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Report **National case report of Delphi analysis**

Case report **Spain**

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Spanish National “Delphi” Report Political and Media Actors’ Visions of the Future of Europe

I. Analytic Summary

There is a broad consensus among Spanish actors that European integration and Spain’s membership in the European Union are good things. There are indeed cleavages, but these cleavages distinguish those who are for the status quo from those who are dissatisfied or critical with the rate of change. There are no Eurosceptics among Spanish actors. With this in mind, one can examine the general views on European integration of five types of actors (state, party, interest groups, NGOs, and journalists) with regards to the changes that should take place, the type of change that is needed, and the speed of change.

i. Main perceived areas of change

The great majority of actors value past achievements on the road toward European integration. They also value positively the recent processes of enlargement and of drafting a European Constitution, although they are concerned about the implications of the former. Nevertheless, a large number among them believe that there is still a long way to go until the process of integration is completed. In relative terms, among these actors we find more representatives of interest groups than of state institutions. The most prevalent comment among these respondents is that the European Union must become more political. These respondents are often critical of the contrast between the high speed at which economic integration has proceeded and the slow speed of political integration. It is often unclear what they mean when they advocate a political Europe. Do they want more transfer of competences to the European Union? Or do they want instead the development of an European Union with a more supranational character? Close inspection of the comments made by the respondents suggests that what many would like is for the European Union to develop and implement instruments that would tame market forces. Most generally, a political Europe and a social Europe very often come to mean the same thing. This, of course, has little to do with the transfer of sovereignty to European institutions, since what really grants supranationality to these institutions is not the number of competences but rather the locus of policy-making and the way decisions are taken. What many respondents want is a move away from neoliberalism toward more welfare policies.

The second major change a sizeable number of respondents advocate is a bringing of the European institutions closer to the European Union citizens. Some respondents criticize the bureaucracy in Brussels, while others criticize the transfer of competences to Brussels. They latter advocate instead a strict respect of the subsidiarity principle. Emphasis on the voices for change, however, should not obscure the fact that close to a half of the respondents are satisfied with the status quo and reflect rather on the European Union’s past achievements. These respondents emphasize the economic achievements mainly, both for Europe and for Spain, and only secondarily the political security and stability achieved. Among the economic achievements they stress the creation of a vast market and prosperity for the greater number. They also mention the economic benefits that membership in the European Union has entailed for Spain. Rather than criticize the lack of momentum in the process of European integration, like does the other group of respondents, these ones emphasize the tremendous pace of integration over the last decades. Rather than criticize new advances toward a political Europe, these respondents praise the newly found ‘pragmatism’ of the European Union and the European Union’s growing sensitivity to national interests.

ii. Type of Change

It is fair to say that the question of a federal versus an intergovernmental Europe does not play a role in Spanish discussions over integration. The real dividing lines among Spanish actors are

those between a weak or a strong Europe and the one mentioned above between an economic or neoliberal Europe and a social Europe. Notwithstanding this clarification, among those advocating change one often hears demands for institutional change in the direction of strengthening the European Parliament and the Commission. Others, especially regional actors, advocate a greater role for the regions. Although a sizeable number, however, these voices do not constitute a majority of those interviewed. For the great majority, the European Union's institutions may be too complex, too distant, overbureaucratized, but in general they see them as acceptable in terms of the distribution of power among them.

iii. Speed of Change

A slight majority of the respondents would like further integration and they often decry what they perceive as current sluggishness. This is certainly surprising when one reflects on the changes that have taken place in the European Union since 1985 (even its name was different). Nonetheless, it is a widespread feeling among respondents, even those who feel very positive about the process. This apparent contradiction is resolved when one notices that many respondents simply compare current developments with the 1985-1995 period. For them, the Delors' Presidency of the Commission was a golden period in the process of European integration. They generally attribute the current standstill to the lack of leadership among current political leaders and to national egoisms. What is lacking in their view is the will to transcend the national interest and to think about the European interest.

II. General Overview

Table 1 below provides us with an overall impression of different actors' perceptions of the contributions of European integration to the region. Interviewees were asked whether the process of European integration contributed to six specific developments in Europe: peace and security, political stability, economic growth, economic competitiveness, environmental protection, and social equality. Where they gave a positive response, their score was recorded as 3; where they claimed European integration "partly" contributed, the score was 1.5; and where they said that European integration did not contribute to that development, the score recorded was 0. Aggregate scores for all actor types are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Actor's perceptions on whether European integration contributes to specific developments on the European region

		Report					
Type of Organization		Security	Political Stability	Economic Growth	Economic Competitiveness	Environmental Protection	Social equality
State	Mean	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,727	2,591
	N	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Std. Deviation	,0000	,0000	,0000	,0000	,6068	,7006
Parties	Mean	2,063	2,438	2,625	2,250	2,250	1,688
	N	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	1,1160	,7763	,6944	,8018	1,1339	1,2518
Interest Groups	Mean	2,864	2,864	2,864	2,591	2,182	1,500
	N	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Std. Deviation	,4523	,4523	,4523	,7006	1,0313	1,1619
NGOs	Mean	2,654	2,538	3,000	2,885	2,192	1,962
	N	13	13	13	13	13	13
	Std. Deviation	,6578	,9456	,0000	,4160	1,1644	1,2823
Journalists	Mean	2,600	2,800	2,500	2,700	2,300	2,700
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15
	Std. Deviation	1,0556	,7746	1,0856	,8409	1,2507	,8409
Total	Mean	2,664	2,741	2,793	2,716	2,328	2,147
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58
	Std. Deviation	,7969	,6961	,6558	,6564	1,0578	1,1278

As can be seen, all types of actors believed that European integration either clearly or partly contributes to the positive development of all six fields. European integration was thus perceived in an overwhelmingly positive light. The table also shows that there was a broad consensus on European integration contributing mostly to economic growth, followed by political stability, economic competitiveness, and security. With regards to environmental protection and especially social equality, the different actors were less convinced that European integration contributed to the positive development in these fields, albeit only in relative terms.

Concerning the five different group of actors, state representatives were the group most convinced of the beneficial effects and outcomes of European integration. Its eleven members were unanimous with regards to the positive impact of European integration in the areas of security, political stability, economic growth, and economic competitiveness, and only slightly less convinced with regards to environmental protection and social inequality. The party representatives were not as positive as the state actors but were on the whole still convinced that European integration did contribute to the development of all six fields, most prominently economic growth and political stability. They were the least convinced with regards to social equality, claiming that the integration process only partly led to development in this field.

Similar results were obtained for the interest groups, which also did not believe that European integration fully contributes to the development of social equality. Nevertheless, in all the remaining fields except environmental protection, the representatives of the interest groups were even more convinced of the positive effects of European integration than were the party actors. Respondents from the NGOs were unanimous in their view that integration contributes to the development of economic growth, and were largely convinced of its enhancement of security, political stability, and economic competitiveness. Concerning environmental protection and social equality, the views were more ambivalent although on the whole still largely positive. Finally, journalists were the group with the most positive evaluations of the effects of European integration on social equality. They also believed in the positive influence of European integration on all other issues.

III. Detailed Analysis of Actors' Perceptions

i. State actors

The analysis of the Spanish state actors' answers reveals a largely positive view of the European integration process. In fact, all but two state actors were in favor of how it is presently unfolding. A comment by the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs is exemplary in this regard:

“The project in itself will create a geographical sphere of prosperity, security, respect to fundamental rights, democratic pluralism, state of law, justice and liberty without comparison in any other geographical space in the world.”

A further interviewee (Dirección General de Coordinación de Asuntos Generales y Técnicos de la UE) made a similar comment, arguing that Europe has lived through “a level of stability and prosperity never experienced before.” Positive comments generally referred to the European Union's beneficial economic effects, ranging from its contribution to the development of alternative markets for Spain's products to its role in promoting sustainable economic growth and its advocacy of flexible economic policies and the liberalization of the economy. One interviewee from the Ministry of Economy, for instance, listed economic growth and stability and the reduction of income inequalities as some of the positive effects of membership in the European Union and commented that these positive developments would result in expanded opportunities. Other respondents, however, like the representative from the Ministerio de Justicia, pointed to other benefits of European integration, namely the fact that people begin to develop a dual identity as members of their country and of Europe.

Despite the dominant positive views on developments in the European Union, some respondents pointed out to areas where progress is needed. For example, one respondent (Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia i Pesca – Catalan regional government) claimed that whilst the process was positive, it was not moving fast enough. He also criticized that the European Union neglects the reality and needs of regions like Catalonia and, more generally, of plurinational states like Spain. Another respondent, a representative of the General Directorate of Foreigners and Immigrants, expressed misgivings about the complexity of European integration. He¹ explained this in his view unnecessary complexity as resulting from the fact that some political leaders perhaps lacked determination to move forward; this problem, he said, can only be addressed through faster and simplified mechanisms to reach agreements and policies. Yet another respondent, this time from the Ministry of Economy, pointed to important differences in levels of social equality in the European Union and to the problems created by the heterogeneity of the member states. Finally, the different historical pasts of the member states were an issue of concern to the representative of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. These differences are according to her the source of the difficulties that the Convent had encountered in the drafting of the European Constitution.

The misgivings and criticisms listed above did not prevent most respondents from expressing a very positive attitude toward the European integration process. The only state actor whose views on the process can be described as really negative was a representative of the Catalan government, for whom many problems remain to be solved and for whom the pace of integration is too slow:

“The current context is not one in which people are ready to assume the challenges. There's a total crisis and we will have to fight a lot to continue defending the ideal of the EU. Unfortunately, it [the pace at which the EU develops] is too dependent

¹ We use “he” and “she” indistinctively to preserve the anonymity of the respondents.

on the political colors of those ruling in the different countries. The trend is towards less Europe.”

The respondent obviously did not agree with this situation and placed some blame on the European Union's institutional arrangements. If progress in European integration were truly on the minds of the respective political leaders, he claimed, the Commission and, even more to the point, the European Parliament, would be granted more weight. Presently, he argued, no serious efforts are being invested toward achieving this. Interestingly enough, his views were echoed by the other Catalan state actor in our study (Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia i Pesca), for whom there is a lack of balance in the distribution of power among the EU institutions. His view was that the European Parliament and the Commission must be strengthened. Another respondent, the representative of the General Directory of Foreigners and Immigration highlighted that the roles of the European institutions are sometimes contradictory and ill-defined, which often leads to clashes of interests rather than to joint efforts toward European integration.

Apart from the three examples listed above, Spanish state actors saw the functioning of the European institutions in a very positive light. What one notices is a positive correlation between the respondents' general views on the process of European integration and their views of the functioning of EU institutions. Most interviewees remarked that the European Union institutions adhere to the roles that correspond to them, which according to the representative of the Ministry of Economy are to “integrate, coordinate, impulse, and direct.” A further respondent praised the fact the EU institutions have allowed candidate countries to participate in the decision-making process. Finally, one interviewee expressed the conviction that integration requires that the prevailing balance, or ‘triangle’, of power between the Commission, Council, and EP be retained and that the power scope of each of these institutions be increased.

ii. Political parties

The representatives of the political parties interviewed in our study were split concerning the process of European integration and by far not as positive as the state actors previously. Only two respondents, one from the conservative Partido Popular (PP) and the other from the socialist party (PSOE) (Agriculture), were unambiguously satisfied with the present situation and with the path integration has followed. They both said, however, they would like to see integration proceeding faster in certain areas and the budget for the EU to be larger. Unsurprisingly, these two respondents were also satisfied with the role and performance of the EU institutions.

The representative of Convergència i Unió (CIU) (Immigration) agreed with the direction of integration. He expressed his belief, however, that Europe is on the road to resembling the Roman Empire – very centralized and with centralist leaders – and thus criticized that the regions have not been favored. A similar ambivalence was expressed by the respondent from the PSOE (Immigration), who argued that there has been “a comparative standstill” with respect to the European governments' support for the development of European policies. Her view was that the prior generation showed a much greater willingness to push for European integration. The current situation can be explained, according to her, by lack of leadership, structural factors, such as the excessive bureaucracy in the European institutions, and political circumstances, such as periodic instances of corruption. Nevertheless, she believed that the process could take off again, especially once the European constitution is approved.

Three respondents had a clearly negative outlook on the integration process. The representative of Izquierda Unida (IU) (European integration) argued that the present direction was not towards “more Europe” but toward strengthening states in detriment of a common EU power, as seen in the squabbling over the number of votes assigned to each member at the Council. Evidence for the lack of a strong European Union power is for him the autonomy of the ECB. A strong

European Union would involve placing the European Parliament at the center of European policy-making, the election of a European Union President by the European Parliament, and the accountability of the ECB to the EU institutions. The CiU (European Integration) respondent also mentioned power concerns and criticized the dominant role that states still play in the European Union.

The respondent from IU (Immigration) commented that although the EU has made advances in the direction of a unified market and a common currency there has not been significant progress in the area of citizens' rights. There is, according to him, no balance between the economic Europe and the citizens' Europe. He understood this situation as a "castration" of the integration process and blamed this state of affairs to the fact that decisions are taken by the Council and the Commission but not by the popularly elected EP. This in turn reflects the lack of a European citizenship. The respondent from CiU (Agriculture) raised similar concerns, when she expressed the belief that the EU neglects a more citizen-centered approach to integration. The integration process needs to be less technocratic and more participative so that citizens make the EU their own. A constitution is a step in the right direction, as long as it considers regional particularities.

iii. NGO actors

The viewpoints of the NGO actors on the European integration process fall between those by political party representatives and state actors. Three of the NGO representatives fully approved the current course of European integration. For the representative of Global Nature this process is slow and hard but he also remarked that it is "a unique example of integration in the world, that countries so different, with such faced histories and faced cultures in some cases, would move towards a federal country." Two other respondents stressed the positive effect integration and, especially, EU funds, have had on the development of countries, particularly Spain, and on the emergence of a more European disposition among the citizens.

Conversely, criticism against European integration was almost exclusively related to non-economic issues. One respondent complained about the neoliberal turn in the European Union, while another criticized the neglect of social and environmental issues. For this respondent the history of European integration has always been like this: "economic integration always succeeds, while progress on the political side of integration is always contingent on economic needs and constraints". The representative of Amnesty International equally criticized the overemphasis on economic issues:

"[European integration] has stressed the market and the economy and very little political and citizenship elements. I think that this leads to resources not being directed toward essential issues: sanitary, educative, social action for diversity, human rights."

The prevalent mood among NGO actors was one of ambivalence toward the process of European integration. Most participants characterized the present situation as a turning point filled with uncertainty. The reasons provided for this diagnostic are varied and are captured by the following expressions:

"It's a delicate moment, with an international situation that inhibits deepening, and at the same time, the opportunity to generate a socially wider EU. The will of elites will be decisive on this point." (Red con Voz)

“The current situation is one of uncertainty about both the institutional model and enlargement. There’s uncertainty about what will be the path followed.” (Real Instituto Elcano)

Uncertainty about the European integration process pervaded the respondents’ outlook for the future of the EU. One argument put forth by a representative from Patronat Catalá Pro Europa was that although there is general progress toward integration, this progress is happening at the cost of the power of the Commission and the EP. Intergovernmentalism is emerging with strength, with growing resistance to the transfer of competences to the European Union and with states clinging to their decision-making power. All of this is holding European integration back. The participant from Andalucía-Acoge was perhaps more optimistic, arguing that the philosophy that presides the process of integration and the steps already undertaken are the right ones but that their positive effects will only be seen in the long run. Integration represents for him “a long-term investment.”

Two interviewees drew comparisons to the USA, but both agreed that the EU should not follow this model. One argued that the US has a clear understanding about how to redefine capitalism in order to confront globalization but that the EU needs an alternative model. The other respondent believed that leaning towards the US will entail a weakening of the integration process.

NGO representatives, like some representatives from the political parties, raised concerns about the lack of citizen participation in the process of integration. The respondent from the Comité Español de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR) regretted that although the integration process is about making decisions for which there is no turning back, hardly nobody in the population knows that this is happening. The respondent from SOS Racismo believed that the existence of a Constitution is not bad at all but that there “should be a grassroots level debate, not just one between experts, but rather one involving referenda and more participation.” Amnesty International deemed the integration process as negative by Amnesty International for lack of development of social rights and citizenship. The lack of the social dimension was also criticized by the organization Red con Voz.

iv. Interest groups

Generally speaking, the representatives from the Spanish interest groups were the most negative in their perception of the process of European integration. Only one respondent saw it in purely positive terms. Conversely, the respondent from Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO) (European integration) was very dissatisfied with an integration process, which, in his view, is dominated by the monetary union. The interviewee from the Unión de Pequeños Agricultores (UPA) argued that Europe is an economic giant and cannot remain a political dwarf. It has the duty of giving itself structures in line with its economic role as well as the duty to balance progress in its internal market with progress in other areas. The EU’s excessive emphasis on economic issues was also raised by the representative of the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), who argued that economic development needs to be made compatible with social development. He also argued that it is time for states to hand over more sovereignty and to make more concessions to the European Union. Another participant argued that the European integration process cannot merely result from the sum of the countries’ respective interests.

The most common criticism was the perceived deadlock of European integration, caused by the lack of determination by EU political leaders:

“At the moment we are at an impasse. The past years have been years of intensification in the process of European-building. The Convent should be understood as an inflexion point leading to the consolidation of the EU in its

juridical and political dimensions; on the one hand, however, there is strong resistance against the process of integration proceeding in this direction (e.g. from the Spanish government), and on the other there is a deficit in pro-European leadership.” (UGT)

“It’s a process where the illusion in the project has been lost. There are no longer Pro-European leaders, which translates in an absence of European initiatives; it [European integration] increasingly reflects the sum of national initiatives rather than a common European initiative, and this is shown in the multitude of actions we have seen recently.” (UPA)

“We do not have a clear perception of the direction of the process because last year’s political events have questioned a series of assumptions about the prospects for integration. The admission of 10 new members perhaps does not help. [...] We see steps backwards; Maastricht represented progress, but the present governments have not shown in recent years the same sensitiveness as did the previous ones.” (UP)

Interest groups also criticized the role of the EU institutions. Criticism versed on the weakness of the European institutions vis à vis national governments, their excessive degree of bureaucratization, their mediocrity, and their small size. Two respondents mentioned that the institutions were not known enough, which explains low participations in EU elections. According to one respondent, the institutions’ functions and importance have not been properly communicated to the population. Furthermore, the institutions are too distant from the citizens.

III. General Overview of Actors’ Perceptions

Although there were contrasts between groups of respondents with regard to their evaluations of the European integration process, the characteristics that they emphasized were rather similar. For instance, the interviewees who expressed favorable views most commonly cited the economic benefits of European integration. This is certainly in line with the earlier findings of Table 1, which showed that European integration was mostly seen to contribute to the positive development of economic growth.

Economics, however, also loomed large in criticism of the European Union, as respondents emphasized the excessive economic focus of European integration or the lack of institutional control over the ECB. The continued preeminence of states over the institutions was another common point of concern, as was the perceived lack of leadership and determination among EU politicians. Finally, the distance to the citizens of Europe was a cause of concern for several participants. There needs to be a move away from the purely economic interests to the citizens’ interests through closeness, less bureaucracy, and subsidiarity.

Neutral respondents often saw benefits in European integration but were not fully convinced by recent developments. Many argued that the process of integration has somewhat slowed down in recent years, although the Constitution was often regarded as a possible spark that could reignite the flame.

Appendix 1—List of interviewees and interview data

European Integration

Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores; Secretary of European Affairs; 7 July 2003
Dirección General de Coordinación de Asuntos Generales y Técnicos de la UE; Director General; 1 July 2003
Ministerio de Economía; Director of Communication; 20 October, 2003
Gobierno de Cataluña; Coordinator of European Affairs of the External Relations Secretariat; 1 October 2003
Izquierda Unida; Member of Congress; 23 September 2003
Partido Popular; President of the Popular Party's Parliamentary Group in the European Parliament; 13 November 2003
Convergencia i Unió; Coordinator Head of Press; 18 July 2003
Comisiones Obreras (CCOO); Secretary of Communication of CCOO; 28 July 2003
Consejo Superior de Cámaras de Comercio; Coordinator of Euroinfocenter; 30 October 2003
CEOE; Department of International Relations; 28 January 2004
Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT); Secretary for International Relations and Quality; 20 October 2003
Red con Voz; University Professor; 22 October 2003
Real Instituto Elcano; Main Researcher on the EU; 6 November 2003
Espacio Alternativo; Coordinator of the socio-union workshop; 7 November 2003
Patronat Català pro Europa; Executive Director; 23 September 2003

Agriculture

Ministerio de Agricultura; Head of the Press Service; 4 November 2003
Ministerio de Agricultura; Technical Counsellor of the General Directorate of Rural Development; 17 November 2003
Ministerio de Agricultura; Advisor to the General Secretariat of Agriculture; 10 November 2003
Departament d' Agricultura, Ramadería y Pesca; Assistant to the Councillor of Agriculture; 23 November 2003
Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE); Member of Parliament; 20 October 2003
Convergencia i Unió (CIU); President of the Agriculture Committee of Unió Democràtica; 19 September 2003
Federación Agroalimentaria (CCOO); Secretary General; 31 October 2003
Unión de Pequeños Agricultores (UPA); Secretary General; 24 June 2003
Asociación Agraria de Jóvenes Agricultores (ASAJA); General Secretary; 11 November 2003
Unió de Pagesos (UP); Head of Organization and Communication; 30 September 2003
APROMA; 8 October 2003
Global Nature; Head of Agriculture; 16 October 2003
ADENA; Head of Press Service; 29 September 2003
Intermón Oxfam; Department of Campaign and Studies; 21 October 2003

Immigration

Ministerio de Interior: Dirección General de Extranjería e Inmigración; Director General; 15 July 2003
Ministerio de Justicia; Vicedirector: Vicedirectorate General for International Juridical Cooperation; 3 July 2003
Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales: Directorate General for Legislation on Migratory Movements; Technical Counselor of immigration; 5 November 2003
Izquierda Unida (IU); Head of immigration unit; 10 October 2003
Socialist Party (PSOE); Member of the Secretariat on immigration; 13 June 2003
Convergencia i Unió (CIU); President of immigration Council of CDC; 2 July 2003
Comisiones Obreras (CCOO); Member of Immigration Unit; 25 June 2003
Asociación de Trabajadores e Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España (ATIME); General Secretary; 18 December 2003
Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales (CEOE); Head of Labor area; 21 November 2003
Centro Guía para Inmigrantes de UGT; President of AMIC; 6 October 2003
Amnistía Internacional; Head of Immigration; 13 October 2003
Comité Español de Ayuda al Refugiado; Director; 18 June 2003
Andalucía Acoge; Representative; 8 September 2003
SOS Racismo; Specialist in Education Policies; 2 October 2003

Journalists

El País; Editor; 21 November 2003
El País; EU Correspondent; 29 October 2003
El País; Agriculture Expert; 6 October 2003
ABC; Immigration; 9 October 2003
ABC; Agriculture; 8 December 2003
ABC; Editor; 19 January 2003
ABC; EU Correspondent; 12 November 2003
El Mundo; Immigration; 12 December 2003
El Mundo; Agriculture; 22 December 2003
El Mundo; Editor; 7 October 2003
El Mundo; EU Correspondent; 30 October 2003
La Vanguardia; Editor; 14 November 2003
La Vanguardia; EU Correspondent; 3 November 2003
La Vanguardia; Immigration; 9 December 2003
La Vanguardia; Agriculture; 22 October 2003