

Presentation of the project ‘Spain and the European integration process’

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Introduction

The research and innovation project ‘Spain and the European integration process’ looks at the historical relationship between Spain and Europe in a broad sense, taking into account the relations of Spain’s various institutional, socio-economic and cultural players with the European Communities — today the European Union — and their interactions with other European organisations, and adopting a chronological approach from the end of the Second World War to the present day. The project is essentially the study of a reciprocal exchange; it focuses firstly on Spain’s contribution to the European integration process in terms of ideas, principles and initiatives, and secondly on the impact of the European integration process on Spain, with regard to the development of its political culture, the reactions to various proposals and decisions, and the social repercussions of this integration process for European citizenship.

One of the main objectives of the project is the publication of a multimedia thematic collection in our European NAVigator digital library (www.ena.lu), including relevant, varied and often previously unpublished documentation, in several languages and from a wide range of archives, as well as sources created by the research team.

Fruitful academic cooperation

Since the launch of the project, the innovative nature of our initiative was enriched by academic and educational contributions resulting from our fruitful cooperation with the Contemporary History Department of the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), in particular Professor Antonio Moreno Juste.

The Research Group on the History of International Relations (GHistRI) worked closely with the CVCE research team and contributed a series of highly valuable academic texts which will serve to contextualise the corpus of documents compiled for the project. This cooperation also includes the joint organisation of educational and academic activities, fulfilling the key aim of developing new teaching tools and instruments suitable for the requirements of the European Higher Education Area and new strategies for student learning.

We would like to highlight the effective coordination, generosity and personal commitment of Professors Juan Carlos Pereira, Antonio Moreno Juste, Carlos Sanz, José Luis Neila and Gustavo Palomares, supported by a team of researchers including Juan Manuel Fernández, Ana Gonzales, Carlos López, Vanessa Núñez and Francisco José Rodrigo, who provided academic and documentary contributions of the highest quality.

Oral memory of European integration

Since it was established, the CVCE has developed an oral history project based on a collection of historical accounts relating to Europe’s heritage which reveal the wealth of historical, political, social and cultural interactions in the European integration process. In connection with this initiative, several Spanish figures generously agreed to share their memories and thoughts on the history of the relationship between Spain and Europe, and in so doing greatly enhanced the academic value of the project.

We would like to thank those who have been interviewed thus far — Carlos María Bru Purón, José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, Manuel Marín González, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre and Jordi Pujol i Soley — for having shared their experiences and ideas on the European integration process. It was a great honour for us to be able to count on their cooperation and to record the experiences of lives devoted to fulfilling the hopes of the European project in Spain.

A wide range of sources

The documentary collection combines official sources with documents from Spanish and international archives, including institutional texts, academic contributions, graphs and statistics, press articles,

photographs, cartoons, videos, interactive maps and diagrams, and a selected bibliography.

Documentary research was conducted in several European countries for this project, often making it possible to re-establish links and correlations between documents kept in geographically distant locations. The research focused on sources that represent the various aspects of historical analysis on as many levels as possible, offering opposing and complementary viewpoints and encompassing all the document types enumerated above. More specifically, documents were selected from the Archives of the Council of the European Union and of the European Commission in Brussels, the Archives of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence, the European Parliament Information Office in Madrid, the European Commission Representation in Madrid, the General Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (AGMAEC) in Madrid, the Documentation Centre and Library of the State Secretariat for European Union in Madrid, the Archives of the Congress of Deputies in Madrid, and the General Archive of the Administration (AGA) in Alcalá de Henares.

Throughout this process, we were grateful for the advice and assistance of the experts working at these archives and documentation centres who helped us to structure the project and establish priorities for its gradual achievement. We would especially like to mention the quality of the support provided by Alfonso Dávila, Director of the AGA, and his colleagues Juan José Villar et Daniel Gonzalbo, as well as all those who helped make the research process a pleasant experience. Our particular thanks go to the Deputy Director of the State Archives of the Ministry of Culture.

We would also like to thank the Director of the Documentation Centre and Library of the State Secretariat for European Union, Isabel Herrero-Botas, Flores Pallardó and Pilar Real, for their commitment to our project, their advice, their considerable documentary contribution and the pleasure of working alongside them. We are also grateful to Pilar Casado, Head of the AGMAEC room, for his continued support, his systematic cooperation during the documentary selection process and his kindness at all times. Our particular thanks go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

We thank Maria Rosario Martínez-Cañavate and all the staff at the Archives of the Congress of Deputies who gave us such effective guidance in identifying and processing relevant sources.

Finally, we would particularly like to thank the Director of the European Parliament Information Office in Spain, Ignacio Samper, for his documentary contribution and the interview that he granted us, as well as the Director of the European Commission Representation in Spain, Francisco Fonseca, for his oral account on the theme of this project.

A project under constant development

The project on 'Spain and the European integration process', which will be progressively developed and will reach its culmination in 2011, is due to include a series of academic activities and communication events for a wide range of audiences. The project's launch, which coincides with the current Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, will lay the foundations for fruitful cooperation with academic, cultural and research institutions that are keen to contribute to the creation and dissemination of sources on Spain's role in the European integration process and the interactive and dynamic nature of Europe's common history.

In conclusion, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Ambassador-Director of the Diplomatic School, José Antonio Martínez de Villareal, and the Rector of the Complutense University of Madrid, Carlos Berzosa, for their precious contribution, and particularly to Ambassador Carlos Carnero and Ambassador Jean Welter for their involvement and continued support.

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