

Spanish Policies towards Latin America: The Pros and Cons of a Guaranteed Mutual Relationship

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INTRODUCTION

Relations between Spain and Latin America are one of the essential objectives and constant presences of Spanish foreign policy. Beyond governmental contacts, these relations form a basic part of the State's external actions, as they weave an extensive network of interactions between the different public administrations (at central, regional and local level), between private agents (companies, trade unions, non-government organisations and different types of collectives), and is permanently impregnated by the human factor, with migratory movements between both, solidly based on the sharing, overcoming the distance factor, of a whole range of values, principles and ways of being that complement each other. This leads to Latin Americans being identified as the most 'European' inhabitants outside of the old continent, and the Spanish as the most 'Latin' outside of their own.

A statement made by Spain's King Juan Carlos during the visit of Argentina's president, Néstor Kirchner, on June 21st 2006, sums up the feelings shared with the rest of the nation with respect to its links with the Latin Americans: "nothing that happens in Argentina is distant to us", meaning that nothing that happens to the Latin Americans is considered as distant by the Spanish.

Another factor to be taken into account is the increasing complexity of relations between both parties, who have gone beyond the framework of intergovernmental action, activating the presence of a plethora of actors, logically operating in different areas with different degrees of importance. This is the case of Spain's Autonomous Communities (the elections held in Galicia were finally decided thanks to the vote of emigrants in Latin America), and its Local Councils (many of which are twinned with municipal districts in Latin America). There are also the 'Spanish' multinational companies that have such a high profile in the economy (and politics) of the region, thanks to the major investments that have been made, and even criticised as a new type of 'conquest'. Furthermore, there is a profoundly interwoven fabric of social relations, ranging from the increasing activity of non-government development organisations in many parts of the subcontinent, to including the two-way flow of population with Latin American immigrants travelling to Spain, and the importance of Spanish tourism in many parts of Latin America.

For more than five centuries, relations with Latin America have formed a part of Spain's foreign policy, although obviously subject to the changes derived from three variables: the internal situation in Spain, the situation in Latin America, and changes in the international system.

Without oversimplifying the topic, it is true to say that the end of the cold war helped configure one of the most favourable backdrops for these relations. Spain recovered the political and economic protagonism it had lost after forty years of dictatorship, and Latin America abandoned the leaden years of the military dictatorships that ravaged much of the subcontinent, although its economic situation continues to suffer, and there are chronic problems such as inequality. Also, the changes that have taken place in the international system have opened the way to new opportunities for increasing and consolidating mutual relations. This has all taken place against a backdrop in which the United States has lost part of its hegemony in the region, a result of the external weakness of which it is still a superpower. This does not mean it will be an easy process, and that tensions may not occur from time to time, especially in economic areas. However, over and above these situations, it is important to emphasise the primacy of acting as partners rather than enemies who resolve their tensions through conflict and not through dialogue. Spain and Latin and America are complementary actors in a wide range of areas on the worldwide stage.

Another important stage we have to take into account is the fact that this bilateral relationship is complemented by relations between the European Union and Latin America. The entry of Spain (and Portugal) into the European Community in 1986 opened the way for the other partners within the Union to intensify their

relations with a region that until that moment had been marginated in terms of European foreign policy.

And of course, it is inevitable to consider the triangle of Spain-Latin America-U.S.A. The United States have had and continue to have a dominant position in relation to their southern neighbours. Spain, together with its European partners, maintains a harmonious position with its partner with regard to Latin American affairs, although it cannot be denied that after the arrival in power of the Socialist Party in 2004, there has been more of a sense of divergence than harmony, as in the cases of Venezuela, Cuba or Columbia.

We will explore this question from the perspective of International Relations, giving it a thorough coverage from a multidimensional perspective, including several areas of the relations that exist between Spain and Latin America, such as politics, economics and the human dimension of these relations. We will start by referring to the terminology used in this case, then continuing with a brief overview of the origins and evolution of these relations, to then focus on the current situation, where we will analyse the bilateral agenda in its different aspects. We have also included the main elements that go towards configuring Spanish foreign policy, and its abilities to turn it into medium-ranking power on the rise. We will end by exploring a series of issues that will be of importance in the future, and the work that will have to be done in order to further consolidate and comprehend these bilateral relations, with a view towards the celebration of the bicentenary of the declaration of independence of the Latin American republics.

NOTES ON THE NOMENCLATURE USED: HISPANO-AMERICA, IBERO-AMERICA, LATIN AMERICA

While a matter of lesser importance, confusion may arise when using different terms to refer to the same region. Today this question is less important than in former years, although we believe it is necessary to briefly clarify this terminological issue to decipher why several names have been used to identify the same region.

Although it would be impossible to define the frontier between these terms, and on many occasions the frequent use of the language confuses them, we will draw a line between the three as at the end of the day, their use still has an important significance depending on the case.

Hispano-America: used to identify American countries in which Spanish is spoken. It was the favourite term used during the regime of Franco. Today it has cultural connotations connected with the use of the language or certain means of expression.

Ibero-America: a name used to the group of countries including Spain and Portugal, and in the American continent Mexico, Central America, some parts of the Caribbean, and South America. It corresponds to the territories colonised by the Iberian countries. Today they form the Ibero-American Community of Nations.

Latin America: name used for the nations and countries in the American continent stretching from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, including the Caribbean countries.

The official Spanish terminology uses the term Ibero-America, although it would not be correct when dealing with relations between Spain and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The two are close, but they are two different issues.

A BRIEF HISTORY: CONSTANTS AND VARIABLES IN RELATIONS BETWEEN SPAIN AND LATIN AMERICA

More than five hundred years of shared history form the foundations of relations between Spain and Latin America, and the Spanish with Latin Americans.

The official history started on October 12th 1492, although the 'discovery' of America was due to a mistake, as Columbus was attempting to reach India via the shortest route, and the continent was named by another Italian (Amerigo Vesputio).

The three variables mentioned above (the internal situation in Spain, the situation in Latin America and the international context, with the growing influence of the USA in Latin American affairs since the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 until today) help establish the coordinates of these relations in each historic moment.

At the start of the nineteenth century, three factors came together to lead to the independence of the Latin American Republics: the fight for emancipation (whose main symbol is Simon Bolivar), the support of the USA in consonance with its own process with regard to Great Britain, and the weakness of the Spanish monarchy after the Napoleonic wars and its internal crisis.

The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century offered another example. There was tension in Latin America produced by backwardness and modernity, with serious internal strife and conflict between neighbours (the Pacific War in 1879); the hegemony and imperialism of the USA; military interventions, the creation of Panama and a protectorate in Cuba; and the crisis in Spain that came to a head in 1898 with the loss of its last colonies and guerrilla war in Morocco.

It was in this climate that José Ortega y Gasset wrote *La rebelión de las masas* (The Rebellion of the Masses), in the second part of which was a chapter entitled "Who controls the world?" in which he affirms "Spain shares a common history, a common race and a common language with the peoples of Central and South America, yet does not form a nation with them. Why? Only one thing is missing, something apparently essential: a common future. Spain was unable to invent a programme for a collective future capable of attracting these zoologically similar groups. The future plebiscite was adverse to Spain, and nobody then made use of the records, the memories, the forebears, the "fatherland". When this exists, all the rest act as forces of consolidation, but nothing more".

In reference to modern times, we return to the idea described above. The end of the cold war set a very favourable stage; Spain recovered its political and economic presence in the international system; Latin America fought to consolidate its

political processes and to improve its social and economic situation. Also, changes in the international global system have opened the way to new opportunities to increase and consolidate mutual relations.

Latin America – or rather, some Latin American countries – are recovering their roles at bilateral and regional level, as well as their presence on the international stage. It should not be forgotten that countries such as Mexico and particularly Brazil occupy an important position; in fact, Brazil is considered as one of the BRICS, the emerging powers, together with Russia, India, China and South Africa. Not without argument, the arrival in power of leftist groups, in all of their different shades, has caused another about turn in Latin American politics, searching for greater autonomy and breaking away from the policies of the USA, which have gradually lost their impact in the region, except in the special case of Mexico, for obvious reasons of their relations as neighbouring states. While the USA has given priority to an agenda dedicated to the fight against terrorism, Latin America has demanded action in other areas, such as the economic sphere or migratory issues.

In many cases, state policies have been recovered combined with a market economy, in order to recover ground that was lost through the process of liberalisation, deregulation, privatization and flexibility, supported by the consensus of Washington.

At the same time, there has been a geopolitical reorganization of the group of regions in Central America, the Caribbean and particularly South America, in a process of intensifying relations, led by Brazil. We have witnessed the crises and renewal of processes of integration in Latin America: Venezuela abandoned the Andes Community, criticising its partners, to the creation of the South American Community of Nations (III South American Presidential Summit, Cuzco, Peru, December 8th 2004, with the presence of leaders from 12 countries). Advances in Mercosur, with proposals to create a 'ring of energy', inspired in the CEC, which coexist with a low institutional level, as we are seeing in the so-called 'Pulp-factory crisis' between Argentina and Uruguay, outside of the framework they share in Mercosur, as a result of a lack of institutions capable of resolving conflicts.

Together with these issues, there are still structural problems awaiting a solution, both in the economy (above all the tremendous inequality that exists in most of the region), and in the political sphere, with the gradual consolidation of formal democracy, although there is a generalised discrediting of the way of carrying out politics, which has led to the collapse or disappearance of many traditional political parties, and the rise of many different types of social movements. Both the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), in its Report for 2000 on equality, development and citizenship, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its Report for 2004 on 'Democracy in Latin America. Towards a democracy of citizens' cover these issues in full.

And so, this is the backdrop to be taken into consideration when exploring the issue that concerns us: relations between Spain and Latin America. Before continuing, we will briefly examine the antecedents that have led to the current situation.

RECOVERING LOST TIME: THE IBERO-AMERICAN AGENDA FROM 1975

The death of General Franco on November 20th 1975 led to a drastic change in Spanish national and foreign policy. During the transition to democracy, Spanish foreign policy gradually recovered its life signs, the most important of which were an active participation in international affairs, breaking away with the previously existing isolation (for example, diplomatic relations with Mexico were resumed in 1977); joining Europe; its relations with the USA as partners, and as a result a new policy of security and defence. All of this took place within the framework of its presence on the international scene as a 'medium-ranking' power, an issue we will explore later on in this article.

Having accomplished these objectives, it was still necessary to redefine our relations with our main contacts in the local area: the Mediterranean (particularly in northern Africa, and with our southern neighbour, Morocco), and Latin America, for whom the rhetoric of Franco's regime had replaced any type of relations with real contents, a situation which Professor Roberto Mesa came to define as 'replacement policies'.

After 1975, Spanish policy towards Latin America, which we officially refer to as Ibero-American Policy, underwent a series of stages until reaching the present day; stages which we may mainly classify according to the different Spanish governments that existed from that time: during the transition to democracy, with the presidency of Adolfo Suárez until 1981; the short-lived government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo; the governments of the left-wing PSOE from 1982 until 1996, under the leadership of Felipe González; the governments of the right-wing PP under José María Aznar from 1996 until 2004, and the return of the PSOE to power after the elections of March 14th 2004, with the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

As mentioned above, alongside the policies of the central government, a whole series of initiatives have been set underway by regional administrations, local corporations, companies, trade unions, non-government organisations and an extensive network of human relations.

The first governments of the transition would dedicate their efforts to recovering the 'life signs' of the country, without forgetting in its discourses the importance of relations with Latin America. Relations in which the head of state, King Juan Carlos, would play an important role, under the auspices of his powers (as the highest ranking representative of the Spanish state in international relations, especially with nations of its 'historical community' as defined in Article 56 of the Spanish Constitution), combined with the prestige enjoyed by the King in the region.

The Socialist governments would set policies underway (in the full sense of the term) towards Latin America, Ibero-American policies, strengthening bilateral links and activating the Ibero-American Community of Nations, whose first summit was held in 1991 in Guadalajara (Mexico). Also, a great deal of Spanish development aid policy would be destined for Latin American countries, as was seen in the creation of the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and Ibero-America in

1985, or the fact that Central America was the first region where an integral cooperation plan was implanted. This region would also receive the first Spanish 'blue helmet' troops, as Spain would be present in supporting the peace process in the region, alongside other European partners. This active role was recognised by Spain's participation in the San José Summit in September 1984, which represented the first step in the institutionalisation of relations between the European Union and Central America. The Spanish government also gave explicit support to the recovery of democracy in the region and the defence of human rights.

Business with the region would also occupy an important place from the start of the 1990's, with the favourable combination of two factors: the growth of the Spanish economy, seen in the internationalisation of companies, investments and the process of privatisation in Latin America, inspired by the conclusions of the "Washington Consensus". The weight of the economic agenda would be fundamental during the years in which Aznar was in power. But even more so would be the events that brought about a change in the relations we are analysing. One of them was the attack of September 11th 2001, which would place the fight against terrorism in the front line of the country's foreign policy, one of the key items in Aznar's political agenda. Another would be the war in Iraq: the unconditional alliance of Aznar with Bush's thesis would mean that apart from appearing in the 'Azores photo', he would be responsible for brokering Latin American collaboration with the intervention in Iraq, particularly considering that two countries from the region (Chile and Mexico) then held seats on the Security Council.

The elections of March 14th 2004, with the victory of the Socialist PSOE led by Rodríguez Zapatero, led to a major turnaround in Spanish foreign policy, which took shape in few days with the announcement of the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, and the subsequent anger of the USA, which to an extent still marks relations with Latin America.

With all of its hits (and misses), I believe that since then we have witnessed a revitalisation of Spain's relations with Latin America, and the recovery of Spain's important role in this region with the presence of governments that to some degree are similar to the Spanish government, and which share initiatives that Zapatero has presented since taking power, such as the Alliance of Civilisations or Spain's joining the initiative of President Lula's government in Brazil of fighting against hunger and poverty.

SPAIN AS A GROWING MEDIUM-RANKING POWER: ITS INCREASING IMPORTANCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

This process has to be situated in line with Spain's capacity to have a real policy towards Latin America, ranging from occupying an active presence in globalized international relations, and therefore maintaining and even improving its role as a medium-ranking power. Let us consider what the theory of International Relations has to say about medium-ranking powers. Professor Esther Barbé, referring to the

idea of hierarchy and powers within the system, states that “The concept of a medium-ranking power is possibly the widest ranging. It is a frequently used concept in recent years in reference to large or medium sized countries with an active diplomacy in certain areas (human rights, mediation, peacekeeping forces) that in some cases brings them great prestige. Here it may be said that political intent has more importance than the resources of the state in question. Holbraad, an analyst of this question, states that ‘medium-ranking powers are those who, due to their size, their material resources, their will and ability to accept responsibilities, their influence and stability, are on the way to becoming major powers’. Based on this decision (dubious with regard to its future dimension), and justified by a series of indicators, the author offers a list of countries, including Spain, Italy, Canada, Brazil, India, Mexico and Nigeria. Considering the imprecise limits of this definition, it is logical that Hobraad’s list of medium-ranking powers differs from that of other authors. This said, the countries mentioned beforehand usually appear in all of the lists”. (BARBÉ, Esther: *Relaciones Internacionales*. Madrid, Tecnos, 2003, second edition, p. 166).

Perhaps we should add that a state which, a priori, combines a series of requirements in order to be considered as a medium-ranking power, should be recognised as such by the rest, and this leads to doubts. This is typical of being in the middle: when Spain joined the European Union, it was said that it was the biggest of the small nations, or the smallest of the large. Also, we are referring to a process and not a fixed photo; a process that is slow in either direction (in the ascent towards higher categories, or in the descent towards lower categories). We have to remember that we may continue to see the light of stars for centuries after they have ceased to exist.

From the current perspective, and with the vision of the future mentioned above, it would seem that there can be little doubt that Spain has joined the group of middle-ranking powers with aspirations towards a more important role. The combination of a series of indicators allows us to verify this statement.

In terms of size, Spain ranks as number 50 out of a total of 214 countries and territories, with a total of 505,990 square kilometres, representing 0.38% of the total. Its location in Europe means it has been able to extend its relations towards the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. With a population of 41.3 million in 2004, it occupies the 29th position in the world ranking, representing 0.66% of the total. Its decreasing birth rate has been compensated by a major increase in its immigrant population, both regular and irregular, from Morocco, Latin America, central Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In economic terms, Spain is the ninth economic power, if we base our conclusions on its Gross National Product, which in 2004 amounted to 875.8 billion dollars; 2.20% of the world total. However, it drops to number 22 if we consider the GNP per capita, at \$21,210. It stands at position 21 out of a total of 177 in the Human Development Index of the United Nations Programme for Development. According to *The World Competitives Yearbook* from 2005, Spain ranks 32nd in competitiveness. According to Transparency International, Spain ranks 23rd on the

index for the perception of corruption. According to *The Heritage Foundation*, Spain ranks 31st in the economic liberty index for 2005. This data, together with a sustained growth of around 3.5% per year, which exists alongside a high external deficit, and the growing role of Spanish investment – particularly, but not only, in Latin America – in the hands of transnational companies, which are gradually scaling positions in the world ranking, have all led both the Conservative Aznar and the Socialist Rodríguez Zapatero to request that Spain, a hopeful with a good CV, be included in the group of world economic powers.

Other economic data indicate that Spain is the world's leading producer of oil, wine and wind power. According to the professional services company Ernst & Young, Spain occupies sixth position in the European ranking for its attractiveness to European investment, according to a survey carried out with European executives. The tenth *World Wealth Report* for 2005, published on June 20th 2006, drawn up by the investment bank Merrill Lynch and the consultancy firm Capgemini, shows that in Spain there are 148,600 millionaires, including people who have more than one million dollars in net financial assets; this number has grown at a rate of 5.7%, the second highest in Europe after Austria, leading it to occupy tenth position in the world ranking of places with most rich people (behind the USA, Japan, Germany, the UK, France, China, Canada, Italy and Switzerland). The European Monetary Fund published a report on June 14th 2006, drawn up by a team that worked for two years on exploring the solvency of the Spanish financial system; it gave a very positive evaluation of the strength of banks and savings banks in Spain, after overcoming several crisis simulations (mortgage credits, increases in petrol prices, depreciation of the Dollar, etc.). one of the scenarios studied was a crisis in Latin America, analysing the major financial risks of Spanish banks in the region, which at the end of 2004 were concentrated in Mexico (53%), Chile (14%), Brazil (12%) and Argentina (4%).

On the contrary, while the number of millionaires increased, there are more than suspicions that fraud is present on a major scale. It is significant that Spain is the country with most 500 Euro notes, and that different bodies have indicated that it is reasonable to assume that the rate of fraud is high. According to data from Spain's Tax Office, fiscal control actions in 2005 amounted to 4,583 million Euros, 12.9% more than in 2004, at 4,061 million Euros.

Evidently, all is not a bed of roses in the economic world, and amongst the negative elements that frequently raise their head are a constant foreign commercial deficit; in the first four months of 2006, the balance between exports and imports was negative, to the tune of 27,999.7 million Euros, representing an increase of 20% over the same period in 2005, although the deficit has grown at a slower rate than in previous years. One of the elements that puts the balance in the red is the country's energy dependence and the increasing price of petrol. Another negative feature detected in the Spanish economy is the lack of competitiveness and the low amount of capital invested in research and technological development.

Another of the scenarios in which the Spanish presence has undoubtedly become visible is in investment, with Latin America once again being one of its

most important destinations. Spanish multinational companies – remember that this term is something of a contradiction in itself – have occupied increasingly higher positions in the world ranking (the clothing firm Zara is 77th in the ranking for the world's top 100 companies), occupying sixth place in the world and second in Latin America. This flow of investment led to Spanish companies occupying first position in the ranking of direct foreign investment in Latin America at the end of the 1990's, although it also led to arguments regarding the advantages and disadvantages of this economic activity, as we will see later on in this article.

Furthermore, the Spanish political scenario has not only recovered lost time after forty years of dictatorship and international isolation, but has also had a clear international protagonism. 2006 marked the twentieth anniversary of the country joining the European Union, a transcendental event for Spanish politics, both in economic terms and in strengthening our external presence. Precisely the European Union serves to measure the qualification of Spain as a medium-ranking power, as we are the smallest of the large countries or the largest of the small, a situation we share with Poland, although it joined more recently. Spain forms an active part of many international organisations and institutions, in line with the multilateral dimension of its foreign policy. One of the consequences of this is that several Spaniards occupy high-ranking posts in these organisations, such as Rodrigo Rato, managing director of the International Monetary Fund. One of the most interesting signings was that made by media mogul Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, incorporating Spain's ex-president José María Aznar as a managerial consultant.

In recent years, Spain has strengthened its diplomatic presence in countries and regions that previously were practically unknown, such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. In the first case, one of the most important issues is migration, as thousands of people set off from this region in the hope of reaching Europe via the Canary Islands. In response to this situation, the Government has approved the 'Africa Plan', which includes a significant increase in its diplomatic presence in Sub-Saharan Africa (opening new embassies and making visits to encourage dialogue), new re-admission agreements, and increasing development aid, at the same time as persuading its partners in the European Union to get more involved in an issue that affects Europe's southern frontiers. In Asia, the increase in activity is due to the economic growth of the region, prompted by the driving force of China as an economic power.

This constant activity has led to the agenda of the Foreign Minister being more and more extensive, and an increase in the number of embassies. However, here we find one of the bottlenecks of Spanish foreign policy, the fact the increasing demand for an international presence is not in line with the resources made available for Spain's overseas administration, with a diplomacy that on several occasions could best be qualified as 'traditional', in terms of human and material resources. In order to face up to this imbalance, the government has proposed the reform of its foreign service, a process that is currently underway. Another case that may decrease this capacity for a foreign presence is the lack of coordination and coherence in foreign policy in general. Although it is true that the Spanish constitution expressly states that the Government is responsible for directing for-

eign policy (Article 97), in reality we find that other actors – particularly the country's Autonomous Communities – are seeking their own presence on the world stage; sub-state diplomacy is an element that enriches international activity as a whole, without forgetting that it dilutes the power that should be held by the Spanish state. The question therefore is how to combine a diplomacy rooted in the past with the complexities of modern public diplomacies for a country seeking to occupy a position of global leadership.

Another factor that explains the increase in Spain's presence is the participation by its troops and police in international peacekeeping missions, as 'blue helmets'. Spain is one of the most active members of the UN in this area. Traditionally, these missions have taken place in Latin America (from Central America to Haiti), although it is still surprising to find Spanish contingents as part of international operations in places as far flung as Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the latter case as part of an operation organised by the European Union.

Spain also has an increasing protagonism in development cooperation, with a steady increase in funds destined for official development aid, as well as measures aimed at increasing the quality of this aid. The International Cooperation for Development Law, passed on July 7th 1998, defined the objectives to be attained. The country's different governments have, to a greater or lesser extent, decided the policies to be adopted via the Master Plans for Spanish Cooperation. In the Master Plan 2005–2008, the main goal is to move from a policy of offering aid to a policy of development, reaffirming the commitment to comply with the Millennium Development Objectives adopted by the UNO on September 8th 2000. Recently, major steps have been taken to put basic elements in this field into effect, such as the approval of the Co-operator's Statute (regulating the legal and employment status of more than 1,400 Spaniards working in foreign countries), and a Law passed on June 22nd 2006, obliging the government to present within one year a plan to renegotiate external debt with the poorest countries that owe the largest sums (HIPC), owing before December 31st 2003. Here there are also a series of pending issues, particularly in terms of coordination between the different administrations and private entities that participate in foreign aid programmes, and particularly in improving the management system, with an in-depth reform of its main protagonist, the Spanish International Cooperation Agency.

Spain is also present in different collective actions that take place on the international stage, particularly its incorporation in 2004 as part of the initiative launched by the president of Brazil, Lula da Silva, to fight against hunger and poverty, and in particular, the proposal of president Rodríguez Zapatero, together with the Turkish government, to put the Alliance of Civilisations at the top of the global agenda, as a forum for dialogue to deal with different worldwide issues, particularly international terrorism. This is proof of the active and effective multilateralism that is one of the priorities of Spanish foreign policy.

Other data, less closely linked with the issue in hand but still important, support Spain's increasing protagonism, as Spain has some of the most advanced legislation in terms of sexual equality (although at the same time the reality of the

situation is grave); it is the world's number two tourist destination, a world leader in organ donation, has one of the planet's highest longevity rates, and different Spanish sports figures are included amongst the world's elite, in tennis or motor racing, for example.

In bringing to a close this list of elements that define Spain as a middle-ranking power on the rise, it is important to highlight the country's cultural presence, motivated by an increasing importance of Hispanic culture, in terms of the increasing growth of Spanish speakers (some 400 million, including those who speak Spanish in Sweden or Brazil), and its culture in general (cinema, TV, theatre, exhibitions, music, literature, etc.), linked to an increasingly important cultural industry. Thanks to this growing market, Spanish companies occupy an important position in the publishing industry, TV and musical markets. At official level, the presence of the Cervantes Institute has been strengthened (despite being created in 1991, one century after the Alliance Française), as the flagship of Spanish culture the world over.

Yet here too – borrowing a line from Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot* – nobody's perfect, and a recent report by José Luis Barberia, published in *El País* on the 19th, 20th and 21st of June 2006, informs us that “Invoking the name of Spain in the field of commerce does not lead to the benefits of prestige that would correspond to it as a developed country of the European Union. The label ‘Made in Spain’ subtracts more than it adds, when the globalisation of the economy calls for an internationalisation and intense competition in foreign markets. In no way does Spain's foreign reputation coincide with its economic, political and cultural reality”.

Apart from these issues, and others we do not have the space to deal with in this article, many of which may be measured in different ways, there is a further key aspect: the support that a given political action receives, both internally, and above all, in relation to foreign affairs. Any text dealing with international relations will inform us that a State's resources must be supported by the will to play a specific international role (measured by an active presence or isolationism), and consensus between the political, social and economic spheres in order to further strengthen this international presence.

Latin America, together with Europe, has been an issue in which this consensus has traditionally existed. However, the current atmosphere of antagonism and confrontation that exists between Spain's two main political parties (the Partido Socialista Obrero Español and the Partido Popular) has also affected the Ibero-American agenda. Leaders of the PP frequently criticise the government's approach to cases such as Cuba, Venezuela or Bolivia, without forgetting the effects of its profound differences with respect to relations with the USA. This loss of consensus has contributed towards weakening Spain's influence on the international stage.

In conclusion, Spain is attempting to consolidate and increase its presence and protagonism on the world stage, and as a result in Latin America, adopting the role of a preferred partner. Yet we should not forget that the present and future situation of this role is conditioned by a recent past that has seen Spain pass from being a dictatorship to a democracy, from being backward to being progressive,

from being a poor nation to a rich one, and from being isolated to having a strong international presence.

THE CURRENT AGENDA OF RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA: POLITICS, ECONOMY, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

The current agenda of Spanish relations with Latin America started with the change of government after the elections of March 14th 2004, with the win at the elections (although without an absolute majority) of the Socialist party (PSOE) and the government led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

However, we should bear in mind that the government was not starting out from zero, and that these relations must always be seen as part of a process and a dynamism that conditions them. The period immediately beforehand was in the hands of the governments of the right-wing PP, presided by José María Aznar, which we will refer to in further detail.

The changes promised by Zapatero in his electoral campaign were quickly enacted in the area of foreign policy; multilateralism was strengthened, as well as the European, Mediterranean and Latin American dimension of Spanish foreign intervention, and two particularly important decisions were taken immediately: the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, and the change of the name of the Ministry, to Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

In his investiture speech on April 15th 2004, Zapatero outlined the main areas of his government's foreign policy: "In this area it is now time to recover a consensus that should never have been broken. We have not progressed in any way by doing so, and have put many of our most important interests at risk. A consensus which, in this order, must clearly express a clear commitment towards Europe; it must focus many of our centres of preferential attention on Latin America and the Mediterranean; it must maintain a relationship of partners and friends with the United States, based on reciprocal loyalty and openness; it must firmly remain in line with international legality, with the reform and strengthen of international instruments of peace, and finally, it must make cooperation for development an essential element of our international policy. All of these areas must be dealt with by a new external service of the State, powerful and prepared to serve Spain as part of a globalized world."

In reference to Latin America, the president made special mention of the main objectives to be reached: "I will make every effort to recover the institutional, political, cultural and economic presence of Spain in Latin America, in order to contribute towards the definitive progress of its peoples, to consolidate democracy in all of its countries, and to lay the foundations for the modernisation and effectiveness of our community of nations."

This constant presence of Latin American affairs in Spanish politics may be seen in the following episode. Set against the backdrop of a debate on energy matters, when the president of the government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, was

asked on February 22nd 2006 about the takeover bid by the German company E.ON for the Spanish firm Endesa, he replied “understand that Germany wants to have a strong company in the international market. Spain also wants to have one. Our position in Latin America is a matter of State”.

Two years after accepting the post, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, offered a balance of his department’s handling of its work (“Del compromiso electoral a la España del mundo global [From an electoral promise to the Spain of a global world]”, *El País*, April 29th 2006): “Our proposal was to participate actively and effectively in the construction of the international community. At the same time, we have begun the renovation of our foreign actions, and taken firm steps to modernise and establish an integral reform of the Foreign Service”. Here the most important events were the return of troops from Iraq, Spain’s return to the heart of Europe and good neighbourly relations with the Mediterranean countries, and particularly with Morocco. He includes talks about the thorny issue of Gibraltar, and active participation in the peace process in the Western Sahara. Other positive issues include coordination in the fight against international terrorism and the initiative of the Alliance of Civilisations. With regard to European construction, he refers to greater political involvement faced with the crisis of growth. He also highlights the constructive dialogue with the USA within the framework of transatlantic relations between the EU and USA; European-Mediterranean relations, supporting partnerships; peace, dialogue and cooperation in resolving the conflict in the Middle East; and strengthening its presence in Africa in Asia. He also highlights the increase in its economic presence (the eighth strongest economy in the world), and the promotion of a greater political and cultural presence through the Cervantes Institute, as well as growing solidarity to reach 0.35% of the GNP dedicated to Spanish development aid. With regard to the future, he states that “Spain must be an agile performer”, in the sense of the Integral Reforms of the Foreign Service. As a general reflection, Moratinos gives priority to “promoting a global Spain, committed towards sustainable development, peace and progress”.

With regard to Ibero-America, the minister states that “In the first two years, the government has strengthened the Ibero-American community, since the Salamanca Summit. Contact with Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil has multiplied bilateral relations. This dynamism is beneficial to closer contact between the EU and Latin America and has permeated our relations with Cuba, Venezuela and other countries in the region, with whom we have constructed a dialogue that aspires to a future that is respectful towards human rights, stable and prosperous”.

Another fact that reveals the importance of Latin America is the constant role of the Spanish Congress and Senate (where there is a Commission on Ibero-American affairs) in the monitoring, control and support of these relations. In the debate on the state of the nation in the area of foreign action, the lower house called on the government (in the parliamentary bulletin nº 206, dated May 20th 2005) to “6. Maintain relations with Latin America as a strategic point of reference for our foreign actions. The Ibero-American summits, which Spain will

organise this year, are an essential instrument as part of this policy. The Government must continue to intensify its political dialogue in order to comply with human and social rights, strengthening our presence, visibility and fair commerce with Latin America, and supporting bilateral relations with the European Union”.

Based on these central guidelines, we will now explore the main areas of action for Latin America:

a. The political sphere

One of the indicators that best demonstrates a country's commitment to its foreign policy is the number of trips made by its representatives, particularly the head of state, the president and the members of the government, particular the head of Foreign Affairs. In the case of Spain, this indicator is accompanied by official trips by representatives of the country's Autonomous Communities and local councils.

In some cases a tradition already exists: the first official trip made by the president of the Spanish government is to Morocco (in the case of president Zapatero, on April 24th 2004). Apart from those made for obvious reasons to Europe, Latin America is the preferred location for diplomatic exchange. From Spain, the King honours Article 56 of the country's constitution, especially to attend the inauguration ceremonies of new presidents of the Latin American republics, ceremonies which have recently been attended by his son, the Prince of Asturias.

Although these form a part of international protocol, the destination and moment chosen for the visit are still important. For example, the last official visit made by president Aznar was to Columbia, where in Cartagena de Indias on February 20th 2003, he reaffirmed together with its president, Alvaro Uribe, the mutual commitment in the fight against terrorism.

Spain's King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia have made official state visits to every Latin American country except Cuba; however, they were present for the ninth edition of the CIN, held in Havana on November 16th 1999.

The president and members of the government make frequent trips to Latin America, and some are particularly famous, despite the intended discretion of these journeys, such as that made by the Minister of Defence, José Bono, to Venezuela for the sale of defence materials. However, in recent times there has been an important procession of ministers from the government of the PSOE to the United States, perhaps with the intention of smoothing out the diplomatic 'wrinkles' caused by the meetings (for example at the NATO summit) between presidents Bush and Zapatero.

However, the list of these journeys reveals that the Minister Moratinos is not a great fan of travelling to the region, perhaps as a result of the diversification of Spanish foreign policy and his more influential role in other parts of the world (the Middle East, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, a region visited for the first time by a Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs at the end of 2005), leaving Latin America to occupy a secondary position in his agenda.

A particularly significant moment was the presence of the president of the Spanish government in Ciudad Guyana (Venezuela), where on March 29th 2005 he signed a declaration together with the presidents of Venezuela (Hugo Chávez), Brazil (Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva) and Columbia (Álvaro Uribe).

Moratinos presented a report to the Foreign Affairs Commission on March 2nd 2006, on relations between Spain and Venezuela, and the contract for the sale of arms to the country, with the following argument: "During the visit to Venezuela by the president of the government in March 2005, two protocols were signed, one of which was ratified by the Spanish and Venezuelan ministers of defence, and another signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Venezuelan Minister of Energy and Mines. The first of these protocols included the purchase by Venezuela of four ocean patrol vessels, four coastal protection vessels, ten C-295 medium transportation planes and two CN-235 marine observation planes. The second protocol covered the purchase by Venezuela of two asphalt-carrying vessels and a Panamax-type vessel, as well as the repair in Spanish shipyards of vessels belonging to the seagoing division of the Venezuelan company PDVSA. The reason for this sale is that it is material suitable for civil and even humanitarian use. The material will be of great use to control territorial waters and jungle regions and in the fight against drug trafficking. The vessels and aircraft sold do not in any way affect the regional strategic balance nor the military balance between Venezuela and Columbia, as their offensive capacity is greatly reduced. The Spanish government has sought to promote an operation which is also of great interest for companies in our country, some of which are experiencing particular difficulties. For these reasons, Spain does not share in the opinion of the USA of not authorising the use of US components in the planes covered by the contract. In any event, it should be noted that the affected companies are responsible for undertaking the contracts they have signed, and as a result for taking any decisions in connection with them. The Government hopes that these contracts are completed successfully, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that this is the case".

Apart from this relation, there were visits by representatives of Latin American governments. In the first half of 2006, three Latin American presidents have already visited Spain.

The president-elect of Bolivia, Evo Morales, winner of the elections at the head of the *Movimiento Al Socialismo*, travelled to Spain as part of his tour of several countries before taking possession of his post on January 22nd 2006. During a visit lasting some thirty-six hours, on January 4th, he met the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Moratinos), the Minister of Industry and Commerce (José Montilla), the president, Rodríguez Zapatero, the general secretary for Ibero-America (Enrique Iglesias), the ex-president, Felipe González, and a group of business representatives, including Repsol YPF, and its president, Antonio Brufau, one of the largest companies in the gas business, whom he offered an "open and fluid dialogue", emphasising that Bolivia needs partners to invest. Finally he was received by the King, Juan Carlos. Faced with uncertainty regarding his economic

decisions and his sympathies towards Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez, both of whom he had visited before travelling to Madrid, Morales stated that: "The State will exercise its right to ownership of its natural resources. There will be nationalisation, although this does not mean it will confiscate or seize property from the companies". Zapatero offered his support and the promise to write off most of Bolivia's debt with Spain, in order to dedicate these funds to literacy programmes, as agreed at the Ibero-American summit in Salamanca. After Zapatero's meeting with Morales, the Secretary of State for Communication, Fernando Moraleda, stressed that "The Spanish government is convinced that the interests of Spanish companies will be fully compatible with the projects of the Bolivian government", in "conditions of legal safety". On the fifth, he met up with representatives of the trade union UGT (Cándido Méndez) and Comisiones Obreras (José María Hidalgo), gave a conference in the Elcano Royal Institute, and met the general coordinator of the left-wing party Izquierda Unida, Gaspar Llamazares. He did not meet with the leader of the PP, Mariano Rajoy, who was not in Madrid. Morales then travelled on to Brussels, France, South Africa, Brazil and China. On January 22nd the Prince of Asturias was present in La Paz at the inauguration ceremony of president Evo Morales.

In the case of Chile, relations have recently moved up a gear. On March 11th 2006 the Prince of Asturias was present at the inauguration of Michelle Bachelet as the new President of the country. The Prince, Felipe de Borbón, had been received the day before by Bachelet and the outgoing president Ricardo Lagos, who had expressed their wishes that Spain should maintain its troops taking part in the mission in Haiti.

On April 27th 2006 at the official residence of La Moncloa, Rodríguez Zapatero received the ex-president of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, who had just been appointed president of the Madrid Club, an organisation dedicated to strengthening democracy in the world.

On her way to the Vienna summit and on her first visit as president to a European country, Michelle Bachelet arrived in Madrid on May 9th 2006. On the same day the King offered a gala dinner at the Royal Palace, where he offered a toast for "very close relations of affection, respect and increasing cooperation" between the two countries. The following day Bachelet met Rodríguez Zapatero, who described Chile as an example of a country that was both "serious and modern", where "our companies feel at ease", both for Latin America and the rest of the world. For Bachelet, "Spain and Chile form a part of the global system in harmony". In reference to the crisis resulting from the decision of the Bolivian government to nationalise its hydrocarbons, Bachelet affirmed that "in Chile we respect the processes of each country". For Zapatero, the path stretched between regional integration and the strengthening of links with the European Union, with two main objectives: "strengthening democracy, and reducing social inequalities. The second will depend on the first". A Strategic Association Plan was signed, representing a higher level in bilateral relations, to coordinate efforts in a multilateral plane, contributing towards peace in the world with initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilisations,

economic cooperation and permanent dialogue, with at least one yearly meeting between the presidents and a permanent contact between the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs. That night, Bachelet was guest of honour at a dinner held by the female vice-president Fernández de la Vega – who had presented her with the New Economy Forum Prize 2006, at which only women were present. Before the dinner, Bachelet had received the leader of the PP, Mariano Rajoy.

The Argentinean president, Nestor Kirchner, travelled to Spain on June 20th 2006, accompanied by the most relevant members of his cabinet. It was his fourth visit to Spain, the third in an official capacity, and was market by economic affairs (renegotiating the country's debt and conflicts with companies: Spain is the second largest investor in Argentina, and Argentina is Spain's largest debtor, for a total of some 1,300 consolidated Dollars). Amongst the official acts held on the twenty-first, there were a series of meetings between Kirchner and Spanish businessmen, who he met in the Pardo Palace, followed by his visit to the King at La Zarzuela Palace. During the toast, the King emphasised Argentina's efforts in escaping from its economic crisis, Spain's support during those difficult times, and called for "the greatest of efforts" to preserve "the important bilateral economic links". In turn, Kirchner thanked Spain for its support, and stressed the opportunities offered by the Alliance of Civilisations. The following day, Kirchner met with Rodríguez Zapatero, emphasising the political harmony between both, in line with the Strategic Association both countries have had since 2005, developed together with a plan of action for 2006–2007.

When referring to the importance of relations with Argentina, we find that investment by Spanish companies in the country amount to 42,000 million Euros, which has grown over recent years, even during the crisis of 2001, reaching a total in 2005 of 1,800 million Euros. Migratory exchanges have also marked the bilateral agenda: some 284,000 Spaniards live in Argentina, and around 320,000 of their descendants. Now it is the Argentineans who travel to Spain, with a community of some 80,000.

Also, as part of this active diplomacy of international summits and meetings, we would also have to include the meetings held as part of the Ibero-American National Summits and the Summits between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, which we will explore later in this article, as well as those held at different sessions called by the United Nations Organisation in New York.

Apart from official visits, there is an endless to and fro of Spanish businessmen travelling to the region (in this case, there is no 'and vice-versa'). This is nothing new, although the intensity and scope of these visits have changed. Although being lesser known, many meetings are held between Latin American presidents and the heads of Spanish companies with interests in the region. One noteworthy case is that of the president of Repsol YPF, Antonio Brufau, who we can safely say has as many meetings with Latin American presidents as the president of the Spanish government. One of the most important was the meeting held in La Paz on March 3rd 2006 with the president, Evo Morales. Brufau declared the company's com-

mitment towards the country, that it would maintain its investments, and expressed his willingness to immediately start negotiations for the migration of contracts within the framework of the new hydrocarbons Law. No one can deny the involvement of this company in Bolivian affairs, against the backdrop of the decision to nationalise energy resources resulting from the Decree issued on May 1st 2006, having been accused of corruption, and Brufau himself of “psychological warfare” after stating that he would not be concerned about abandoning the country.

Another important element is Spain’s contribution towards processes of peace and stability in the region, with its first involvement being the presence of Spanish troops in the peacekeeping operations in the region as a whole (ONUCA) and in El Salvador (ONUSAL). Until recently there were Spanish troops stationed in Haiti – on July 1st 2005 there were 6,207 ‘blue helmets’ there from 20 countries, 200 of which were Spanish, and 1,288 police from 34 countries (35 from Spain), after the request issued by the Chilean president Ricardo Lagos and the Brazilian president Lula da Silva. An interesting feature in this case is the presence of Moroccan troops in the Spanish force (who would have imagined such a thing, after the incident of ‘Perejil Island’, which led to a serious stand-off between Spanish and Moroccan troops). However, despite the requests of several Latin American governments, on April 6th 2006 a joint declaration was published on cooperation between the kingdoms of Spain and Morocco, as part of efforts in the stabilisation mission of the United Nations in Haiti (MINUSTAH), established by Resolution 1542 of the Security Council of the UN. After elections were held in Haiti on March 26th, both governments decided to put an end to their mission, sending their troops home in a coordinated operation on March 30th 2006, with their equipment and other material returning home over the following days.

This event reflected, as has occurred in other cases (such as the sale of ‘defence materials’ to Venezuela) the lack of coordination, and some divergence between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Minister of Defence, during the period in which the ministry was headed by José Bono.

Another noteworthy feature is the presence of Spanish interlocutors in peace processes and as mediators in solving conflicts. Through the media, we discovered on July 19th 2005 that ex-president Felipe González was acting as a mediator between the Columbian government and one of the guerrilla factions operating in the country, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). During the process of mediation and dialogue between the parties, Spain (in particular its ambassador, Yago Pico de Coaña) played an active role in the Group of Friends of Columbia. It is not the first time that a Spanish politician has played such a role, as ex-president Adolfo Suárez had already done so in conflicts between Latin American countries.

A polemical affair was the sale of military material to Latin American countries, with the involvement not only of the countries directly involved, but also the USA, with its aggressive policy towards the government of Hugo Chávez. This occurred during the government of president Aznar in the case of sales of arms to Columbia, and during the government of Zapatero with the sale of arms to Venezuela.

Even in this case, as we have seen, differences became apparent within the government between the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Moratinos) and the Minister of Defence (Bono). On May 19th 2006, when the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alí Rodríguez Araque was questioned about criticisms levelled by the Partido Popular about this operation carried out by the Socialist government, he affirmed that “When the government of Chávez first took power, president José María Aznar came to Venezuela, to propose business very similar to that we are currently doing with the present Spanish government”.

Although we are not able to deal with it in the depth it deserves, we cannot leave aside an issue as transcendental as human rights. In the absence of national or international mechanisms, Spanish justice has served to try cases of violations of human rights and fundamental liberties. The most publicised case was the trial in Spain of the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. However, the cases have continued, and have culminated with sentences issued to torturers and mass murderers. On April 19th 2005, Spain’s High Court condemned Adolfo Scilingo, a former Argentinean soldier, to 640 years’ imprisonment for crimes against humanity. There are other cases underway, such as the process against Ricardo Cavallo for crimes committed during the Argentinean dictatorship. The Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberto Menchú, has filed criminal charges against politicians and security chiefs in Guatemala for a series of crimes, including the assault against the Spanish embassy in Guatemala City in January 1980. On September 26th 2005 the Constitutional Court issued a groundbreaking sentence, establishing that Spanish courts have the power to investigate and judge crimes of genocide and against humanity committed in other States, even when there are no Spanish victims.

As we have seen, it is important to take into account the role of other public and private bodies, including the foundations that have Latin America as the main recipient of their activities. These include the Carolina foundation or the International Foundation for Ibero-America for Public Administration and Policies (FIIAPP).

To sum up this section, Spanish foreign policy towards Latin America appears to give priority to the most important nations, with which it has created strategic associations (such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico) leaving to one side other more problematic countries such as Cuba, Venezuela or Bolivia. This was revealed by the Minister Moratinos in an interview published in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, on May 28th 2006, in which affirmed that “We do not have bad relations with Cuba, Venezuela or Bolivia, but they are not our priority. The volume of Spanish investment in Bolivia is 1% of its total investments in Ibero-America, with this percentage including the one billion Euros invested by Repsol”.

During his appearance before the Foreign Affairs Commission in the Senate on May 31st, Moratinos said “Our policy with Ibero-America must consist of strengthening the strategic alliances we have with Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Chile, and giving a new impulse to relations between the European Union and Latin America through the results of the Vienna Summit, and mediate and support dialogue and agreements between the European Union and Mercosur, the Andean

Community and Central American Community, as well as support these processes of Latin American integration. We also wish to continue mediating as before between Columbia and Venezuela in order to prevent the outbreak of regional conflicts. We will continue to support the new direction of European Union policies towards Cuba, insisting on respecting human rights”.

b. Economic relations: How important is Spanish commerce and investment in Latin America?

In this chapter on economic relations, it is necessary to break down a series of components, according to a number of specific coordinates. In commercial issues, Spain no longer has its own say, as this policy forms part of the responsibilities of the European Union, whose European Community Treaty includes a common commercial policy. Forming part of the same block means that most commercial relations are carried out within the block. For this reason, we may describe commercial relations between Spain and Latin America as scarce, and continue to consider as valid the statement made by Felipe González some years ago, when he stated that Spain traded more with Portugal than with the whole of Latin America.

Although taking only one year as an example has its shortcomings, if we take 2004 as our point of reference, it may be highly revealing. Imports from Latin America represented 2.59% of the total, while Spanish exports to the region were 3.58%. By countries, the main destination of Spanish exports was France, with 19.39%; we have to look down as far as position number 10 to find the first Latin American country, Mexico, with 1.56%. In terms of imports, the first is Germany, with 16.12%; the first Latin American country is also Mexico, at number 19, with 0.95%.

With regard to investments, we have already discussed the importance they have obtained in recent times. In any event, most investments are the responsibility of multinational companies, who have become major economic players (and political figures, naturally). Which, at the end of the day, forms part of the way of doing business and obtaining profits for their shareholders, offering a series of questions, especially in terms of remaining in the market (despite the crisis) or which become what have become known as “swallow capitals”. This said, the figures reveal the importance of investments: in Latin America, these plunged from 27,700 million Euros in 1999 to 6,100 million in 2004. A further piece of data is highly revealing: this last amount only represents 14.4% of direct Spanish investment abroad, and less than 0.8% of the GNP, while in 1999 it represented 65% and 5% respectively. Meaning that while the presence of multinational Spanish companies investing in Latin America is very important, what the figures tell us – as seen in the reports by the United Nations Conference on Development or those of the CEPAL – is that the most important investments occur in and between rich countries, that are safer, more reliable, and offer greater legal safeguards for investors.

What does make the presence of Spanish companies in Latin America more important is that their investment has been made in strategic sectors, such as energy, banking, transportation, communications or water. This situation, in countries that previously had strict state control over these sectors, accompanied by extensive poverty resulting from following the indications of international financial bodies, and a misguided sense of superiority by the heads of these companies, led to a general mood that was opposed to Spanish investments, which in isolated cases led to the burning of Spanish flags and the belief that a new Spanish colonisation and conquest was occurring. To further aggravate the situation, the *Financial Times* referred to a new 'Spanish Armada'.

What cannot be denied is that business in Latin America has substantially benefited the profit and loss accounts of many Spanish companies. The joint assets of BBVA and SCH in AL (140,000 million dollars) represent nearly 9% of their consolidated balances, and 53% of the total assets of the top 10 transnational banks in the region. In terms of attributed profits, Latin America provides 42% of those of BBVA, and 29% of SCH. In the case of Telefónica, business in Latin America represents 34% of its total income, with Telefónica Móviles, with 57 million customers, as the leading company in the region. More than 45% of the income of Repsol YPF and 23% of Endesa come from Latin America. One final piece of data: In 2005, petrol company Repsol YPF presented the best results in its history, with net profits totalling 3,120 million Euros. Curiously, in January 2006, the area of exploration and production made an over-estimate of 1,254 million barrels of petrol (25% of the total) for the company's proven reserves, especially in Bolivia and Argentina. In these two countries, Repsol YPF has a major presence, as a result of the decree nationalising the energy sector in the former, and as a result of efforts by the Argentine government to recover lost ground in this sector.

Another issue of particular relevance is the question of debt. On several occasions, Spanish governments have dealt with the issue in a bilateral manner, dealing above all with human disasters caused by natural disasters. On July 8th 2005 the Council of Ministers took a decision to cancel more than 2,200 million Euros owed by 38 poor countries that are highly in debt. Four are Latin American countries: Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guyana. In this case an important initiative was taken by the Lower House of the Spanish Parliament, the *Congreso de los Diputados*, which on June 22nd 2006 gave its approval to a law whereby the government would have to present within one year a plan to renegotiate the foreign debt of the poorest countries most deeply in debt (the HIPC), owing to Spain before December 31st 2003.

Also in the political-economic sphere, we should include a matter that reflects Spanish tension and dualism with regard to its affective bond with Latin America and its obligations as a member of the European Union. I refer to demands from Latin America to do away with commercial protectionism and the difficult situation of Spain faced with demands from Latin America and the advantages of belonging to a club that offers large-scale grants through the Common Agricultural Policy, amongst others.

The case of Bolivia has served as a reflection of the complexity of dealing with matters that are chiefly economic, but which have a clearly political undercurrent, involving public and private sectors. The chronicle of the first days of May 2006 reflect this situation. After the decree issued by the Bolivian government on May 1st, nationalising the hydrocarbon sector, the Spanish government responded by calling for a meeting with Bolivia's commercial attaché in Madrid Álvaro del Pozo, who was received by the Director General for Ibero-America, Javier Sandomingo. He was warned of the "consequences for bilateral relations" that would result from applying the decree. The Bolivian authorities set a deadline of 180 days for the companies, including Repsol YPF, to adapt to the new rules. From Buenos Aires, the president of the company, Antoni Brufau, expressed his "concern" for the "sad and worrying" decision made by the Bolivian government. In turn, Spanish vice-president Fernández de la Vega requested that the minister of Industry, José Montilla, met with the Spanish companies with interests in the country, and with various Secretaries of State, the Economy (David Vegara), Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Bernardino León), Presidency (Miguel Sebastián) and the Secretary-General for Industry (Joan Trullen).

c. Cooperation for development

From its very outset, Latin America has been a priority destination for Spanish Official Development Aid. The International Cooperation for Development Law makes it clear that "international cooperation policies for development forms part of the state's external actions, and is based on the state's unity of action abroad" (Article 3). Based on these foundations, and taking the situation of Latin American countries into account, the main destination of Spanish aid is linked with the interests of foreign policy. On dealing with geographical priorities, Article 5 states that within the bilateral framework, and notwithstanding the establishment of other territorial areas as established in Article 5, the preferential areas of action will be considered as the countries of Latin America, the Arab countries of north Africa and the Middle East, as well as those less developed nations with which Spain has special bonds of a historic or cultural nature.

This priority towards the Latin American countries has been reflected in the different Master Plans adopted between 2001 and 2004, and 2005 and 2008. In the current Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation 2005–2008, a series of criteria are established as the basis for geographical assignment: an orientation towards the poorest countries; a greater commitment from the destination countries with development objectives; greater comparative advantages to guarantee greater effectiveness of the aid given; and the presence of cooperation agreements and treaties between Spain and the destination countries. In terms of geographic priorities, there are four types of countries: priority nations, in which the largest volume of resources will be concentrated, creating a Strategic Country Document, which in Latin America includes Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador; countries with special

attention, depending on the need to prevent conflicts or contribute towards the construction of peace, as a result of weaknesses in human rights and the democratic system, and as a result of natural disasters or others caused by economic problems, including Cuba and Columbia; and preferential countries, in which there are sectors of the population living in conditions of limited economic and social development, including Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, Panama, Argentina and Uruguay.

The Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Leire Pajín, detailed the aims, instruments, resources and participants in Spanish cooperation with Latin America on June 6th 2006, before the Ibero-American Affairs Committee of the Spanish Senate. Once again, she stressed that: "Latin America is an essential point of reference for our country, and a priority area for our foreign policy, and of course for our development cooperation policy". Pajín described how 10 countries in the region (Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador), together with a further 13 countries throughout the world, considered as priority, receive 70% of Spanish Official Development Aid. The amount set aside for 2006 totals some 613 million Euros, a "historical record" in the words of the Secretary of State.

If we look through the list, we see that of all the Latin American countries, plus Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean are included (except for some logical exceptions, such as Surinam) in some type of preference for Spanish cooperation. Amongst the arguments handled by the Master Plan to continue this preference, is "the political commitment that has been continuously renewed, and which is expressed in a cooperation based on accompanying the main public policies and strategies of poverty in the Latin American countries". It is a type of language that diverges from that of the previous period, under the government of the PP, which focused more on the worthiness of liberalism and private initiative as motors for the economy, with the accompaniment of aid for development.

The Annual International Cooperation Plan 2006, approved by the Cabinet on January 20th this year, takes a step forward in making progress towards improving the quality and quantity of Spanish aid. It is expected that the total amount of official development aid totals some 3,234.96 million Euros, representing 0.35% of the Gross National Product. The government is committed to increasing this figure to 0.5% of the GNP by 2008, and then reaching 0.7%, in the event of achieving a second legislature, for 2012.

Without including any major changes in its priorities, the Plan for 2006 reflects new priorities, conditioned by factors such as immigration, mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa. It emphasises that "Spain has supported the priority action included in the Declaration for the Countries of Low Income and Less Advanced Countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the greatest needs are concentrated in terms of achieving the Objectives of the Millennium", without forgetting that "this support has been complemented with the defence of the need to maintain attention on Medium-Income countries, in particularly those of Medium-Low Income Countries, many of whom face up to problems similar to those of countries with less income".

For Latin America, as a result of the agreements of the fifteenth Ibero-American Summit (held in Salamanca on the 14th and 15th of October 2005), the most important commitments are: setting up an Ibero-American Plan to eliminate illiteracy in Latin America before 2015; supporting programmes to exchange debt for social investment; establishing foundations to create an Ibero-American Cultural Charter; preparing an Ibero-American Agreement on Social Security; supporting the Ibero-American Judicial Cooperation Network; supporting the establishment of an Ibero-American Humanitarian fund; the decision to implement a coordination mechanism to offer an effective response to natural disasters in the region; the joint declaration by Ibero-American business associations and trade unions; the integration of the indigenous perspective and gender issues as essential factors in Ibero-American cooperation; the preparation and presentation of an Ibero-American Meeting on Migrations; the monitoring and analysis of the features of cooperation in Medium-Income countries; and the maintenance of Ibero-American support for the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

An ambitious plan, often counting on more political willpower than the actual resources necessary to set them underway, and in particular to provide them with the continuity necessary to ensure their sustainability.

An important piece of data to bear in mind is that according to the Spanish Cooperation Association, some 1,400 Spaniards work in this field on a professional basis; of this total, 58% work in Latin America, according to the first census taken for this group. This reveals the growing inclusion of non-governmental agents in the field of cooperation, a much relevant role in the case of decentralised cooperation, carried out by Regional Authorities and local Councils.

d. Cultural Relations

Here we would include a few lines on the fact that these cultural relations are directly linked to the increase of Hispanic culture and increasing number of people who speak Spanish in the world. We should remember that candidates to the presidency of the USA have to speak a few lines in Spanish to win the vote of part of the electorate in the southern states, and the fact that many cities, including Los Angeles, have Hispanic mayors.

This leads on directly to the importance of the culture industry in Spanish, especially visible in music and cinema, with an increasing Latin presence, opening the way to a large market for film companies.

An important issue is the diffusion of culture and the role of the Cervantes Institute. Its work has particularly come to light with the recent 400th anniversary of the publication of *Don Quixote*.

As regards the future, one interesting proposal is the configuration of an Ibero-American Space for Higher Education, which could be set up alongside the Euro-Latin American Educational Space, supported amongst other agents by the European Parliament. It also received the explicit support of the Ibero-American conference of University Chancellors, held on May 19th and 20th, bringing together 406 Chancellors in Seville from Universities in Spain, Portugal and Latin America.

One last matter for consideration is that on June 13th 2006, in Cordoba, Andalusia, the Cultural Charter of the Ibero-American World was adopted, as part of the eighth Ibero-American Culture Conference.

e. Social relations. The human dimension; Migrations: Spain, from a country of emigrants, to a receptor of immigration.

It is impossible to deny the continuous exchange of people crossing from one side of the 'pond' to another, over a common history spanning these 500 years.

In the case of migrations, this transit has been constant, and depending on the conditions and the political, social and economic situation, has changed over the years. Recently, the Universities of Madrid paid homage to the family of the president Lázaro Cárdenas, who opened Mexico's frontiers to receive thousands of Spaniards fleeing from the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship.

As we mentioned before, the circumstances have changed, and now the migratory currents bring thousands of Latin Americans to Spain, and thereby to other countries in the European Union. After the process of regulating permits for immigrants carried out by the Ministry of Employment between February and May 2005, a total of 691,655 requests were received, of which 688,139 were processed. From these requests, 122,414 were from Ecuador, followed by Romania (95,830), Morocco (64,477), Columbia (48,265), Bolivia (37,179), Bulgaria (21,270), Argentina (20,271), The Ukraine (18,626), Uruguay (9,148), etc. It has been calculated that immigrants represent 8.5% of the total population of Spain. The figures also reveal that Spain is the country within the European Union that received most immigrants in 2005, with a total of 652,300, followed by Italy with 338,100.

This situation opens an extensive debate on questions regarding immigration, frontier control, the integration of immigrants, repatriation, etc, with its focal point as money sent home by emigrants, which in the case of some Latin American countries (Ecuador and Mexico) has become one of their main sources of income. According to data from the Bank of Spain, these amounts sent by emigrants to their countries of origin totalled some 3,844 million Euros in 2005, 10.42% more than in 2004.

The fact that in some cases visas have been requested to enter in Spain, which has justified the decision as it was taken within the framework of European institutions, has meant that in the case of Columbia, the writer and Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez has refused to visit the country.

In this case, it is necessary to redefine the spaces we share, at the same time as improving quality of life in all areas, including democracy. This is the goal of the Secretary of State for Cooperation, Leire Pajín, from the pages of the Carolina Foundation, referring to the creation of an active Ibero-American citizenship: "One of the main goals of Spanish policy towards the region, as indicated in the Spanish Cooperation Plan 2005–2008, is to use part of those resources towards promoting the quality of democracy through real and effective participation by society, and

the exercising and respect of fundamental rights. For this reason, the Spanish government is dedicated to supporting and promoting representative and participative democracy, and political pluralism; in supporting and strengthening the processes and mechanisms of social dialogue; and in strengthening the State of Rights, coinciding with the wishes of many of the governments in the region. Here, the actions carried out by Spanish Cooperation in the sector of democratic governability and institutional development range from supporting the development of an Administration at the service of its citizens to the correct handling of public affairs, and the strengthening of Public Administrations aimed at guaranteeing equality and quality in the access, management and provision of public services”.

RENEWING THE IBERO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS AND THE IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMITS

One of the ‘star items’ on Spain’s foreign policy agenda with Latin America is the Ibero-American Community of Nations. Without doubt, even as a collective project, it was born and has developed thanks to Spanish support, at both political and financial level.

In order to make this project a reality, the Ibero-American Summits took place, the first of which was in Guadalajara (Mexico) on July 18th and 19th 1991, leading to the following declaration of intentions: “We have met together for the first time in history in order to jointly explore the major challenges that face our countries in a world undergoing transformations. We therefore propose to channel all of the political will of our governments towards providing the solutions for these challenges, and turning a series of historical and cultural similarities that bind us into an instrument for unity and development, based on dialogue, cooperation and solidarity.”

The fifteenth summit took place in Salamanca, Spain, on October 14th and 15th 2005, bringing together a total of 22 countries: three from Europe (Andorra, Spain and Portugal) and 19 from Latin America and the Caribbean. Their representatives ratified “all of the joint efforts made by Ibero-America including the values, principles and agreements that we have reached in previous Summits. These are still maintained through the full effectiveness and commitment towards the proposals and principles consecrated in the United Nations Charter, in our adhesion to International Law, extending democracy, development, the promotion and universal protection of human rights, the strengthening of multilateralism and cooperation between peoples and nations, and the rejection of unilateral coercive measures contrary to International Law.”

One of the shortcomings detected, the lack of continuity, visibility and institutional-ity was attempted to be resolved with the creation of the General Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB) as a permanent supporting body for the institutionalisation of the Ibero-American Conference. It was headed by an international figure, Enrique V. Iglesias, who had previously held the post of president of the Inter-American Development Bank. The 22 countries appointed him to support the objectives

established in the Convention of Santa Cruz de la Sierra aimed at strengthening Ibero-American cooperation, internal cohesion and the international projection of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. It achieved this to the extent that the Ibero-American Community is recognised by the United Nations Organisation, and Enrique Iglesias (who has frequently been the subject of jokes as a result of sharing the name of the famous singer) has met with representatives of the institutions of the European Union as part of the preparations for the fourth European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean Summit.

As regards the objectives being sought, the Ibero-American countries reaffirmed in Salamanca the “commitment of the Ibero-American Community with International Law and an effective multilateralism, which we intend to contribute towards in a relevant manner. We commit ourselves to actively supporting an extensive reform of the system of the United Nations which, based on the principles of efficiency, participation, transparency, representation, sovereign equality and democratisation, strengthens its role in preventing threats, maintaining peace and international security, and promoting economic and social development. In this sense, we declare our recognition of the work of the General Secretary of the United Nations on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organisation.”

Tasks whose effective completion may contribute towards diminishing one of the criticisms most frequently levelled against the Ibero-American Community, its tendency towards excessive rhetoric instead of actions.

One of the authors who has explored the summits in greatest detail, Celestino del Arenal, states that: “the fact that they have come to articulate in practice this common Ibero-American space, expressly recognising its existence, is the most tangible expression of the reality of this space, and of the idea that this may be a starting point for further exploring the relations that exist between Ibero-American countries as a whole, which may take shape in specific ways of cooperation and exchange, of the most varied types and in the most diverse fields”.

THE TRIANGLES: SPAIN – EUROPEAN UNION – LATIN AMERICA AND SPAIN – USA – LATIN AMERICA

In a world that is increasingly interrelated and globalised, foreign policy agendas interweave without ceasing. For this reason, relations between Spain and Latin America have to be considered taking another two coordinates into account, visible in the triangles mentioned above.

In the first, Spain – European Union – Latin America, there was great expectation that Spain would act as a bridge between the other two groups. Negotiations for Spain to join the EU, leading to its entry on January 1st 1986, made it clear that it was not Spain that would change the policy of the European Community, but instead community policies that would change Spanish politics in many of its facets, both in national and foreign affairs. In the same year, Latin America was marginalized from European foreign actions, and the entry of Spain (and Portugal, it should be remembered), led to the start of a relation which would gradually

reach the category of a strategic association, although once again, the name was considerably more important-sounding than what actually occurred. Since then, relations have been consolidated, and we may say that there is a clear harmony in the political agenda, and clear differences in economic matters.

Institutionalised political dialogue reached its highest level at the European-Latin American summits. The first took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999, the second in Madrid in May 2002, the third in Guadalajara in May 2004, and the fourth in Vienna on May 12th 2006.

Without ignoring the importance of the first, simply for this reason, the meeting held in Guadalajara was particularly interesting, as it incorporated two major novelties: the incorporation of 10 new member states, with the European Union now reaching a total of 25 member states; and the change in the Spanish Government, with the triumph of the Socialist Party. The fact of bringing together politicians representing parties from the left led to the summit including two essential issues in its final declaration: active and effective multilateralism, and social cohesion.

The Vienna meeting carried on from previous contacts, although it was marked by a loss of importance of Latin America in Europe's foreign policy agenda (the Austrian presidency had other priority issues, and the geopolitical map of the 25 member states did not look so far afield, to a region that did not cause it any problems), and also, because Latin American integration appeared to be on rock ground at that time, with Venezuela abandoning the Andes Community, and with the crisis in Mercosur (resulting, amongst other problems, from the so-called paper mill crisis between Argentina and Uruguay).

Spain, together with other partners, especially Portugal, has the role of being Latin America's main partner in the EU, making every effort to ensure that neither the internal crises of the union nor the new map of external relations, based on threats to European security, serve to hinder relations with Latin America. If this task is relatively simple in politics, it is much more complicated in the economic sphere, where Latin American countries, once again led by Brazil, continue to demand that the rich countries (whether from the European Union, USA or Japan) abandon their protective policies that have such negative consequences on the economy of poorer countries. In this case it is difficult, as we have seen, that Spain abandons the benefits of Common Agricultural Policy grants to defend the proposals of Latin American nations.

We are left with the other triangle. We could sum up relations between the USA and Latin American countries with a famous phrase from its southern neighbour, which states "poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the USA". Latin America was the first to suffer the consequences of the expansion of the USA, from 1847, when Mexico lost nearly half its territory, up to the present day, although this power has decreased with the passage of time. This means that there is an extensive list of negative events in inter-American relations, combined with relations of cooperation and 'good neighbourliness', as relations were referred to during the government of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

It comes as no surprise that the European Union, a weak player, has had little presence in a region considered as the back yard of a superpower. By increasing its international presence, the EU should also occupy its own space in Latin America, although without altering the dominant status quo. And Spain is responsible for supporting good relations with Latin America and the USA, both from a bilateral point of view as well as from its position within the European Union.

However, the variables in this area are extensive, and the changes frequent. There is no similarity between Spain's relations with the USA during the government of president Aznar (who had the privilege of putting his feet up on the table and smoking a cigar together with Bush) and those during the period of president Rodríguez Zapatero, whose decisions in foreign policy (such as the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq) have been punished by not having met with Bush for an interview. And these relations have had their consequences in Latin America. The presence of Aznar in the photo from the Azores summit (together with Bush, Blair and Barroso) led on to his trips to find converts to the cause of fighting a war against Sadam Hussein, using the falsehood of the presence of weapons of mass destruction as an excuse. These were important trips, if we consider that two Latin American countries (Chile and Mexico) occupied a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, like Spain. Aznar achieved a lesser prize, as some Central American countries, faithful to the Bush administration, did decide to send troops.

With the arrival of president Rodríguez Zapatero the map changed. Not only the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, but also decisions regarding Latin America have irritated the USA. The removal of sanctions on Cuba and greater contact and dialogue with the Cuban regime; criticisms of the situation in Columbia; the sale of arms to the government of Hugo Chávez, as part of which operation the USA administration refused that components made in the USA could be sold, are all examples of thorny issues that have made relations more difficult. However, it does appear that the frosty atmosphere is thawing a little, after a series of visits by members of Zapatero's government to Washington and a brief encounter between the two presidents (on February 22nd 2005, Bush and Zapatero crossed paths in Brussels, during a NATO summit; the exchange was brief, with Bush saying in 'Spanglish': "Hola! Qué tal, amigo?" (Hi, how are you, friend?), with Zapatero replying: "Bien, y tu?" (Fine, and you?).

The first glimmer of a degree of reconciliation was seen during the visit by Minister Moratinos to Washington, where he met Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on June 19th 2006, with both emphasizing the favourable progress of relations. The visit took place in the midst of an argument regarding reports from the European Council on the transportation of detainees accused of terrorism on flights organised by the CIA. Moratinos qualified Spain's policy as "complementary" to that of the USA with regard to Latin America, and according to reports, dealt with the thorniest cases, such as Cuba and Venezuela. With regard to Cuba, Moratinos said: "We differ with the USA on its current policy, although Spain's greater capacity to act as an interlocutor with the Cuban authorities has been highlighted, and our intention is to use this ability to enable Cuban society to extend its level

of democratisation, and improve its human rights record". The day before, in Tampa (Florida), during the annual meeting of the Spain-USA Council, Moratinos had discussed his idea of working in a complementary capacity: "When it comes to Latin America, it is our intention to work in a complementary manner, although there are still some differences that need resolving. Each of us has its abilities, and we have to play the role that corresponds to us. We do not wish to replace the USA; we need the USA more in Latin America, but we also need Spain to bring a real projection to the region". Several days earlier, on June 13th, in the Spanish Senate, Moratinos had said that: "We believe that in the Latin American perspective, the desire for autonomy and independence does not necessarily call for confrontation. On the contrary, it is compatible with a certain level of cooperation". It was every bit a declaration on a way of working that could redirect relations between Spain and the USA, with consequences for Latin America.

Here we would also have to situate the relations between the USA and the European Union in reference to Latin America, conditioned to some extent by the previous 'triangles'. On the twenty-first of June, a Transatlantic Summit was held in Vienna between the two main world powers, which in its final declaration included their concern for the situation of human rights in Cuba. The Cuban response was as undiplomatic as it was blunt, with the editorial in the newspaper *Granma*, of June 23rd, ending with the following phrase: "The alliance of the European Union with Bush is pathetic. They do not have the moral authority or the capacity to dictate conditions, or impose decisions upon Cuba. Even the empire itself was capable of doing that. The power of the lackeys is minimal". We should remember that from December 2nd 1996, at the behest of Spain's then president Aznar, the European Union had adopted a common position, conditioning its relations with Cuba on a change in its economic, political and social system.

LOOKING FORWARD: THE BICENTENARIES

Curing the wounds of the past (colonisation), without blaming the colonisers for everything that happens

Although a series of strategic bilateral associations have been established, their content, and particularly their results, would appear to be insufficient. This is an opinion related to that of the writer Celestino del Arenal (in the Spanish newspaper *El País*, on May 28th 2006), when he said, "Spanish policy in Latin America is more than summits. The main problem of Spanish foreign policy is that it is not planned in the medium and long term, and no strategic objectives are defined country by country. Action is taken on a day to day basis, in a reactive manner".

Consensus

The intensity of these relations at present, based on the community of values and an absence of conflicts, does not mean that there are no problems pending

solution: these would include increasing cooperation for the consolidation of democracy (clearly detailed in the Report from the PNUD from 2004, entitled *La democracia en América Latina. Hacia una democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos*); the fight against poverty and the problem of inequality that so severely afflicts Latin American societies; questions relating to immigrants, including their integration and the money they send back to their countries of origin; the economic agenda in the light of problems such as debt, an area in which there are already a series of interesting initiatives, or the activity of Spanish companies. Furthermore, Spain, and particularly its government, must strive to make the best use of its position with Latin America in the forums and organisations in which it has a presence and influence, particularly in the case of the European Union, beyond the usual proposal of acting as a 'bridge'.

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