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# Internationalising Spanish firms to the East: business strategies of the National Institute of Industry towards the Soviet Union (late 1950s to 1991)

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the internationalisation of Spanish firms, promoted by the National Institute of Industry (Instituto Nacional de Industria – INI), towards the Soviet Union market within the context of the Cold War and East-West economic collaboration. Based on a business history methodology and the primary sources of the INI, this paper argues the following. First, the National Institute of Industry’s approach to the Soviet Union was dictated by national strategic interests, such as industrial policy goals, resource-seeking, technology-seeking investment, and profit-seeking attitudes. Second, the INI’s approach to the Soviet Union was dictated by political purposes, such as establishing or maintaining relations with Spain and the Soviet Union. Third, before the restoration of diplomatic ties in 1977, the “stateness” of INI was considered a disadvantage. Finally, after restoring diplomatic relations, the “stateness” of the INI was deemed an advantage.

**KEYWORDS:** SOE internationalisation, strategic business, National Institute of Industry, Spanish-Soviet relations.

**JEL CODES:** F23, L32, N24, N44.

## 1. Introduction

This study examines the internationalisation strategies of the National Institute of Industry (INI),<sup>1</sup> a state-owned enterprise (SOE) of Spain, towards

1 The National Institute of Industry (Instituto Nacional de Industria, or INI), a public industrial and financing holding, was founded in 1941. Its goal, per Article 1, is to “promote and finance, in the service of the Nation, the creation and revival of our industries, especially those whose main purpose is the resolution of problems imposed by the demands of the country’s defence or that are directed at the development of our economic autarky”, taking as a model the establishment in 1933

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the Soviet Union from the late 1950s to 1991. This topic and chronological period are justified by the following points.

First, the role of the INI in the Spanish economy was undeniable, as scholars' assessments verified. Thus, Carreras, Tafunell, and Torres (2000, p. 209) pointed out the somewhat limited character of the INI in the Spanish economy, arguing that the INI's numeric mean weight in employment, gross capital formation, and gross domestic product was lower than the Italian and French ones. Accordingly, in 1963, it represented 12%; in 1979, 10%; in 1985, 12%; and in 1990, 10%. By contrast, Italy corresponded to 12%, 20%, 20%, and 19%, and France corresponded to 19%, 18%, 24%, and 18%, respectively. Martín Aceña and Comín (1991) demonstrated the indispensable role of state holdings in the national economy. García Hermoso (1989, pp. 265-266) stressed that INI group enterprises occupied a significant position, leading the Spanish market in sales in 1986 with 1,462 billion pesetas, and were the principal Spanish enterprise in export operations in 1986, reaching 30% with 447 billion pesetas, highlighting the relevance and opportunities of its international strategies.

Second, the specificity of the Spanish economy consisted of late and rapid industrialisation and further deindustrialisation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, considering that in the 1960s to the 1970s, industry occupied 30% of the Spanish Gross Domestic Product (GDP), dropping to 21.57% in 2000 (Carreras and Tafunell 2005, p. 360). The 1959 Stabilization Plan allowed foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign capital participation in national enterprises and, consequently, the admission of Spain into the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1961. These institutional changes coincided with the Golden Age of economic growth and the Spanish economic miracle, generating 6.88% of the annual GDP growth from 1958 to 1964 and 6.94% from 1964 to 1974 (Prados de la Escosura 2003, p. 154). The 1973 international oil crisis and stagflation effects promoted the international and national privatisation policies of the 1980s to 1990s, seriously affecting the INI's position. Further, Spain's membership in the European Union (EU) in 1986 created a liberal institutional framework for national private businesses (Tortella 2000), considerably diminishing the INI's enterprises at the beginning of the 1990s until almost its disappearance.

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of the Italian Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI). Within 50 years of its history, the INI initiated direct participation in 178 enterprises, and on 31 December 1990, continued as a shareholder in 65 of them. Despite some inefficiencies and strategic errors, the INI produced an undoubted and decisively positive effect in the transition from underdeveloped Spain and the primary economy of the 1940s to the thriving and potent one of the 1970s. However, with the opening of the Spanish economy to international trade and especially to the European Economic Community, the INI lost all meaning, and its companies were privatized throughout the 1980s. The INI disappeared in 1995, and its functions were assumed by the State Company of Industrial Participations (Sociedad Estatal de Participaciones Industriales in Spanish – SEPI). See: Gómez Mendoza (2000); Comín Comín (2000); Gámir Casares (2005).

Third, the international historical context and chronological framework. The chronological period from the 1950s to 1991 corresponds to the long post-war period (Judt 2006) and Cold War Global Development (Lorenzini 2019). The reconstruction and integration of the European economy (Aldcroft 1997; Zamagni 2011) were realised under the following institutions: OEEC (1948) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) (1949), the expansion of the socialist world, Red Multinationals, and Red Globalisation (Lavigne 1991; McMillan 1987; Sanchez-Sibony 2014; Yányshev-Nésterova 2023). In addition to the political Cold War watershed, East-West economic and technological cooperation occurred (Fava 2018; Romano 2014; Romero 2014; Romano and Romero 2020).

Fourth, the Spanish-Soviet relations. On the political map of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was considered one of the principal powers, offering an alternative way of socioeconomic development, whereas Spain could be characterised as a non-principal catch-up country of the capitalist world. It is worth mentioning the opposing political nature of both states: national Catholicism and anti-communism of Francoist Spain until the death of the dictator in 1975, transition and democracy. On the other hand, the Soviet Union was established as a communist state. Nonetheless, in the process of global integration, Sachs and Warner (1995, pp. 1-25, 91) classified the Spanish economy as “non-open” until the adoption of the 1959 Stabilization Plan. Indeed, considering the similarities between the two countries, the Soviet economy was likewise characterised as “non-open”.

After the constitution of the Soviet Union in 1922, Spanish-Soviet relations were established in 1933 during the Second Republic. However, the relationship was cut in 1939 when General Franco came to power, and remained so until it was re-established in 1977. Nevertheless, hidden and regulated commerce between Spain and the Soviet Union occurred in the late 1950s, obtaining a legal form after the 1972 Trade Agreement (Garrido Caballero 2019; Filatov 2018; Herrero de la Fuente 1974). Besides the little relevance of Spanish trade with the Soviet Union in relevant terms (maximum 2% of total trade), the INI's attitude to the Soviet Union reclaimed its importance in the light of the “political weight”, Cold War, economic development and East-West economic relations.

In 1971, a “phenomenon” of Spanish-Soviet relations took place: the enterprise Sovhispan, which comprised 50% Soviet capital from Sovrybflot (Soviet Fishing Fleet) and 50% Spanish capital (Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, 25% and Vapores Suardíaz Navy, 25%), was established in the Canary Islands, the outermost territory of Spain. From 1971 to 1977, Sovhispan operated within the framework of the non-existence of diplomatic relations, functioning as a consignee or ship chandler, providing food supply and technical and material assistance to the large-scale Soviet fishing and commercial fleet arriving in the Canary Archipelago while fishing in the West Af-

rican geographical area (Yányshev Nésterova 2016; 2019; Yányshev-Nésterova and Luxán Meléndez 2021). Sovhispan's social capital increased 72 times from 7 to 504 million pesetas, or approximately from 50 thousand to 3.6 million US dollars (Yányshev Nésterova 2016a; 2019; Yányshev-Nésterova and Luxán Meléndez 2021).

Summarising the abovementioned points, as commerce between Spain and the Soviet Union existed even before the 1972 Trade Agreement, research on the companies involved and the INI itself in relation to the Soviet Union is worthwhile. Who were the INI's actors, businessmen, policymakers, and enterprises? How did the strategies of internationalisation evolve under the changing institutional framework?

Research regarding the internationalisation of Spanish enterprises within the field of business history (BH) revealed that greatest emphasis was placed on the internationalisation of privately-owned enterprises (POEs), stressing the opportunity to operate in the most-developed countries – like OEEC, the so-called “West” – or emerging markets – the culturally close states of Latin America – and underlining the business success of the POEs versus SOEs (Caruana de las Cagigas 2021; Fernández Moya 2009; Goñi 2009; Guillén 2005; Martín Aceña and Comín Comín 1991, pp. 417-418; Puig Raposo and Fernández Pérez 2009a; 2009b; Pérez Hernández 2010; Puig Raposo and Torres Villanueva 2007; 2009; Torres Villanueva 2009; Tortella 2012, pp. 44-48; Valdalisso 2006; Vidal Olivares 2012, pp. 105-141; Virós 2009).

Binda (2009, pp. 107-109) emphasised that in the 1950s, the only enterprises that started developing internationalisation (in the cases of Italy and Spain) were public holdings: the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale, and the Instituto Nacional de Industria. Remarkably, the most similar research to the chronological frame and the geographical direction was realised by Fava (2018), regarding the corporate strategies of the Italian POE Fiat towards the Soviet Union during 1957–1972. Thus, except for the work of Lobejón Herrero (1999), there is a gap in the literature, revealing the Spanish POEs and SOEs with public participation towards the CMEA and the Soviet Union non-open markets, the so-called “East”.

Much literature has been developed in international business (IB), starting with Mazzolini (1979). Due to the wave of privatisation of SOEs in the 1980s–1990s, academic interest reduced gradually in the 1990s–2000s. Moreover, with the globalisation and expansion of state-owned enterprises, especially from emerging countries, research on SOEs has been considered streamlined during the last two decades (Amighini, Rabelotti and Sanfilippo 2013; Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2014; Benito et al. 2016; Xie and Redding 2018; Cuervo-Cazurra and Li 2021; Rygh and Benito 2022).

Prior studies focused on the Chinese SOEs in Spain as part of the international business held through the lens of the institutional theory revealing

the differences in company behaviour under various home and host institutional pressures (Li et al. 2018), applying the transaction cost theory, underlining the determinants of establishment mode choice (Quer Ramón, Claver Cortés and Rienda García 2017), and making comparisons of the Chinese investment in the energy sectors of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain (Pareja-Alcaraz 2016) as well as the penetration of the Chinese SOEs in the Spanish and Portuguese automobile sector (Marcuello Recaj and Jia Zheng 2017; Jia Zheng 2018).

Presumably, no research has been conducted regarding the INI's projections for the international market, the East, or the Soviet Union. However, this study does not attempt to fill the gap in the INI's internationalisation for the 1941–1995 period, underlining this topic as a potential one. Internal INI resources provide documents related to international activities, trips, contacts, and contracts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, primary sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have become inaccessible since 2010.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the present paper focuses on the INI's internationalisation towards the Soviet Union in the late 1950s to 1991, providing a general perspective and filling in the gap regarding Spanish SOEs towards the USSR.

Given the peculiarities of Spanish-Soviet political and trade affairs, the conceptual framework of this research is based on institutional theory (Li et al. 2018), revealing differences in the INI's behaviour under home and host institutional pressures, the characteristics of non-open economies, and the political realities of the Cold War. Thus, the present study maintains the following hypotheses: (1) the INI's approach to the Soviet Union was dictated by national strategic interests, such as industrial policy goals, resource-seeking, technology-seeking investment, and profit-seeking attitudes; (2) the INI's approach to the Soviet Union was dictated by political goals such as establishing or maintaining relations between Spain and the Soviet Union; (3) before restoring diplomatic relations in 1977, the “stateness” (Cuervo-Cazurra and Li, 2021) of the INI was considered a disadvantage; (4) after restoring diplomatic relations, the “stateness” of the INI was deemed an advantage.

Regarding methodology, Jones and Khanna (2006) claimed to bring history back into IB studies, arguing that history “not only matters”, but that focus should also be given to “how it matters”. Buckley (2009, p. 318) underlined that BH and IB are cognate subjects, stressing that “qualitative research

2 Besides temporal restrictions on archival access, varying from 30 to 40 years, since 2010, research has become even more challenging in Spain due to the October 2010 Agreement of the Council of Ministers regarding the State Secrets Law, adopted in 1969 and partially modified in 1978, denying access to the primary documents from the last 53 years at the General Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

is more normal for a single firm or industry-focused and longitudinal". Finally, Friedman and Jones (2017, pp. 443-455) evoked Chandler's methodology of BH as a discipline: (1) the historical perspective that influences business organisation, production, and marketing research; (2) the creation of the research question; (3) a comparative analysis, contrasting why some changes were produced in some enterprises and did not occur in others; (4) the elaboration of the rich historical narrative, backed by the primary and secondary sources, related to the chronological timeframe; and (5) application of the interdisciplinary perspective, conceptualising the historical observations. Thus, this study represents qualitative, primarily empirical research, combining IB theory and BH methodology.

As for the sources, for this case study, holdings of the Center for Documentation and Historical Archiving of the Industrial Shares' State Society<sup>3</sup> (ASEPI) of the former National Institute of Industry (Laruelo Rueda and San Román 1998; Laruelo Rueda 2005) were consulted to prove or refute the hypotheses raised and answer qualitative questions. Additionally, primary documents from the National Foundation of Francisco Franco (FNFF),<sup>4</sup> National Archive of Catalonia (ANC),<sup>5</sup> and Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE)<sup>6</sup> were employed. Data from the National Institute of Industry and Lobejón (1999) require quantitative elaboration.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explains Spanish-Soviet political, economic, and business relations until 1977, when the non-existence of diplomatic recognition determined a specific institutional framework of bilateral affairs, including the Spanish SOEs and the INI's attitude to the Soviet Union. Section 3 identifies the internationalisation of SOEs within the framework of diplomatic recognition of 1977–1991, which coincided with the transition in Spain, the beginning of industrial conversion, entrance into the EU market, and the perestroika process into the Soviet Union. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper and presents its reflections.

3 Here in Spanish: Centro de Documentación y Archivo Histórico de la Sociedad Estatal de Participaciones Industriales, [archivo.sepi.es](http://archivo.sepi.es), [https://archivo.sepi.es/default\\_es.asp](https://archivo.sepi.es/default_es.asp), accessed 24 June, 2022.

4 Here in Spanish: Fundación Nacional de Francisco Franco, [fnff.es](http://fnff.es), <https://fnff.es/>, accessed 24 June, 2023.

5 Here in Catalan: Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya, [anc.gencat.cat](http://anc.gencat.cat), <https://anc.gencat.cat/es/inici/>, accessed 24 June, 2023.

6 Here in Russian: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki, [rgae.es](http://rgae.ru), <http://rgae.ru/>, accessed 24 June, 2023.



## 2. Spanish-Soviet political, economic, and business relations from the late 1950s until 1977: the INI's implicit internationalisation to the Soviet Union

### 2.1. Background to the late 1950s–1972 Trade Agreement

Since the mid-1950s, the “restoration”, or at least renovation, of the official trade contacts between Spain and the USSR was contemplated. Resource-seeking strategies have pushed both states into shy and irregular commercial interchanges. Four major fields were revealed in the Spanish-Soviet resource-seeking strategies: petroleum; coal coke; uranium enrichment; and fishing activities, developed in Western Africa, anchored in the Canary Islands, the outermost and backward region of Spain.

The possibility of buying Soviet oil marked the beginning of such strategies. In 1954, the High Staff received two notes sent from London (February 27) and Moscow (March 2) by a British businessman communicating about the Soviets' willingness to sell oil to Western countries, including Spain, at prices lower than those of the market, opening its commercial niche.<sup>7</sup> On March 16, 1959, the Ministry of Commerce requested from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs “the arriving to Spain of the Soviet patrial Gourof [sic], President of Sojousnefteexport [sic], the Trade Institution for the Soviet Oil and Derivatives Industry, to get in touch with interested Spanish circles”. On March 16, 1959, a document was accompanied by a note from the General Director for Economic Relations and the Office of the Ministry of Commerce, Faustino Armijo, which stated:

Currently, with the government's authorisation, the INI has signed agreements with the North American Caltex and British Shell regarding the new Hydrocarbons Law. In the case of the purchase of Soviet oil, the American and British companies could lose interest in the Spanish market; the exchange with the Soviets unleashed the problems of payments and choice of currencies; and the Soviets could “cut off” supplies when it would suit them.

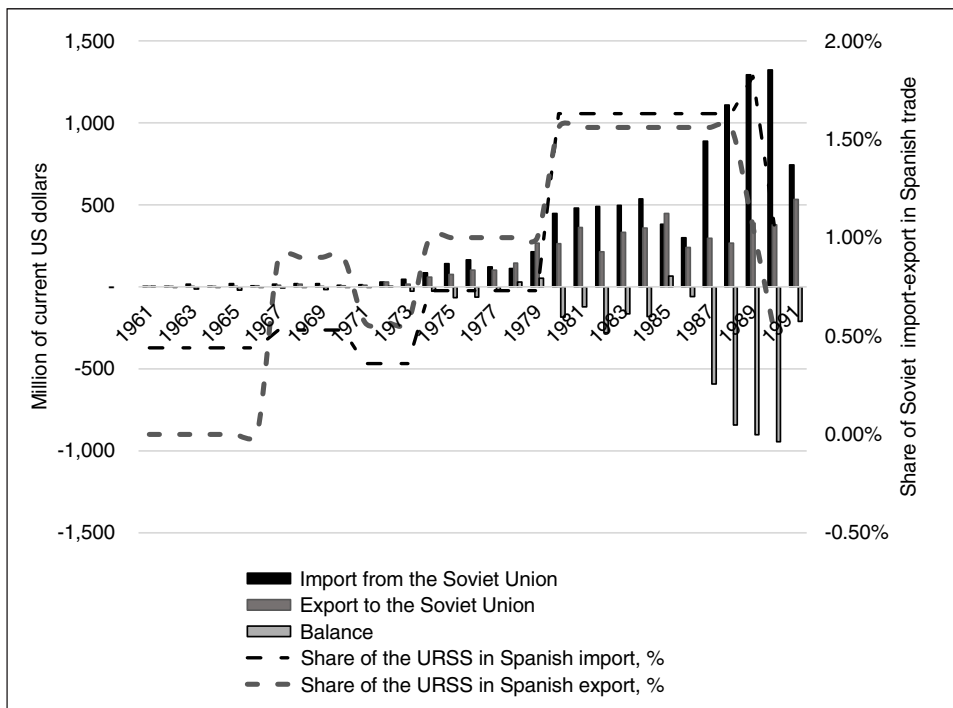
Despite the secrecy of Spanish-Soviet relations, semi-hidden contacts and the possibility of re-establishing commercial relations came to light in the press of neighbouring countries. On October 8, 1959, the Italian newspaper *il Nuovo Cittadino* reported that “the Director of the Ministry of Commerce Gregorio López Bravo will soon come to Moscow to re-establish commercial relations”. The newspaper stressed that although the lists of imports and exports published annually never record the products purchased directly from the

7 FNFF, file 9779, roll 90.

USSR, “it is more than known that ... commercial exchanges ... have taken place, especially in the form of triangular operations”. In addition, it was indicated that “it will be... the first time that a special envoy of the Government of Madrid moves to Moscow... since the Soviet Government has been the first to take the initiative”. Indeed, Gregorio López-Bravo’s “technical” stopover in Moscow would take place later, in December 1969, leaving still a decade of irregular trade.

In June 1971,<sup>8</sup> the same year that Sovhispan was launched in the Canary Islands, the President of the INI, Claudio Boada Villalonga, travelled with numerous Spanish officials (119 officers, including spouses) to the Soviet Union for the 8<sup>th</sup> World Petroleum Congress (Annex I).<sup>9</sup> The visit would likely have a transcendental character for the INI, the Hispanic oil company, and other SOEs in petroleum purchases.

**FIGURE 1** • Spanish-Soviet trade, 1961–1991



Source: Author’s elaboration from Lobejón Herrero (1999: 255-256).

8 No information in the INI’s archives was found regarding the period of the 1960s. As for the ANC, documents from the 1960s related to petroleum purchases in the Soviet Union were not available to the general public.

9 ASEPI, Box 157.



Notably, Spanish statistical data (Carreras and Tafunell 2005, p. 624) registered imports from the USSR (0.47% of the total imports) from 1956 to 1960. Accordingly, Soviet trade records in 1958 reflected Soviet exports to Spain, such as aluminium, cellulose, coal, and canned spider crabs, and imports from Spain, such as agricultural products including citrus, almonds, and bananas (Filatov 2018). According to Lobejón Herrero (1999), during the 1960s, Spanish exports to the Soviet Union comprised agricultural products, whereas USSR imports comprised raw materials, fuels, and food products (Figure 1). As shown in Figure 1, since 1961, commercial interchanges with the USSR have become visible due to the 1959 Stabilization Plan, increasing slightly since the 1972 Trade Agreement and significantly in absolute terms after the diplomatic recognition of 1977 (notwithstanding, in relative terms, the interchanges did not reach 2%).

How was Spanish-Soviet trade organised in the framework of the non-existence of diplomatic relations or any signed treaty? Lobejón Herrero (1999, pp. 25-63) explained that before the 1972 Trade Agreement, Spanish-Soviet commerce and the internationalisation of Spanish firms were working via payment arrangements, which were agreed in 1957-1958.

Moreover, five firms authorised by the Spanish Government, which comprised public shareholdings or maintained close relations with the ruling circle of the Franco regime (Sánchez Recio and Tascón Fernández 2003), controlled Spain's commerce in relation to the Soviet Union: *Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas* (CGTF), *Epyr* (March group), *Ciex* (linked to the Garrigues family), *Prodag*, and *Waimer*. Due to the “non-transparent” character of Spanish-Soviet trade before 1972, it is worth providing the available information and prosopography regarding those companies involved in trade relations with the USSR.

Thus, in the late 1960s the CGTF – founded by Antonio López y López in Barcelona in 1881 and based in Manila, the Philippines – turned to the Soviet Union, and was implicated in negotiations with Soviet agents such as *Sovinflot* (Soviet Foreign Trade Fleet) and *Sovrybflot* (Soviet Fishing Fleet) following the signing of the Spanish-Soviet Maritime Treaty of 1967, allowing Soviet vessels call at Spanish maritime ports and vice versa. The 1967 Maritime Treaty was amplified in 1969, permitting Soviet vessels to dock in the Canary Islands, mainly in Gran Canaria at the port of La Luz y Las Palmas and at the port of the island of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, taking provisions there on the way to the fishing grounds of Western African states. Moreover, in 1968, 46% of CGTF's social capital was owned by the Spanish Institute of Foreign Currency (*Instituto Español de Moneda Extranjera*), a public body (Yányshev-Nésterova 2016a, pp. 8-9). In 1971, the CGTF became a shareholder (25%) of the Spanish-Soviet enterprise *Sovhispan* (Giralt and Raventós 1981). The implications of the CGTF revealed a second point in Spanish-Soviet affairs: fishing activity.

Epyr belonged to the March Group, founded by Juan March Ordinas (1880–1962), one of the most influential Spanish entrepreneurs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He founded Banca March in 1926, financed the 1936 coup against the Government of the Republic, and created Fundación Juan March in 1955 (Cabrera 2011). It was Juan March, however, with his anti-Republican views, who became the President of Campsa (Compañía Arrendataria del Monopolio de Petróleos, S.A.) and who advocated and realised the purchases of petroleum by Campsa from Soviet Russia in the 1920s, within the framework of the non-existence of diplomatic relations, dissolved by the 1917 revolution (Tortella 2012, pp. 40-44; Tortella, Ballester and Díaz Fernández 2003).

According to Lobejón (1999), Ciex belongs to the Garrigues family. The Garrigues family remains one of the most influential dynasties in Spain, with family members occupying the positions of lawyers, entrepreneurs, diplomats, and politicians in the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, Antonio Garrigues Díaz-Cañabate (1904–2004) was a Spanish Ambassador to the United States (1962–1964). His son, Antonio Garrigues Walker (1934–currently), was President of Garrigues Lawyer Offices from 1962 to 2014<sup>10</sup> (García-León and Martínez-Echevarría 2014; Velarde Fuertes 2004).

While no additional information was found regarding Prodag, the Waimer (Waymer) enterprise was in evidence under the title of the Hunosa (Hulleras del Norte) company created by the INI in 1941.<sup>11</sup> Seeking coal-coking technology was the third point in the Spanish-Soviet resource-seeking strategy.

On the eve of the signing of the September 1972 Trade Agreement (Herrero de la Fuente 1974), the Director of Foreign Trade Promotion, Jesús Orfila, had proposed the following on May 5, 1972 to the Director of the INI, Claudio Boada Villalonga:<sup>12</sup>

Given the special characteristics of foreign trade with socialist countries [...] it is recommended to use a centralised commercial instrument [...]. It seems useful to take advantage of and use the experience, contacts, and commercial networks [...] experienced by various Spanish foreign trade companies that have already been negotiating with Russia by creating a Public Limited Company to promote trade with Russia.<sup>13</sup>

The plan to establish a Limited Company was proposed with the following shareholding and intervention from the same private companies that had

10 Garrigues.com, [https://www.garrigues.com/es\\_ES/sobre-garrigues/historia-de-garrigues](https://www.garrigues.com/es_ES/sobre-garrigues/historia-de-garrigues), accessed 17 July 2022.

11 See: ASEPI, Boxes 241, 253, 255, 260.

12 Claudio Boada Villalonga, the 4<sup>th</sup> President of the INI, 24 April 1970–01 February 1974. See: [archivo.sepi.es, https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm](https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm), accessed 17 July 2022.

13 ASEPI, Box 99, Expedient 243.47.

participated in the trade: Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas (20%), Waimer (20%), Eximgold (20%), Prodag (20%), and the INI (20%), with a share capital of 5,000,000 pesetas distributed in 100 ordinary shares of 50,000 nominal pesetas each. However, the liberalisation of Spain-USSR trade did not give way to the foundation of the “centralised” Public Limited Company, which was not to suggest that the INI would stop trying to establish dealings with the Soviets.

## *2.2. The INI's performance from the 1972 Trade Agreement to the 1977 restoration of diplomatic relations*

The signing of the Spanish-Soviet Trade Agreement in 1972 ended the semi-hidden commercial activity, brought liberalisation to bilateral trade (Herrero de la Fuente, 1974), and propelled another kind of Spanish activity towards the USSR. Thus, the most practical action of the National Institute of Industry in the Canary Islands was the creation of Astican (Astilleros Canarios, or Canarian Shipyards) in 1972, serving the large-tonnage fleet of Sovrybflot, coming from the Soviet Union and other nations, and serviced by Sovhispan. The Tenerife shipyard under Diatlansa was founded in 1978. During the stagflation crisis of the 1980s, the majority of Astican's income was generated by the Soviet fleet calling at the port of La Luz y Las Palmas (Yányshév-Nésterova and Luxán Meléndez 2021).

The successful functioning of the Sovhispan joint venture (Yányshév-Nésterova and Luxán Meléndez 2021) induced the INI's authorities to seek more direct collaboration with the USSR, considering Soviet technological advances in fishing worldwide (Crone Bilger 2014). In September 1973, the Soviet Minister of Fisheries, Alexander Ishkov, visited the Canary Islands in a personal capacity, and on December 6, 1973 he visited the INI's offices, accompanied by Soviet President Rafael Riva Suardíaz.<sup>14</sup> Other factors that dictated the INI's collaboration with the Soviets were unsatisfactory results and the profitability of its investments in the fishing sector in the Saharan-Mauritanian region through the creation of Industrias Pesqueras Africanas S. A., Ipasa, and, above all, the Industries Mauritaniennes de Pêche, S. A. and Imapec (Martínez Milán 2014). Subsequently, in November 1973, the INI raised the possibility of creating a joint fishing venture with Sovhispan:

To develop and contribute to cooperation between the USSR and Spain on fisheries matters; obtain profitability; contribute and improve the percentage of Spanish catches in [areas of] the Canary Islands' waters and influence; contribute to restructuring the fishing fleet by providing it with better technical and human

14 ASEPI, Box 163, Expedient 334.

resources, creating jobs, supplying the Spanish market, and INI companies dedicated to the industrialisation and commercialisation of fishing.<sup>15</sup>

The new company's capital would amount to 10,000,000 pesetas, shared between the INI (50%) and Sovhispan (50%), where Sovhispan would commit to subrogate lease contracts with Sovrybflot from its centre in Las Palmas.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, that project did not come to fruition, as Sovhispan's economic activity was sufficient, and the power of the Soviet Sovrybflot multinational ended up supplying fish to the Imapec company (Martínez Milán 2014, p. 230).

In February 1974, the Director of the Chemical, Food and Miscellaneous Sector, Enrique Moya Francés, submitted a brief report on Soviet activities in the Atlantic and Spanish-Soviet collaboration in the field of fishing to the President of the INI, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez.<sup>17</sup> The document stated the following:

In the South Atlantic, 2,500 Soviet Sovrybflot vessels were operational, 600 in the Canary-Saharan bank, and the rest in the South Atlantic and Boston banks. It was also emphasised that Sovrybflot agreed with Imapec, supplying 60% of its frozen fish with 15 vessels to its factory in Nouadhibou (Mauritania). The report stressed other types of Sovhispan activity in terms of the number of calls made by the vessels of Sovrybflot, repaired ships, expenses of Soviet mariners, and the crew carried by Aeroflot, Aviaco, and Transeuropa on the trip to Las Palmas-Moscow.<sup>18</sup>

It was suggested to the Ministry of Commerce, given the signed 1972 Trade Agreement, to increase Spanish-Soviet collaboration in line with Soviet-Japanese and Soviet-Somali fishing treaties presented (which were previously translated into Spanish), to launch the creation of fishing corporations, both Spanish-Soviet (Sovhispan, 50%; the INI, 25%; a private Spanish firm, 25%), and Spanish-Japanese (Igfisa, 51%; Shinsei, 34%; a private Spanish firm, 15%).<sup>19</sup> The corporations activity should contribute to the Spanish fishing industry and Canary Archipelago Development and increase Spanish fish catches in subjacent Spanish waters.

On March 6, 1974, the President of the INI, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, received an invitation from the Soviet Minister of Fisheries, Alexander

15 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, order 6.

16 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, order 6.

17 Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, the 5<sup>th</sup> president of the INI, 01 February 1974–08 November 1974. See: [archivo.sepi.es](https://archivo.sepi.es), <https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm>, accessed 17 July 2022.

18 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, order 7.

19 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, order 10.

Ishkov,<sup>20</sup> to visit the Soviet Union and “treat the issues of the mutual interests... continuing the negotiations initiated in Madrid”.<sup>21</sup> Francisco Fernández Ordóñez’s trip to the USSR was not completed, presumably due to a lack of support from the Ministry of Commerce and the absence of diplomatic relations. Thus, Ordóñez never travelled to the USSR, and on June 6, 1974, the Soviet Ambassador Sergey Bogomólov<sup>22</sup> was informed of the impossibility of travelling, and promoted Evaristo Marco Mateo, the Director of the Chemical, Food and Miscellaneous Sector of the INI.<sup>23</sup>

The next INI President, Juan Miguel Antoñanzas,<sup>24</sup> had the opportunity to act on behalf of the Institute in internationalising Spanish businesses towards the Soviet Union. On September 11, 1975, Luis Martínez Hevia, the General Director of the Vapores Suardíaz Navy, informed him after visiting the Soviet Union for the inauguration of Sovhispan’s office in the Soviet capital.<sup>25</sup> Martínez Hevia proposed the establishment of INI trade representation in Moscow, relying on business contacts established through Sovhispan, and thus strengthening commercial ties. In addition, he reported to the INI President the participation of Sovhispan in the International Fishing Industry Fair held in Leningrad (currently Saint Petersburg), and of the public interest in the Spanish stand. However, Antoñanzas responded, “The Institute does not have Delegations or Representations abroad. On the other hand, some of their companies create subsidiaries or establish Delegates and Representatives when business possibilities justify it”.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, Spanish-Soviet collaboration in fisheries through Sovhispan made the foundation of other companies possible, in Spanish-Soviet joint ventures where the shares ranged from 5% to 75%, trade with the Soviet Union was involved, and fishing activities in Western Africa states expanded, such as Pesconsa in 1975; Soviemex in 1976; Iberles in 1976; Sopedogo, for activities in Togo, 1977; Sobecib, for Benin, 1977; and Cafishtraco, for Cameroon, in 1978 (Yányshev-Nésterova 2016a, p. 12; 2019; Yányshev-Nésterova and Luján-Meléndez 2021).

The year 1975 combined events at micro and macro levels: the Helsinki Declaration of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the

20 Ishkov, Alexander Akimovich, Minister of Fishing Industry of the Soviet Union (1940–1950; 1954–1979). See: RGAE, fund 8208, unit 25, file 172. Personal files for 1962–1994.

21 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, order 12.

22 Sergei Alexándrovich Bogomólov (1926–2004), first ambassador of the USSR in Spain (5 May 1977–26 October 1978). See: Pereira Castañares (1993:197).

23 ASEPI, Box 245, Expedient 596, orders 14–15.

24 Juan Miguel Antoñanzas Pérez-Egea, the 7<sup>th</sup> President of the INI, 14 March 1975–21 January 1977. See: [archivo.sepi.es, https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm](https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm), accessed 17 July 2022.

25 ASEPI, Box 464, Expedient B4. 1354, order 53, page 1.

26 ASEPI, Box 464, Expedient B4. 1354, order 53, page 4.

death of Franco, the opening of Sovhispan's office in Moscow, the participation of Sovhispan in the International Fishing Industry Fair in Leningrad, and the celebration of the First Mixed Spanish-Soviet Commission to propel the 1972 Trade Agreement. The second session of the Mixed Commission took place in October 1976 and the third in October 1977, suggesting that the volumes of bilateral trade were not sufficient, and Spanish imports rose due to purchases of Soviet petroleum (Yányshev-Nésterova 2019, pp. 201-209).

Uranium enrichment<sup>27</sup> represented the fourth pillar of Spanish-Soviet collaboration. The technologically complicated process for the National Program of Nuclear Power Plant Development required advanced technology, and few countries could provide services – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Norway, and the Soviet Union (Sánchez and López 2020). Thus, from November 1973, negotiations between the INI, Enusa (Empresa Nacional de Uranio, or National Uranium Company; Annexes II and III), and the Soviet body Techsnabexport took place.<sup>28</sup> This led to the signing of a mid-term contract until 2000, despite, once again, the non-existence of diplomatic relations. Generally, the Soviet share in the supply of enriched uranium was 13%, meeting the Spanish goal of diversifying the uranium supply (Sánchez and López 202, pp. 148-149).

Summarising the INI's activity in relation to the Soviet Union, it could be asserted that its "stateness" impeded explicit internationalisation towards the Soviet Union before the 1977 restoration of diplomatic relations. Avoiding the establishment of the INI's branch in the Soviet capital and declining official visits by Soviet bodies, the INI promoted its SOEs. These SOEs strategically controlled important sectors, such as petroleum via Hispanoil and uranium via Enusa. They successfully developed the fishing sector, especially in the Canary Islands, monitoring Sovhispan and promoting close associations, such as ship reparations via the Astican and Diatlansa shipyards. Thus, hypotheses 1 and 3 were supported.

27 The production of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) for military and civil purposes became one of the key elements of the nuclear weapons arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (see: Bunn and Holdren (1997); Podvig (2011)). The Soviet Union started the HEU program after the end of the Second World War. Considering the 'neutrality' of Spain until it joined the NATO military bloc in 1982, the Spanish government considered it a convenient turn to the Soviet Union either. The topic of uranium enrichment within the Spanish-soviet relations could be considered a future scope of research.

28 ASEPI, Box 223, Expedient 517 C, Enusa.



### 3. Spanish-Soviet political, economic, and business relations from 1977 to 1991: the INI's explicit strategies for the Soviet Union

#### 3.1. *Rise of bilateral affairs due to the 1977 restoration of the diplomatic relations*

The restoration of diplomatic relations changed the institutional framework and character of the INI's internationalisation policies towards the Soviet Union. Francisco Giménez Torres<sup>29</sup> visited the Soviet Union in February 1978 after five years of projects pursuing either political goals or strengthening contact with the Soviet counterpart of the INI, the State Committee for Science and Technology (SCST).<sup>30</sup>

Negotiations took place in December 1977,<sup>31</sup> after the Third Meeting of the Mixed Spanish-Soviet Commission regarding the implementation of the 1972 Trade Agreement (Yányshev-Nésterova 2019, p. 209). The vice president of the USSR State Committee for Science and Technology issued an invitation to visit the Soviet Union and its official institutions. The visit became viable due to the re-establishment of political relations and the work of the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, through Juan Antonio Samaranch<sup>32</sup> in Spain and his Soviet colleague Sergei Bogomolov, from December 1977 to January 1978. Due to the existence of trade relations between Spain and the Soviet Union before 1977 (Figure 1), and analysis of the 1976–1977 export-import operations, the list of INI enterprises upholding Spanish interests and involved in trade with the USSR was previously elaborated<sup>33</sup> (Table 1).

29 Francisco Giménez Torres, the 8<sup>th</sup> President of the INI, 21 January 1977–02 May 1978. See: [archive.sepi.es](https://archive.sepi.es), <https://archivo.sepi.es/presidentes.htm>, accessed July 17, 2023

30 Here in Russian: Gosudarstvennyi Komitet po Nauke i Tekhnike SSSR (GKNT). The SCST, a counterpart of the INI, was a governmental body of the USSR that implemented state policy in the field of scientific and technological activity. It was founded in 1948 and dissolved on December 1, 1991, due to the breakdown of the planned system and the collapse of the USSR. The SCST was charged with determining the main directions for the development of science and technology, planning and organising scientific and technical problems of national importance, systematising the implementation of discoveries, inventions, and the results of exploratory research in production. The work of the Committee was coordinated with the Ministry of Finance, the State Bank, the Supply Department, the State Planning Committee, and the State Labour Committee. See: Temirbulatova (2009); RGAE, fund 9480, files 1-3,7,9.

31 ASEPI, Box 260, Expedient 1.

32 Juan Antonio Samaranch Torelló (1920–2010), first Ambassador of Spain to the Soviet Union (10 June 1977–17 October 1980), President of the International Olympic Committee (1980–2001). See: Pereira Castañares (1993); Durántez Corral (2010).

33 The list of the cited SOEs is demonstrated without any preponderance of a sector vis a vis with others.



**TABLE 1** - *The INI's enterprises involved in the trade with the USSR*

<b>Enterprises, years of INI's holding</b>	<b>Type of business relations</b>
Aesa, Spanish shipyards, 1969–1989	Repair of Soviet merchant ships, mainly oil tankers. Better offers had been launched to Lisnave (Lisbon, Portugal), a consequence of previous unsatisfactory results.
Astano, Northwest shipyards and workshops, 1972–1989	Collaboration with Sudoimport, a Soviet shipbuilding company.
Astican, Canary Islands shipyards, 1972–1989	Repair of Soviet fishing vessels through the Sovhispan company. In 1977, billing for 62 repaired ships totalled 55 million pesetas. The contracts were signed with the USSR Ministry of Fisheries. Possibilities of repair of the merchant vessels through the Intramar company, in the process of investigation.
Astander, Santander shipyards, 1969–1989	Repair offer for 10 Soviet fishing vessels, for an estimated value of 1000-1,200 million pesetas.
Enusa, National Enterprise of Uranium, 1969–1989	Uranium enrichment contract, signed with Techsnabexport in 1974; contemplated the purchase of 5,100 million Separation Work Units (SWUs). The second contract signed in 1975, implied the enrichment of 2,650 million SWU, with the extension of an additional 800 thousand SWUs.
Enasa, National Enterprise of Trucks, 1946–1989	Initiation of contacts with the respective Soviet organisations.
Hunosa, <sup>34</sup> Northern coal, 1941–1989	Acquisition of Soviet machinery for coal mines. Interest of the Spanish side: mechanisation of mines, Soviet technical assistance through the company Waimer.
Hispanoil, Spanish petroleum, 1965–1986	Purchase of Soviet crude oil through the Sojuznefteexport company of 127,000 tons. Spanish private refineries Petronor and Ert acquired 608,000 tons. Problem of the ability of Spanish ships to load larger quantities.
Ensidesa, National Enterprise of Iron and Steel Industry, S. A., 1943–1989	Consideration of the USSR as one of the main export markets, especially since 1976, after the sale of 132,000 tons of product, worth US 26 million dollars. Main Soviet buyer Promsyrimport. Prospects for other sales. Interest in establishing long-term contacts, importing coking coal from the USSR.
Imapec, Mauritanian fisheries industries, 1969–1972	Supply of 80% of Imapec's fish through the Soviet company Sovrybflot. In 1977 Sovrybflot unloaded 9,000 tons of fish in Nouadibhou, Mauritania.
Iberia, Spanish airlines, S. A., 1943–1989	Establishment of the agreement with Aeroflot, Soviet Civil Aviation in 1973, carrying out the charter flights linking Madrid, Moscow, and Las Palmas.
Enagas, National Enterprise of Gas, S. A., 1972–1986	Interest in importing Soviet gas, hampered by the non-existence of gas liquefaction plants in the Black Sea on the Soviet side.

Source: Author's elaboration from Yányshev-Nésterova (2019, pp. 212-213); ASEPI, Box. 260.

34 Due to the reduction of coal usage worldwide, the Spanish coal industry since the 1960s was finding in crisis. That led to the INI's intervention to palliate the market's negative consequences, looking for new technology and amplifying the export area. See Sudrià (1994).

According to Table 1, the major points of the internationalisation of Spanish enterprises were related to maritime and fishing activities (including the supply of Soviet fish to Spanish plants, repair of Soviet vessels at Spanish shipyards, transport of Soviet sailors from Moscow and Las Palmas), followed by cooperation in the energy and fuel sector, including purchases of Soviet petroleum and gas, and collaboration in atomic energy via uranium enrichment.

The direct travel of the extended INI delegation to the Soviet Union would amplify trade qualitatively and quantitatively, and increase the degree of Spanish enterprises' internationalisation. The INI delegation was headed by Francisco Giménez Torres, and composed of Tomás Galán, Assistant to the Presidency for Planning; José Luis Niño de Olaiz, Engineering and Technology Director; Carlos Espinosa de los Monteros, Commercial Director; Carlos Payá Riera, President of the National Engineering and Technology Company; Luis María Linde de Castro, Commercial Counsellor of the Embassy of Spain, and Juan José Santos Aguado, First Secretary of the Embassy of Spain.<sup>35</sup> The documents stated, "The different Soviet organisations provided the reception of the INI delegation, and the extremely cordial welcome was offered by the SCST, showing the great interest in developing industrial and commercial relations with Spain".<sup>36</sup>

The meeting between the INI delegation and SCST senior officials constituted the first official contact of a Spanish public industrial organisation with Soviet representatives since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. This meeting between homologous organisations also responded to the SCST's policies of internationalising the Soviet economy, especially with Western countries. The SCST is proud to maintain over 200 agreements with public and private entities, including approximately 40 agreements with the United States, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Stanford Research Institute, General Electric, Fiat, and Siemens.<sup>37</sup> Table 2 summarises the main results of the INI's visits to prospective Soviet institutions or those previously involved in commercial relations between Spain and the USSR.

After the visit of the INI delegation to the Soviet Union on January 19, 1979, the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement was signed in Moscow between the National Institute of Industry of Spain and the State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Science and Technology, the undersigned being the INI President José Miguel Rica Basagoiti,

35 ASEPI, Box 260, Expedient 1, page 25; Box 88.

36 ASEPI, Box 260, Expedient 1, p. 2.

37 ASEPI, Box 260, Expedient 1, p. 5.

**TABLE 2** - Summary of the INI delegation's visit to the USSR in February 1978

<b>Enterprises, years of INI's holding</b>	<b>Visited Soviet institution</b>	<b>Officer in charge</b>	<b>Area of cooperation with the Soviets; General considerations</b>
Enasa, National Enterprise of Trucks, 1946–1989 Hunosa, Northern coal, 1941–1989	State Committee for Science and Technology (SCST)	Gvishiani Dzhermen, Vice-President	Food industry, energy, steel and metallurgy, oil and petrochemical, electronics, automotive, shipbuilding, and coal mining.
Any INI Enterprise	USSR Academy of Science	Scriabin, Scientific Secretary	Possibility of research stays for Spanish academics. The Academy was responsible for basic and applied research, while the implementation was the prerogative of the SCST.
Enusa, National Enterprise of Uranium, 1969–1989 Ensidesa, National Enterprise of Iron and Steel Industry, S. A., 1943–1989	Ministry of Foreign Trade	Manzhulo Alexey, Vice-Minister	More than 60% of the exchanges between the two countries were concentrated in the sale of crude oil by the Soviet side and steel products by the Spanish side, as well as uranium enrichment and purchases of steel products.
Astican, Canary Islands shipyards, 1972-1989	Ministry of Fisheries	Zhigalov Gueorgui, <sup>38</sup> Vice-Minister	Shipbuilding and repair. Repair of 5 Soviet vessels, type Super-Atlantic. Equipment of the Angolan fleet.
Spanish shipyards in Matagorda and Vigo	Sudoimport, shipbuilding company	Ganin Pavel, Vice-President	Problems related to the Spanish shipyards' services cost. Better mutual knowledge and major repairs of the Soviet vessels in Italy and Portugal. Lack of Official Soviet Registry's inspections in Las Palmas and Tenerife. More repairs of Soviet ships by Astican in the Canary Islands, depending on calls (more than 2000 yearly).
	USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industries	Govisov Boris, President	Signing of the Protocol between the Soviet Chamber and the Spanish Higher Council of Chambers. Spanish stand that would take place in November 1978, Moscow Exhibition; the INI pavilion of 100 m <sup>2</sup> . INI participation in the shipbuilding symposium.

38 Zhigalov, Gueorgui Vladimirovich, from March 1980 to July 1991, held the position of the Chief Executive Officer of Sovhispan. See: Yányshev-Nésterova (2019, p. 243).

<b>Enterprises, years of INI's holding</b>	<b>Visited Soviet institution</b>	<b>Officer in charge</b>	<b>Area of cooperation with the Soviets; General considerations</b>
Astano, Northwest shipyards and workshops, 1972–1989 Eximgold Group (César Álvarez), Euroalde Group	Licensintorg, Licenses and Transferable Patents Department	Akopian, Vice-President	Transferable licenses on Soviet patents in the fields of steel, metallurgy, and energy. Sale of patents to the company Altos Hornos de Vizcaya (Blast Furnace of Vizcaya).
Enasa, National Enterprise of Trucks, 1946–1989	Autoexport, Automobile factory ZIL <sup>39</sup>	Fedorov, Technical Director	Manufacture of gasoline engine trucks up to 150 HP. Possible contacts between the Spanish and Soviet engineers.

Source: Author's elaboration from ASEPI, Box 260, Expedient 1, pages 1-50; Box 88.

and SCST's First Vice President Dmitriy G. Zhmerin.<sup>40</sup> Table 3 summarises the existing and potential fields of Spain-USSR cooperation.

To fulfil the January 1979 Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, in October 1979, the First Mixed Commission consisted of Spanish and Soviet officers. It was headed by the Vice President of the SCST, Dmitriy Zhmerin, and the General Director of the Technical International Cooperation of Spain, Manuel Barroso. The Commission also determined the spheres of cooperation, such as astronomy and earth science, healthcare, oceanography, agriculture, urban planning and roads, energy and industry, standard normalisation and metrology, economy, and planning.<sup>41</sup> The parties agreed to establish a Second Mixed Commission at the end of 1980. They celebrated the Days of Science and Technology in Spain and USSR between 1980 and 1981.<sup>42</sup> The INI's explicit strategies towards the Soviet Union since 1977 affirm hypothesis 2 on the maintaining of political contacts, and prove hypothesis 4 regarding INI's "stateness" in the framework of the restored bilateral affairs.

39 ZIL, here in Russian: Zavod Imeni Likhacheva, the Likhachev plant, is one of the oldest automotive companies in Russia, founded in 1916.

40 ASEPI, Box 410, Expedient 1119. Letter of José Miguel Rica Basagoiti, INI President, to Juan Antonio Samaranch, Ambassador of Spain to the USSR, on January 23, 1979. ASEPI, Box 20667. Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement between the National Institute of Industry of Spain and the State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Science and Technology.

41 ASEPI, Box 364, Acta de la I Comisión Mixta de Cooperación Científica-Técnica España-URSS (Minutes of the 1st Mixed Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation Spain-USSR).

42 Ibid.

**TABLE 3** - *Areas of Spanish-Soviet cooperation according to the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement of 1979*

Area	Details
Coal mining <sup>43</sup>	Mines start-up and mechanisation machinery. Exploitation of layers with a high content of firedamp.
Steel and metallurgy	Coal preheating before coking. Preformed coke. Refrigeration, by evaporation, of iron and steel furnaces. Dry quenching of coke. Homogenisation of coals to make coke paste. Optimisation of the blast furnace load. Pyrohydrometallurgical and pyrometallurgical treatment of pyritic minerals containing Cu, Zn, Pb and others.
Petrochemistry	Development of lubricating oils and additives. Hydrogenation of oil fractions. Development of new petrochemical processes. Optimisation of olefin plants. Catalyst development.
Tourism and crafts	New tourism areas and improvement of the current ones. Hotel services. Manufacture and sale of handicraft products.
Transformation and use of solid waste	n/d
Energy	Pollution in thermoelectric power plants. High voltage networks and electrical interconnection. Underground lignite mining for thermoelectric plants. Uranium minerals.
Naval building <sup>44</sup>	Shipyards conversion. Ship repair. Computer applications to shipbuilding. Ships transporting liquefied gases. Offshore oil platforms.
Transport	Railway material. Industrial vehicles and motors. Groups for industrial vehicles. New composite materials for aeronautics
Engineering	Complete design of thermal power plants. Criteria on the control of turbines and boilers. Use of computers in the operation of thermal power plants. Automation of control chains in thermal power plants. Metallurgy of main equipment in thermal power plants (condensers, heaters, pumps, etc.). Coal and ash handling systems in thermal power plants. Thermal power plant boilers. Types of home and circulation systems. Heavy components for power plants. Design and construction of large dams.
Organisation, rationalisation, and modernisation of production	Modelling and optimisation techniques, organisation and rationalisation of production, prediction of technological evolution, planning and sectoral programming.

Source: Author's elaboration from ASEPI, Box 20667.

43 ASEPI, Box 410, Expedient 1119. As explained in the letter from INI President José Miguel de la Rica Basagoiti to the Vice President of the SCST Dmitriy Zhmerin on January 23, 1979, "the agreement that exists between our firm Hunosa and the Ministry of the Coal Industry of the USSR, is a good example of the possibilities of economic and technological-scientific cooperation that existed between both countries".

44 ASEPI, Box 410, Expedient 1119. It should be noted that the collaboration in the shipbuilding and repair area in the Canary Islands shipyards, Astican, represented a special topic of the correspondence before signing the Agreement. The Spanish part demanded higher volumes of the Soviet part's orders for repairs, on the eve of the opening of the offices of the Soviet Official Registry in Las Palmas and Tenerife, the Canary Islands, in 1978. Another issue to be resolved has been contracting the construction of 10 fishing boats to the company Construcciones Navales del Sureste by Sudoimport, leaving the company Construnaves, despite the economic contacts established in 1975.

### *3.2. Collapse of bilateral relations in 1981 due to Spain's integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)*

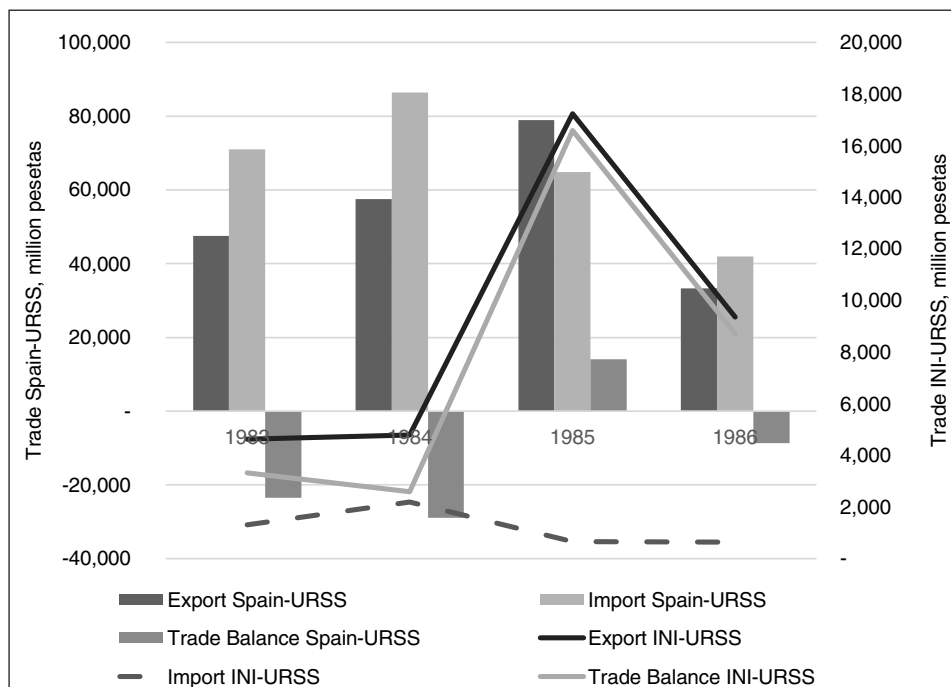
The realities of the Cold War, such as the enlargement of the military organisation countering the Warsaw Pact, interfered with Spanish-Soviet affairs. After Spain joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on February 25, 1981, the political “spy scandal” and the “cooling of politics” lowered the degree of bilateral relations (Yányshev Nésterova 2019, pp. 170-172, 215-223). The Spanish-Soviet “spy scandal” explicitly influenced the functioning of Sovhispan, a remarkable Spanish-Soviet joint venture. In 1981, Focoex, a public enterprise in Foreign Trade, became a 25% shareholder of Sovhispan. Simultaneously, the INI maintained 40% of Focoex in 1976, 15.8% in 1980, and 39.4% in 1982. Thus, the INI entered into business with the Soviets as an indirect shareholder of Sovhispan (Yányshev-Nésterova 2019, pp. 248-253; Martín Aceña and Comín Comín 1991, pp. 500-501).

The political situation did not prohibit the INI's internationalisation policies towards the Soviet Union. Thus, on July 11–16, 1981, the Spanish delegation, consisting of officers from the INI and Initec (Empresa Nacional de Ingeniería y Tecnología, or National Engineering and Technology Company), visited the Soviet Union, fulfilling the foundations of the January 19, 1979 Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement.<sup>45</sup> Trade exchanges did not stop. At the end of the 1980s, Spanish imports from the USSR exceeded USD 880 million, reaching USD 1.321 million, while exports did not reach USD 400 million, except in 1985 (Figure 1).

Figure 2 and Tables 4-7 illustrate the trade between Spain and the USSR and the INI-USSR in the 1980s, revealing three tendencies: first, the deficit in Spanish trade with the Soviet Union; second, the trade surplus of the INI-USSR; and third, the shares of the INI in Spain's trade with the Soviet Union. It is worth noting that in the early 1980s the INI remained one of the actors in Spanish-Soviet trade, as an outlet of Spain's privatisation policies and the trade liberalisation process.

Tables 4 and 5 provide information on the percentage of INI import operations from the Soviet Union between 1983 and 1986. As stated, the shares of the INI in imports did not exceed 2% of national imports. However, in particular sectors, such as inorganic chemicals and metal appliances, they varied considerably up to 48%. Exports were highly successful in 1985–1986, where the INI maintained over 20% of all national operations with the USSR: fats and oils, paper and paperboard, and aluminium the principal export sectors.

<sup>45</sup> ASEPI, Box 364, memorandum of the visit of the Spanish delegation composed of representatives of the National Institute of Industry (INI) and the National Engineering and Technology Company (Initec).

**FIGURE 2 • Spain-USSR and the INI-USSR trade, 1983–1986**


Source: Author's elaboration based on ASEPI Box 478, Expedient 1409. Dirección Comercial de Aduanas (Customs Commercial Directorate).

**TABLE 4 • Participation of the INI in import operations proceeding from the USSR (%)**

Sector	1983	1984	1985	1986
03. Fish and crustaceans	0	5	0.3	0
27. Mineral fuels	0	2	0.3	0
28. Inorganic chemicals	48	22	17	5
73. Cast iron and steel	0.02	1	1	0
75. Nickel	0	0	3	0
84. Boilers and metal appliances	31	35	28	15
<b>Total INI/Total National</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>

Source: Author's elaboration based on ASEPI Box 478, Expedient 1409. Dirección Comercial de Aduanas (Customs Commercial Directorate).



**TABLE 5** - *Participation of INI in export operations directed to the USSR (%)*

Sector	1983	1984	1985	1986
15. Fats and oils	8	0	4	0
26. Metallurgical minerals	0	0	0	0
48. Paper and paperboard	26	17	34	0
76. Aluminium	0	93	0	0
84. Boilers and metal appliances	0.3	0	44	0
85. Electrical devices and electronic uses	0	2	0	0
<b>Total INI/Total National</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Author's elaboration based on ASEPI Box 478, Expedient 1409. Dirección Comercial de Aduanas (Customs Commercial Directorate).

Tables 6 and 7 show qualitative information regarding INI enterprises involved in commercial operations in the Soviet Union. Thus, the SOEs that actively and profitably traded with the USSR were Oesa and Pamesa, and primarily cast iron and steel operations such as Ensidesa, Babcock Wilcox, Perfrisa, and Reinosa. Enlarged export operations represent Smithian growth and positively affect enterprises and the national economy.

**TABLE 6** - *The INI's import operations from the USSR (million pesetas)*

Sector-Enterprise	1983	1984	1985	1986
03. Fish and crustaceans	–	123	7	–
27. Mineral fuels	–	1,255	148	–
Endesa	–	153	148	–
Ensidesa	–	1,102	–	–
28. Inorganic chemicals, Enfersa	1,261	621	308	288
73. Cast iron and steel	1	88	75	175
Astander	1	–	–	–
Reinosa	–	88	75	141
BWE	–	–	–	34
75. Nickel, Reinosa	–	–	16	12
84. Boilers and metal appliances	49	103	95	136
Endesa	49	–	80	–
Hunosa	–	103	15	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,311</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>611</b>

Source: Author elaboration based on ASEPI Box 478, Expedient 1409. Dirección Comercial de Aduanas (Customs Commercial Directorate).

**TABLE 7** • *The INI's export operations to the USSR (million pesetas)*

<b>Sector-Enterprise</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1986</b>
15. Fats and vegetable and animal oils, Oesa	395	–	200	–
26. Metallurgical minerals, Almagrera	–	–	–	24
48. Paper and paperboard, Pamesa	267	–	95	179
73. Cast iron and steel	3,961	4,436	16,213	8,918
Ensidesa	1,400	731	12,791	7,548
B.W.C	1,895	3,027	2,068	879
Perfrisa	120	27	1,220	491
Reinosa	546	651	134	–
76. Aluminium, Endasa	–	25	–	31
84. Boilers and metal appliances	2	–	726	198
Bazan	–	–	2	–
Secoinsa <sup>1</sup>	2	–	–	–
Remetal	–	–	724	198
85. Electrical devices and electronic uses, Focoex	–	33	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>4,784*</b>	<b>17,235*</b>	<b>9,350</b>

<sup>1</sup> Companies that from 1986 were not part of the INI Group

\* + 2,004 shipyard services

Source: Author elaboration based on ASEPI Box 478, Expedient 1409. Dirección Comercial de Aduanas (Customs Commercial Directorate).

Analysis of Tables 4–7 reveals that the INI-URSS trade and technological relations stalled at the level of the “second industrial revolution”, hampered by the non-leading position of Spain, the Soviet Union’s falling technological position, and belonging to opposing geopolitical and military structures, taking into consideration that the advanced Soviet technology was oriented towards the military industry.

### *3.3. The rise of Spanish-Soviet relations since the second half of the 1980s*

After the entry of Spain into the European Market and the referendum regarding Spanish membership in NATO during May 19–22, 1986, Felipe González, the President of the ruling Socialist Party Government, visited the USSR.<sup>46</sup> The official trip:

<sup>46</sup> One of the Spanish delegation members was Manuel Meler Urchaga, the President of the Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, the pioneer company in establishing relations with

Reflects Spain's freedom of movement from its new location [...] normal among the remaining members of both [CEE and NATO, author's note] Western organisations. The main asset Spain can obtain from a presidential trip is a better balance between the blocs, similar to other Western countries, both in the political and economic fields. The trip could perfect a series of Bilateral Agreements (the Economic-Industrial, the Road Transport, and the Double Taxation), give the signal to another series of agreements (Tourism, Social Security, and the formalisation of political contacts), fine-tune other Treaties that have already been formed [...] Maritime, Air Transport [...] reviewing some issues that are pending between Spain and the USSR (the Olympiad in Barcelona in 1992, cultural relations [...] consular disputes, etc.).<sup>47</sup>

In the late 1980s, Spanish-Soviet visits and business contacts intensified due to the opportunities provided by the perestroika of Mikhail Gorbachev, political liberalisation, the dismantling of the economic planning system, decentralisation of foreign trade, and permission for joint venture creation on Soviet soil (receiving FDI) (Albin 1989; Aldcroft 1997; Judt 2006; Zamagni 2011).

Thus, in March 1987, the INI considered opening a Moscow branch to cover the Soviet and CMEA markets. From May 25–28, 1987, Miguel Ángel Fernández Ordóñez, the Secretary of State for Commerce and former INI President, undertook a trip to the USSR, leading the Spanish delegation of the Mixed Spanish-Soviet Commission, followed by a large group of POEs and SOEs. The issued report emphasised that “Spain and its industry lost their first presence in the USSR from the late 1960s, when penetration became possible, and the foreign presence occupied all possible niches”.<sup>48</sup>

At the end of November and the beginning of December 1987, the Minister of the Coal Industry of the USSR, Shadov, arrived in Spain. The outcome was signing the contract for “The Soviet coal's barter for INI products”, where INI Export would instrument import operations.<sup>49</sup> Due to the market system transition in the USSR, barter showed presumable difficulties in obtaining foreign convertible currencies to pay for imports.

Between April 12 and 21, 1988, the Soviet Science and Technology Days were held in Madrid, organised by the Higher Council for Scientific Research (Spain) and the SCST, with the invitation of the INI's President. The presented topics covered a broad agenda of the “current topics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”,

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the USSR, who held 25% of the shares of the joint venture Sovhispan. See ANC, fund 138, custody unit 12719, inventory unit 1408. 03.02.02. Subfolder “Visit of the Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González to the Soviet Union May 19–22, 1986”.

47 ASEPI, Box 20667.

48 ASEPI, Expedient 1409. Box 487. Russia, 1987–1988. Here, particularly, the example of the Italian Fiat company is relevant (Fava, 2018). The Italian business did not permit to escape the opportunity going to the Soviet market since the late 1950s.

49 ASEPI, Box 20667.

starting with cosmonautics, cybernetics, electronics, medicine, and environmental protection.<sup>50</sup>

A year later, between July 9 and 13, 1989, an official trip to the USSR on the eve of the Soviet market opening and the deregulation of its economy was organised by the Minister of Industry and Energy. The delegation was formed by either representatives of INI companies, including Aesa, Enadimsa, Endesa, Initec, Hunosa, Enusa, Babcock Wilcox, Imenosa, Spanish Shipyards, Iniexport, Iberia, Ensidesa, and Enusa, or an extensive group of private firms and entrepreneurs<sup>51</sup> who represented a wide range of industrial sectors: financial services, telecom, construction, ship repair and building, chemistry, textiles, and food. The INI, in this last stage of privatisation, deregulation, and deindustrialisation, acted as a “strategic nucleus” for Spanish firms in their intent to internationalise to the East. The Soviet market in transition looked “unknown” and “untouched”, and required a consolidated entrance led by the veterans like those from the National Institute of Industry.

#### 4. Conclusions and final reflections

This study contributes to the scholarship of the INI’s internationalisation strategies towards the Soviet Union from the late 1950s to 1991. The available primary documents confirmed the four hypotheses constructed on the IB theory regarding those strategies, such as the orientation to strategic goals, petroleum, coal coke, uranium enrichment, fishing activities developed in strategically important regions, and improving and maintaining established relations.

50 ASEPI, Box 20667.

51 CAF, Investronica, Duro Felguera, Proco 75, Sirecox, AFM, Fagor Sistemas, Alconza, Jumberca, Argelich Termes, Grupo Sabamex, Abengoa, Banco Bilbao-Bizcaya, Banco Santander, Banco Hispanoamericano, Dragados y Construcciones, Telefónica Internacional, Astilleros Reunidos del Nervión, ERT Internacional, Tudor, Skycom, Sovhispan, Chupa Chups, Epyr, Amper, Remetal, Fiesta, Nutricer, Azcoaga, Cointeco 2000, Ceselsa, Carboex, Divisiones Bienes de Equipo INI, Inagrosa, Hispano Química, Mares, ITLV, Tamko, Tubacex, Tarquinus, CTA (Ciencia y Tecnología Aplicada), Tubos Reunidos, Inta Eimar, Indunares, Construnaves, APD, Tecniberia, Foster y Wheeler, Campofrío, Banco Exterior de España, Alcatel-Standard Eléctrica, Huarte, Anisa, Rua Papel y Servicios, Banco Central, Soquimes, Agemac, Saenger, Viscofaiviansa, SA Cros, Compañías de Industrias Agrícolas, Consejero Superior de las Cámaras de Comercio, Iliop, Enconsa Internacional, Aentec, Senermar, Refracta, Levantor, Marketing Internacional Consultores, Oitasa, Zara and Macosa. See: ASEPI, Box 20667. In this matter, Alcatel, an outcome of the French Direct Investment in Spain, and Telefónica represented a case of telecommunications’ internationalisation. See: Puig Raposo and Castro (2009: 535); Cliftona, Comín and Díaz-Fuentes (2011). Abengoa (engineering), Banco de Santander (banking) and Chupa-Chips (food and beverages) were listed among the 146 largest internationalised Spanish family firms. See: Puig Raposo and Fernández Pérez (2009a, pp. 480-482). Sovhispan, in January 1991, established the joint-venture Lenespan on Russian soil, subscribing 10% of shares with Lenyrbprom (51%) and Megasa (39%). See: Yányshev-Nésterova and Luxán Meléndez (2021).

The “stateness” of the INI represented a disadvantage before 1977 and an advantage after 1977.

Primary sources used in this paper permit the orientation of the manuscript towards the BH field, demonstrating “how history matters” and revealing qualitative information about the who, when, and how of the INI’s officers and policymakers promoting the internationalisation of the SOEs towards the Soviet Union. The period before 1977 represents the most interesting episode, as the INI was implicitly involved in external affairs with the Soviets. Moreover, the relationship between the INI and the joint venture Sovhispan existed since the early 1970s.

Finally, this article shapes the forms of the INI’s internationalisation: projects to create a joint venture with the Soviets, the establishment of a structure to control trade besides the 1972 Agreement, then the promotion of open official contacts with their Soviet counterparts, followed by the fall of the INI in Spanish trade since the 1980s and, notwithstanding, the leading position of the INI during the perestroika.

As a scope for future research, studies should focus on analysing every branch of industry involved in trade with the Soviets, the expansion of Spanish-Soviet capital to Western African states, displacement in time from 1991 to the 2020s, and examining Spanish businesses in the post-Soviet geographical space. Fundamentally, this article can serve as a model for a comparative analysis of the Italian and French cases between POEs and SOEs in the Soviet and CMEA markets. Finally, the internationalisation of the INI and its SOEs in all directions from 1949 to early 1990 remains an insufficiently explored topic; hence, further investigation is necessary in future studies.

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■

***La internacionalització de l'empresa espanyola cap a l'Est: les estratègies empresarials de l'Institut Nacional d'Indústria cap a la Unió Soviètica (des de finals de la dècada del 1950 al 1991)***

## RESUM

Aquest article examina la internacionalització de les empreses espanyoles, impulsada per l'Institut Nacional d'Indústria (INI), el mercat de la Unió Soviètica en el context de la Guerra Freda i la col·laboració econòmica Est-Oest. Basat en la metodologia de la Història de l'empresa i en les fonts primàries de l'INI, aquest treball argumenta el següent. En primer lloc, l'enfocament de l'INI cap a la Unió Soviètica va ser dictat per interessos estratègics nacionals, com ara objectius de política industrial, cerca de recursos, inversions en recerca de tecnologia o actituds de cerca de guanys. En segon lloc, l'acostament de l'INI a la Unió Soviètica va estar condicionat per propòsits polítics com ara establir o mantenir relacions entre Espanya i la Unió Soviètica. En tercer lloc, abans del restabliment dels llaços diplomàtics el 1977, l'«estatalitat» de l'INI es considerava un desavantatge. Finalment, després del restabliment de les relacions diplomàtiques, l'«estatalitat» de l'INI es va considerar un avantatge.

PARAULES CLAU: internacionalització de les empreses públiques, negocis estratègics, Institut Nacional d'Indústria, relacions hispano-soviètiques.

CODIS JEL: F23, L32, N24, N44.

■

***La internacionalización de la empresa española hacia el Este: las estrategias empresariales del Instituto Nacional de Industria hacia la Unión Soviética (desde finales de la década de 1950 a 1991)***

## RESUMEN

Este artículo examina la internacionalización de las empresas españolas, impulsada por el Instituto Nacional de Industria (INI), al mercado de la Unión Soviética en el contexto de la Guerra Fría y la colaboración económica Este-Oeste. Apoyado en la metodología de la Historia de la empresa y en las fuentes primarias del INI, este trabajo argumenta lo siguiente. En primer lugar, el enfoque del INI hacia la Unión Soviética fue dictado por intereses estratégicos nacionales, como objetivos de política industrial, búsqueda de recursos, inversiones en búsqueda de tecnología o actitudes de consecución de ganancias. En segundo lugar, el acercamiento del INI a la Unión Soviética estuvo condicionado por propósitos políticos como establecer o mantener relaciones entre España y la Unión Soviética. En tercer lugar, antes del restablecimiento de los lazos diplomáticos en 1977, la «estatalidad» del INI se consideraba una desventaja. Finalmente, después del restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas, su «estatalidad» se estimó como una ventaja.

PALABRAS CLAVE: internacionalización de las empresas públicas, negocios estratégicos, Instituto Nacional de Industria, relaciones hispano-soviéticas.

CÓDIGOS JEL: F23, L32, N24, N44.



## Annex I

**I. N. I.**

Fecha: 4 de mayo de 1971

De Dirección de Estudios a EXCMO. SR. PRESIDENTE

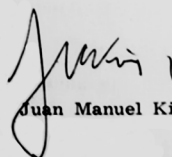
Asunto: Viaje a Rusia


INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE INDUSTRIA
DIRECCIÓN DE ESTUDIOS
FECHA: <u>4-V-71</u>
N.º SALIDA: <u>178</u>

Si, como parece, proyectas ir a Rusia aprovechando el Congreso del Petróleo, creo oportuno que la visita se planee adecuadamente. El Presidente del INI puede trabar contactos importantes en aquel país, pero yo conozco algo la Unión Soviética y nada se puede hacer si no se preparan con mucho cuidado entrevistas a nivel suficientemente elevado. Para ello será preciso contactar al Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, a la Delegación Rusa que hay en Madrid y, quizá, a la Embajada Rusa en París.

En particular, doy importancia especial al tema del carbón para coke, del que la Unión Soviética puede ser un suministrador interesante. Para ello es preciso, también, que se preparen entrevistas a alto nivel y que algún especialista de Ensidesa-Uninsa, te acompañe.

EL DIRECTOR DE ESTUDIOS,

  
Juan Manuel Kindelán



## Annex II

17-4-74

EMPRESA NACIONAL DEL URANIO, S.A., (ENUSA) - GESTION DEL  
APROVISIONAMIENTO NACIONAL DE SERVICIOS DE ENRIQUECIMIEN-  
TO DE URANIO - CONTRATACION DE SERVICIOS DE CONVERSION Y  
DE ENRIQUECIMIENTO DE URANIO CON LA UNION SOVIETICA

### 1. CONSIDERACIONES GENERALES

En la actualidad, hay en España tres centrales nucleares en explotación, con una potencia total de 1.110 MW, siete reactores en construcción, con una potencia total de unos 6.550 MW, para entradas en servicio en 1976-79, y planes de construcción de nuevas centrales nucleares para entradas en servicio a partir de 1980, al ritmo de unos 2.000-3.000 MW/año, pudiéndose prever que la potencia eléctrica nuclear en explotación alcanzará en 1985 un total del orden de unos 23.000 MW.

Este fuerte desarrollo en España de la producción eléctrica de origen nuclear, que pasará a ser una de las fuentes principales del abastecimiento energético del país, implica necesidades importantes y crecientes de concentrados de uranio, servicios de enriquecimiento, fabricación de elementos combustibles y demás fases que constituyen el ciclo del combustible nuclear. Dada, además, la extraordinaria importancia de las inversiones requeridas en centrales nucleares, resulta claro que es de la máxima prioridad asegurar, con la mayor garantía posible, los aprovisionamientos necesarios de dicho ciclo, y particularmente de concentrados de uranio y de servicios de enriquecimiento.

Respecto al aprovisionamiento de servicios de enriquecimiento de uranio, la situación mundial se caracteriza en la actualidad por un fuerte aumento de la demanda y por el hecho de que hasta el presente y en los próximos cinco o seis años, con la salvedad de la penetración rusa en el mercado, de alcance total y posibilidades futuras no conocidas, el suministrador prácticamente único de dichos servicios será la Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) de USA, cuyas tres



