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THE SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

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The participation of two new member states in the complex EPC machinery raises a number of questions that regard not only the substance, that is the future adoption of common stands at Twelve, but also the procedure: the adjustment of the newcomers to EPC's peculiar functioning. Concentrating on the procedural aspect, the analysis of the foreign policy decision-making procedures of the acceding countries can provide us with useful information on their future performance within the EPC framework. In both cases - Spain and Portugal- we are facing a relatively recent discipline; the transition from an authoritarian regime to a Parliamentary democracy requires a profound modification of the state's institutional and bureaucratic framework. The adjustment of the obsolete structures of the ancien régime and of its working habits to the new democratic situation is nevertheless a process that requires some time.

In Spain, this aspect appears to be most evident in the field of foreign policy where the inheritance of the dictatorship is deeply rooted in the bureaucratic structure and functioning of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. "The implications of Franco's tutelage over the shape and course of Spain's foreign policy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is worth stating. Once more the general governing system, for all that it enforced political stability on the nation as a whole, did not encourage the development of a regular ministerial responsibility in the foreign policy-making process. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained too much subject to the Caudillo's direct influence to evolve as an independent and authoritative agent in the policy-making process "(1). Though, during that period, the bureaucratic structure of the Foreign Ministry was subject to several rearrangements and amplifications of the ministerial machinery in order to respond to the growing complexity of international relations, the decision-making process remained within Franco's exclusive domain.

The end of the dictatorial regime and the establishment of a democratic political system in 1977 marked the beginning of a new era. During the second phase of the transitional period, from the first democratic elections in June 1977 until the approval of the Constitution in 1978, Spain was, however, undergoing a delicate period in an attempt to consolidate the emergent democratic system. The major political forces, aware of the dangers of a possible involution, were engaged in the effort of constructing a parliamentary monarchy and in obtaining Spain's international legitimation. In foreign policy, this effort was crystalized in a nation-wide consensus on the main foreign policy axes. At the same time, there was an attempt by the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Marcelino Oreja, to endow the Foreign Ministry with authentic influence in the policy-making process and thus assume a leading role in Spain's external relations (2). Internal struggles together with the final drafting of the constitutional text, which confers the conduct of domestic and foreign policies on the government as a whole (art. 97), frustrated this tendency.

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The clear parliamentary nature of the Spanish system, as set down in the Constitution seems, however, to have evolved towards a somewhat presidentialist pattern, as we will see in the present chapter. Conventional practice, personality of the leadership and working habits have gradually shaped the overall foreign policy decision-making process in Spain.

The present chapter will focus on several aspects: the institutional framework (review of the constitutional provisions), the role played by the different actors engaged in Spain's external action and patterns of policy formulation. A final section will deal with the Foreign Ministry, due to its central importance in handling EPC and EEC affairs. The new bureaucratic structures and coordination procedures set up to conduct Community affairs are of special interest as they can contribute to a better understanding of Spain's future performance both within European Political Cooperation and at Community level.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that so far the decision-making process has received scant attention in Spain. This attempt in dealing with the procedures of foreign policy-making is thus based on the information gathered from interviews with participants in the process: Ministry officials, members of parliament and representatives of political parties and other institutions whom we thank for their useful collaboration.

II. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK:

The foundations of the Spanish parliamentary monarchy are to be found in the 1978 Constitution that provides the general institutional framework of the new democratic system. The sources of the foreign policy decision-making procedures are therefore primarily institutional. Article 97 (Chapter IV) of the Constitution establishes that it is the government that conducts the foreign policy. International relations are entrusted to the exclusive competence of the central organs of the state (Article 149 paragraph 1.3). Furthermore the sharing of responsibilities regarding the external action of the state is articulated on a triangular basis:

- The King : as the organ of maximum representation.
- The government : as the organ in charge of direction and management.
- The Cortes : as the organ of control (3).

The so called Estado de las Autonomías

From the previous provisions we can easily infer that the conduct of foreign affairs are centralized competences, that exclude the direct participation of the regional authorities both from policy-making and from policy-execution. The constitutional drafters when shaping the future territorial organization of the Spanish state, had a series of choices ranging from: the establishment of a unitarian and centralized state to a conventional federal state. The Spanish reality, however, had its own peculiarities and a specific model was required. The formula adopted was the so-called Estado de

las Autonomias (State of Autonomies). Although we do not find a clear cut definition of this new pattern, the subsequent developments in implementing the State of Autonomies is, according to Jose Mario Armero, in certain fields growing closer to a confederation than to a federal system (4). This model foresees that certain competences are exclusively regional, while others are to be shared between the central government and the regional ones. However, competences in the field of foreign and defence policies and macroeconomic matters are expressly meant to be centralized. (Article 149 lists the fields of exclusive state competences). In many aspects the constitutional drafters followed the Italian pattern established in the 1947 Constitution, whereby the state is 'one and undividable' though recognizing the existence of local autonomies (Article 5 of the Italian Constitution). The autonomous regions have only domestic competences (Art.117 of the Italian Constitution) whereas the external competences are exclusively conferred to national organs. In the Spanish case, it is also clear that the regional authorities play no role in foreign policy matters. Although they have no direct participation in the decision-making process, they are nevertheless informed and let the central government know their views on specific issues that could affect their own regional interests. Moreover, the Statutes of Autonomy granted to the several autonomous regions include provisions concerning external relations, in particular for those matters that, being of their exclusive competence may have an external dimension and thus fall within the central government's sphere of action. The Catalan Statute, for instance, establishes (Article 27 paragraph 5) that the "Generalidad (the Catalan regional government) will be informed of the elaboration of treaties and agreements as well as on the drafting of customs union legislation, as long as they affect matters of its specific interest". Identical provisions can be found in the other Statutes of Autonomy, i.e., the Statute of the Basque country, Andalucia, Asturias, Murcia and the Statute of the Community of Madrid. In the case of the Canary Islands, the statute provision adds that 'once this information has been received, the governmental organ of the autonomous community will issue its opinion, if necessary'. There is therefore no transfer of competences, but simply the institutionalization of the regional participation in the domestic process of elaboration of treaties and other international agreements (5). This consultation process, for instance, was effectively put into practice during the accession negotiations with the EEC. In this respect, the Spanish model closely follows the German one, in which, although the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany entrusts the conduct of external relations to the federal government, it also foresees this process of consultation with the Laender, previous to concluding international treaties that could affect regional interests.

Within the regional framework, it is worth noting that the state's sovereign competence in foreign affairs may however clash with the external dimension of regional competences. This is to a large extent due to the lack of a specific set of regulations concerning the external dimension of the autonomous communities and of their respective authorities, which has lately given rise to conflicting situations. Such has been the case, for example, with the more than fifty trips abroad of regional authorities in the past two years. This 'autonomous' external activity of the regional presidents has caused serious problems of coordination to the Spanish diplomacy. The Foreign Affairs Ministry has called attention to the need of coordinating and exchanging information on the trips of representatives of the state outside Spain. Otherwise, these activities may jeopardize the credibility of the state's

external action and break the principle of 'unity of action' in foreign policy (6). The regional authorities, that so far have shown a tendency to ignore the instructions given by the Foreign Ministry and those issued by the executive organ of the Socialist Party, Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol (PSOE), - 12 of the 17 regional presidents are party members - has induced the government to rule this regional external activity by means of a decree. The central government regards as highly positive that the autonomous communities have a presence abroad but this activity must necessarily be coordinated through the Foreign Ministry.

The Role of Political Parties in the Formulation of Foreign Policy:

These conflicting competences, however, do not interfere in the conduct of Spain's major foreign policy issues. The exclusive governmental responsibility in decision-making and policy execution in this field is clear enough. Although political parties try to influence the decision-making process by parliamentary means, they do not formally claim a share in the decision-making structure. The legal framework clearly delimits the government's competences while it leaves a certain margin of flexibility to be fulfilled by habits and conventional practice. In any democratic system these habits and conventional practices acquire a relevant role in relation with international affairs. The nature of these issues imposes a peculiar relationship between the executive and the legislative that is gradually shaped by customs and previous behaviour (7). In Spain, the need to attain a stable political system on the one hand and the urge to obtain international recognition on the other, has induced the democratic governments to search for a consensus on foreign and defence policy matters. The definition of Spain's international role has required the unanimous support of Spanish political forces in order to acquire credibility and give continuity to Spain's external action. This 'consensus policy' was first put into practice by the center government of Adolfo Suarez, which obtained a broad consensus on Spain's main foreign policy axes (i.e. accession to the EEC, non-integration into NATO for the time being but contribution to Western defence by means of the existing bilateral agreements with the US and, therefore, maintenance of the American military bases in Spanish territory; the idea that Spain should not alter the international strategic equilibrium; Spain's Mediterranean and Latin American dimension; etc.). The possible participation of the political forces through parliament is, in any case, an exclusive governmental initiative. Furthermore, today there is general agreement on the grounds that foreign policy is increasingly becoming a state issue that thus requires the participation of the national political forces for major decisions. This practice is largely extended in the different democratic nations where the traditional role of control by the legislative power is gradually becoming active participation. In the British model, for instance, the participation of the political forces is not channelled through the parliamentary committees (they have less relevance as far as international affairs are concerned) but by the so-called 'behind the bench' consultation between the leaders of the parties in government and in opposition, or by the relationship - of both opposition and collaboration - between the secretary of the Foreign Office and his "shadow" colleague.

Patterns of behaviour in this context are strongly influenced by the composition of the government (i.e. majority governments, coalition governments or governments that enjoy a relative majority). Coalition governments are constrained to search for an agreement among the members of the coalition,

Therefore, although he has no participation in the decision-making process, he periodically exchanges views with the President of the government and with the Foreign Minister.

Furthermore, from a domestic point of view and although the King constitutionally does not play an active political role, his support is crucial for the government (apparently one of the causes of President Suarez's resignation in 1981 was that he no longer enjoyed the King's confidence). The present Socialist government and in particular President Gonzalez have successfully achieved an excellent relationship with King Juan Carlos, gaining his support and confidence.

The Cabinet and, at the top, the President

The government and, at its head, the President are entrusted with the basic responsibilities in the management of the governmental policies (Articles 97 and 98.2 of the Constitution). In the system established by the 1978 Constitution, the head of the executive does not have the status of a Prime Minister but that of a President. The peculiarity of the Spanish system derives from the fact that it is a parliamentary monarchy in which the King has a limited political role. The President of the government therefore becomes one of the highest political institutions of the state, concentrating greater powers than other presidents. Consequently, the constitutional responsibilities for the government's policies rest primarily with the President who assumes greater weight in the political management of the nation. Therefore, in case of disagreements between the President and his ministers the opinion of the former prevails and hence the choice is either to resign or to accept the policy lines fixed by the President.

Within this framework, foreign policy is formally carried out by the Minister of Foreign Affairs under the orders of the President of the government. The sharing of tasks as far as policy-making is concerned is, however, strongly influenced by personalities and political affinities. Though decisions are normally adopted by the Cabinet, there are changing patterns as far as policy-making is concerned. The relationship between the President and the Foreign Minister is a major factor underlying this process and will, to a certain extent, characterise the decision-making system at this level. This aspect will be further elaborated in the next section dealing specifically with the decision-making procedures. But coming back to the sharing of tasks in foreign affairs, there is another feature to be underlined: the active role performed by the different presidents in Spain's external relations (i.e. Adolfo Suarez during his terms of office and at present, Felipe Gonzalez). Their personal interest in this field has encouraged a concentration of decision-making power, whereby proposals and orientations of the basic guidelines of the government's foreign policy originate with the President.

The Parliament and its committees

The third pillar of the state's external action is represented by the Parliament, which exerts a function of control over the executive (Article 66.2 of the Constitution). The constitutional text foresees the contribution of the Chambers in foreign policy matters, articulated by means of its mandatory participation or authorisation in the formation of specific international acts, such as the declaration of war and peace settlements (Article 68.3) and for the

rendering more complex the decision-making process, whereas majority governments on the contrary enjoy, in theory, complete freedom of action. Since 1977, Spain has only experienced governments of relative and absolute majorities but still, the decision-making pattern has been somewhat different in each of them. President Suarez's 'progressive' foreign policy, for instance, was strongly contested by certain sectors of his party, Union de Centro Democratico (UCD) and was therefore compelled to search for an agreement among the different factions. The present Socialist government on the contrary enjoys not only an absolute majority in parliament, but its foreign and defence policy guidelines, despite the strong opposition shown by the left-wing sectors of the party in relation to the NATO issue, have obtained the support of the Socialist Party (PSOE). The government in office today, therefore, enjoys total autonomy in the decision-making process. Moreover, this is the first time that Spain has an absolute majority government, constituting a unique case in Spanish parliamentary history. The Socialist government has nonetheless respected the consensus habit in foreign and defence policies, a tradition that was broken previously when, in 1982, Calvo Sotelo's government decided on Spain's entry into NATO without the support of the major political forces of the opposition. The consequences of that unilateral decision have proved to what extent relative consensus is necessary in order to give continuity and reliability to Spain's external action.

MAIN ACTORS OF THE STATE'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

As mentioned in the previous section, the Constitution establishes a clear-cut division of competences between the three main actors of Spain's external relations: The King, the central government and the Parliament.

The King

Article 56.1 of the 1978 Constitution provides a definition of the King's role in this field: "The King holds the highest representation of the state in international relations". The formula of using the concept of 'highest' means that this representation, though assigned to the Chief of State, may occasionally be held by other organs (8). From the constitutional provisions we therefore infer that the King does not participate in the formulation of foreign policy, but simply performs as a useful instrument contributing to Spain's external image. He, in fact, lacks individual initiative as his trips and speeches abroad are part of the general foreign policy strategy elaborated by the government. However, the King's performance in domestic affairs, and in particular, his decisive contribution during the initial stages of the democratic transition in obtaining international support for the new democratic regime, have considerably increased his weight at a factic political level. The King's personal and institutional prestige, both internally and externally, are an essential factor in his role in international affairs. It is interesting to underline that the King is especially useful in the relations with other monarchies (i.e. Morocco - of major importance for Spain, Jordan etc.) that formally prefer to deal with the King rather than with the head of government.

conclusion and abrogation of certain types of international treaties (Articles 93, 94 and 96.2), in other words, whenever an international treaty or agreement implies the commitment of the nation.

This narrow scope of parliamentary action is further limited by the internal regulations of the Chamber of Deputies (Article 156) and the senate (Article 144) respectively. According to these internal rules, the texts of treaties and/or agreements cannot be modified. The Chambers may only request their non-ratification, postponement or reserve. Article 144 of the senate's internal regulation also foresees the possibility of requesting from the Constitutional Court a declaration on the constitutionality of the treaty or agreement submitted (9). The Parliament, however, can also use other "political" means of control to check the foreign policy carried out by the executive. These political instruments are, for instance: motions formulating proposals of resolution, interpellations regarding the performance of the executive, debates on governmental projects, investigation committees, informative sessions attended by the Foreign Affairs Minister or other authorities and/or public functionaries involved in the topic under discussion (Article 44 of the internal regulation of the Chamber of Deputies). Through these means of control, the Parliament can politically urge the government to follow one or another direction in the management of foreign policy and is supplied with valuable information on the performance of the executive (10). This activity is mainly carried out by the Foreign Affairs Committees of both chambers. These committees are integrated by representatives of the different parliamentary groups, allowing for the direct participation of the political parties at this level. Furthermore, the Parliament can also give an important contribution in the shaping of foreign policy, as mentioned previously, when the nature of the issues requires a broad consensus among the parliamentary political forces and the government brings the matter up for discussion in Parliament (i.e. NATO and EEC issues). For obvious reasons, with an absolute majority government, the role of the Parliament is less relevant as far as the shaping of the foreign policy is concerned. However, the consideration that Spain's international role must be beyond political alternatives is gradually encouraging the convergence of the executive and the legislative powers in the definition of the major foreign policy axes.

Other institutional forces and non-governmental institutions

From the previous analysis we may conclude that foreign affairs are formally the exclusive domain of the central government, though gradually evolving towards a larger participation of the Parliament. Other institutional forces and interest groups are therefore in principle excluded from this field. Such is the case of the armed forces, that institutionally play no role in foreign matters. In practice, however, when dealing with issues that directly involve the armed forces, it is in the government's interest to establish consultation procedures so as to keep friction at the lowest level possible (e.g. in relation to the NATO issue).

On the other hand, the absence of institutionalized lobby activity certainly limits, in practice, the sphere of action of non-governmental institutions such as trade-unions and entrepreneur organizations. Their influence, if any, is in any case channelled through unofficial consultation mechanisms or informal contacts with governmental leaders. This happened, for example, during the accession negotiations with the EEC. The wide scope of matters under discussion advised consultations with social sectors that would

be greatly affected by their outcome. The exchange of views was nonetheless carried out by the ministerial departments responsible for the different areas rather than by the Foreign Affairs Ministry. For example, the Confederacion Espanola de Organizaciones Empresariales (CEOE) the largest entrepreneur organization, developed an intense bargaining activity with the ministries that were drafting the package-deals to submit to the EEC. Trade unions, the Socialist Union general De Trabajadores (UGT) and the Communist Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) welcomed favourably the fluid consultation and exchange of information that took place with the administration on the occasion of the EC negotiations. Otherwise (note that the enlargement issue has been an exceptional case), interest groups have to address their claims concerning foreign matters to parliamentary representatives.

DEFINITION AND EXECUTION OF THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS

A presidentialist system?

The central government's exclusive competence in foreign affairs is beyond doubt, but how are the tasks shared at government level? What are the rules, if any, of the decision-making procedure? What kind of coordination/cooperation mechanisms exists between the different ministries? Competences in policy-making seem somehow blurred. The rules of the decision-making process do not appear to be very distinct in the initial phase, as there is no clear-cut division of competences between the President and the Foreign Minister. In the Spanish case, responsibilities for governmental action fall upon the President, whereas each minister takes the responsibility for the execution of his respective policy. Not so in the German system where the Chancellor only has the 'Richtlinienkompetenz', i.e. the right to give global directives, while each minister assumes the responsibility for his policy (11).

The leading role played by the actual President of government in foreign affairs is characterised first of all by the constitutional framework, but also, and not less important, by the leadership feature of Gonzalez's policy - both in relation to the nation and within the Socialist Party - and to his personal interest in this field. Similar attitudes can also be attributed to the former president, Adolfo Suarez. In both cases, their strong personalities and determined initiatives in foreign affairs have had paramount influence in the decision-making mechanism. The President's direct control over foreign affairs is mainly carried out through his personal staff, composed of a limited number of experienced diplomats (four or five) who enjoy Gonzalez's absolute confidence. Coordination between the presidency and the Foreign Ministry is therefore handled through permanent contacts with the President's staff. Its influence on the decision-making process is of great importance due to its direct contact with the President, constituting one of the basic elements of this process.

Foreign policy initiatives are jointly discussed by the President and the Foreign Minister, who then present their proposals to the Council, organ that formally adopts the decisions. A key aspect in this process is hence the relationship between the President and the Foreign Minister, their political

affinities and the political weight of the latter within the Cabinet (and also in the party). In general terms, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is in charge of the projection and execution of the foreign policy under the orders of the government. His competences in foreign policy management were further defined in a Royal Decree (No. 629/83) of 16 February 1983 whereby "It corresponds to the Foreign Minister, in agreement with the directives of the government and with the principle of unity of external action, the task of promoting, projecting, directing and executing the state's Foreign Policy". In other words, his role can be defined as that of policy information and policy execution, being in charge of carrying out the foreign policy that has been collectively decided by the Cabinet. Within this context, his status is therefore of maximum responsibility, enjoying a certain margin of manoeuvre in the handling of the external action.

Coordination Procedures

The decision-making procedure may thus be divided into several phases. The initial stage is characterised by the formulation of the general foreign policy strategy that is jointly discussed by the President and the Foreign Minister. This task is carried out through both formal and informal contacts (a meeting is held at least once a week between the President and the Minister and other contacts are extremely frequent) where foreign policy developments are thoroughly discussed and the policy line to be followed is decided.

In a next stage these proposals are brought up within the Council of Ministers, that formally adopts the resolutions concerning governmental policy. Conflicting issues often give rise to divergent opinions, but tensions within the Cabinet are kept at a low level due to the President's solid leadership and to the homogeneous nature of the present government. Consensus on governmental policies is normally attained in this framework, yet in case of persistent disagreement, it is the President who decides.

The Cabinet, functions not only as a consensus-builder for conflicting issues, but is also an essential pillar of the inter-governmental coordination mechanism. The complex nature of foreign affairs, with interests spilling over into other governmental areas (i.e. economic, defence and security policy etc.), requires the participation of other ministerial departments that do not always share the same views as the Foreign Ministry.

The Cabinet's role in providing overall coordination and cooperation between the different ministerial departments, giving unity and coherence to Spain's international action, is hence of great importance. The lack of an efficient structure to coordinate Spain's external action (i.e. Spain's international cooperation was handled by several ministries with a somewhat chaotic outcome due to lack of coordination) was one of the major problems to be tackled by the administration and the one that most urgently called for profound reform. This has been achieved recently with the restructuring of the Foreign Ministry (undertaken in July 1985), which has now taken the lead in the coordination of Spain's international cooperation.

The formal mechanism of inter-governmental coordination is, therefore, provided above all by the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers. This meeting has a 'decisional' character, although other meetings may be held only for deliberation. The next level of coordination is handled by the Commission

of Under-secretaries. This Commission that holds meetings once a week is in charge of preparing the agenda of the Council and deciding on matters that do not need the intervention of the Cabinet. At another level, we find the delegate commissions of the government, whose role is that of coordinating the actions of the different ministries in specific areas. These commissions, that are composed of the ministers involved in the topics under discussion, have as a main task that of trying to bring together divergent views and jointly prepare the dossiers which will later be discussed by the Council. Finally, there are the so-called "inter-ministerial" commissions that are similar to the former ones but have a permanent character. They normally deal with overlapping issues that affect several ministries and try to achieve a certain coordination. Occasionally, the coordination between the different ministries is handled by the President himself (e.g. the fisheries issue with Morocco, the gas issue with Algeria and to a certain extent the EC negotiations).

Network of informal contacts and consultation mechanisms

Regardless of the government's majority in Parliament, in practice foreign and defence policy matters, in other words, Spain's role in international affairs, is generally submitted to the parliamentary political forces to attain the largest support possible in favour of the government's initiatives in these fields. Such was the case with the so-called 'Decalogue' presented by President Gonzalez to the Parliament in October 1984, that intended to obtain a broad consensus on Spain's future defence policy within the more general context of Spain's external role. The search for consensus introduces a new element of informal mechanisms into the decision-making structure. Within this context the network of informal and/or confidential contacts and consultations are a useful instrument. Confidential contacts are only held between the President and the leader of the opposition party, who is generally informed of the government's initiatives. Otherwise, the government, and in particular the Foreign Minister, provides detailed information to the Parliament about what has already been decided and executed. Only under special circumstances does the government announce beforehand what is going to be done in relation to a specific issue (i.e. the political forces were informed in advance of the government's decision to re-establish diplomatic relations with Guatemala).

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

Joining European Political Cooperation constitutes a serious challenge for Spanish diplomacy. The so-called 'coordination reflex' requires an adequate structure capable of handling the information and consultation mechanisms inherent to the EPC machinery. Moreover, the rigid bureaucratic structure inherited from the Francoist regime could no longer handle Spain's new international commitments. An organic reform of the Foreign Affairs Ministry was, therefore, one of the most urgent tasks the Spanish administration had to face in order to adapt to existing international requirements.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the Foreign Ministry has traditionally been one of the ministries with lower budgetary assignments.

Although this tendency has not been reversed, the increasing amounts granted to the Foreign Ministry in the past years seem to reflect its growing importance (12). These limited resources have forced Spanish diplomacy to keep the numbers of diplomatic staff unaltered, which throughout the past ten years have ranged from 650 to 700 members. Of these 700 diplomats, around 150 are at the Foreign Ministry in Madrid while the others are scattered in the 150 embassies Spain has around the world (in almost every country with the exception of Taiwan and North Korea) (13). The lack of diplomatic staff has nonetheless been supplemented by public officials (e.g. the commercial attachés are normally high ranking civil servants) that represent approximately 50 per cent of the total staff in the different embassies. Due to its limited budget, Spain's enlarged network of external relations certainly required, at least a modernized structure.

The main goals of the internal restructuring were, therefore, to adapt the bureaucratic structure to Spain's growing international role, improve the extremely cumbersome and deficient coordination mechanisms - not only within the ministry but especially with other ministries dealing with Spain's external dimension - and set up an adequate structure to deal with and coordinate Community affairs.

On 28 August 1985 the main guidelines of the Foreign Ministry's new functional structure were set down in the Royal Decree No. 1485/1985. This reform introduced three major innovations: a) an enlarged state secretary for the European Communities (secretaria de Estado para las Comunidades Europeas); b) the creation of a state secretary for International Cooperation and Latin America (secretaria de Estado para la Cooperación Internacional y para Iberoamérica) and c) the nomination of a general Political secretary. The new administrative structure replaces the previous one that was based on a three-fold criteria:.

- The politico-geographic general directorates, divided into four geographic areas: Europe, North America and the Pacific, Africa and Continental Asia and Latin America.

- The functional directorates that covered three fields: cultural affairs, economic affairs and international technical cooperation.

- The general directorates dealing specifically with external action: consular matters, international organizations and conferences and a directorate in charge of security and defence matters. Finally, dependent on the Foreign Ministry was the State Secretary for the Relations with the European Community (Secretaria de Estado para las Relaciones con La Comunidad Europea), the organ in charge of coordinating and carrying out the accession negotiations.

Network of coordination mechanisms for Community policies

The existing State Secretary for the Relations with the European Communities, now called state secretary for the European Communities, will continue to lead Community affairs. The greater responsibilities assigned to this organ, which is in charge of coordinating the activities of the Spanish administration on Community matters - and has therefore changed from a negotiative organ into one of management - consequently required an enlarged bureaucratic structure. The secretary of state will henceforth be assisted by a general secretary and two general directorates: General Directorate for Technical Cooperation (in charge of the Community's sectorial policies) and a general Directorate for Juridical and Institutional

Coordination. Furthermore, separate sections dependent on each general directorate will deal with specific policy areas (i.e. agriculture and fisheries, economic, financial and social matters, institutional aspects, etc.).

The allocation of the new state secretary for the European Communities within the Foreign Ministry, confirms the leading responsibility conferred to this ministry in the management of Community affairs. In the past, the existence of a specific ministry to deal with Community matters proved to be highly conflictual and was therefore discarded. In some ways, the choice adopted by the Spanish administration seems to follow the same criteria as those adopted by other member states (i.e. Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) that have made their respective foreign ministries the central coordinators of EC policy.

The second priority of the Spanish administration was that of setting up - at domestic level - an efficient coordination mechanism to cope with Community affairs. Together with the state secretary for the European Communities, the organ formally in charge of handling Community matters, a Royal Decree of 2 September 1985 (No 1567/1985) created an Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Affairs related to the EC (Comite Interministerial para Asuntos Economicos relacionados con la CEE). This committee aims at creating a fluid coordination and decision-making procedure within the whole range of the Community working groups. It will replace the so-called 'task force' (technical team in charge of the accession negotiations) and its role will be that of coordinating the activities of the administration in the field of economic matters related to the EEC, centralizing information on decisions affecting Community matters adopted by the different ministerial departments and, in general, handling daily Community issues. For this purpose, the committee is entrusted with decision-making capacity, though limited to those matters that do not require the intervention of the government's Delegate Commission for Economic Affairs (Comision Delegada del gobierno para Asuntos Economicos). To enable efficient coordination between the different organs dealing with Community affairs, this committee is chaired by the state secretary for the EC and is composed of representatives of the different ministries: finance, commerce, industry, employment, agriculture (that exceptionally has two members: one for agriculture and another for fisheries) and a representative of the presidency.

Finally, a subsequent decree (No. 1568/1985 of 2 september) enlarged the scope of activities of the abovementioned Delegate Commission for Economic Affairs, to include Community matters. The decree also foresees the participation of the Foreign Minister and the State Secretary for the EC in those cases in which the matters to be discussed upon by the delegate commission are related to Community affairs.

At ministerial level, and in order to activate the decision-making mechanism, each ministry will set up an internal coordination committee for EC matters.

Coordination of international cooperation

The second major innovation of the recent organic restructuring has been the creation of a State Secretary for International Cooperation and Latin America. This new organ aims at solving the serious problem that so far existed of the lack of coordination in the management of Spain's international cooperation policy, scattered among various ministerial departments. This State

Secretary will henceforth coordinate Spain's overall international cooperation both at the international and regional level, giving special emphasis to the relations with Latin America. Coordination will be managed by three general directorates: one for cultural relations, one for international technical cooperation and a third one in charge of international economic relations. Finally, the State Secretary will also supervise the specific organs dealing with regional and bilateral cooperation: the Cooperation Bureau for Equatorial Guinea (Oficina de cooperacion con guinea Ecuatorial) the Latin American Cooperation Institute (Instituto de Cooperacion Iberoamericana) and the Spanish-Arab Cultural Institute (Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura).

So far, the new organic structure of the Foreign Ministry, with the above-mentioned State Secretaries as main pillars of its future functioning, clearly reflects Spain's foreign policy priorities: Europe and Latin America (and to a lesser extent the Arab world).

EPC management: a positive balance

Thirdly, but most important in view of Spain's participation in the EPC framework, is the creation of a General Secretary for Foreign Policy chaired by the so-called Secretario General Politico (General Political Secretary with the functions of a political director). It should be remembered that in the previous administrative structure no post of political director existed which raised the problem of Spain's participation at the political director's level. Although during the first EPC meetings the General Director for Europe was the Spanish official who attended the political director's meetings, it was soon clear that this choice would raise a number of problems. In the first place, the equal status enjoyed by the other regional Directors General would, as a consequence, render the decision-making and coordination procedures extremely difficult (note in this respect that in the Spanish administrative hierarchy the regional departments are chaired by higher ranking officials - General Directors- than in other European countries). In the second place the general Director for Europe only deals with European affairs and thus lacks the necessary information to cope with the vast range of EPC matters. These considerations, therefore, advised the nomination of a higher ranking official, a General Political Secretary, that enjoys the status of a somewhat 'super' General Director, and whose task is that of coordinating the regional and specialised general Directorates directly dependent on him. According to the new distribution, the regional departments are the following: General Directorates for Europe, Latin America, North America and Asia, Africa and the Middle-East, International Organizations and Conferences and general Directorate for Security matters and Disarmament.

In practice, however, the new general Political Secretary has in fact assumed a double role: first, that of General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry and, secondly, that of Political Director. The great responsibilities inherent in each of these distinct functions would consequently advise to divide these roles in the future, creating a specific post of Political Director whose exclusive competence would be, as in other member states, that of coordinating the different geographic general directorates and the supervision of EPC matters.

Subordinate to the general Political Secretary (or Political Director) a specific organ has been created to handle EPC affairs: the Deputy-General Directorate for European Political Cooperation. The European correspondent has, therefore, the rank of a Deputy-General Director and is assisted by a staff composed of two diplomats and four members of the administrative body who are carefully selected on the basis of reliability and good knowledge of languages.

According to ministry officials, from an organizational point of view, the recent experience has proved to be very satisfactory. A fluid coordination mechanism has been set up between the European correspondent and the different regional directors by means of daily meetings. In the course of these meetings the ministry's high ranking officials are informed of important dossiers and major decisions concerning Spain's performance are taken. These guidelines are, in a second stage, passed over to the respective general directorates directly involved in the decisions adopted, that in turn are in charge of drafting the official position. Finally, the definitive draft is returned to the European correspondent who is in charge of execution. Consultation with the Political Director regarding daily matters only takes place if the issue is considered of major importance. The same applies to the relations with the presidency, limiting consultation procedures with the President's staff for issues of special relevance. This is not so for daily EPC matters; although the President's staff does not perform a leading role in daily EPC affairs, coordination mechanisms work efficiently, keeping up a constant flow of information. On the other hand, this strict collaboration and exchange of information between the Foreign Ministry and the presidency is of crucial importance for the resolution of delicate issues, when the President, in fact, takes over the leading role (e.g. as happened during the recent crisis with Libya) and in view of the European Council.

From a practical point of view, Spain's participation in EPC has also produced positive results. In the first place, Spain's participation in EPC's 23 working groups, by means of the respective Deputy General Directors of the different geographic areas, has been defined by the Spanish European-correspondant as "natural". In other words, Spain's inclusion in EPC has surmounted the initial obstacles of the adaptation process and has entered a phase of active participation. This can be seen by the number of "coreus" sent by Spain in the first semester of 1986, reaching the third position after great Britain and Luxembourg which was then holding the presidency. Yet, so far Spain's participation in EPC has been considered by the Spanish officials as somewhat "defensive" rather than "offensive". During the initial stage the main objective of the Spanish officials has been, and still is, that of trying to influence those issues that according to Spanish views and perceptions require a more balanced approach (i.e. the Central American crisis, the Palestinian question, south Africa and to a lesser extent East/West relations). In future stages, however, Spanish officials expect to be in a position to contribute in a more active way, that is, to be able to put forward proposals and thus actively contribute to the future shaping of EPC.

The initial restructuring carried out in the Foreign Affairs Ministry is simply the first step of a vast reform of Spain's foreign service. Together with these administrative reforms that aim at rationalizing the Foreign Ministry by endowing it with an efficient structure, further changes are still to be introduced. Among the top priorities, we can mention the new role to be assigned to ambassadors who in the future will assume greater responsibilities and will be in charge of the coordination of all services abroad; the improvement of the communications system among the different embassies enabling an information flow on Community resolutions and an agile decision-making procedure that will allow for quick responses; and, in the third place, the project to reform the diplomatic school, that will limit its activities not only to education of the future diplomatic staff but will also provide constant training for personnel abroad.

CONCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS

EPC membership has not only triggered the urgent need to carry out major reforms within the Foreign Ministry's bureaucratic apparatus but has also stimulated Spain's decisive will to actively contribute to the management of a common European approach to world affairs.

The challenge of integrating into such an ad hoc mechanism has been faced by the Spanish administration with courage. The not so easy task of carrying out a vast bureaucratic reform has already been initiated and has so far produced satisfactory results. The process of change, however, given the experience of other member states, seems to be endless. The need to set up an adequate infrastructure to deal with Community affairs in general, and EPC in particular, is still the object of ministerial rearrangements in other member countries (Italy, for instance, recently attempted a new reform of its Foreign Ministry in a constant search for improved coordination and decision-making capabilities). Yet, though comparative experience is of great help, domestic constraints require specific solutions. The Spanish institutional system provides the general framework and it is only in accordance with the latter that reforms may be introduced. In other words, Spain's presidentialist tendency in foreign affairs implies, on the one hand, a more limited role for the Foreign Ministry, and on the other, the setting up of fluid coordination and information mechanisms to allow for efficient participation of Spanish officials in EPC. Recent experience has shown, however, that as far as EPC is concerned these mechanisms seem to be working satisfactorily.

But, if in some ways the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of the President could raise practical problems, in others, this feature is in perfect accordance with recent international trends. Today, the dynamics of the international system is gradually shaping new decision-making patterns, conferring greater powers to the heads of state and government, regardless of their institutional competences. The extended habit of coordinating major foreign policy matters by means of the direct participation of the heads of state and government - the European Council being a good example of this tendency - has consequently given way to serious conflicts of competences within the respective national political spheres. In Italy, for instance, this issue created considerable tension between the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs who, in fact, is responsible for the nation's foreign policy. The consolidation of this new habit in the management of world affairs would inevitably lead to major institutional reforms in order to grant greater powers to those heads of government that so far have had limited competences regarding foreign affairs. It is not so in the Spanish system, where the President already assumes the responsibility for overall governmental action.

In Spain, however, the existing habit of "consensus policy" in foreign affairs could be slightly modified in the future. The main reason for this is that the definition of Spain's major foreign policy axes, in other words its role in world affairs, has already been achieved (i.e. membership in the EC and NATO, its Mediterranean dimension and the special ties with Latin America). This will consequently induce a more autonomous governmental management of current foreign affairs issues. Consultation mechanisms with the major opposition forces will remain but probably be limited to those matters of major relevance for Spain's international stand. Furthermore, Spain's participation in EPC will reinforce this trend as decision-making procedures at this level require quick responses.

On the whole, it may be said that Spain's participation in EPC does not seem to pose major problems either in relation with procedure, or with substance. The Spanish diplomacy has shown its willingness firstly in assuming an active role and secondly in being ready to share responsibilities regarding Europe's role in world affairs. The effort made by Madrid in adopting the existing acquis politique (i.e. the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel was a clear sign of this effort) and its readiness in searching for common stands during the recent crisis can therefore be considered a good start.

FOOTNOTES-

- 1) SMYTH, Denis: "Spain's first Secretariat of State, Ministry of State and Ministry of Foreign Affairs", in Zara steiner (ed). The Times survey of Foreign Ministries of the World. London (Times Books) 1984, (p.442).
- 2) SMYTH, Denis: "Spain's first secretariat of state..." op. cit. (p.444).
- 3) REMIRO BROTONS, Antonio: in "La Accion Exterior del Estado", Temas clave de la Constitucion Espanola. Tecnos, Madrid 1984. (pag. 73).
- 4) ARMERO, Jose Mario: in "Autonomia y Politica Exterior", edited by the INCI, Madrid 1983, (p.9).
- 5) ARMERO, Jose Mario: for further information on the External Dimension of the Regional Communities, see "Autonomia y Politica Exterior", op. cit.
- 6) Declarations of Fernando Perpina, former Technical general secretary of the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry, to "El Pais", 7 April 1985, p.17.
- 7) MORAN, Fernando: in "Una Politica Exterior Para Espana", Barcelona 1982, (p. 49).
- 8) REMIRO BROTONS, Antonio: in "La Accion Exterior..." op. cit. (p.75).
- 9) ARMERO, Jose Mario: in "Autonomias y Politica...." op. cit. (p.47).
- 10) REMIRO BROTONS, Antonio: in "La Accion Exterior..." op. cit. (p.83).
- 11) REGELSBERGER, Elfriede and WESSELS, Wolfgang, National Paper on the Federal Republic of Germany in "The Presidency of the European Council of Ministers", Ed. Colm O Nuallain, Croom Helm, London 1985 (p. 76).
- 12) In 1980 the total amount assigned to the foreign ministry was of 12.024.0 million pesetas and in 1985 it accounted for 41.362.891.000 ptas.(representing approximately around 0.45% of the total budget).
- 13) Of the total of 150 Spanish embassies, 95 have a resident ambassador and 55 have a non-resident one.