

commercial agreements with Spain. In August 1950 Spain was awarded the first of a long series of loans, and only three months later pressure from the United States caused the United Nations to lift the boycott it had imposed after the Second World War, when Spain was considered 'the last holdout of fascism' (Shaw, 1987, p. 162). In 1951 there was a remodelling of the ministerial cabinet which gave the more moderate wing of the regime more power, and there began to be changes in the commercial ambit.

In 1953, Spain signed an agreement that allowed the USA to have military bases and installations on Spanish soil. In exchange, the United States granted Spain economic aid amounting to approximately \$ 1 billion. That same year, a concordat was signed with the Vatican, and two years later Spain entered the United Nations. The international isolation had ended, and the regime began a new phase (Di Febo and Juliá, 2005, p. 65). It is true that in various European countries and in the Eastern bloc there continued to be firm opposition to General Franco's regime, but the image of a backwards country under the repression of a military dictatorship gave way to that of a touristic destination with sun and beaches, flamenco, bullfights and, of course, exciting football games. Starting in 1955, Spain became a nation recognised by the international community, although certainly without democratic legitimacy (Fusi, 2012, p. 232).

When in the year 1957 the European Communities started to put into effect its model of European integration, the most conservative ministers in the government reacted with their characteristic disdain and public negativity towards Europe. However, the technocrats, who had come to form part of the government paid close attention to the process and to the opportunities that this integration would offer the Spanish economy. Europeanism entered the Spanish public opinion, and at the end of the 1950s, 'Spaniards had the certainty that their destiny, in the short or long term, was none other than Europe' (García de Cortázar and González, 1996, p. 616). This conviction was installed permanently in the elites and, progressively, would extend among the middle classes and more active groups in urban areas. This 'support for Europe' could also be seen in the enthusiasm of Real Madrid for the European Cup, which we turn to in the following section.