

ASSEMBLY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

TWENTY-THIRD ORDINARY SESSION

(First Part)

Western Europe's policy towards Mediterranean problems
The Western Mediterranean

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the General Affairs Committee
by Mr. Mendelson, Rapporteur

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the Western Mediterranean**

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1. Adopted unanimously by the Committee.

2. *Members of the Committee* : Mrs. von Bothmer (Chairman); Sir John Rodgers (Alternate : Channon), Mr. Sarti (Vice-Chairmen); MM. Abens, Amrehn, Ariosto, Beith (Alternate : McNamara), Sir Frederic Bennett, MM. Brugnon (Alternate : Forvi), Cormolacce, Faulds, Gessner, Mrs. Godinache-Lambert, MM. Gonella (Alternate :

Roberti), Grangier, von Hassel, Leynen, Mende, Minnocci (Alternate : Treu), Nessler, de Niet, Peijnenburg, Péridier, Porthoine (Alternate : Voogd), Segre, Urwin, Van Hoeylandt.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation

on Western Europe's policy towards Mediterranean problems — the Western Mediterranean

The Assembly,

Having surveyed the present political situation in Spain ;

Noting the decision of the Spanish Government to hold elections in June 1977 ;

Recognising the important constitutional and political changes which have occurred in Spain during the last sixteen months ;

Welcoming the moves towards a more liberal system of government which have taken place since the death of General Franco, in particular the legalisation of political parties and of free and independent trade unions ;

Recognising the important advances made in the new preliminary constitution of Spain, and expressing the hope that after free and completely unfettered elections Spain will proceed on its way towards a full system of parliamentary democracy,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

Give every encouragement and assistance to Spain, looking forward to the day when the new Spain can be welcomed in the various joint parliamentary and democratic European organisations.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mr. Mendelson, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Your Rapporteur visited Spain from 9th to 14th January 1977 to examine future possibilities of co-operation between Spain and Western Europe, this being an essential part of European policy in the Western Mediterranean in view of Spain's importance and its place at the western limits of the Mediterranean. Spain's internal situation has so far prevented it from taking part in the Council of Europe, the European Economic Community and NATO because the members of these organisations expect countries wishing to join to be governed by a democratic parliamentary system.

2. The death of General Franco, after more than thirty-five years of dictatorship in Spain, left the way open for new developments. The choice before the people of Spain was between "rupture with the old régime and reform from within".

3. In the long run, the action of the countries of Western Europe will depend above all on these developments and their opinion of them, since the main lines of Spain's foreign policy seem but little affected by the changes now taking place.

II. Basic facts

4. General Franco died on 20th November 1975 after appointing a member of the former Spanish royal family, Prince Juan Carlos, as his successor. This was not a full restoration of the monarchy insofar as Prince Juan Carlos was not the first successor to the Crown but became King by the will of the dictator, Franco, and not by right of primogeniture. The present régime in Spain is thus still the one instituted after the civil war and the system established by the Franco dictatorship will remain in force until another takes its place.

5. It is quite certain however that King Juan Carlos wishes to introduce important political changes in Spain and the country is now passing through a period of transition. But the outcome of this transition is still uncertain: will it merely be a more liberal edition of the Franco régime or will the State be reorganised on a new and truly democratic basis? The trend so far is towards liberalisation without as yet any decisive measure indicating a radical change in the régime. If there were to be a radical change, the transitional period would be a long one.

6. It should be noted however that present conditions in Spain are no longer those in which

General Franco was able to overcome democratic forces thanks to a military uprising. More than 60 % of the Spanish population today is less than forty years old and has therefore known no other régime than that of Franco. But the civil war left deep scars and the population as a whole is mainly concerned with avoiding any recurrence of such hostilities.

7. Spain's economy has made rapid progress in the last ten years. It has had one of the highest growth rates in Europe. There has been a flow of population from the countryside towards the towns, reducing the percentage of those employed in agriculture to less than 25 % of the population. Education has been improved and illiteracy has been considerably reduced. The development of tourism has increased contacts with people from other parts of Western Europe which is that part of Europe to which Spain has traditionally belonged. The standard of living has risen and the gross national product per inhabitant is now over \$2,000, which is bringing it close to the least favoured of the EEC member countries and it had an annual growth rate of over 7 % from 1968 to 1974. The way of life, interests and civilisation are increasingly similar to those of other western countries.

8. There are therefore no longer any fundamental obstacles to that country's participation in all the joint activities of the Western European countries, whether in economic matters or in terms of civilisation. The remaining difficulties are mainly political, although many delicate problems may arise for the integration of certain sectors of the Spanish economy in the overall economy of the community.

III. The economic position

9. Although Spain's economic progress has been particularly remarkable in recent years, General Franco died at a particularly difficult time for preparing a new course for Spain.

10. In 1976, Spain began to feel the crisis which had been affecting the industrialised countries of Western Europe since 1973. This delay is explained by the special characteristics of the Spanish economy, there being a sharp recession in tourism, a major factor in the Spanish balance of payments and employment.

11. The peseta suffered from rampant inflation as testified by a tremendous increase in prices in 1976. Official statistics set the increase in cost of living in Spain in 1976 at over 20 % compared with 16.9 % in 1975 and 15.7 % in

1974. Unemployment also increased considerably, the official figure being 800,000 unemployed. The above figures are challenged by the opposition, however, who consider that the increase in consumer prices and the number of unemployed must be much higher than official statistics show.

12. There has been a marked drop in investment due to industry working well below capacity.

13. A provisional government with its sights set on legislative elections which are essential for the future of the country is hardly in a position to launch a valid cleaning-up policy and implement an economic recovery programme. The fact that the economic crisis coincides with the political crisis inevitably makes more difficult the search for solutions to the economic problems of the country and, insofar as the political crisis is expected to be a long one, it is to be feared that Spain will take a long time to overcome the economic crisis whose social and political effects cannot be measured accurately at the present time.

IV. *The government*

14. At the present time the King has full powers. On acceding to the throne, he was sworn in under the Spanish Constitution in the same way as all his ministers. It was he who appointed the two successive prime ministers: Mr. Arias Navarro who was already Prime Minister towards the end of the Franco dictatorship and then, with effect from July 1976, Mr. Adolfo Suarez Gonzales who had been national secretary of the only legal Spanish political organisation under the Caudillo.

15. The powers of the King and of the government are limited, however, by the existence of the Cortes appointed during General Franco's time. In several respects the Cortes amended in a conservative sense reformist bills presented by the government. The renewal of the Cortes is therefore of decisive importance because only then will it perhaps be possible to speak of a true change in the régime. The indications are that this will occur between May and July 1977, although no date has yet been fixed, and the responsibilities of the new assembly have not yet been finally spelt out.

16. The members of the government, including the Prime Minister, are all relatively young. However, they all have their roots in the Falangist Party, the Franco administration or the army which makes one wonder to what extent they want changes and are prepared to accept the fundamental changes sought by the opposition parties.

17. It is a general — General Gutierrez Mellado — who occupies the post of Deputy Prime Minister and three other generals are members of the present government as Ministers of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The question is therefore how far military leaders are in a position to influence government decisions and to what extent they are prepared to encourage or tolerate a true change in the régime.

18. On 18th November 1966, on a proposal by the government, the Cortes adopted a political reform bill which was the subject of a referendum on 15th December and then endorsed by 94 % of those taking part in the vote (77.4 % of the electorate). This bill established a transitional régime under which the Cortes henceforth was composed of two chambers, thus confirming its democratic nature with greater and specific powers in legislative matters, although without true supervisory powers over the executive. The government remains responsible only to the King. In addition, the King has the right to resort to a referendum in the event of differences between the government and the Cortes. However, the fact that in the future the Cortes will have constituent powers implies that the régime established under the new bill will be provisional. It is expected that the main task of the new assembly to be elected in the forthcoming general election will be to frame a new constitution.

V. *The political parties*

19. Throughout the Franco era there was a single-party system. The political parties of Republican Spain went underground and new political groups were formed illegally, which denied them a wide audience. These illegal political parties were too small to be strong enough to present themselves successfully at the polls once democratic consultation became possible.

20. The result is that recent political trends that have shaped Spanish opinion are represented by a multitude of parties whose following cannot be assessed since most of them have never stood for election and there are only vague indications of the number of members or sympathisers. For the elections to be held at the beginning of the summer of 1977, it would be essential for these parties, which alone are truly democratic, to regroup themselves according to general trends, perhaps even forming electoral alliances.

21. Any such regrouping or alliances, however, is most difficult since nothing is yet decided about the conditions in which elections will be held. Further difficulties stem from the fact that political parties have only just been legally authorised in Spain. Only a few right-wing parties have taken advantage of the authorisation granted since Franco's death to form political

associations in accordance with the law. Most of the democratic parties have preferred to remain under the cloak of illegality as long as they were not legally authorised to exercise their political activities in full. Until very recently they were tolerated, but to varying degrees, depending on the parties' political leanings — for instance the communist leader, Santiago Carrillo, was again arrested for a few days at the end of December 1976. Some parties still had to take refuge behind names destined to conceal their nature or their political leanings. They have very few means at their disposal. Since radio and television are State-controlled they do not have access to them. It is even difficult for them to publish and distribute newspapers. The régime is not therefore one of freedom of parties but one in which democratic parties are merely tolerated without any guarantee of the limits of tolerance. Their leaders were until recently in danger of being arrested since their activities were *ipso facto* against the law. Admittedly, negotiations are being conducted between the Prime Minister and the political parties but they are particularly difficult because the government cannot negotiate with all the parties, little being known about what each one represents. They have therefore been obliged to organise themselves to conduct these negotiations. They have appointed a group of nine persons, joined informally by Santiago Carrillo for the Spanish Communist Party, to prepare the negotiations which are conducted by four representatives for all the opposition parties and the Prime Minister. The aim of the negotiations is to draw up legislation granting political parties a status and right to a normal activity.

22. On 11th January, an important step was made in these negotiations since the Prime Minister, by making them formal, indirectly recognised the existence and the right to exist of the political parties. It was even possible to issue a joint communiqué after that meeting.

23. The purpose of that sitting was to define the conditions of an amnesty and to spell out the freedom of the political parties. The negotiators agreed to no longer make the existence of political parties subject to a government decision but merely to registration by statement as for public companies. Should the programmes, principles or activities of these parties not be in conformity with the law, they could be taken to court but not made subject to a government decision.

24. Following upon these negotiations several political parties have since been legalised, i.e. the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party, two Socialist Parties, and the Socialist Party of Catalonia. But the application of the Communist Party to be legalised has not been approved, but referred to a court of law for a decision. This, in spite of the demands by all the opposition parties

that the Communist Party should also be made legal.

25. The main political parties may be classified in a number of main groups. The referendum on 15th December 1976 allowed an assessment to be made of the numbers opposing any change in the country. This figure is less than 3 % of the electorate since only 2.6 % voted no in the referendum. This represents the most conservative element of Francoism, the main party of this tendency being the "new force" led by Mr. Blas Pinar.

26. The major right-wing grouping of Spanish politics is represented by the Popular Alliance Party, led by Mr. Fraga Iribarne, which has the considerable advantage of being authorised as a political association and, consequently, of being able to exercise influence on society and the electorate. It has widespread and valuable backing among the ruling classes. It represents a will to prolong in a more liberal manner the régime instituted by General Franco and it is clear that it has a wide following in Spanish society.

27. A former member of the Falangist Party and Minister of Information under Franco, Mr. Fraga Iribarne, was the author of one of the rare reforming laws under Franco introduced in 1966 abolishing prior censorship of the press. Since leaving the government in 1969, he has been very outspoken in calling for further limited reform measures. On Franco's death he became Minister of the Interior in the Arias Navarro government but is not a member of the Suarez government. In the Cortes he voted for the reform bill on 18th November 1976. He calls himself liberal but members of the Liberal Party do not agree. Mr. Fraga Iribarne's Popular Alliance Party includes five other former Franco ministers among its leaders. In his interview with *Der Spiegel*, Mr. Fraga Iribarne said that the liberalisation of Spain was still his aim but it would take at least four years to achieve. Throughout that period he called for the maintenance of the ban on the Communist Party and on the Basque or Catalan separatist organisations.

28. On the other hand, the three traditional branches of western democracy — liberal, christian democrat and socialist — are very widely dispersed because of their semi-clandestine existence. Finally, there are the Spanish Communist Party, several extreme left-wing groupings, and a number of regionalist parties, particularly in the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia.

29. A very wide range of parties will therefore be standing for election in Spain. The Popular Alliance Party might well obtain many of the votes from those who do not want to break with Francoism, whilst their opponents will be fragmented into a number of different groups.

30. The opposition parties have shown true solidarity with the Spanish Communist Party by refusing to negotiate freedom for their own parties which did not allow equal treatment for the Communist Party.

31. This active solidarity produced results since a representative of the Communist Party is taking part in the discussions between the opposition parties to prepare the negotiations with the government on this essential question. The Communist Party for its part seems intent on preserving this solidarity and not jeopardising the liberal trend in Spain by pushing itself to the fore or by adopting positions which might disturb public opinion.

32. The strength of the democratic parties which, in principle, have remained clandestine, is extremely difficult to assess. Most of them had recommended abstaining in the referendum on 15th December 1976, but abstentions numbered only 23 %, all of which are obviously not due to the instructions of these parties. The inference is probably that even if they represent the inner feelings of many Spanish people, the democratic parties cannot expect a sweeping victory in the spring elections and they will no doubt have to find an acceptable compromise with other political forces if they wish to play an active rôle in establishing a democratic Spain.

VI. Trades unions

33. There are similarities between the position of the trades unions and of the political parties, but a number of problems are peculiar to the unions. Under the Franco régime, an official union was set up associating employers and employees. Membership of and consequently subscriptions to this union were compulsory. It was responsible for various welfare services.

34. Nowadays, trades unions are again tolerated, although not officially recognised. However, the official, compulsory trade union still exists, thus considerably hindering recruitment by democratic trades unions since workers can hardly be asked to subscribe to two trades unions at once. The result is that the trades union bodies which have been formed or reformed in recent months can give only very partial and approximate indications of the number of their members.

35. Here we must mention the special place occupied by the workers' commissions, set up clandestinely. They have endeavoured to use the possibilities made available to the official national labour organisation and the electoral procedures applied by the Franco system at plant level for the appointment of representatives of that organisation. The national labour front has been infiltrated by many militants from the workers' commissions, in order to find a basis

for their influence in the framework of the Franco system.

36. This tactic brought them into conflict with the trades union bodies which had been officially disbanded under the Franco régime but continued covertly, refusing any form of co-operation with the official trades union and the Franco régime.

37. A serious drawback of this situation is that it prevents the trades union unity which they all say they want. The workers' commissions have said they want immediate trades union unity, even before forming a confederation themselves.

38. The traditional union bodies, particularly the General Workers' Union (UGT), wished to reorganise themselves first before embarking on negotiations on unification. Since their reorganisation is far from complete, early unification seems unlikely and the workers' commissions too have had to form a confederation. To these difficulties are added political issues as in many other countries, the UGT seeming to be linked with socialism whereas the communist element plays a greater rôle in the workers' commissions.

39. There is every reason to think that trades union rights could be recognised in a similar manner to those of political parties. However, the problem raised by the existence of the official union is still serious. Will workers still be obliged to belong and subscribe to this union? What will happen to the large sums invested by this union in forty years of contributions by workers? The democratic trades union bodies seem in no way inclined to abandon such considerable wealth, which belongs to the workers, to an organisation which they consider to be in no way representative.

VII. Regional problems

40. Although the Spanish Republic had granted considerable independence to the provinces, some of them, such as Catalonia, having a real government, Francoism was very much in favour of centralisation. In a number of regions a large proportion of the population considers that the restoration of freedom means re-establishing regional and local autonomy. In the case of the Basque country and Catalonia, there are very strong claims for autonomy. Many Basques and Catalans consider that they are true nations which should constitute States federated within a Spanish confederation. Regionalism also seems quite strong in Galicia.

41. Basque nationalism led to a series of acts of terrorism, attacks and demonstrations, as in Pamplona on 16th January 1977. Basques were to the forefront of the fight against Francoism and are the only ones to have carried out attacks since Franco's death. The Basque prob-

lem is therefore there for all to see, both in Spain and abroad. Everyone knows it can be solved only through substantial concessions to Basque nationalism. But demands are being made for an immediate extension of the amnesty granted by the new régime to political prisoners, there still being about 180, most of them Basques.

42. In the negotiations on 11th January, the representatives of the opposition parties appear to have obtained from the government a number of measures which, although not granting amnesties in the case of crimes involving bloodshed, would nevertheless lead to all political prisoners being freed before the elections.

43. The left seems far stronger in the Basque country and Catalonia than in the rest of Spain and if local governments are set up it can hope to have considerable influence, which might not be the case in other regions. For instance, the Catalan Socialist Party claims to have ten times more members at present than the Spanish Socialist Party in Catalonia, and it seems clearly in favour of the claim for very wide autonomy in Catalonia.

44. Whatever sympathy there may be for a federalist concept of the State and the right of cultural communities to govern themselves, it must be borne in mind that the importance of regionalist movements may be considerable in the next elections, since although they may bring a large number of electors to vote for the democratic parties, they may also lead those who oppose regionalism, which some may consider as a threat to the unity of Spain, to vote for the Democratic Alliance or other nationalist parties.

VIII. Elections

45. No date has yet been fixed for the general elections, but they can hardly be held before 10th May and must be held before the end of July 1977. The date is of some importance because of the disorganisation of the democratic parties, which need several months to reorganise themselves and prepare the elections. If the elections were to be held earlier it would in no way imply that Spain would be progressing more quickly towards democracy. Again, it is not yet known what electoral system will be applied, although the law provides for regional representation. The future electoral law has yet to be negotiated by the four representatives of the parties and the government.

46. One aspect of uncertainty about the coming elections is the extent to which they will be influenced by the authorities. Strict government neutrality in electoral matters would not be enough to ensure an independent ballot. Local, municipal and provincial authorities are still those set up by the Franco régime and they still

have great authority. The terror on which their authority was based in Franco's day has left many traces and without far-reaching changes in the administrative staff it is to be feared that many electors may be influenced by staff many of whom have every interest in preventing genuine radical changes in the political life of Spain.

IX. Future of the régime

47. It now seems an accepted fact that the Cortes to be elected at the beginning of the summer will play a constituent rôle, although this has not been stated with absolute clarity. It might be just a question of revising the present constitution and not drawing up a new one. This means that perhaps the break with the past and the Franco régime may be held up by the procedure for forming the new assemblies, since the new Cortes is to be composed of a Chamber elected in accordance with the principle of proportional representation and a Senate elected by majority ballot for four-fifths of its members, the remaining fifth being appointed by the King.

48. Furthermore, it would appear that the political system on which the Spanish State will be based after the elections will not be a parliamentary one. There is nothing to oblige the King to choose his ministers from a parliamentary majority and, while the next Cortes will be far more democratic than earlier ones, it does not mean that the next Spanish Government will be more liberal or democratic than the present one. However, it may be expected that if the elections are held correctly and the parties are able to express themselves freely, the King will have to take account of the results of the ballot and of the majority in each of the two assemblies in forming the government. But there is a risk of conflict between the government and the Cortes which the army would still be in a position to arbitrate, particularly if the economic crisis and unemployment were to become worse or if there were unrest, especially in the Basque country.

X. Foreign policy

49. The democratic parties show no signs of wishing to make radical changes in the present course of Spanish foreign policy, which will continue to be directed towards maintaining and improving links between Spain and Latin America and between Spain and other Mediterranean countries, particularly the Arab countries. It would be normal to think that a more democratic régime would look for partners in Latin America and the Mediterranean among countries which are more democratic than those which have been Spain's partners in recent years.

50. Moreover, Spain considers itself to be a wholly European country and all the parties, from the Popular Alliance to the Communist Party, have expressed a keen desire for Spain to join the Common Market as early as possible, although they may have certain illusions about the political and economic difficulties which this might encounter. They know that some countries, including the Federal Republic and France, have shown their desire for Spain to join the European Community without delay, but that other countries, including the Netherlands, insist on a truly democratic régime being established in Spain before opening negotiations. But what would be the reaction of the EEC countries towards Spain's application for membership if there were no major changes in the Spanish régime ?

51. Moreover, present economic difficulties in Spain, the competitiveness of much of its agricultural produce with that of France and Italy, the fact that its per capita gross national product is lower than that of the EEC member countries and the vast disparities between the regions will inevitably raise problems which will become worse if the present recession continues, in Spain as in the rest of Europe, particularly because the problem of Spanish manpower would then become acute.

52. More controversial is the question of Spain acceding to the Atlantic Alliance. Spain is at present associated with western defence through special agreements with the United States, by which American bases have been set up on Spanish territory. Some parties wish Spain to join NATO and the Atlantic Alliance as a whole to take over the place now occupied by the Americans alone.

53. Conversely, other parties consider that the maintenance of present agreements would be preferable and this is the position *inter alia* of Mr. Santiago Carrillo of the Spanish Communist Party.

54. In an interview in the International Herald Tribune of 9th January 1977 he said : "We are in favour of an ever-stronger Europe that is independent of the Soviet Union and the United States, a Europe that can contribute to ending bipolarity and create a multipolar world". But at the same time he considers that the present

balance in Europe is a guarantee of peace. He does not wish Spain to join NATO but would not oppose it outright. The idea that Spain's membership might change the balance and consequently endanger peace was expressed by several Spaniards with whom your Rapporteur spoke. Very few of them showed a real desire to join NATO, although some of them considered that this might be the price that Spain would have to pay to join the EEC.

55. However, it must be realised that Spain does not consider itself isolated in the military field. The Spanish army already carries out combined manoeuvres with the French army and the new direction some people feel its defence policy should take is mainly seen as a means of better ensuring Spain's security while reducing the military effort it would have to make.

XI. Conclusions

56. All the information obtained by your Rapporteur during his visit to Spain leads him to believe that premature steps should not be taken as regards relations between Spain and the Western European countries. Developments in Spain since Franco's death are still uncertain in too many respects and, until the next elections at least, Spain is still a country with a basically authoritarian régime even if the government pursues a relatively liberal policy. Only when Spain has worked out the new régime under which it intends to live will it be possible to examine how democratic that régime is.

57. Secondly, it became clear that the increasing number of interventions from without might have the contrary effect on developments in Spain to that which was expected, such interventions possibly leading to an anti-European and anti-democratic reaction, which is precisely what must be avoided.

58. This in no way means that material assistance and expression of solidarity with the Spanish democratic parties must be avoided, but such assistance and solidarity must be cautious insofar as the political forces have not yet organised themselves and it is difficult to ascertain which groups supporting which tendencies are the most representative of Spanish society.