growth to 15% during such period. It must be acknowledged that, at least on this specific issue, Spanish environmental policy has been absolutely insufficient. In 2002 Spain had already increased its greenhouse gases emissions by 38,06%, and the governmental forecasts (expressed in the document entitled *Planificación de las redes de transporte eléctrico y gasista 2002-2011*) foresaw an increase of 64% for 2010, even if this figure could be reduced to 58% if the goals of the proposed *Estrategia de ahorro y eficiencia energética en España 2004-2012* were to be achieved. It must be underlined that a very important part of this increase (all but 7,7%) has taken place during the eight years of PP government. These circumstances have forced the government to defend the convenience of relaxing the EU's commitment within the Kyoto Protocol, a move which has left Spain standing alone with Italy, vis-à-vis the overt opposition of the other member states and the Commission<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, the PP government has frequently opposed the environmental policies supported by the EU, as well as some of its positions in the international arena. In short, once Spain has overcome the policy-taking period, the Spanish contribution to the shaping of the EU's environmental policies (both at the internal level and the international fora) can be qualified as reticent or even overtly contrary to the adoption of ambitious measures to protect the environment.

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<sup>6</sup> "La UE desoye a Italia y España y ratifica su compromiso con Kioto", *El País*, March 3, 2004.

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Special Issue: Spain in Europe 1996-2004  
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**Balance of an age in Spain's politics: the Aznar  
administration (1996-2004) and European identity**

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During the period in which José María Aznar led the Spanish government, his European policy has experienced a clear twist in relation to the precedent administrations. Felipe González, the Spanish president who brang at his time not only the negotiations towards the Spanish joining of the Communities, but also the conclusive Maastricht debates, had shown a strong communication with the European building process. Nonetheless, the governments led by the Partido Popular seem to have broken the existing empathy between the Spanish policies and the European ones, empathy that seemingly had adopted structural characteristics.

It appears that the new Partido Popular administration, once got the power at 1996, gave a basic priority in foreign policy to promote the transatlantic security relations. This brings us to give a secondary role to the efforts of the previous governments for joining in an active position the European building process. The Spanish presence before the European institutions is focused mainly in the defence of the privileges acquired in that area, especially in what refers to the structural funds assigned to Spain and the power acquired related to the Council decision-making system approved at the Treaty of Nice, on December 2000. Meanwhile, the EU is been living a delicate period which includes the approbation and implementation of the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice and the starting of the rouge road towards the 2004 enlargement and towards the initially failed Constitution. At this period the European institutions started a low level debate focused in the frustrated constitutional text, around the identity contents of the future EU. Spain, centred in an aggressive and often obstructionist European policy, did no participate in a constructive mood in that debate, but she did bring its own point of view and sensibility which, actually, gets the support of other European governments. The pictures given by the Aznar administration is one of a Union strongly governmental, not much integrated from an institutional point of view and with its security strongly linked to the Atlantic interests. This picture lets a narrow space to the symbolic contents of a Europe which is designing its geographical and cultural boundaries with a new enlargement and with a new Carta Magna. Nonetheless, Spain showed a particular insistence in that the European Constitution should reflect the cultural heritage of Christianity. This has been the main input from Spain to a debate which will not mean in fact anything else that a foolish show of opposed attitudes which reflect national or ideological sensibilities, without a clear interest in approaching positions or bringing elements of common interest in a European framework.

Although Spain is a mainly Catholic country<sup>1</sup> and the relationship between the democratic public administration and the Catholic Church has been always one of collaboration, both institutions have been always very careful in keeping their independences. The 1979 Spanish Constitution grants the lay character of the State and does not include any reference the cultural heritage of Christianity. Nonetheless, the Spanish Popular, with a strong Christian Democratic inspiration, brings a representation to a social sectors closely linked to the Church. This relationship between the party and the clerical sectors has not had, in domestic policy, any meaning further

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<sup>1</sup> The data showed by the Catholic Church (brang by the *Anuario Pontificio 2001*, available at [www.katolsk.no](http://www.katolsk.no)), Spain has a 94,1% of baptized people. Nonetheless, a wide poll made by the Spanish official sociological centre *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* on September 2002 ([www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es)) gives an amount of 80,8% of Spaniards who identify themselves as Catholics, from which only 21% are regular adherents; the data shown in that work coincide with others from recent polls and enquiries.

that a low-intensity debate around the religious contents at school. Anyway, President Aznar seems to have focused in the European arena his personal and political sensibility in what refers to religion. Aznar has met four times as Prime Minister of Spain with Pope John Paul II: in 1997, in February 2003, during the Pontifical visit to Madrid in May of the same year and, last time, in January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004, in what has been understood as a personal farewell from Aznar to his spiritual leader<sup>2</sup>. No one doubts that at these three last meetings both leaders had been talking about the point in which converged their worries: the inclusion of a reference to Christianity in the European Constitution.

The President of the Spanish Government has placed himself as the main speaker of the Vatican position towards the European constitutional process. The Spanish attitude was of defending the humanitarian contents of Christianity as an essential input which defines Europe and must be reflected on its fundamental texts. In that way was expressed by President Aznar at the Forum Ambrosetti in Cernobbio (Italy) in September 6<sup>th</sup> 2003, where he said he could not understand why there is not a reference to the Christian heritage of Europe, *"since without it we can not explain the actual Europe, not exactly because its character of being a faith but mostly for the freedom, equality and respect to the human rights we can find in the essence of Christianity, whatever is anyone's religion, and because we are talking of a real fact"*.<sup>3</sup> Not long later he insisted again in the issue in an interview published by the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in November 4<sup>th</sup> 2003: *"The European concept is linked to the European Christian tradition. Otherwise we could not explain the history of my country. I can not explain the gothic domain in Spain without the Christianity, nor the re-conquest of the country (from the moors), the influence of the Catholic Kings or the Charles V Catholic monarchy. It's impossible."*<sup>4</sup>

In a coherent way, the Spanish delegation delivered this position to the European constitutional debate. On June 19<sup>th</sup> 2003, at the Saloniki European summit, José María Aznar showed his worries about the inclusion of a reference to the Cultural heritage of Christianity in the European Constitution. Despite the explicit support to the Spain official position expressed by different leaders of the European Popular Party and, more exactly, by the Italian and Portuguese prime ministers, the Spain's minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Palacio, felt obligated to explain in that meeting that the reference required by Aznar was to be included at the preamble, not at the juridical body of the future Constitution.<sup>5</sup> At the Rome summit on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2003, which inaugurated IGC which had to lead to the approval of the Constitution, Aznar wanted to make clear that the religious reference was a priority to him: *"I did not mention all the issues that I understand we must face but, among the ones I did mention, one of them is that I believe the preamble of the Constitution must include a reference to the Christian roots. (...) We must put the important issues on the table from the very beginning."*<sup>6</sup> In that occasion coincide also in requiring the reference to Christianity the leaders from Poland, Italy and Portugal.

Although the religious issue has not been decisive in the failure of the Constitution at the Brussels summit, it did contribute to define some intransigent positions among the European leaders in a sharp debate which hardly allowed any space to condescendence or dialogue attitudes between this unexpected "Catholic lobby" and the firmly laicist positions led by France. The Spanish position reflected a sensibility which belonged to a government and a single party, but it did not mean exactly that this position came from a social debate or worry in Spain. At the contrary, in this same period, we can find a strong detachment of the Spanish society facing the exigencies of their government related to the symbolic contents of the future EU, at the same time that we find a strong implication of the Spanish society in the European building process. The Spaniards show themselves among the firmest European partisans of a Constitution: 85% of enquired people in the Autumn 2003 eurobarometer express some kind of

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<sup>2</sup> We must remind that the last two meetings between Aznar and the Pope have taken place with the international background of the Iraq crisis. Although the Vatican was openly opposed to the intervention, the papal visit to Madrid meant a strong backing to Aznar in a delicate moment to his popularity.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.es-ue.org/Documents/Cernobbio.doc>.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.info-spanischebotschaft.de/doku/r90.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2003/06/19/internacional/1056054739.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://noticias.ya.com/mundo/europa/2003/10/04/5575250.html>.

agreement with it, when the EU average is 77%. In the same poll, 62% of the Spanish enquired gave support to the EU enlargement to all applying countries, against the 47% we find for the whole EU.<sup>7</sup> According the 2000 barometer, in a moment of booming of immigration in Spain 75% of the Spanish enquired agreed with the statement "it is a good thing for any society to be shaped by people from different races, cultures and religions" (second position in the EU, after Sweden; the European average being at 64%); in the same poll, 56% of Spanish enquired showed their disagreement with the statement "the presence of people from minority groups in a cause of insecurity", face to a 34% who disapproved it (in the whole of the EU, 44% agreed with this statement, and 43% disagreed); 23% of Spaniards, facing 17% of European citizens, stated that "the cultural diversity helps to strength our country", and only 1% of the enquired Spanish (against 5% of the EU citizens) confessed that the presence of people from other "race" provoked "disturbance" to them.<sup>8</sup> In a significant way, 68% of Spaniards felt in 2003 that immigration policies should be decided at EU level, against 51% who thought in such a way in the whole EU.<sup>9</sup>

The insistence of President Aznar regarding the inclusion of the religious reference in the Constitution reflects actually a personal and political position. It contributes as well to shape a national attitude in a hardly born debate about the symbolic contents of the future institutional Europe. But we can find out that it does not reflect an essential point of view among the Spanish social priorities, and it does not even bring a starting post for a consensus among the different European countries and sensibilities. Its essential function is to bring an image of strength before the European institutions as well as before the Spanish society, bringing forward at the same time a picture of what appears to be an especially sensitive issue to the Spanish culture. The failure of this proposal was more than foreseeable, done not only the secular tradition in several European countries, but also the European social and political tendencies of the last decades; but, since Spain and other countries with similar political needs opposed to the European Constitution for much deeper reasons, such as the power sharing or the future of the structural funds, the fact of keeping the intransigence on the symbolic aspect of the text does not bring anything else than a strength for the obstructionist attitude towards the Constitution. On the other hand, as we have seen, Spain under the Aznar administration has not a major interest for the shaping of the future Europe since it overcomes its actual ambitions in domestic policy or in a security centred in the Atlantic Alliance. For that reason, it can afford an aggressive attitude on a symbolic issue without a real importance, appointed to failure and without a big social support, but which brings the image of a firm, coherent and internationally respected leadership in a constitutional debate at European level; debate that, actually, Spain did not kept a serious interest in defending it or in driving it to a good harbour.

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<sup>7</sup> See [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/flash/fl159\\_fut\\_const.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/flash/fl159_fut_const.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> See [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_138\\_tech.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_138_tech.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb60/exec\\_summ\\_sp.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb60/exec_summ_sp.pdf).