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*Małgorzata Mizerska-Wrotkowska<sup>1</sup>*

## **IMPACT OF SPAIN'S DEMOCRATISATION ON ITS MULTILATERAL RELATIONS<sup>2</sup>**

**Keywords:** Spain, democratisation, transformation, foreign policy, multilateral relations, Council of Europe, NATO, European Union

**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this article is to analyse the impact of the Spanish democratic transformation on its multilateral relations. It analyses the strategies of Spanish governments in the transformation era and the process of accession to NATO, the Council of Europe and the European Communities. Source analysis and criticism methods (applied mostly to Spanish-language texts), as well as comparative analysis were employed for the needs of this article.

**Based** on her research, the author concludes that changes to Spanish foreign policy were evolutionary in nature. Therefore, it took Spain several years to regain the full confidence of its partners. Before any breakthrough changes could occur in the multilateral dimension, Spain needed to normalise its bilateral relations.

**The** democratic elections conducted on the 15th of June 1977 in Spain was the breakthrough without which no accession to any important international organisation could ever happen. As the event clinched the state's democratisation, it paved the way for Spain to join soon the Council of Europe. The accession process for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was more complex. The Spanish political scene was divided in that matter. Spain's accession to the European Communities was the longest process. It was subject not only to the state's democratisation progress but also to economic issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Małgorzata Mizerska-Wrotkowska, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, Institute of European Studies, m.mizerska-wrotkowska@uw.edu.pl.

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## 1. STRATEGIES OF SPANISH GOVERNMENTS IN THE TRANSFORMATION ERA

### 1.1. THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE FIRST GOVERNMENT AFTER FRANCO'S DEATH (XII 1975-VII 1976)

Francisco Franco died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1975. The changes made by King Juan Carlos I, who ascended the throne two days later, were evolutionary ones. To demonstrate the case, let us mention the fact that following Franco's death, Carlos Arias Navarro retained the office of Prime Minister<sup>3</sup>. In that period of his rule, Arias Navarro introduced limited amnesty for political prisoners and appointed three proponents of opening up and changes to ministerial positions: Antonio Garrigues Díaz-Cañabate (department of justice), Manuel Fraga Iribarne (department of the interior) and José María de Areilza (department of foreign affairs).

Arias Navarro's supreme goal was to hold democratic elections (which finally happened under the next Prime Minister) to enable Spain to start running for membership in the European Communities and NATO. The new government's intentions were presented to the leaders of other states by Minister de Areilza during his travels to European capitals.

One should bear in mind that in the period analysed Spain did not belong to any international assembly which made decisions of crucial importance for international security or cooperation. Its alliances were limited to an agreement with the USA (Armero, 1989, p. 20). Reforms of the state's foreign policy were difficult for Navarro due to his lack of international experience, including lack of knowledge of foreign languages (de Areilza, 1977, p. 204). Further, one could notice scepticism for sweeping changes: "Either Europe will recognise our role as a neutral ally or Spain will be forced to restrict the use of its [military – note by MMW] bases for the USA and own purposes only... We wish to accede to European structures with full rights. It means we are willing to build a <Spanish style> democracy, which would enable us to join the current policy of free

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<sup>3</sup> On the 4th of December 1975 Carlos Arias Navarro was given mandate by the king to continue as the Prime Minister.

Europe but would not make us abandon our own traditions” (as cited in: Armero, 1989, p. 21).

The first government in the transformation era did not manage to accomplish most of the goals it had set for itself in the sphere of external relations<sup>4</sup>. As regards the normalisation of bilateral relations, it only succeeded in having major European ambassadors return to Spain and in reactivating relations with Portugal. The government's greatest achievement in foreign affairs was the positive effect of negotiations with the United States of America and elevation of agreements concerning military bases in Spain to the level of a treaty requiring to be ratified by the US Senate.

## 1.2. FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ADOLFO SUÁREZ (VII 1976–I 1981)

From the perspective of political science, the Spanish transformation, strictly speaking, began with Adolfo Suárez assuming the function of Prime Minister. It was during his rule that the Cortes<sup>5</sup>, which ran the risk of dissolution, adopted the Act for Political Reform (*Ley para la Reforma Política*)<sup>6</sup> in November 1976. The act was then approved of in a national referendum<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. The Programme of the Government (*Programa de Gobierno*) pronounced by Carlos Arias Navarro at the plenary session of the Spanish Cortes on the 28th of January 1976. In his speech, Navarro talked for instance about looking for solutions aimed the full integration of Spain in European integration structures, plans for reinforcing relations with Latin America and special relations with Western Sahara. He also focused on analysing potential effects of closer relations with NATO. He considered Spain's isolation in the international arena to be a genuine threat to the state's survival, while the full normalisation of external relations to be more than barely a sign of opportunism (“La Vanguardia”, 29.01.1976, p. 7; Armero, 1989, p. 22).

<sup>5</sup> Under Franco's rule, the Cortes was a unicameral advisory body. It had deputies by office, by appointment or elected by local governments and professional corporation.

<sup>6</sup> *Ley para la Reforma Política* was technically the last act belonging to the so-called Fundamental Acts (*Leyes Fundamentales*) issued in Spain from 1938. 425 deputies voted in favour, 59 against and 13 abstained. Its adoption meant passage from authoritarianism to democracy while retaining law in force.

<sup>7</sup> The turnout during the referendum was 77.8%, of which 94.1% voters said “yes” to the question: “Do you approve of the Political Reform Bill?”

### 1.2.1. “Pre-democratic” period (VII 1976–VI 1977)

Until elections, Spanish foreign policy was not subject to any democratic control by the parliament; therefore, the period from July 1976 to June 1977 could be called, following José Mario Armero, “pre-democratic” (*etapa predemocrática*). The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelino Oreja, announced the former government’s policy would be continued, expressed his willingness to maintain friendly relations with all states and disposition for international cooperation (especially in the forum of the UN) and integration with the European Communities (Declaration of the government of Spain of the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 1976). Three dimensions would be most important for Spanish foreign policy: European, Iberoamerican and Arabic (Oreja Aguirre define la política...). But the qualitative change meant for instance the greater involvement of the head of the government in foreign affairs. He took many trips abroad, as opposed to his predecessor.

An achievement of Marcelino Oreja in the “pre-democratic” period was the normalisation of external relations (Aldecoa Luzarraga, 1994, pp. 158–160). Having established diplomatic relations with socialist countries, Mexico and former Portuguese colonies: Angola and Mozambique and the Republic of Capo Verde<sup>8</sup>, Spain had a nearly complete network of diplomatic ties (except for Israel, Albany and North Korea)<sup>9</sup>. Spain also progressed a lot as regards implementation of international law. In September 1976 Minister Oreja signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (after the completion of the ratification process, the document came into force in Spain on 24.07.1977). Moreover, Spain’s endeavours to become a member of the European Communities started to have a realistic chance of success. The application for membership submit-

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<sup>8</sup> Spain established democratic relations with Angola, Mozambique and the Republic of Capo Verde only after the democratic election. As regards the two first countries, it took place on 6.10.1977, and for the third one – on 21.12.1977.

<sup>9</sup> Diplomatic relations with Equatorial Guinea were severed temporarily on the 12th of December 1977.

ted by Minister Oreja could get a positive response by member states (for more information see 2.3.).

### 1.2.2. Democratic period (VII 1977–II 1981)

The first democratic election in Spain after Franco's death (15<sup>th</sup> June 1977) was won by the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD)<sup>10</sup>, which received 34.5% votes (165 mandates). Further positions were taken by the socialists of PSOE<sup>11</sup> (29.5% votes – 118 mandates), communists of PCE<sup>12</sup> (9.4% votes – 20 mandates) and the People's Alliance – AP<sup>13</sup> (8.2% votes – 16 mandates). The turnout was 78.8%. The new government of Adolfo Suárez was sworn in on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1977. Marcelino Oreja remained in position as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. His task was not an easy one though. UCD was a coalition of many parties and diverse personalities and thus did not guarantee political stability as required for effective foreign policy. Further, Oreja had opponents within his own party.

Less than a month after the election (11<sup>th</sup> July 1977), Adolfo Suárez declared the priorities of Spain's foreign policy. They included the following ones: normalise relations with all states; strengthen relations with European states in the vein of CSCE and commence accession negotiations with the European Communities; cooperate closely with Portugal; re-establish the close, historically-grounded cooperation with Latin America; maintain strategic relations with the USA; launch a debate concerning possible accession to NATO; establish a regional cooperation system in the Mediterranean region; continue the friendly cooperation with the Arab states; resume negotiations with Great Britain concerning Gibraltar; and continue negotiations with the Holy See concerning the revision of the current concordat.

<sup>10</sup> UCD – *Unión de Centro Democrático* (Union of the Democratic Centre) led by Adolfo Suárez.

<sup>11</sup> PSOE – *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) led by Felipe González.

<sup>12</sup> PCE – *Partido Comunista de España* (Communist Party of Spain) led by Santiago Carrillo.

<sup>13</sup> AP – *Alianza Popular* (People's Alliance) led by Manuel Fraga.

All the activities of the government were to respect Spain's independence and its full territorial integrity (Armero, 1989, pp. 72–73). After a break of forty years, Spain's foreign policy was again controlled by a democratically elected parliament and free press. Foreign affairs, Human Rights and Latin America committees were formed in both chambers of the parliament. Decision-makers of the ruling Union of the Democratic Centre, however, put emphasis on reaching a consensus concerning domestic affairs, while setting foreign policy slightly aside. In October 1977 major political parties entered into what was known as the Moncloa Pacts (*Pactos de Moncloa*). The political pact (Acuerdo sobre el programa de actuación jurídica y política) introduced e.g. a ban on pre-publication censorship, freedom of public meetings and freedom of speech. The economic pact (Acuerdo sobre el programa de saneamiento y reforma de la economía) established the right to associate in trade unions and also decided to devalue the peseta in order to stop inflation and to reform the tax system and financial control system. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1978 the Cortes Generales passed the Constitution of Spain, which was adopted in a national referendum and signed by the king in December. The basic law introduced the cabinet-parliamentary system in Spain and enabled the ruling Union of the Democratic Centre to reform the state's foreign policy.

### 1.3. THE FINAL PERIOD OF THE SPANISH *TRANSICIÓN*

#### 1.3.1. The last government of Adolfo Suárez

José Pedro Pérez Llorca became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Adolfo Suárez's fourth government. But a governmental crisis and difficult political situation made it impossible for him to pursue an effective foreign policy. Nonetheless, the political discourse touched upon the issue of possible accession of Spain to NATO, its specific mission to develop relations between Europe and Latin America, support for the Palestinian case in the Middle East Conflict and the stabilisation of the Equatorial Guinea, establishment of peaceful relations with the Maghreb states and launch of negotiations concerning Gibraltar. In that period, the major directions in Spain's foreign policy were Europe (including relations with Portugal and

France, combating terrorism and endeavours to become a member of the European Communities; review conference in Madrid), Latin America and the Mediterranean region (Armero, 1989, pp. 134–142).

### 1.3.2. Foreign policy under the rule of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (II 1981–XII 1982)

In February 1981, Adolfo Suárez tendered his resignation and ceased to be the head of the Spanish government. He also resigned from the position of the President of UCD. The two positions were taken by Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo. The change of the Prime Minister involved a failed coup attempt staged by a lieutenant colonel of Guardia Civil Antonio Tejero on the 23rd of February 1981. José Pedro Pérez Llorca remained the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the new government, concentrating his politics on European affairs.

The year of 1982 proved crucial for Spain's foreign policy. After the last objection from France, as voiced by President François Mitterrand, Spain came close to being a member of the European Communities: On the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1982, the European Parliament gave its consent to accession. Despite the express opposition from the USSR<sup>14</sup>, Spain acceded to NATO in the same year (for more information, see 2.1.).

## 2. SPAIN'S MULTILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE TRANSFORMATION ERA

### 2.1. NATO

In the first years of transformation, the Spanish political scene was divided as regarded the possible accession to NATO. Some believed that an alliance with the United States of America would be enough as it pro-

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<sup>14</sup> On the 7th of October 1982, the Soviet Union issued a memorandum to the Spanish government, setting out the negative impact of Spain's accession to NATO would have on its relations with the USSR. The Spanish party rejected the document, explaining it was an attempt at forcing a sovereign state to change its decision and action counter to international practice.

vided the opportunity to participate in the western security system. Others believed it was insufficient. Any way, they knew potential integration with the Alliance could only occur after the full democratisation of the country<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, the access application was rejected in that period, despite the support of the USA for Spanish integration plans (declaration by Henry Kissinger of the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1975) (Armero, 1989, pp. 37–38).

Neither was Suárez's government unanimous about the possible membership in NATO. On the one hand, Minister Oreja realised that an agreement with the USA was in fact bilateral and gave no allied guarantees of defence ("Ya", 06.08.1976); on the other hand, he believed Spain's security-related needs were satisfied and the state contributed largely to ensuring security on the continent ("Cambio 16", 16.08.1976). He also thought the first step should be taken by the Alliance. And it was taken in December 1976 at the annual meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It issued a declaration recognising the transformation efforts made so far, but Spain's membership in NATO was deemed conditional upon full democratization („ABC", 19.11.1976). At the same time, there were more statements given in favour of Spain by influential politicians: US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and NATO Secretary General Josep Luns ("ABC", 11.12.1976).

Minister Oreja was not convinced yet. He believed all the "pros" and "cons" needed to be analysed thoroughly as the issue was so important from the national perspective ("ABC", 19.03.1977). In his opinion, the advantages related to the possible accession of Spain to the organisation included the participation in a significant international structure, access to political and strategic information and modernisation of the military. But he also saw some drawbacks of this manoeuvre: acceptance of obligations such as support for allies under armed attack; presence of foreign armies in the Spanish territory or implementation of the principle of solidarity with the allies, which would involve specific sacrifices. Hence

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<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Portugal became an original member of the Alliance in 1949, although it was under the authoritarian rule of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. It was due to Portugal's neutrality combined with friendliness towards the Allies during World War II (although there were some "respects" to the Third Reich III too: sales of mineral resources, a national day of mourning after Adolf Hitler's death).



he believed that a decision the state's security depended on should be supported by a majority of citizens. The support was to be based on in-depth analysis and knowledge (*Diario de Sesiones del Senado*, 9/1978, pp. 460–461).

Prime Minister Suárez spoke in the same vein: NATO – yes, but under conditions which would account for the Spanish character, security requirements and solely with the support of the parliamentary majority (*Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 3/1979, p. 43). As a result of this wariness, the application for Spain's membership in NATO was submitted by another minister in another cabinet.

The pursuit of foreign policy under the rule of UCD was more difficult also due to the need of compromises within the ruling party. The state's external activity became a source of disagreements among leading Spanish political parties. Differences of opinion were visible during parliamentary debates concerning NATO held in March and April 1978. PSOE and PCE were against Spain acceding the organisation.

Therefore its accession to NATO was postponed and made subject to the positive result of a national debate. At the same time, negotiations were conducted concerning the conditions for accession to the military organisation. On the other hand, events such as the coup attempt of November 1978<sup>16</sup> or the activity of the terrorist organisation ETA raised doubts among some NATO members about the trustworthiness of Spain as a potential ally.

Spain acceded NATO ultimately in 1982. The choice of date was intentional. The Spanish and USA agreement concerning military cooperation expired in September 1981 and the USA authorities wanted negotiations concerning a new treaty and negotiations concerning the accession to

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<sup>16</sup> Under Operation Galaxia, conspirators from Guardia Civil, the police and army (e.g. Antonio Tejero and Ricardo Sáenz de Ynestrillas) planned to occupy the Moncloa Palace in November 1978, arrest the members of Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez's cabinet and force the king to form a national salvation government. The coup was foiled due to the denunciation by some plotters. Tejero was imprisoned for seven months only. On the 23rd of February 1981, he made another failed grab for power with representatives of the army and Guardia Civil, when he headed an armed unit into the Congress of Deputies during the swearing-in ceremony Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo as the Prime Minister.

NATO to be conducted in parallel. Moreover, the Prime Minister of Spain Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo strived to speed up the time of accession as he was afraid PSOE (a party of adamant opponents of accession to NATO) would win. Accession documents were signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1981 and submitted in Washington on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1982. Less than two months later, Spain entered into an agreement with the USE concerning military bases. The socialists of PSOE won a decisive victory in autumn 1982, in Spain. The new team made the stay in NATO subject to the positive result of the national referendum. Until then, they suspended talks about the possible establishment of NATO headquarters in Madrid that would cover the Canary Islands-Gibraltar-the Balearic Islands axis (Story, 1995, pp. 61–62; Armero, 1989, pp. 143–151).

## 2.2. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

At the same time, Spain made significant progress towards its membership in the Council of Europe. For Minister Oreja it was as important as the membership of the European Communities. In recognition of those efforts, the Council of Europe adopted a resolution (Resolution 640 (1976), Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1976, which, on the one hand, praised Spain for launching the democratisation process and amnestying political prisoners, but, on the other hand, called for total freedom of speech and independence of mass media. Responding in his speech given in the forum of the UN General Assembly on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1976, Minister Oreja announced the Spanish authorities would respect human rights, as evidenced by the signing of the Covenant on Human Rights on the next day. As a consequence of those actions, the Council of Europe published a declaration approving the democratic changes in Spain in January 1977<sup>17</sup>.

But Spain could only be admitted to the Council of Europe after a democratic election. In July 1977, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council adopted a resolution to congratulate the Spanish nation on its

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<sup>17</sup> For comparison, Portugal was admitted to the Council of Europe on 22.09.1976. For more information, see: Armero, 1989, pp. 89–92.

political maturity due to the free election to the parliament. At the same time, it invited a delegation of Spanish MPs to participate as observers in the plenary session scheduled for October (Marcos, 1977). The accession process culminated a month later – on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1977, when Spain became a full, twentieth, member of the Council of Europe. It had not passed a new democratic constitution yet. But Prime Minister Suárez, Presidents of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate (Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Antonio Fontán) and opposition leaders (Felipe González and Santiago Carrillo) promised such a constitution would be passed and it would be consistent with the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950.

Interestingly, the dedication of Spanish politicians to the accession of their state to the Council of Europe was recognised. In 1981–83 José María de Areilza was the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Marcelino Oreja was Secretary General of that organization in 1984–89 (Granell, 2011, p. 1063).

### 2.3. EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

As a result of General Franco's death, most European countries showed interest in Spain. As was to be expected though, no representatives of the top-level governmental authorities came to the funeral service. Italy, Austria, Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland were represented by their ambassadors, Portugal – by the chief of the military section of the president of the republic, France – by the Minister of Defence, Great Britain – by the Leader of the House of Lords and the European Communities – by the Commissioner for External Relations. Much more “popular” was the ceremony of Juan Carlos's swearing-in as King of Spain: it was attended e.g. by the presidents of France, Ireland and FRG, the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Portugal, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Crown Prince of Luxembourg and Prince Bertil of Sweden (Armero, 1989, p. 32; see also: Lemus, 2004, pp. 113–143).

During the first days of transformation, many European politicians expressed their support for the democratic changes in Spain. The Prime Minister of Luxembourg (the state which assumed the presidency of the

EC Council of Ministers in the first half of 1976) – Gaston Thorn – expressed his hope Spain would satisfy the political and economic conditions for its accession to the Communities one day. Approval for Spanish changes was also voiced by: Willy Brandt – the former German Chancellor, then leader of SPD, Walter Behrent – President of the European Parliament, Prime Minister of Norway (Armero, 1989, p. 32), Anthony Crossland – Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and also EC President of the Council of Ministers in the first half of 1977, and President of the European Commission – Roy Jenkins. At the same time, the European Communities unblocked the accession negotiations with Spain, which had been suspended in October 1975 because of the ETA and FRAP militants put to death (see Announcement of the External Affairs Council of 20.01.1976). In May 1976, the European Parliament issued a document which made Spain's accession to the Communities subject to specific democratic reforms (Armero, 1989, p. 33).

The Spanish side also proved active. Minister de Areilza travelled three times to the capitals of EC member states to assure them of Spain's determined efforts to democratise itself and integrate with Europe. During his first trip, he visited the FRG, Luxembourg and France. In the capitals of the first two states, the Spanish Minister met with support and understanding. The visit to Paris was a major challenge though, since the French right objected to Spain's rapid integration with EC. They were afraid of Spain getting a stronger position in North Africa and South America as well as competition in the farm produce market. In his speeches, the Spanish Minister put emphasis on the "great political friendship" between Spain and France, which was supposed to become the starting point for mutual relations, especially in the context of the EEC.

During his second trip, de Areilza visited Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands, while on his third trip, he went to Great Britain and Denmark. The London visit provided no breakthrough concerning Gibraltar, it concentrated on the issue of Spain's democratisation. The stay in Copenhagen coincided unfortunately with the tragic events in Vitoria<sup>18</sup>. At the

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<sup>18</sup> On the 3rd of March 1976, the police started shooting strikers in Vitoria (the Basque Country). The incident resulted in the death of 5 people and injuries of 150.

end of his voyages abroad, the Spanish Minister visited Italy. Despite the fact that all those visits were conducted in a more or less friendly climate, European states expected decisive changes in the Spanish political arena. The confidence Europe had favoured Spain with some months earlier started to run out (Armero, 1989, p. 36).

In mid-July 1976, the new Prime Minister, Adolfo Suárez, went to France. The short visit was a breakthrough mostly for the public relations aspect (Armero, 1989, p. 42). In the analysed period, Spain had lively diplomatic contacts with Western European countries and institutions of the European Communities. On numerous visits and exchanges, Western diplomats spoke in the same vein: they approved of Spain's accession to the EC provided that the democratisation process was completed.

The democratic elections conducted in Spain made the political obstacles to the state's European integration disappear. Other obstacles surfaced soon, mostly economic ones. Nonetheless, the European Parliament adopted a resolution unanimously to support Spain's integration aspirations (Aldecoa Luzarraga, 1994, pp. 161–162). In such a favourable atmosphere and following the democratic elections, the Council of Ministers authorised Minister Oreja on the 23rd of July 1977 to submit an official membership application, which he did on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July. But Prime Minister Suárez did see how sceptical member states were about Spain's integration with the EC, when travelling to the European capitals.

Spain did not cease its endeavours though. In February 1978, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo was appointed minister without portfolio for relations with the European Communities. And in march, Minister Oreja presented the government's negotiation policies in the Senate and informed that Spain would only be interested in full integration with the EC and there would be no consent to any intermediate form (Diario de Sesiones del Senado, 9/1978, pp. 456–457). Official negotiations were launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1979, i.e. less than a month before the general elections, which did not give UCD an absolute majority but led to the simplification of the political system. Two parties came to the forefront: the UCD (168 mandates) and PSOE (121 mandates), portending the bipartisanship about to come. The government had a slight majority in the Parliament and needed

to seek consensus and support from other political options in order to lobby undertakings both in domestic and foreign policy.

After the elections Spain experienced a crisis. The UCD was consumed by internal divisions and the Spanish economy collapsed. Due to the oil crisis, the trade deficit doubled while labour and capital costs increased. Moreover, the army and Church grew more dissatisfied; the Church did not accept the government's policy regarding education, divorces or abortion. Further, no progress was perceivable in the negotiations with the European Communities. As he wanted to convince MPs and the public to support the European integration of Spain, Minister Oreja formulated three political arguments. First, he stated it was worth seeking together effective solutions to problems affecting all states. Second, he convinced that integration did not mean they would lose their national identity, as every state could preserve its national identity, while shared actions could reinforce their negotiating positions towards third states. Third, he underlined that genuine independence did not mean isolation but a sovereign right to make decisions to protect one's own interests. Integration with the European Communities was supposed to fit into the accomplishment of the four strategic goals of foreign policy, i.e.: maintain the policy and security in Europe, respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, establish a new regional policy and solve pressing economic problems of international impact (*Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*, 21/1979, pp. 1085–1087).

At the beginning of the 1980's, Spain's partners had very different opinions about possible dates for the state's accession to the EC. For example, the Prime Minister of Belgium declared on his visit to Spain that the country would accede the Communities before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1983. After several months, the President of France, Giscard d'Estaing, stated the enlargement would be "frozen" until the internal economic and institutional problems of the Communities were solved. Due to the scale of tension in Spanish-French relations, there was much pressure that Oreja be dismissed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, he retained his function until the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1980, when he was replaced by José Pedro Pérez Llorca (Armero, 1989, pp. 73–89; for more information on the entire process of Spain's accession to the European Communities, see

M. Mizerska-Wrotkowska, 2013, pp. 171–218.). The negotiations with the European Communities were taken over by the PSOE socialists after they won the elections in 1982.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, following Franco's death, Spain was in a difficult situation. It did not belong to any essential assembly and had to restore painstakingly its position in the international arena. Spanish policy evolved and the democratisation process required time. Therefore, it took Spain several years to regain the full confidence of its partners. Before any breakthrough changes could occur in the multilateral dimension, Spain needed to normalise its bilateral relations.

The democratic elections conducted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1977 in Spain was the breakthrough without which no accession to any important international organisation could ever happen. As the event clinched the state's democratisation, it paved the way for Spain to join the Council of Europe. The accession process for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was more complex. The Spanish political scene was divided in that matter and the contemporary Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelino Oreja, believed the action should gain the support and approval of citizens. Events such as the coup attempt of 1978 or ETA operations both delayed the accession to NATO and undermined Spain's credibility. But in 1982, some time before the PSOE assumed power, Spain acceded NATO.

Spain's accession to the European Communities was the longest process. It was subject not only to the state's democratisation progress but also to economic issues. The greatest resistance came from France, which feared competition in the farm produce market. However, a month after the democratic elections, Minister Oreja decided to submit the membership application. The ultimate positive final of the process occurred after nine years more.

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