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# **The Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020: A Preliminary analysis of the Spanish position**

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**Mario Kölling**  
**Cristina Serrano Leal**

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# 1. Introduction

Spain holds a key position in the negotiation of the MFF 2014-2020. Unlike any other country, it has undergone an extraordinary transformation: from being the largest net beneficiary in absolute terms in the period 2000-2006 to being a potential net contributor starting in 2014. One of the factors in this evolution was the country's outstanding economic development until 2007, with growth rates above the EU average, which gave Spain a budgetary situation considered one of the best in the euro zone. Another factor was the virtual rise in the EU's per capita GDP as a result of the incorporation of 12 new member states which absorb now 50% of the EU regional funds. This increase, known as a 'statistical effect', has influenced the receipt of EU regional funds and was one of the key issues in the last round of the negotiation on the financial perspective 2007-2013<sup>1</sup>. From being the first receptor of EU regional aid, with around 25% of the total in the period 2000-2006, Spain stands now as the second country, after Poland, to receive this aid, with around 12% of the total of funds. Furthermore, this decreasing path will continue after 2013.

The negotiations for the new MFF 2014-2020 will take place in the context of a deep economic and financial crisis in the Eurozone. Spain is one of the countries which is most affected by the crisis and is subject to a big effort of consolidation of public finances. At the same time, Spain's situation as a net receptor of the EU budget is due to change in the coming years. In this context, the Spanish government's position will be different from that which it held in former negotiations on the financial perspectives 2007-2013. According to this unique situation, the Spanish government is alert to any changes that might be introduced in terms of spending and revenues, and will try to keep all of its options open. In this sense the Spanish negotiating position will not be static, but will evolve according to the negotiation process.

Until now, the Spanish government has made no general official declaration regarding the Commission proposals for the MFF 2014-2020. However, the following analysis has been redacted based on statements by government representatives, official documents published recently and press articles on the topic as well as taking into account the experience from previous negotiations and Spain's response to the public debate on the EU budget which took place in 2008-2009<sup>2</sup>.

Spain's preliminary ideas on the new financial and budgetary framework were also already expressed in the answer given to the public consultation on the EU Budget Review, which the European Commission organized in 2009<sup>3</sup>. The main ideas presented can give a clear indication of the Spanish position for this financial framework debate currently taking place.

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<sup>1</sup> Serrano Leal, C. y Kölling, M. (2009), *Spain and Budget reform in the EU*, Working Paper nº 12/2009, Real Instituto Elcano, 27/02/2009, Madrid.

<sup>2</sup> See Navarro, M.A. y Serrano Leal, C. (2008) "El contexto de la negociación de las perspectivas financieras 2007-2013. España ante las nuevas perspectivas financieras", *Presupuesto y Gasto Público* nº 52-(3/2008), Madrid, pp.9-23.

<sup>3</sup> Spain's answer to the public consultation on the "EU Budget review", 2009. <https://europa.eu>

## 2. General reactions to the Commission proposal: the political stance

In general, a broad consensus among the main political parties and the Spanish government regarding the future financing and the expenditure of the EU budget can be confirmed. The political parties represented in the Joint EU Affairs Committee at the “Cortes Generales”, in close cooperation with the government, established in February 2010 a sub-commission to monitor the process of the preparation of the Commission proposal for the MFF 2014-2020. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 the joint resolution between PSOE and PP based on the work of this sub-commission was approved by the Spanish Parliament with an overwhelming majority. Only the parliamentary group of ERC-IU-ICV voted against it. The resolution fixes the main lines which the Spanish Government should follow in the negotiation of the MFF 2014-2020.<sup>4</sup>

Although the approval of the joint resolution and the publication of the Commission proposal happened at the same time, there has been no formal reaction of the Parliament and the government regarding the Commission proposal. Nevertheless, members of the Spanish parliament criticised that the proposal of the Commission was already very detailed on the subject of the expenditure but less concrete about the financing of the EU budget. The joint resolution of the PSOE and PP approved on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June makes reference that the parliamentary groups should incorporate these main negotiation lines in their negotiating strategies within the European Parliament.

With regard to the expenditure, the Joint EU Affairs Committee at the “Cortes Generales” signed in July 2011 with the EU Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly and the Senate of France a joint declaration on the future of the CAP, stating that during the next financial perspective 2014-20 no reduction of the CAP budget and no re-nationalisation elements should be introduced in the “first pillar”. Although first reactions from the Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine were positive regarding the Commission’s proposals<sup>5</sup>, since Spain could theoretically maintain the level of funds in prices of 2013, several governments of the Autonomous Communities and the agriculture associations rejected the funding cuts of between 11% and 12% while the rest of the budget grows.<sup>6</sup> In the Commission proposals the share of CAP decreases steadily from around 42% of total budget in 2013 to approximately 34% in 2020, equivalent to the share of structural funds.

As regards regional policy, the Spanish government, the parliament and several autonomous communities (Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Murcia and Galicia) assessed very positive by the new intermediary regional category for regions with a GDP of between 75% and 90% of the EU average in the Cohesion policy. Furthermore the proposals to support SMEs to increase their competitiveness and the proposed increases in resources for R&D were seen as very positive signals.

With regard to the proposed Connecting Europe Facility, the representatives of several political parties expressed concerns that this new instrument could undermine the priorities set out by the Member states in the trans-European transport network.

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<sup>4</sup> Informe de la Ponencia sobre la revisión de las perspectivas financieras, la reforma del sistema de recursos propios, y la reforma de las políticas de cohesión y agraria común, Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales, Núm. 448, 29/06/2011.

<sup>5</sup> CE, MARM, Andalucía y Galicia valoran propuesta de presupuesto de futura PAC, Agencia EFE, 07/07/2011.

<sup>6</sup> Bruselas recorta los fondos de la PAC, El País, 01/07/2011.

The Spanish press concentrated on the possibility that Spain could be a net contributor in the next MFF.<sup>7</sup> The proposed new own resources, the position of the net contributors to reduce the EU budget and the cuts in the CAP have been analysed critically in the press. On the other side the proposals regarding the transition regions have been assessed very positively. Furthermore the press stressed the broad political consensus between PP and PSOE in the negotiation of the MFF 2014-2020, which builds upon previous consensus in former negotiations, and informed about the specific activities of Spanish MEPs in order to maintain or increase the expenditures of the EU in Spain.

### 3. Priorities in the negotiations concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework

Because of its likely new role as a net-contributor, Spain's position is based on the objective to achieve an agreement on the revenue system in parallel to the discussion on the expenditure, as well as in defending the principles of equity in income and quality of EU expenditures.<sup>8</sup>

With regard to the expenditures side, the Spanish government will ensure that the MFF 2014-2020 counts with sufficient resources to finance the new powers assigned to the EU by the Lisbon Treaty and to finance the projects and actions arising from the EU Strategy 2020, but also to finance traditional policies, particularly the CAP and the cohesion policy.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the later, the Spanish government considers a priority a cohesion policy that represents a continuation of the current system but introduces also certain improvements. The main priority is to establish fair gradual exit strategies for those regions which are leaving the Convergence Objective. For these regions the Spanish government demands transition periods designed to avoid abrupt changes in the funding received, to guarantee financial stability and to allow these regions to continue to converge with the more prosperous regions,<sup>10</sup> following the same approach which was taken in the former negotiations. Furthermore, the Spanish government would probably like to obtain a specific treatment within the cohesion policy for the Canary Islands, as a ultra-peripheral (RUP) region, and for Ceuta and Melilla, as remote border towns, just as in obtained in the past negotiations.

According to the Spanish government demands, already mentioned, for more simplification and transparency in the implementation of funds, the proposed provisions related to the conditionality of funds are seen as a further step to increase the complexity of the system.

Regarding the Common Agricultural Policy, Spain has traditionally been, and continues to be against the renationalisation of direct aids, especially against proposals of co-financing the "first pillar". It is to be remembered that CAP payments are the main item coming from the EU Budget. Under ideal conditions, Spain should aim to continue to receive at least the amounts currently receiving from EU budget within

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<sup>7</sup> "La UE inicia la batalla para dar forma al presupuesto comunitario hasta 2020", la Vanguardia, 29/06/2011. "Barroso propone otro IVA para recaudar... La Comisión Europea quiere reducir la aportación directa de los Estados con tributos comunitarios", El mundo, 30/06/2011. "Berlín, París y Londres tachan de «demasiado alto» el presupuesto de la UE para el periodo 2014-2020", ABC, 30/06/2011. "Bruselas recorta los fondos de la PAC", El País, 01/07/2011. La Junta no prevé recortes de la UE si se es región "en transición", El País, 04/07/2011.

<sup>8</sup> Serrano Leal, C. (2011), "Capítulo 9. Financiación: EL Presupuesto", en Beneyto, Maillo, Becerril (coord), Tratado de Derecho y Políticas de la Unión Europea, Tomo III, Aranzadi-Thomson Reuters, pp.492-993.

<sup>9</sup> Informe de la Ponencia sobre la revisión de las perspectivas financieras, la reforma del sistema de recursos propios, y la reforma de las políticas de cohesión y agraria común, Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales, Núm. 448, 29/06/2011.

<sup>10</sup> Luis Espadas Moncalvillo, Secretario General de Presupuestos y Gastos, in DSCD, Núm. 192, 03/05/2011.



this heading.<sup>11</sup> Moreover the reformed CAP should improve the competitiveness of the sector and include effective measures to strengthen the position of producers of agriculture goods and of the food industry. According to the ideas put forward in 2008 CAP should be regarded as a multifunctional policy where various objectives are met, including modernisation of structures and environmental standards, together with the traditional role of an agricultural policy. In this sense, the first Commission's proposals have positive elements, although the changes in the historical system underlying the calculation of direct aids still needs to be evaluated.

Furthermore the government will demand a simplification of the regulations and procedures as well as negotiate the introduction of mechanisms, which will offer sufficient flexibility for national and regional implementation for the cohesion policy and the CAP.

With regard to the financing, the approach will be to equip the European Union with sufficient resources to meet future challenges and demand a financing structure, based on the principles of fairness and transparency. In this sense the Spanish government supports a financing structure of the EU budget based only on the Traditional Own Resources and the Gross National Income, eliminating all compensation and correction mechanisms<sup>12</sup>. This position was very clearly stated in the last negotiations and is not a surprise.

## 4. Size of the budget

The Commission proposal foresees a 5% increase of the budget. In terms of GNI this is 1,05% in commitment appropriations and 1,00% in payments appropriations. With the new 'Outside the MFF' framework the total expenditures are 1,11% of GNI.

The Spanish government has stated in several occasions that it is against the freezing of the EU budget, and will be satisfied with the overall size of the proposed budget for the MFF 2014-2014. However, Spain could become in the next MFF a net contributor; this new situation will be reflected in the Spanish government position regarding the contribution and the design of policies. In any case, the Spanish government will try to avoid becoming an "excessive" net contributor,<sup>13</sup> and will probably continue to defend the principles of "gradualism in changes" and "proportionality in effort", which lead Spain's negotiations position five years ago.

The context of the negotiation however is much more difficult for various reasons. First, there will be a general restrictive approach, increased by the situation of economic crisis and already followed by net contributors which have already asked for a "freeze" of the EU budget under the level of 1% of EU GNP.

Second, the new conditionality mechanisms introduced in the proposals for regional funds links internal budgetary performance to the reception of the funds. That means that respect to the Stability and Growth Pact and to the Commission macroeconomic recommendations will influence the funds received by a country (independently of what the real necessities are). As a consequence it will be much more difficult to make a projection of expected "returns" from the EU budget.

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<sup>11</sup> Puxeu Rocamora, Secretario de Estado de Medio Rural y Agua, in DSCD, Núm. 123, 25/05/2010.

<sup>12</sup> Informe de la Ponencia sobre la revisión de las perspectivas financieras, la reforma del sistema de recursos propios, y la reforma de las políticas de cohesión y agraria común, Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales, Núm. 448, 29/06/2011.

<sup>13</sup> Luis Espadas Moncalvillo, Secretario General de Presupuestos y Gastos, in DSCD, Núm. 192, 03/05/2011.

Third, the proposal to introduce new resources, such as a financial transaction tax, or a new TVA resource will also introduce uncertainty as regards the amounts which will have to be paid to the EU budget. Therefore, under this climate of uncertainty it will be much more difficult to make accurate estimations of the expected net balances and of the results of the negotiation.

As regards, the mechanisms foreseen ‘Outside the MFF’, these need the approval of the governments of Member States in order to be activated. This procedure could lead to important administrative burdens, which is seen as contrary to the demand of simplification and flexibility, and could eventually lead to delays in the reception of the specific funds, especially with regard to the European Globalisation Fund and the Reserve for Crisis in the Agriculture Sector. The EDF will be maintained outside the EU budget and will need its own financing key, which needs also a separate negotiation.

## 5. Expenditure

### 5.1. R+D Policy

The EU has the intention to incorporate the EU2020 Strategy in almost all the different Heading of the budget. There is a 53 billion increase in Heading I ‘Smart and Inclusive Growth’. The Common Agricultural Policy must also make a shift towards the goals of this strategy. Against this background, the reactions on the upgrading of expenditures on items such as research, innovation and technical development has a double perspective.

The Spanish government didn’t benefit in the former financial perspectives from resources coming from headings related to R&D as much as it did in other areas such as the CAP or regional policy. However the Spanish government made a special emphasis in the negotiation of the financial perspectives 2007-2013 on the technology gap among Member States and on the need to promote measures not only with the regional policy but also in the R+D policy.

In the current debate the Spanish government seems ready to advocate the need to introduce into the EU budget elements that take into account the efforts to close the so-called ‘digital or technological gap’. Spain increased its budget on R+D policies in the years 2005-2010 with a view to making efforts to progress in this area, and has also increased its share in the EU Framework Programme from around 6% to 9% in the last years. The Spanish government has repeatedly stressed the importance of the financing of innovation oriented policies and research within the European Union as key for the success of the 2020 strategy, and supports the promotion of SMEs in the future Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation programme<sup>14</sup>. However, as stated already in the debate of the Budget review, this should not only be based on criteria of “excellence” but also on a broader idea of “convergence in R&D” across the EU.

In this sense, the proposed increases on items such as research, innovation and technical development are welcomed, although it has to be stressed that in former negotiations the resources proposed for R&D have been finally subject to important cuts. However the increase in the expenditures on R&D should not be financed by cuts in other policies, such as the CAP or the regional policy<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Informe de la Ponencia sobre la revisión de las perspectivas financieras, la reforma del sistema de recursos propios, y la reforma de las políticas de cohesión y agraria común, Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales, Núm. 448, 29/06/2011.

<sup>15</sup> Luis Espadas Moncalvillo, Secretario General de Presupuestos y Gastos, in DSCD, Núm. 192, 03/05/2011.

## 5.2. Achieving the EU2020 goals through the budget

From the Spanish government and the parliament is perspective the EU 2020 strategy is an essential element for the design of all future EU policies and EU expenditures should be in line with the EU2020 goals.<sup>16</sup>

More specifically, there is support for the ideas that the criteria for allocating funds for the cohesion policy are in line with the objectives of the EU strategy 2020. However there are arguments in favour of giving more importance to unemployment criteria and to additional criteria for the distribution of cohesion funds such as the technology gap, innovation rates or the rate of immigrant population.

Furthermore, the reformed CAP should also contribute essentially to the goals of the EU2020 strategy. The Spanish Presidency of the EU included already in the European Council of March 2010 a reference to competitive agriculture, mentioning that the CAP should support the 2020 Strategy. In this sense, the proposed increases in funds for R&D in agriculture are welcomed.

## 5.3. The reform of the CAP

The future CAP is essential for the Spanish negotiation position; during the current MFF Spain is the second largest recipient after France and the CAP will also in the future MFF (even more than cohesion policy) be an important element to improve the net balance of the country.<sup>17</sup>

In the MFF proposal the amount of expenditure dedicated to CAP policy continue the ongoing decreasing trend, and will tend to be equal to the expenditure on regional policy, as percentage of total expenditure (around 34% of the budget). The approach followed seems to be essentially a continuation of the existing one, although some new elements are introduced as regards direct payments, which will be linked to cohesion elements (such as the level of aids in the poorer countries). In any case, the proposal does not follow the ideas of those member states (such as the U.K. or Denmark and Sweden) which are critical with the CAP and have proposed to eliminate or substantially reduce the aids.

According to the Spanish government, the CAP must set up a prospective future for the European agriculture and offer clear prospects for farmers and support the production of agricultural products. In this sense, and in line with the Commission proposal, the CAP should ensure an economically viable and sustainable agriculture, which guaranties food security and supply, territorial cohesion, the conservation of the environment and contributes to the fight against climate change. During the last years Spain has made important efforts regarding the greening of the agriculture so the government feels prepared to implement the new requirements without difficulties.

As already mentioned, the Spanish government is strongly opposed to the co-financing as it already happened in the 1999 negotiations and to the reduction of the budget of the “first pillar” and would also like to maintain the main orientations of the CAP, however with a redefined focus on supporting the production of agriculture goods. In the same direction representatives from the Autonomous Communities demanded a system of direct payments to finance the benefits that farming brings to society, a better functioning of the market and rural development focused on competitiveness, innovation and diversification of economic activity and supporting the rural population.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ocaña Pérez de Tudela, Secretario de Estado de Hacienda y Presupuestos, in DSCD, Núm. 123, 25/05/2010.

<sup>17</sup> Puxeu Rocamora, Secretario de Estado de Medio Rural y Agua, in DSCD, Núm. 123, 25/05/2010.

<sup>18</sup> Silvia Clemente Municio, Consejera de Agricultura y Ganadería de la Junta de Castilla y León, in DSCD, Núm. 169, 22/02/2011. José Luis Martínez Guijarro, Consejero de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente de la Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha, in DSCD, Núm. 169, 22/02/2011.

With regard to the second pillar (rural development) and further elements the attitude is much more open to reforms, but the new proposals which reintroduce the EFDF into the cohesion policy need to be further analysed.

## 6. EU Own Resources

In the 2009 budget review the Commission proposed several forms of new own resources. After several research the Commission retained two remaining options: a new VAT resource and the introduction of a new financial transaction Tax, which have been included in the proposal on the Own Resources System made for the next period post-2013.

As already mentioned, representatives of the political parties have criticised that the proposal of the Commission was already very detailed regarding the expenditures but less concrete regarding the financing of the EU budget. Spanish governments have been traditionally critical as regards the VAT resource, which is considered to be regressive in nature, and have defended the financing of the EU by a system based on the GNI-resources and traditional own resources. In the current debate on the EU Budget the government and the parliament support the financing structure of the EU budget founded on the principles of fairness and transparency. This means that the financing of the EU budget should be based on the traditional own resources and the Gross National Income, eliminating at the same time all compensations and rebates to specific Member States.

This is coherent with Spain's position in previous MFF negotiations. Spain has traditionally defended a "progressive" GNP resource, based on GNP per capita, which would mean higher payments for richer countries. This idea has been systematically rejected by those countries which have GNP per capita above the EU average. Additionally, a study by the EP in 2008 showed that the EU system of own resources is far from being fair: some countries like Spain pay around 0,9% of their GNP, while others, like United Kingdom, Germany or the Netherlands, which are subject to compensations, rank around 0,50-0,60 % of their GNP's.

The Spanish government has not reacted officially to the proposed Financial Transaction Tax, although it has expressed sympathy for this idea. Furthermore, the proposed new VAT-resource would need a complex implementation. In this sense the proposed own resources are still to be evaluated.

Nevertheless, several comments can be made in this regard. First, the proposal will probably imply a breakdown of the principle of "parallelism" in the negotiations of expenditure and resources. The reason is that the proposed reforms are controversial and need to be adopted by unanimity. United Kingdom has already rejected the financial transaction Tax, Furthermore the Own Resources Decision needs to be ratified by National Parliaments and there is a risk that the processes may be complicated and slow. It will be therefore much easier to agree on elements of the expenditure side, leaning the adoption of the own resources for the last moment.

Second, the Commission does not propose to abolish the existing rebates (the British rebate, as well as the discounts for Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden included in their financing of this rebate) nor compensations. It proposes to introduce lump-sum compensations according to the 1987 Fontainebleau conclusions, that is, when "the contribution is excessive compared to relative prosperity". Spain has been traditionally active, together with France, against any type of rebates or discounts, but we will have to wait and see what happens in there negotiations.

Third, in a context of economic crisis, which may last for several years, any new proposal will have to be thoroughly analysed in order to evaluate its financial consequences on the Spanish contribution to the budget. The main objective should be avoiding increases in the contribution to the budget which may not be justified, in line with the general objective of not coming to a future situation of “excessive net contributor”.

## 7. Other issues

As regards other policies, parliamentarians from all political parties and the government agree that a common security and defence policy, as well as the police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (specifically Frontex and Eurojust) need more financial resources. The EU's external action is a priority action by the government of Spain, in this regard the government stressed the importance of the European External Action Service, as well as basic issues such as fighting poverty or commitments on climate change.<sup>19</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

In the next months Spain will face the negotiation on the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. This is going to be a difficult and complicated negotiation, with some specific situations compared to the previous one.

First of all, it will be the first time that all 27 Member States, including the new Member States, will be present as full negotiators. It will also be the first negotiation after the Lisbon Treaty which has given a greater co-decision power to the European Parliament as regards the financial framework. Furthermore, it will also coincide with a major economic and financial crisis in the EU, as well as with the first institutional crisis regarding the euro-zone. These three elements will undoubtedly put pressure on the negotiations. Europe will have to respect the general agreement on austerity, also regarding the EU budget. At the same time, there is a need to use the European budget as an instrument to help to fight the crisis and increase competitiveness.

In this complex context Spain will have to play a complex role. It will probably need to include different elements into its position, looking into the future elements such as the R+D policy and the elements linked to the Strategy 2020, taking into account the specific characteristics of the Spanish economy, such as the emphasis on small and medium enterprises. It may need to leave aside its history as a “cohesion” country and become a “competitiveness country”, concentrating efforts on the “transition regions”, which will gradually lose the conditions for receiving structural funds from the EU budget.

In this sense, the traditional position on policies such as the CAP or the Structural Funds will have to be updated and modernized, without forgetting though, that both policies are the main sources of funds coming from the European budget. At the same time the main objective should also be to avoid becoming an excessive net contributor, and maintain a gradualism in the changes of the financial position towards Europe.

The specific situation of the Spanish economy, in the middle of a deep economic crisis, will also be a new and important factor. In moments of crisis a financial negotiation is even more important and the aid coming from the EU will be even more valuable. The negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, which have now started, will, therefore, be both important and necessary.

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<sup>19</sup> Luis Espadas Moncalvillo, Secretario General de Presupuestos y Gastos, in DSCD, Núm. 192, 03/05/2011.





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**Resumen:** España ocupa una posición clave en la negociación del próximo marco financiero plurianual (MFP) de la Unión Europea para el periodo 2014-2020. A diferencia de cualquier otro país, ha sufrido una transformación extraordinaria: de ser el mayor beneficiario neto en términos absolutos en el período 2000-2006, pasará a ser un potencial contribuyente neto a partir de 2014. Por lo tanto, las nuevas negociaciones del MFP representarán un momento crucial para un país como España, que se encuentra en medio de una crisis económica que está afectando también a la zona del euro en su conjunto. Las recientes propuestas que la Comisión Europea ha presentado en los últimos meses pueden tener diferentes efectos dependiendo del desarrollo de las negociaciones y del acuerdo final que pueda ser alcanzado a finales de 2012. Este documento presenta el planteamiento español de esta negociación, aprovechando la experiencia de negociaciones anteriores y las diversas declaraciones y análisis políticos que se han desarrollado en el último año. También comenta las principales características de las diferentes líneas presupuestarias que deberán ser negociadas y aprobadas por el Consejo y el Parlamento Europeo para 2014-2020.

**Palabras clave:** Marco Financiero Plurianual, España, Unión Europea, presupuesto comunitario, finanzas europeas, política agrícola común (PAC), fondos estructurales, recursos propios.

**Abstract:** Spain holds a key position in the negotiation of the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the European Union for the period 2014-2020. Unlike any other country, it has undergone an extraordinary transformation: from being the largest net beneficiary in absolute terms in the period 2000-2006 to being a potential net contributor starting in 2014. The new MFF negotiations will therefore represent a crucial moment for a country like Spain, which is in the middle of an economic crisis that is also affecting the Eurozone as a whole. The recent proposals by the European Commission presented in the past months may have different impacts depending on the development of the negotiations and the final agreement which may be reached at the end of 2012. This paper presents the Spanish approach towards this negotiation, building upon the experience from previous negotiations and the various statements and political analysis which have been developed in the past year. It also comments the main lines concerning the different budgetary categories which will have to be negotiated and adopted by the Council and the European Parliament for 2014-2020.

**Keywords:** Multiannual Financial Framework, Spain, European Union, EU budget, European finances, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Structural Funds, own resources.

