

"Spain is the problem. Europe is the solution". In this fashion Ortega y Gasset once dramatized the need to "Europeanize" Spain. The results over the first twenty five years of EU membership have been truly impressive. When Spain became a member of the EC, some of the best and brightest of Spain's governmental cadres and universities joined the expanded European institutions, taking on positions of responsibility. The most prominent chaired the European Court of Justice (Gil-Carlos Rodríguez Iglesias) and the Parliament (Enrique Barón, José-María Gil Robles, and Josep Borrell), holding key positions in the Commission, and filling the newly created position of High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Javier Solana).

Spain, in sum, "was not different", contrary to what old-fashion tourist publicity for the country used to say. It was a European country like any other that was returning to its natural home after a long exile.

Spain, in turn, received considerable benefits from EU membership through funds for regional investment policies, agriculture and rural development, and the modernisation of national infrastructure. From an index of 60 percent of the European average in 1986, today Spain's income per head is in the range of 105 percent, with some regions surpassing 125 percent. From being a country that was a net receiver from the EU budget, Spain today is a net contributor.

Reflecting this development, the present volume examines different dimensions of the deepening relationship between Spain and the rest of Europe through membership of the EU (its history, and its impact on policy development on economic growth and on relations with third countries).

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the First Twenty-Five Years (1986-2011)

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