**Committee**: North Atlantic Treaty Orgazination 

**Country**: Spain

**Agenda Item**: NATO's political and military role in the Balkan Region

Spain has been the member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1982. Following World War 2, Spain was left in a very cold and isolated position in the world. Luckily, Spain had barely managed to stay out of the war, and over time, Spain slowly drifted towards NATO because of economic and political benefits, Francisco Franco’s intense hatred of Communism also continued to align Spain towards the West, and eventually in 1953, Francisco Franco signed the Pact of Madrid. This effectively ended Spain’s isolation from the rest of the world.

Spanish foreign policy in the Balkans dates back almost exclusively to the 1990s with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. The Bosnian War in 1992 also sparked off a new stage in Spanish cooperation, which until then had centred on North Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Spain’s participation in the Balkans has been guided by the interest in maintaining peace and stability in the region, within the general framework of the international community’s intervention. This has been carried out through three main channels: a general foreign policy framework defined according to international community directives (until 2008); the deployment of troops in the area; and cooperation assistance aimed at physically rebuilding and pacifying the region. Spain’s participation in the Balkans has been more notable in terms of its deployment of troops and cooperation for reconstruction and development. The deployment of troops was particularly important during the Bosnian War. More than 8000 Spanish military personnel carried out humanitarian aid and armed escort tasks under the authority of the United Nations, for which they obtained numerous distinctions, including the building of the Spanish square in Mostar in appreciation of the work carried out by Spanish blue helmets to achieve stability and rebuild the city. Spain has also participated actively in peace operations in Kosovo. More than 22,000 military personnel were deployed in ten years, until September 2009. Spanish troops were mainly deployed in the Kosovan province of Istok; a detachment was also set up in Osojane Valley to protect the Serbian returnees. As well as forms of humanitarian invention, Spain has been actively involved since 2004 in the European force EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia, to which it currently contributes a contingent of 304 military personnel (of a total of 2000). Spain heads the Multinational Maneuver Battalion, which has provided the basic structure of EUFOR since 2007 in conjunction with the Integrated Police Unit, which is also under Spanish control. In terms of development aid, Spanish cooperation policy has made a very significant quantitative contribution to Bosnia. In fact, Bosnia has been the biggest recipient of aid within Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, receiving more than 350 million dollars in bilateral official development aid (ODA). This financial contribution has made Spain one of the biggest European donors in the country in recent years. Aid to Bosnia has been fundamentally dictated by the post-war circumstances, though it has evolved over the years. With the beginnings of the European integration process and the transformation of the Balkans region, the Spanish development cooperation agency has focused most on state consolidation within the framework of the European integration process. At regional level, Spanish assistance in the Balkans has been centred on increasing institutional and economic capacities, as well as the capacity for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in recognition of the close relationship between security and development. The assistance has been concentrated mostly in Bosnia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro..

The individual countries in the region pose significant challenges, and Spain should bear these in mind when defining its agenda for the Balkans during its European presidency. The tensions among the region is escalating day by day and Spain must therefore act as a mediator and make sure that the mechanisms of the European integration process continue, provided that the conditions set out by the NATO are fulfilled.

Spain aims that all NATO countries will be able to come hand in hand and find the best possible solutions for this urgent crisis. We will try to be as cooperative as we can -except the issue with Kosova’s indepence- Our Country’s problem with Catalonia prevents our stance towards Kosova from recognizing their indepence. If we accept Kosova’s independence, Catalonians would also demand the same option. Spain can not leave a open door to any possible disturbance.

We wish for his conference to success and serve its purpose in the most efficently way.

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