

Institutional and Geopolitical Changes of the EU from the Perspective of Spanish National Interests¹

Lenka Špičánová and Pavlína Springerová

Abstract: *This text deals with the period of Spain's entry and presence in the European integration project, analysing the most relevant changes in the first and third pillar from the perspective of Spanish national interests. The article is focused primarily on changes in the institutional position of Spain based on an analysis of the position of Madrid in negotiating particular treaties (Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice) and the priorities related to the economic integration and socio-economic cohesion in the EU. The secondary objective is to compare PSOE and PP governments in terms of their defence of national interests.*

Keywords: *National Interest, Spain, González, Aznar, European Union, PP, PSOE, Institutional Changes, Geopolitical Changes, Cohesion*

The entry of Spain into the European Community (EC) in 1986 was clear evidence of the country's democratic course. The inclusion in the European integration structures, which was supported by almost the entire Spanish society, and all the relevant political parties² brought a definite end to the diplomatic isolation brought about by the Franco's regime.³ This text deals primarily with the defence and transformation of Madrid's national interests in the context of geopolitical changes related especially to enlargement waves and negotiations concerning institutional changes in the EU.

In terms of thematic content the text concentrates exclusively on changes in the first and third pillar, focusing primarily on changes in the institutional position of Spain based on an analysis of the position of Madrid in negotiating individual treaties (Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice) and priorities related to the economic integration and socio-economic cohesion in the EU. In a comparative perspective we will also compare the attitude of socialist (*Partido Socialista de Obreros Españoles*, PSOE) and People's Party (*Partido Popular*, PP) governments to defining and defending national interests in the first and the third pillars.

The main research question is focused on the position of two main political parties as it follows: Did the coming of the People's Party to power bring crucial change in the content and the definition of the main national interests in the first and third pillar? The response to the research question presented will be explored especially on the basis of the diachronic comparative method comparing politics and positions of PSOE and PP.

In terms of temporal focus the text deals with the period since Spain's entry into the EC in 1986 and 2004 when the last large changing of political parties in power occurred. Within this period we can define three basic phases. In the first period of 1986 to 1992 the Maastricht Treaty was signed. In this phase the socialist party was in power and there was a national consensus about Spain's support for European policies (Closa 2001: 10; Morata and Fernandez 2003: 174). In the second phase of 1992 to 1995 socialists were still in power but their position was becoming complicated because of the economic crisis, the impact of geopolitical changes related to the end of the Cold War and the gradual waning of the pro-European optimism among Spanish citizens (Gillespie 1996: 155). In 1996 the People's Party came to power and stayed in power until 2004.

The Spanish membership and the activities in the EC/EU are well analysed in various texts of Spanish or English written provenience. Czech production in this area of interest is until these days absolutely scarce and reduced to a few short texts describing particular aspects of the Spanish membership in the EU. High attention is paid specially to the role of Spain in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (especially texts by Esther Barbé), however the first and the third pillars do not stand outside of the scientific interest. Different policies are explained from the Spanish perspective in books edited by Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs or by trio editors Richard Gillespie, Rodrigo Fernando and Jonathan Story. The economic issues, so important for Spain, are well exposed in works by Mary Farrell. There are also many texts describing Spanish road to the EC/EU and its changing position in the Union. This historical approach can be found for example in books by Charles Powell or Julio Crespo MacLennan. Scientists such as Francesc Morata and Ana-Mar Fernandez or Carlos Closa, who is leading specialist in the field of Spanish interests in the EU, also focus on an analysis of Spanish presidencies (very often in comparative perspectives) in their works.

The Enthusiastic Phase (1986–1992)

Although Spain attempted accession to the EC as early as 1962 and again in 1964, it had to wait for the complete demise of Franco's rule. In 1977 the Suárez government could finally submit an official application to the EC (Martin de la Guardia 2004: 102–105). The main political power that accomplished the entry of Spain into the EC were socialists who came to power after the 1982 elections. The primary motives for supporting entry into the EC were related especially to political reasons and the attempt to maximally consolidate democracy; nevertheless, after 1986 this political goal was joined by strong economic imperatives related to the need to modernise the national economy and liberalise the economic sector (Tovias 1995: 103).

The First Presidency of the Council of the EU and Negotiating the Maastricht Treaty

Since the start Spain strove to persuade other Member States about being a trustworthy, constructive and pro-European partner capable of transcending its narrow national interests (Powell 2003: 149). In this context the Spanish socialist government became a proponent of a federalist discourse and an orthodox attitude toward integration. The first test in which Felipe González's cabinet could confirm the strength of its European commitment came with the Spanish presidency of the Council of the EU, which started in January 1989. The concrete priority of the presidency was to continue preparations for the common market with the target date of 31 December 1992. This involved fiscal harmonisation and issues related to free movement. Furthermore, issues concerning the EMU and the social dimension of the internal market also demanded priority attention although the results in these two priority areas were very variable. The Council summit held in Madrid in June 1989 made progress in negotiating the EMU and adopted the Delors Plan defining the three-stage outline plan for European economic and monetary union (EMU). However, the progress in EMU⁴ negotiations, the greatest achievement of the Spanish presidency (González Sánchez 1989: 720; Morata and Fernandez 2003: 180), was overshadowed by the opposition of the United Kingdom to the European Social Charter.

The geopolitical changes at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s brought a shift in the political orientation of the EC/EU, which endangered Spanish national interests defined geographically, financially and institutionally. The new orientation toward Central and Eastern Europe raised concerns in Madrid regarding the potential push of Spain to the periphery of Europe, endangered income from the EU funds, and resulted in a turn away from Spanish regions of interest — the Mediterranean and Latin America. In this period Spain became inclined toward a more realistic notion

of Europeanism. The Spanish government started concentrating on developing its own diplomatic activity and stronger defences of its interests in an effort to 'push them ahead' on the European agenda (Barbé 1996: 110). Since the beginning of the 1990s Spain strove to strengthen its position by applying two strategies. The first was the heightened activity of the Spanish delegation during the negotiations of the Maastricht Treaty between 1990 and 1992. The second was the Europeanisation of its foreign agenda especially as concerns the Mediterranean.

In the discussions of the Maastricht Treaty Madrid concentrated especially on three main areas: social and economic cohesion: the concept of European citizenship and the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). We shall concentrate here on the first two aspects. In the 1980s Madrid successfully demanded some sort of redistribution in favour of poorer countries. At that time Spain became one of the major recipients of regional, developmental and structural financial support, which the government used to maximum for the development and reforms of the national economy (Powell 2003: 149). The issue of social and economic cohesion based on the concept of supranational solidarity became crucial for Spain at the beginning of the 1990s.⁵ In the end the Spanish government received the promise of creating the Cohesion Fund, and the fund became part of the Maastricht Treaty. The second issue for Prime Minister González was the principle of European citizenship, which was also included in the Maastricht Treaty. The freedom of movement and stay of European Union citizens was a very important aspect for Spain because about 600,000 Spanish citizens at that time lived and worked abroad in EC/EU Member States (Powell 2003: 152).

The Realist Phase (1992–1996)

The second phase of the Spanish membership in the EU was marked by changes caused by internal and external factors, which lead to the cooling of the Spanish pro-European enthusiasm. In the 1993 elections PSOE lost the absolute majority while it had to face major corruption scandals⁶; last but not least between 1992 and 1994 Spain was plagued by the greatest economic crisis of the post-Franco period. The *peseta* weakened and was devalued; unemployment reached 24 % (MacLennan 2004: 298). These economic problems complicated Spanish attempts to meet the Maastricht criteria and inclusion in the eurozone. The economic recession also shook Spain's confidence in the EU; the public started to view the integration more critically and was losing its enthusiasm. Over 60 % of Spanish citizens thought that EU membership was not beneficial for them (Closa 2001: 39; Powell 2003: 154–155).

The Fourth Enlargement and the Danish Veto on Maastricht in Light of Spanish National Interests

In an attempt to improve the economic situation in the country, the Spanish government concentrated its efforts especially on obtaining the greatest possible financial support from structural funds and the Cohesion Fund, which became obvious at the summit of the Council in Lisbon in June 1992 and in Edinburgh in December 1992. In Lisbon the United Kingdom refused to increase the Union budget, which Spain counteracted with its threat to veto the vote on the next wave of enlargement. Spain regarded the planned entry of the EFTA countries (Austria, Finland and Sweden) into the EU as a threat — under threat was the cohesion policy, Europe's centre was moving northeast and Spain's loss of the institutional weight in the Council of Ministers was imminent. Another problem to which Spain took a very clear stance concerned the Danish 'No' in the Maastricht referendum.⁷ The negative position of Denmark on defence policy and inclusion in the Western European Union (WEU)⁸ was not in line with the Spanish idea about the development of this policy and stood in opposition to the Spanish interpretation of Maastricht as rejecting the idea of a multi-speed Europe. All the parties conceded to a compromise at the Edinburgh summit where the enlargement was approved and at the same time an agreement was reached on doubling the structural funds budget and the budget of the Cohesion Fund.⁹ It was especially the Delors II Package and the agreement on the funds' budget that were a tangible result of the Spanish consent to the Danish opt-out in defence policy (Barbé 2000: 50; Powell 2003: 155).

The Edinburgh Council meant a qualitative change in the position of Spain in the EU. Spain used the negotiations with the EFTA candidates very well to partially re-negotiate the conditions of its own entry into the EU (e.g., on the issue of fisheries policy) (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 177). It was for the first time that Spain undertook to promote its national interests completely openly, without fears of being seen as reluctant Europeans. This process of Spanish emancipation was confirmed with the adoption of the 1994 'Ioannina Compromise.' This political agreement was initiated by Spain and the United Kingdom, which feared that after the enlargement it would be easy to override their vote. The resulting compromise stipulated that if members of the Council representing between 23 votes (the old blocking minority threshold) and 26 votes (the new blocking threshold) express their intention of opposing the taking of a decision by the Council by qualified majority, the Council will do all within its power, within a reasonable space of time, to reach a satisfactory solution that can be adopted at least by 68 out of 87 (EU website; Horspool and Humphreys 2006: 45).

Analysis of the Priorities of the Second Presidency of the Council of the EU

In view of the continued geopolitical changes in Europe, the second Spanish presidency (launched in July 1995) was marked by the effort at maximally flexible and pragmatic politics. Nevertheless, the presidency came in a fairly complicated situation both in terms of home affairs when PSOE was shaken by corruption scandals, and in terms of Union affairs, which culminated in the difficult negotiations of the continuation of the EMU. At this time opinions appeared that the least developed member states (Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy)¹⁰ did not have to be included in the EMU's third phase, i.e., the first wave of introducing euro, because their economic instability could damage European economy. The EMU negotiations were the alpha and omega of this period, all of this compounded by Spain's poor economic situation related to the repeated devaluations of the *peseta*. Until 1997 Spain was unable to meet the convergence criteria. However, most member states were battling economic difficulties, which made it difficult for them to meet the Maastricht criteria, and in the end the third phase was postponed until January 1999. At the Madrid summit in December 1995 some principles of the European employment policy were defined, and negotiations were held regarding the strengthening of the European cooperation in the area of justice and home affairs, especially in terms of prevention and fight against terrorism.¹¹

During the second presidency Spain definitively abandoned the role of a 'good European.' It did not have to prove to be a reliable member of the EU because its international prestige was consolidated, and it started defending its own interests assertively. Although Spain did not implement as activist pro-integration a policy as in the first phase, the government did not give up its effort to maintain Spain's position in the centre of European policy. It refused the exclusion of the country from the EMU's third phase and attempted to Europeanise its traditional foreign policy interests especially in an effort to compensate for the EU's turn eastward (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 182). However, the presidency was the swansong for PSOE. In March 1996 after a series of scandals of socialist politicians, premature parliamentary elections were held from which the opposition People's Party headed by José María Aznar came victorious.

Under the Wand of the People's Party (1996–2004)

Aspects of Continuity and Change

Before the coming of PP to power, it was fairly difficult to define the People's Party European policy. It voiced critique of PSOE concerning the insufficient defence of Spanish national interests or excessive orientation toward the French-German tandem

but this did not in any way elucidate the concrete European policy José María Aznar was to implement. This unclear situation was a result especially of the complicated creation and development of the party as the PP brought together several various political wings, among them especially the Christian-Democratic and ex-Franco right, which did not share the common vision of the European policy¹² (Closa, Heywood 2004: 46). The coming to power of the PP, however, did not bring a radical change in terms of the content of Spanish European policy.¹³ Aznar's administration respected the fundamentals established by González although Aznar's strategies, often influenced more by domestic than European factors, often represented a mix of nationalist positions, reactive pragmatism and a lack of flexibility (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 177–178). The coming to power of the PP can be described as a combination of a change and continuity with stress on continuity (Barbé 1999; Powell 2003: 160). The key changes especially concerned a greater focus on nationalism because Aznar clearly preferred an intergovernmental approach to integration, which matched the growing scepticism of Spanish citizens toward the EU. Last but not least the PP left the French-German tandem and launched a much more intensive cooperation with Atlanticists such as Berlusconi's Italy or Blair's United Kingdom.

A major continuity between the socialists and the People's Party can be seen in the issue of the defence of socio-economic cohesion, in the common interest in joining the EMU and in the orientation on the Mediterranean and Latin America. The Spanish government always advocated the position that socio-economic cohesion is a matter of principle and is an integral part of the *acquis communautaire*. Nevertheless, the positive development of Spanish economy at the end of the 1990s paradoxically made problematic the sustainability of Spain's financial demands.¹⁴ In the end, in 1999 Spain was promised 10 billion *pesetas* from the structural and cohesion funds for the period 2000 to 2006.¹⁵ Spain 'paid' for the funds with its consent to the EFTA enlargement in Edinburgh in 1992, and seven years later at the Berlin summit it again 'sacrificed' its consent with the eastern enlargement for the funds (Powell 2003: 162).

The EMU and the introduction of the euro was a stable presence in Spain's European policy and had the general support among political parties (with the exception, for example, of the *Izquierda Unida*) and among the public. After coming to power, the People's Party came with a new convergence programme (1997–2000), which reflected developments in the EMU and the meeting of the demands of the 1997 Stability Pact. The PP's plan stressed structural reforms, especially privatisation, reform of the energy industry and road and rail infrastructure (Farrell 2001: 89–92). In the first years of his rule Aznar strove to ensure that Spain was ready to adopt the common currency and become a full member of the EMU. The economic recovery in the second half of the 1990s significantly helped to achieve this goal and brought Spain close to meeting the Maastricht criteria. For all Spanish administrations it was fundamental to become a part of the key project of economic integration in which

they could participate since the very start and thus to neutralise the traditional fear of being pushed to the periphery of the EU. At the Brussels summit in May 1998 it was announced that on 1 January 1999 the final phase of the EMU would be launched and eleven countries, including Spain, would be part of it. Thus, thanks to budgetary discipline, monetary and financial stability and low inflation Spain managed to meet all the convergence criteria except for the gross debt to GDP ratio.¹⁶

The Amsterdam Treaty

The planned eastern enlargement brought new challenges to the EU, related especially to the future institutional and financial structure. Such a situation could potentially disturb Spain's interests as it worked to maintain its role in EU institutions in an effort to be considered part of the 'big five'. In negotiations at an intergovernmental conference, which preceded the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997,¹⁷ Aznar placed emphasis especially on the first (number of votes in the Council) and third pillars (political asylum, terrorism).¹⁸ In terms of the institutional arrangement, the Spanish administration took a fairly obstructive stance, which was related to the general difficulty of the negotiations and disputes between small and large states. First, it even threatened to block the agreement on the general reform of the EU if its demands concerning the weighting of votes in the Council were not heard. In the end, it managed to push ahead an official declaration concerning the 'special case of Spain' the solution of which had to precede the next enlargement. The Spanish problem lay in the fact that Spain was willing to accept the loss of one Commissioner in exchange for an increase in the number of its votes in the Council of Ministers (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 178; Powell 2003: 160).

Matters of the third pillar (and in some cases the first pillar because the agenda of the asylum and immigration policy was moved to the first pillar under the Amsterdam Treaty and thus did not demand the principle of unanimity) were of utmost importance for Spanish administrations because they were inextricably linked to the fight against Basque terrorists. During the negotiations the Spanish government especially refused the processing of applications for political asylum for EU citizens in other EU Member States, especially due to maximising the efficiency of its fight against the ETA.¹⁹ The final text stipulated that such asylum petitions would not be accepted unless *'the Member State of which the applicant is a national denounces the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights or the procedure for its suspension from the EU for serious and persistent breach of human rights has been initiated or such a Member State was already suspended'* (Masopust 1997: 10). In addition Member States had the right in the last instance to make decisions in individual cases. Although not completely satisfied, this provision meant an important step forward for the Spanish administration as regards the issue of asylum policy (MacLennan 2004: 334).

Another success for the Spanish administration came with the provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty that recognise the special status and legislative treatment of ultra-peripheral regions which in addition to the French overseas departments, the Azores and Madeira also included the Canary Islands. According to the Treaty, the structural disadvantages of these island regions demand special treatment on issues such as customs and trade policies, fiscal policy and access to the structural funds and other EU projects (Masopust 1997: 57–58). Furthermore, the right, important for Spain, was confirmed to make border checks on persons coming from the United Kingdom, including Gibraltar, regardless of the fact that another article of the Amsterdam Treaty demanded that these checks be abandoned (MacLennan 2004: 334). Furthermore, Spanish negotiators sharply disagreed with the expansion of qualified majority voting on structural and cohesion funds and social security, and in this they found support in the United Kingdom and Denmark. On other matters Madrid moderated its positions to achieve its key national priorities concerning the ultra-peripheral status of the Canary Islands and the restriction on asylum rights for EU Member State citizens (Barbé 1999; Morata and Fernandez 2003: 178). In the end, Aznar talked about the Amsterdam Treaty as ‘reasonably positive, constructive, optimistic and satisfactory’ (El País, quoted in Masopust 1997: 63).

The Treaty of Nice

In February 2001 the Nice Treaty²⁰ was signed in an effort to facilitate streamline the institutional functioning of the EU after the EU-25 and then EU-27 enlargement. Among the main goals of the Treaty was to define the size and composition of the Commission, the decision on the change of weighting votes in the Council (re-weighting of votes, introduction of double majority and defining the threshold for qualified majority decisions) and negotiation of the expansion of qualified majority voting in the Council. In the end, the agenda also included the issue of the number of representatives of individual countries in the European Parliament as a sort of principle of compensating for ‘wrongs suffered’ in terms of the composition of the Commission and the Council (Plechánová 2000). Spain’s key demand was related to the effort to become a major player and maintain its position in the most important institutions; there was a plan to block the final agreement if other countries did not accede to its demands. In view of the declaration in the Amsterdam Treaty concerning the ‘special case of Spain’ Spain also demanded interlinking the reforms of the Commission and Council. In the end Spain secured 27 votes in the Council, which meant the same weight as Poland; nevertheless, the ‘big four’ had two votes more. Although Aznar’s administration initially demanded the same number of votes in the Council as Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, the result can be considered positive for Madrid because it achieved proportionately the greatest

increase in the number of votes.²¹ As other large countries, Spain lost one commissioner. In terms of the composition of the European Parliament as the equalisation tool, it lost 14 seats and acquired 50 euro seats. Germany, in exchange for retreating from its demand for more votes in the Council, kept its 99 MPs; the three remaining countries — the United Kingdom, France and Italy — had to accept a reduction from 87 seats to 72.

Aznar's administration refused to accept the principle of qualified majority voting as a generally valid voting model, and preferred its limited application. Spain was willing to accept the expansion of qualified majority voting on issues of freedom of movement and social affairs but it opposed this principle in fiscal²² and environmental policy, territorial affairs and especially on the issue of structural funds (Closa and Heywood 2004: 129). Keeping the veto on decisions on fiscal issues in regional policy until 2007 when the budgets were planned for the period of 2007–2013 was a clear sign of Spain's victory. Aznar called the Treaty of Nice 'great' for the Union and 'excellent for Spain' because it provided for strengthening of Union institutions and further enlargement. He also emphasised that Spain was a country that would gain most from the new Treaty, especially in terms of the weight of votes in the Council and also in terms of voting on Union funds (EFE, Terra). However, opposition cautioned that the number of votes in the Council is not as advantageous because the blocking minority in the enlarged EU-27 was 91 votes, which meant Madrid was exactly two votes short of being able to form a coalition with two large states and one small country with four votes in the Council (Closa and Heywood 2004: 130).

The Third Presidency — Marked by the Issues Terrorism and Euro

Spain was again at the helm of the EU during the first six months of 2002, for the first time under the leadership of the People's Party, which strove to dispel fears of its European attitudes during the presidency. The Spanish administration outlined six priority areas of its presidency: the fight with terrorism; successful introduction of the euro; continuation of economic reforms in the EU; enlargement; strengthening the external position of the EU; and debate about the future of the EU (Pavlík 2002: 25). The fight against terrorism can be considered to be the main priority: this was not only in reaction to 9/11 but primarily in an effort of Spain to europeanise its own domestic problem with ETA. Spanish government concentrated especially on strengthening legislation and convergence of EU Member State's legal systems, improvement of the cooperation of security forces in the Member States, prevention and identification of various forms and tools of terrorism and international cooperation (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 183; Pavlík 2002: 26).

Another priority of the presidency involving the smooth introduction of euro was fulfilled without any difficulties. Spain contributed to the formation of a network providing information on technical aspects of the transfer to the new currency, coordinating economic policies and promoting the euro as the new reserve currency (Pavlík 2002: 26). A certain failure may be seen in the fact that Spain, even with the support of the United Kingdom and Italy, did not manage to push full liberalisation of the energy market, which was opposed, especially by France and Germany. Although the Spanish presidency agenda did not contain the issue of immigration, this issue became one of the priorities immediately before the Seville summit as Aznar managed to include this issue on the agenda. The Spanish Prime Minister also profited from the fact that conservatives won elections in several countries, and also with the help of the United Kingdom he could react to the problem of growing xenophobia in Europe. Nevertheless, the Spanish proposal for imposing financial sanctions on less developed countries that cannot control their migration flows was strictly refused by France and Sweden (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 184–185).

Eastern Enlargement — a Threat for Spain?

The relationship of Spain to the fifth enlargement²³ was perceived somewhat ambivalently from the start. On the one hand, it is necessary to realize that the issue of cohesion and ensuring the flow of funding from Brussels was a fundamental priority for all Spanish administrations. In this respect Spanish administrations were by far the most successful even compared to other less developed EU Member States.²⁴ And it was the potential competition posed by the new Member States that could endanger the influx of money. At the same time, there was a concern that the fifth enlargement would tilt the geopolitical interests of the EU north-east. On the other hand, solidarity related to the shared non-democratic experience — even if the regimes in the Iberian and Central European countries were dramatically different — may have played a role in the attitude of Spain to the enlargement. Certain historical-political parallels called up sympathies in the Spanish public, which was in favour of the enlargement, and in this context the Spanish government called the enlargement ‘a moral and political commitment’ (Closa and Heywood 2004: 132). Last but not least, Central and Eastern Europe were never among Spain’s economic and business priorities.²⁵ It was clear that the economic profit from the enlargement would be very imbalanced and would depend on geographical proximity and other, primarily business links to the new Member States (Viñas 2001: 82). Although certain economic potential opened up for Spain in relation to the eastern enlargement, this fact could not counterbalance the negative impact on Spain’s real geopolitical and economic interests (Tremosa 2005).

Nevertheless, the official position of the Spanish administration on this wave of enlargement was positive and forthcoming. Aznar repeatedly spoke for integration of post-communist countries into the EU, and for example after the Helsinki summit in 1999 he stated that the enlargement is an opportunity for Spain, not a problem (Viñas 2001: 81). In real politics, however, we can see a pragmatic and cautious approach, which sometimes became untactful as when Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries were not invited to the 1995 summit in Madrid (although this was at the time of the socialist government), which confirmed the unofficial Spanish reluctance toward the countries of this region (Closa and Heywood 2004: 132).

The Spanish government was among those that spoke against a fixed date of enlargement as it was proposed by the European Commission; during negotiations it preferred the 'regatta principle' and not the 'big bang' or 'wave' principles, i.e., entry of more candidate countries at the same time. Although the regatta principle did not win,²⁶ it was to reflect the potential of just competition based on a common start when each of the candidate countries was to be judged exclusively according to its own results and progress made. Another of Spain's demands concerned the development of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) where it had to prepare for a fight with the new competitors concerning the allocation of agricultural subsidies, quotas and use of other compensatory instruments. These concerns were understandable given that at the beginning of the 21st century Spain was the second largest net recipient of agricultural support after France (Closa and Heywood 2004: 133–134; Tremosa 2005).

Crisis of the People's Party

As we stated above, terrorism was clearly one of the Spanish administration's priorities since Aznar came to power in 1996. This gathered intensity after 9/11, and acquired new dimension in March 2004 after the bomb attacks in Madrid. Aznar's pro-Atlantic orientation and joining of the anti-terrorist coalition brought many problems to the Spanish People's Party and caused a major breach of a longstanding consensus on the domestic scene. The decision to send a Spanish contingent to help the coalition headed by the US resulted in a major wave of indignation.²⁷ Aznar probably presumed that the anti-terrorism chord would outweigh Spanish anti-Americanism²⁸ but the Madrid bomb attacks, which, also according to the subsequent results of the elections, were put in the context of Aznar's pro-American politics,²⁹ clearly refuted this assumption. After this unprecedented attack, which occurred only three days before the parliamentary elections and killed almost 200 people, Prime Minister Aznar, in an effort to avoid discrediting his own foreign policy, tried to persuade citizens that the Basque ETA, which was at the centre of his party's attention, was behind the attack. Although pre-election surveys predicted a

matched fight between PSOE and PP, the People's Party (headed in these elections by Mariano Rajoy) lost by 5 % and the victorious socialists gained 42.6 % of the vote. The terrorist attacks resulted in a change of the government and with it also weakening of the Atlantic ties. That socialists came to power meant not only the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq but also a return to a more pro-integrationist policy focused primarily on cooperation with France and Germany.

Discussions about the future of the EU in 2002 entered the Convent, which was established under the Laeken Declaration from December 2001 in an effort to make the Union a more democratic and efficient organisation. The main goal of the Convent was to prepare a draft of the constitutional agreement of the EU. As with Amsterdam and Nice, most disputes were related to institutional reforms; this time it was Spain and Poland, which blocked the negotiations.³⁰ Neither country was willing to give up their strong positions in voting in the Council negotiated in the Treaty of Nice because the newly proposed principles of the division of votes reflected more clearly the size of population in individual Member States. The blocked situation was broken only when PSOE came to power after the March 2004 elections when Zapatero gave up Spain's insistence on the division of votes in the Council. Spain ratified the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in the Parliament and at the same time it was one of the first countries to adopt it in a referendum in February 2005.³¹

Conclusion

Spain clearly took advantage of its participation in the European integration project to consolidate democracy and overcome the Franco trauma, which can be gleaned from the strong social-political consensus confirming the authority of the course taken. Although the initial enthusiasm waned in time, Spain was an important actor, which contributed to EU's major policies with an emphasis on those, which it could influence from the very start (such as the EMU). This text looked particularly into the defence of and changes in Spanish national interests examined in the context of geopolitical changes and negotiations about institutional changes of the EU. We followed exclusively changes concerning the first and the third pillar and concentrated especially on changes in the institutional position of Spain, which during the individual negotiations (of Maastricht, Amsterdam, and Nice) strove to maintain the position of a 'big state'³² and funding linked to the socio-economic cohesion. Our secondary goal was to compare the attitude of socialist and People's Party governments to defining and defending national interest in the first and third pillars.

The EMU was the policy in which Spanish administrations took a very active role irrespective of their ideological backgrounds. Each of the Spanish presidencies

contributed significantly to the progress on individual phases of the EMU. During the first Spanish presidency a decision was made on the launch of the initial phase of the EMU; during the second presidency in 1995 the name of the new common currency was adopted and the schedule for the last phase of the EMU was approved; during the third presidency euro was put in circulation. For Spain participation in the EMU meant a big chance to deal with its chronic economic problems such as inflation and unemployment. In the case of the EMU we can observe a constant continuity and permanent activity of Spain, which linked the future of its national economy with the EMU.

The regional and structural policy of the EU was also linked to the economic situation, modernisation and inclusion in the EMU. Spain managed to safeguard a regular flow of funds from the cohesion and structural funds, and became the largest recipient of these funds. Even when the People's Party and socialists accused each other of insufficient defence of national interests as part of the internal political struggle, their attitude in this matter *de facto* did not differ, and both parties strove to secure maximum incomes. Let us recall 1992 when Spain 'paid' for the funds with their yes to the enlargement of the EFTA countries and the Danish opt-out clause; seven years later they linked the funds to their yes to the eastern enlargement. The effort to europeanise their national problem related to ETA, however, was not well taken by other Member States. Nevertheless, Spain managed to push some important legislative mechanisms into the third and first pillar, which helped to coordinate Europe's fight against terrorism.

With the end of the Cold War, deep geopolitical changes occurred which affected the negotiations about further waves of enlargement, which automatically evoked the issue of institutional reorganisation of the EU. Between 1992 and 1994 economic crisis hit to which the Spanish public reacted with falling confidence in the EU³³ and doubts appeared as to whether Spain would manage to keep pace with the EMU project. The socialist government had to react adequately and realistically to the changing environment and increase of external and internal pressures with the goal not to weaken the position of the country. During Aznar administration Spain stressed the maintenance of its institutional position but it clearly did not play a leadership role in the integration process. The Prime Minister saw the integration more as a framework for promoting Spain's national interests built on rigorous defence of national sovereignty and at the same time viewed the Union as a source of financial and legal instruments needed to expand free market and solve Spain's internal problems (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 186–187).

To answer the main research question of the text (whether the People's Party coming to power did bring crucial change in the content and the definition of the main national interests in the first and third pillar) we can affirm that despite certain modification of forms and strategies, continuity in content dominated Spain's European

policy regarding the first and third pillars. Although People's Party did bring some changes in the attitude to European politics (e.g., an emphasis on the Atlanticism and the intergovernmental approach), in terms of the basic priorities in the first and third pillar we can see a strong continuity. If we were to identify a relevant change, then more important than the coming of the People's Party to power in the country was the second socialist phase in the first half of the 1990s. Especially after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 Spain became a pragmatic and realist pro-European country the policies of which are no longer guided by the effort to persuade partners about its strong commitment to the EU but by the necessity to promote efficiently its own national interests in complex Union negotiations.

Notes

- ¹ The article is a preliminary study for the project "Czech Republic in the European Union", part of the National Research project II (No. 2D06016).
- ² Even the strongest nationalist parties of the Basque region and Catalonia, *Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV)* and *Convergència i Unió (CiU)* expressed support for Spain's entry into the EC in an attempt to transfer their demands outside Spain's borders. Moreover, public opinion polls showed that a majority of the population (53 %) was for the entry of Spain into the EC and only 20 % was against (Lloréns 2003; Martin de la Guardia 2004: 106–107, 111).
- ³ Unlike Greece and Portugal, Spain had never been a member of EFTA (Portugal) or NATO (Portugal and Greece).
- ⁴ On the issue of Spanish economy, its development in relation to the EU and convergence, see Farrell 2001.
- ⁵ In 1989 Spain vetoed the EC budget to force an agreement on doubling financial sources for Structural Funds as a trade-off for adopting the Single European Act (SEA). Two years later Madrid threatened to block the agreement on the political union unless the new Cohesion Fund is included in the Maastricht Treaty. In exchange Spain agreed to a majority vote on some policies (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 177).
- ⁶ Let us recall, for example, the scandal of Deputy Prime Minister Alfonso Guerra who resigned in 1991 or the corruption and financial scandals involving the companies Rumasa, Ibercorp and Filesa.
- ⁷ This referendum was held at the beginning of June 1992, and 50.7 % voters were against the Maastricht Treaty. The key problems from the Danish perspective were the common European currency, cooperation in justice and home affairs, Union citizenship and defence cooperation. In these areas Denmark received altogether four opt-outs at the summit of the European Council in Edinburgh (Hořejšová 2002).
- ⁸ The new member states – Finland, Sweden and Austria – did not become full members of the Western European Union. All three (or four including Denmark) countries have the status of an observer in the WEU.
- ⁹ The Delors II Package was introduced here for the period 1993 to 1999 and placed emphasis on the social and cohesion policy and the introduction of the euro.
- ¹⁰ These four least developed countries were sometimes pejoratively called PIGS, an acronym of their first letters.
- ¹¹ For more detail see EP 1995 or Westendorp 1995: 22.

- ¹² The final inclusion of the PP in the EPP (European People's Party) in 1989 was to confirm the centre-right orientation of the party and to definitely hush voices linking the People's Party with Franco's legacy. (Martin de la Guardia 2004: 113–114; EPP) Nevertheless, the entry of the PP into the EPP occasioned many negative reactions to which the PP reacted by abandoning some of its ideological lines, moderation and approximation of other European centre-right parties (Closa and Heywood 2004: 46).
- ¹³ The consensus was reached especially thanks to the limited fragmentation of the Spanish party system and minimal changes of governments – only three parties have headed the country since 1977 and only two of them at a time when Spain was a member of the EC/EU. This is one of the reasons why there is continuity in the Spanish European policy. According to PSOE European integration and policy is the clearest continual line in the Spanish foreign policy (Closa and Heywood 2004: 42).
- ¹⁴ Per capita GDP grew from 69 % to 85 % of the Union average; nevertheless, 'hard' negotiating strategy made it possible for Spain to remain the main recipient of Union funds until 2006 (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 174).
- ¹⁵ Since 1998 Spain's differences with Germany became relatively frequent as concerns financial sources because Germany was a net contributor to the EU budget. During the negotiations about the allocation of funds from the Cohesion Fund and the structural funds for the period 2000–2006, Aznar managed to secure almost an equal amount as for the preceding phase; in the case of the structural funds there was a slight reduction (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 179).
- ¹⁶ In view of the fact that only Finland, France and Luxembourg managed to meet the public debt convergence criterion, the falling tendency in the debt was accepted as an additional criterion. According to a report by the European Commission and the European Monetary Institute from March 1998, Spanish inflation was at 1.8 % (the limit was 2.7 %), the interest rates at 6.3 % (the limit was 7.8 %) and the deficit of the public budget was at 2.6 % (the limit was 3 %). The public debt to GDP ratio was 68.8 %, which exceeded the limit by almost 9 % (Ministry of Finance).
- ¹⁷ It came into effect on 1 May 1999.
- ¹⁸ This is a difference compared to the Maastricht Treaty where the Spanish administration stressed especially the second pillar. The Amsterdam Treaty brought a number of changes also in the second pillar, which were more or less in line with the Spanish position. The Amsterdam Treaty introduced, among other things, the new function of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and merged it with the function of the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union (Spanish socialist Javier Solana was appointed to the position).
- ¹⁹ In the name of common fight against terrorism, the Spanish administration pushed for cooperation within institutions such as Europol or Eurojust (Powell 2003: 160–161).
- ²⁰ It entered into force on 1 February 2003.
- ²¹ Spain multiplied the share of votes 3.3 times whereas the 'big four' only 2.9 times or less. Furthermore, Spain improved its position as regards the relation between votes and the population from 0.876 to 0.965 (EFE, Terra).
- ²² In the end, Aznar's administration somewhat reassessed its position on fiscal matters and after the Nice summit the Spanish Prime Minister expressed regret that in the end the agreement on the expansion of voting using qualified majority as part of this issue was not adopted (EFE, Terra).

- ²³ This enlargement wave included the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- ²⁴ For example, between 1994 and 1999 Spain received 27 % from the structural and cohesion funds, 11.7 % went to Portugal and also Greece, 5 % of the resources were allocated to Ireland (Fernandez Martínez 1997, quoted in Viñas 2001: 77).
- ²⁵ In 1998 Spanish exports to countries of Central and Eastern Europe amounted to only 2 % of the total exports and 7.4 % of Spanish exports outside the EU. In countries of Central and Eastern Europe Spanish imports made only 2.4 % of total imports. (Viguera 2001; López Moreno 1999, quoted in Tremosa 2005).
- ²⁶ The summit in Laeken in December 2001 redefined the group of candidate countries, and the 'Laeken group' included the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, which resulted in hierarchisation of the candidate countries as Bulgaria and Romania were excluded. This brought the situation back to the original though modified strategy of waves and abandonment of the regatta principle (Pitrová 2003).
- ²⁷ According to various surveys about 80 % (e. g., Pew Research Center) of the public refused the war against Iraq (Pew Research Center 2003).
- ²⁸ Typical of Spain is its deep-rooted anti-Americanism, which is one of the strongest of all EU countries, as Eurobarometer surveys also confirm. Secondly, based on its own national experience, Spanish public reacts extremely sensitively to the issue of terrorism (Noya 2002).
- ²⁹ In May 2004 66.6 % of respondents stated that the bloody terrorist attacks in Madrid "were closely related" to the then Spanish foreign policy and over 64 % of respondents believed that if their government had not joined the US in the war against Iraq, the massacre would not have occurred at all (Bermejo, Reinares 2007).
- ³⁰ This two-member block was a pragmatic coalition of countries, which in some respects of EU policies could be competitors but in this case were allied on a number of issues. Both countries have similar populations, they share the idea of NATO as a key actor of European security and, last but not least, both countries are traditional Catholic bastions (Farrell 2005: 223).
- ³¹ Over 42 % of voters participated in the referendum; 76.7 % of Spanish citizens voted for the adoption of the EU's Constitutional Treaty.
- ³² The position of Spain in EC/EU was quite interesting since its entry because the country did not fall into any of the established groups. At the time of its entry Spain was not large and very prosperous, nor small and prosperous nor less prosperous and small (Powell 2003: 148).
- ³³ Despite the change in the Spanish public's opinion we can say that since 1986 Eurobarometer has quite consistently reflected three main characteristics of the Spanish notion of European integration. The integration had more proponents in Spain than was the EC/EU average. Furthermore, Spaniards accepted the idea of strong EU which they did not see as a threat to their national identity or culture, and supported the principles of subsidiarity. Last but not least, the confidence in European institutions was above the EU average and sometimes even exceeded the confidence of Spanish citizens in their own national institutions (Morata and Fernandez 2003: 175).

References

- Barbé, Esther (1996) 'Spain: the Uses of Foreign Policy Cooperation', in Christopher Hill (ed) *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, pp. 108–129. Routledge.
- Barbé, Esther (2000) 'Spain and CFSP: The Emergence of a "Major Player"?' , *Mediterranean Politics* 5, 2: 44–63.
- Barbé, Esther (2001) 'Spain and CFSP: The Emergence of a "Major Player"?' in Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs (eds). *Spain: The European and International Challenges*. Frank Cass.
- Bermejo, Rut and Fernando Reinares (2007) 'Visiones del terrorismo internacional en la opinión pública española', *Real Instituto Elcano*. Available at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/programas/terrorismo+global/publicaciones/publ-opinion+publica/ari+32-2007.
- Closa, Carlos (2001) 'Las raíces domésticas de la política europea de España y la presidencia de 2002'. Available at http://www.notre-europe.eu/uploads/tx_publication/Etud16-es_01.pdf.
- Closa, Carlos and Paul M. Heywood (2004) *Spain and the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Farrell, Mary (2001) *Spain in the EU. The Road to Economic Convergence*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fernandez Martínez, Pascual (1997) 'Los fondos estructurales europeos y el desarrollo regional. Balance de una década desde la perspectiva Española', *Información Comercial Española*: 766 (Oct.–Nov.).
- González Sánchez, Enrique (1989) 'La Presidencia española de la Comunidad Europea', *Revista de Instituciones Europeas* 16, 3: 691–723.
- Horspool, Margot and Matthew, Humphreys (2006) *European Union Law*. Oxford University Press.
- Hořejšová, Tereza (2002) 'Dánsku je dnes výjimka z obranné spolupráce spíše na obtíž', *Europeum*. Available at http://www.europeum.org/dispatch_article.php?aid=568.
- Lloréns, Basabe Felipe (2003) 'Spain: the emergence of a new major actor in the European arena' in Wolfgang Wessels, Andrea Maurer and Jürgen Mittag (eds) *Fifteen into one?: the European Union and its member states*. Available at <http://www.politik.uni-koeln.de/wessels/DE/PUBLIKATIONEN/texte/TextMaurer/andreas/Span.pdf>.
- López Moreno, Luis (1999) 'La ampliación de la UE, consideraciones para la política comercial común y de España', *Información Económica Española*, N.º. 776, Febrero.
- MacLennan, Julio Crespo (2004) *España en Europa, 1945–2000*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Martin de la Guardia, Ricardo (2004) 'In Search of lost Europe. Spain', in Wolfram Kaiser and Jürgen Elvert (eds) *European Union Enlargement. A Comparative History*, pp. 99–118. Routledge.
- Masopust, Zdeněk (1997) 'Amsterdamská smlouva' (translation of a study of the Amsterdam Treaty), *Parlamentní institut*, Studie 97/83. Available at www.psp.cz/kps/pi/PRACE/PI-1-106.DOC.
- Morata, Francesc and Ana-Mar Fernandez (2003) 'The Spanish Presidencies of 1989, 1995 and 2002. From commitment to reluctance towards European integration', in Ole Elgström (ed) *European Union Council Presidencies A comparative perspective*, pp. 173–190. Routledge.
- Noya, Javier (2002) 'Iraq and International Public Opinion', *Real Instituto Elcano*. Available at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/ari+97-2002.
- Pavlík, Petr (2002) 'Španělské předsednictví v Evropské unii', *Mezinárodní politika* 26, 9: 25–26.

- Pitrová, Markéta (2003) 'Pátá vlna rozšiřování EU – standardní postup, či nová metodika?', *Středoevropské politické studie* 5, 4.
- Plechanovová, Běla (2000) 'Smlouva z Nice a výsledky mezivládní konference o reformě institucí Evropské unie', *Střední Evropa* 103: 10–30. (in electronic version available at http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~plech/Nice%20a%20IGC%202000_SE.pdf).
- Powell, Charles (2003) 'Spanish Membership of the European Union Revisited', in Sebastián Royo and Paul Christopher Manuel (eds) *Spain and Portugal in the European Union. The First Fifteen Years*, pp. 147–168. Frank Cass.
- Tovias, Alfred (1995) 'Spain in the European Community', in Richard Gillespie, Rodrigo Fernando and Jonathan Story (eds) *Democratic Spain: Reshaping External Relations in a Changing World*, pp. 88–105. Routledge.
- Tremosa, Sonia Piedrafta (2005) 'The EU Eastern enlargement: Policy choices of the Spanish government' *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP) 9, 3. Available at <http://www.eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2005-003.pdf>.
- Viguera, Enrique (2001) 'Posturas y perspectivas ante la ampliación', *Economía Exterior* 16: 69–81.
- Viñas, Angel (2001) 'The Enlargement of the European Union: Opportunities and Concerns for Spain' in Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs (eds) *Spain: The European and International Challenges*. Frank Cass.
- Westendorp, Carlos (1995) 'Balance de la Presidencia española de la Unión Europea', *Presupuesto y Gasto Público*. Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda 17: 15–28.

Online resources

- CNN (2003) *Aznar: Ruling party won't be 'cornered' by pro-war stance*. Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/03/29/sprj.irq.spain/>.
- EFE, Terra (2000) *Aznar considera que el acuerdo es 'muy satisfactorio' para España*. Available at <http://www.terra.es/actualidad/articulo/html/act15291.htm>.
- EP (1995) *Madrid European Council, 15 and 16 December 1995, Presidency Conclusions*. Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/mad2_en.htm#annex3.
- EPP. *Chronology 1976 – 2003*. Available at <http://www.epp.eu/subsubpagina.php?hoofdmenuID=1&submenuID=3&subsubmenuID=9>.
- EU website. *Glossary*. Available at http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/ioannina_compromise_en.htm.
- Ministerstvo finance ČR. *Vznik eurozóny*. Available at http://www.zavedenieura.cz/cps/rde/xchg/euro/xsl/euro_vznik_eurozony.html.
- OEZ Úřadu vlády České republiky (2008) *Když se řekne Lisabonská smlouva... Perspektiva fungování Evropské unie podle nového smluvního rámce*. Available at http://www.euroskop.cz/gallery/13/4050-kdyz_se_rekne_lisabonska_smlouva.pdf.
- Pew Research Center (2003) Available at <http://people-press.org/report/175/americas-image-further-erodes-europeans-want-weaker-ties>