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## Spain's Balancing Act: Net Contributor or Net Beneficiary of the EU Budget

*Real Instituto Elcano, ARI 50/2012*

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### Abstract


If it had not been for the sovereign debt crisis, the negotiation of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 would have been the leading topic during these months. The current negotiation is taking place at a time when budget consolidation requires the limitation of public expenditure, including the EU budget, although the need for growth-oriented policies is increasing. In this respect, the next MFF could be a good opportunity to shape Europe's future.

The negotiation is also of particular importance to Spain, for several reasons. First, over the past few years Spain has experienced a significant change in both financial and economic terms, which has altered its financial situation in relation to the EU budget. Secondly, the country is in the midst of an economic crisis, in the context of a severe sovereign debt crisis in the Euro Zone countries. This is a new element to take into account in the negotiations: the Spanish position will reflect this transition and will need to strike a balance between different objectives. Hence, Spain's negotiating position will not be static, but will have to have the flexibility necessary in each stage of the negotiating process. Furthermore, because of its likely new role as a net contributor, Spain's general position in the negotiation will be based on the objective of achieving an agreement on the revenue system in parallel to the discussions on EU expenditure, and it should try to leave all options on the table.

**Keywords:** multiannual financial framework, EU budget, Europe 2020 strategy, Common Agricultural Policy, Cohesion Policy

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