

# ***Immigration and integration management in Spain***

***December 2018***

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*Report prepared by Gemma Pinyol-Jiménez  
with the assistance of Sílvia Caraballo*

## **Introduction**

In the short span of slightly over a decade, Spain has shed its longstanding status as an emigrant country to become a land of immigrants. In the course of its rapid move toward parity with European countries with a longer history of absorbing foreigners, it has even occasionally ranked among the EU's top receiving states. As a country with a historically hazy migratory policy and an economy largely based on construction and services that has constituted a strong pull factor for intense and diverse incoming migratory flows, Spain is a unique object of study in terms of immigration management. Furthermore, its immigration policy would appear to have undergone few changes during and following the most recent financial crisis and has varied little regardless of the political party in power. Last, but not least, it is worth noting that although Spain was one of the countries hit hardest by the economic turndown and suffered exceptionally high levels of unemployment as a result, the debate on immigration there has not been profoundly politicised as it has been in other EU Member States. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of any palpable manifestation of anti-immigrant sentiment in Spain to date – even in the context of recent elections in Andalusia, which marked the very first time a xenophobic political party has managed to gain a parliamentary foothold in the country.

This report attempts to provide a basic overview of Spain's approach to immigration management and integration measures implemented in that country over the past

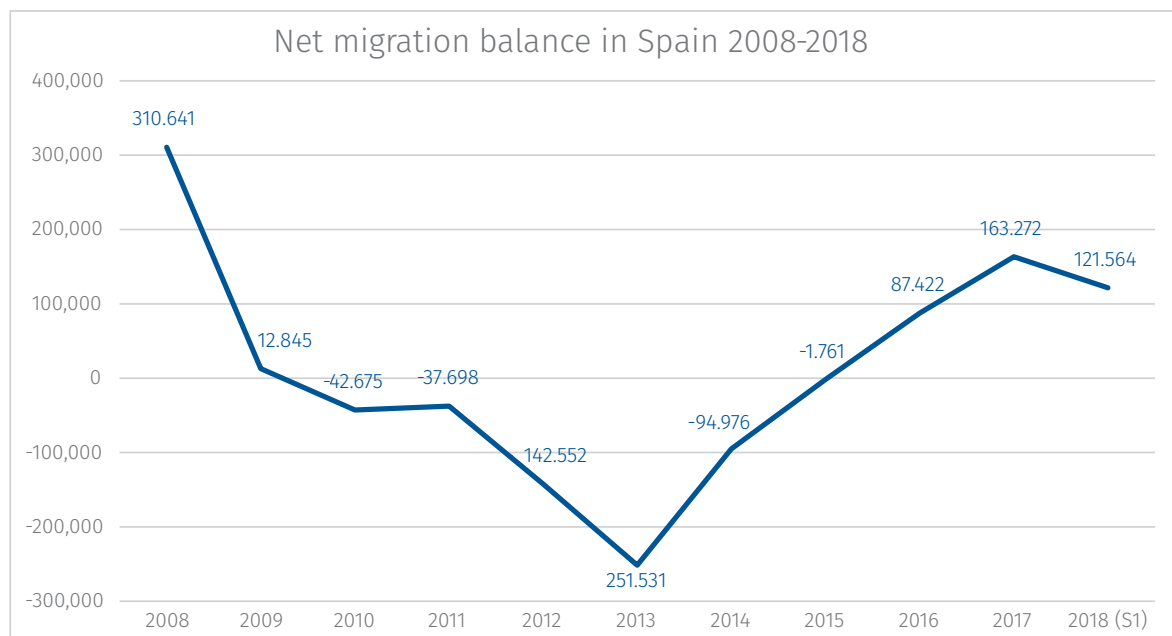
two decades as well as identify key migration-related issues, highlighting those that may be of particular interest to a German audience.

## Context

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, Spain, like other Southern European countries, took a relatively laissez-faire approach to labour market regulation and border protection. Its lack of preoccupation regarding the latter is understandable, given that prior to its entry into the European Community in 1986 it perceived itself to be an emigrant country. Thirty years on, it has become a country of immigrants with certain exceptional characteristics that set it apart from its neighbours. The first is the intensity of the inward migratory flow it absorbed on a yearly basis well into the first decade of the present millennium. The second is the wide range of countries from which these immigrants have migrated. The third is the capacity of its labour market during this period of three decades to absorb incoming workers on both a formal or informal basis. Last, but not least, has been the relatively harmonious incorporation of this ongoing influx of foreigners into the warp and woof of Spanish society, a process that local authorities had not anticipated and initially had a limited capacity to facilitate.

### Immigration to Spain, an overview in numbers

An examination of national immigration and emigration figures from 1940 to the present confirms the exceptional nature of the years 1991-2009 in the history of migration in Spain. There were six consecutive years during this period in which the number of new arrivals topped the 600,000 mark. The foreign population in Spain has nevertheless declined considerably in recent years. This is partially due to ongoing naturalisation processes (the number of which increases as more and more immigrants achieve permanent residence status), but is also a consequence, as noted in the table below, of increased emigration on the part of both autochthonous and foreign residents, some of whom, in the latter case, have taken advantage of voluntary return programmes. Spanish citizens accounted for close to 80,000 of the half a million people who emigrated from Spain in 2013 (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1.** Net migration balance in Spain 2008-2018: net immigration (in hundreds of thousands)

Source: INE.

Spain's foreign-born population, which stood at slightly over half a million (631,546) in 1981, reached a high of almost 7 million (6,759,780) at the beginning of 2012,<sup>1</sup> before falling to 4,572,055 in 2018.<sup>2</sup> According to the latest Permanent Observatory on Immigration statistics, Spain now has 5,331,774 legally registered foreign residents, slightly more than the 5,237,710 recorded in 2017. Of the total foreign residents registered in Spain in 2018, 3,195,942 fell under the EU residency regime (2,712,121 being citizens of EU Member States) and 2,135,832 under the Spanish *Regimen General* on the conditions under which foreigners may reside, study and work in Spain.<sup>3</sup> The percentage of foreign residents within the total population of Spain has risen from 1.6% in 1998 to 10.1% in 2018<sup>4</sup> (**Figure 2**).

Most of Spain's non-Community foreign residents have come from Africa (1,055,225 as of 2017) and Central and South America (862,000), the main countries of origin in

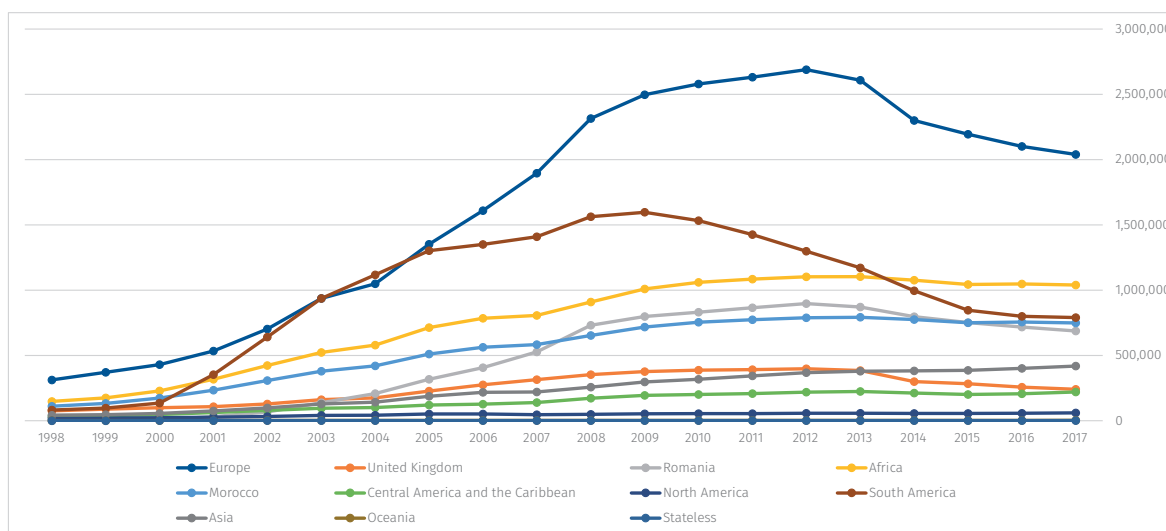
<sup>1</sup> Permanent Observatory on Immigration (2012). *Una aproximación demográfica a la población extranjera en España* (p. 27).

<sup>2</sup> INE press release (2018). *Avance de la Estadística del Padrón Continuo*, 1, January.

<sup>3</sup> See: Principales Resultados – June 2018 in [http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/Estadisticas/operaciones/concertificado/201806/Residentes\\_Principales\\_Resultados\\_30062018.pdf](http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/Estadisticas/operaciones/concertificado/201806/Residentes_Principales_Resultados_30062018.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> INE press release (2018). *Avance de la Estadística del Padrón Continuo*, 1, January.

**Figure 2.** Distribution of foreign population of Spain by continent of origin 1998-2017



Source: Continuous Register statistics, INE.

these regions being Morocco (782,295), Ecuador (158,673) and Colombia (124,000). Immigrants from China (215,061) form another important group. Although the ratio of men to women varies from one immigrant community to the next, the overall foreign population in Spain is fairly balanced in terms of gender.

While it does not appear likely that immigration figures will return to pre-crisis levels anytime soon, the profile of those arriving today is markedly different: more and more are well-educated middle-class people over-qualified for the majority of employment opportunities available in Spain.<sup>5</sup>

## An overview of the legal framework for immigration and asylum in Spain

Spain had no legislation in place regarding the regulation of immigration or, in fact, anything that could be rightfully construed as constituting an immigration policy, prior to its entry into the European Community. When it enacted its first law governing immigration in 1985, it was still an emigrant country and took the move to fulfil a pre-requisite for EC membership. Organic Law 7/1985 on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain was drafted in the conspicuous absence of public or parliamentary debate, its purpose being merely to address the preoccupations of EC Mem-

<sup>5</sup> For additional information on this topic, see: <https://www.europapress.es/epsocial/migracion/noticia-perfil-nuevo-inmigrante-clase-mediaestudios-sobrecualificacion-20180424151932.html>

ber States concerning Spain's geostrategic position and, more particularly, the role it played in the Mediterranean and its ties with Latin American states. Statistics confirm that the incorporation of Greece, Portugal and Spain into the European Community in the 1980s led to the transformation of all three – initially into transit zones that functioned as entryways into European states that had long been receiving countries and eventually into receiving countries in their own right.

Less than two decades after the introduction of its first legislation related to immigration, Spain had become a receiving country absorbing a heterogeneous inward migratory flow. The process of its ascension to this category was marked by the rapidity with which it became a target destination, the volume of migration it attracted and the diversity of the points of origin from which people came. The period 2000-2001, frequently referred to as the moment of 'the discovery of immigration' in Spain (Zapata, 2004), marked the first time the topic generated significant public and media debate, much of which centred on labour rights and the irregular status of many new arrivals.

Spain's gradual transformation into a receiving state prompted the development of a legal framework for immigration at the national level and mechanisms for managing the phenomenon in a more orderly manner. Measures included regularisation campaigns conducted in 1986, 1991 and 1995, which collectively facilitated the regularisation of around 150,000 foreigners as well as a more recent campaign launched in 2000 in concert with a new reform of immigration legislation that resulted in the regularisation of an additional 400,000 people. Between 2000 and 2004 a conservative government under the Partido Popular (PP) modified immigration law several times, passing two pieces of legislation on the subject within the span of a single year.

The adoption of Organic Law 4/2000 supposed a redefinition of Spain's model of migratory management. Title I of this legislation set out a list of the rights and liberties of foreign nationals residing in Spain (including those in an irregular situation), some of which were later curtailed under Organic Law 8/2000 but restored in Organic Law 2/2009 in compliance with a ruling handed down by the Constitutional Court concerning rights and liberties.<sup>6</sup> Title II of the same document, 'Legal Rulings for Foreign Nationals', established a legal framework for foreign nationals in Spain (visas, requirements for entry, residence, etc.) and Title III dealt with infractions involving foreign nationals

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<sup>6</sup> Spanish Constitutional Court ruling STC 236/2007 and Organic Law 2/2009 on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration.

and their sanctioning regulations. Title IV, which addressed coordination between public authorities throughout Spain at every level in matters pertaining to immigration, established three entities that play an important role in decision-making and policy-making in this sphere: the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants, the Tripartite Labour Commission and the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia.

Further action taken following the passage of this law in 2000 included the creation of administrative structures for immigration management (which for the most part were related to border control), the negotiation of bilateral agreements with third countries on readmission and the management of labour immigration flows, the establishment of a quota system that regulated the entry of foreign workers and the creation of the Integrated Surveillance System (SIVE), a network that monitors unauthorised immigration across Spain's maritime borders. Spain's burgeoning status as a receiving country has led to a greater emphasis on integration policy, an area in which local authorities have played an ever greater and more visible role, and efforts to address a broader range of considerations such as the rights of irregular immigrants and the management of cultural diversity. Four specific issues have, to a greater or lesser extent, marked the Spanish immigration agenda over the past few decades:

- The need to design (and strengthen) mechanisms for regulating migratory flows (quota systems, contract schemes in countries of origin, etc.).
- The fight against irregular migration (that has been heavily focused on the protection of maritime borders).
- The need to collaborate with third countries, mainly, but not solely, on efforts to avoid the flow of irregular migration.
- The social inclusion of immigrants and their incorporation into the Spanish labour market.

The division of competences related to migrant flow management and immigrant integration between national, regional and local government authorities in Spain implies a dynamic of multilevel relations regarding these topics. Policy related to border control, entry, nationality and asylum and the general framework for immigration affairs is the exclusive domain of the national government. National government competences related to migration and asylum are for the most part divided between three ministries: The Ministry of Labour, Migrations and Social Security, The Ministry of the

Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation. The principal entity responsible for immigrant management is the Ministry of Labour, Migrations and Social Security's Secretariat of State for Migrations.<sup>7</sup> As competence in areas such as social services, education, health care and housing has been delegated to Spain's autonomous communities, the brunt of responsibility for immigrant integration is borne by regional authorities, who also play a significant role in policymaking in this area. Regional governments are responsible for administering affairs in these categories in conjunction with local city governments, which have their own competences related to such things as social action and urban planning. NGOs also work hand in hand with government authorities at various levels in areas such as social inclusion and integration. All of these public and private institutions and entities make up a rich, if complex, framework for immigration management that requires close cooperation between all involved in order to function optimally.

## Migratory flow management policy

There is a general consensus that the model of migratory management pursued in Spain is tightly linked to labour market demand (Aja, Arango and Oliver, 2009). The economic expansion Spain underwent in the 1990s stimulated growth in labour-intensive, low-qualification sectors such as construction and tourism. Between 1994 and 2004, the Spanish economy generated 6 million jobs, 2 million of which were filled by foreign workers. When growth came to an abrupt halt in 2007–2008 following the outbreak of the worldwide economic crisis, the economic picture in Spain changed dramatically. Mechanisms for controlling immigration flows in the wake of the economic downturn have since been implemented in tandem with measures focusing on the fight against irregular immigration and cooperation agreements with third countries related to migration management.

The objective of this chapter is to provide a diachronic picture of immigration-related policies and actions corresponding to three specific periods. With an eye to providing the most comprehensive account possible of events within these time frames, this discourse will include two sections devoted respectively to an exploration of the link between mi-

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<sup>7</sup> This entity has only recently regained the status of Secretariat of State it lost for six years as the result a 2012 government ministerial reorganisation. Between 2012 and 2018 its functions were assumed by the General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration, which now functions as a department within the newly reinstituted Secretariat of State for Migrations.

gratory flows and the Spanish labour market and an analysis of the predominant weight the fight against irregular immigration has had in public migration management in Spain.

## A diachronic overview

This diachronic account of immigration management in Spain will examine three specific time frames, beginning with the initial period (2000-2004) during which the country's main instruments of immigration management were developed. It will then explore the second period (2004-2008), during which the consolidation and amplification of these mechanisms took place, before moving on to the third (2008-2018), which has constituted a 'standby' period for many of the instruments implemented previously.

### *The initial period: 2000-2004*

The first period of the history of migratory flow management in Spain spans the years 2000-2004, the time frame during which the country established its first migratory management mechanisms. The framework migratory management instruments developed during this time linked immigration policy to two fundamental issues: the needs of the Spanish labour market (addressed by means of entry quotas and bilateral manpower agreements) and border control (which has entailed the implementation of the Spanish Integrated Surveillance System, often referred to by its acronym SIVE, and the negotiation of various readmission agreements). Subsequent government actions taken more recently confirm the strong relationship that policymakers continue to draw between migratory flow and the demands of the labour market, a telling example being the transfer of the principal organ of immigration affairs at the national level from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Labour.

A number of bilateral manpower agreements were negotiated during this period. These include pacts with Ecuador and Colombia (signed in 2001) and other countries of origin such as Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Bulgaria, Poland and Romania. This first generation of agreements offered signatory countries advance information regarding market demand by means of a quota system, guarantees that foreign workers' rights would be fully protected, priority access to temporary job contracts and voluntary return programmes (**Table 1**).

Within the same time span, Spain also negotiated repatriation and readmission agreements with Nigeria (2001), Guinea Bissau (2003) and Mauritania (2003).

**Table 1.** Bilateral Labour Agreements between Spain and Ecuador and Colombia

	Permanent		Temporary		Total	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
<b>Quota system</b>	10,884	10,575	21,195	23,582	32,079	34,157
<b>Approved</b>	4,732	3,490	10,520	21,498	13,914	24,988
<b>Colombia</b>	585 (17.2%)	400 (11.5%)	547 (5.2%)	1,531 (7.1%)	1,132 (8.1%)	1,931 (7.7%)
<b>Ecuador</b>	758 (22.3%)	434 (12.4%)	180 (1.7%)	49 (0.2%)	938 (6.7%)	483 (1.9%)

Source: Pinyol-Jiménez, 2009.

Spain moreover used its 2002 presidency of the European Council to push for the inclusion of migration issues on the EU agenda, centring part of the agenda of the Seville Council meeting on the fight against irregular immigration and using that occasion to reiterate concerns it had previously raised at earlier Council meetings in Tampere and Laeken. The Spanish government's decision to address the topic of irregular immigration during its presidency was warmly received by then European Commission Roman Prodi, who signalled the strong degree to which Spain's concerns in this area ran parallel to those of Europe as a whole.<sup>8</sup> This initial support notwithstanding, it quickly became clear that neither the Commission nor certain Member States would agree to the sort of link the Spanish government was attempting to make between migration and development. Whereas the Spanish proposal for action embraced a negative conditionality narrowly focused on curtailing irregular immigration, the EU opted in the end to pursue a positive conditionality based on offering more attractive cooperation agreements to countries that collaborated in efforts to contain irregular migration flows.

### ***The period of consolidation and enlargement: 2005-2008***

The second period of Spanish migratory management, which lasted from 2005 to 2008, saw the implementation of new formulas and actions related to the management of incoming migratory flows and the introduction of mechanisms for integrating resident immigrants into Spanish society. Immigration policy became increasingly aligned with foreign policy from 2005 onwards, following events in Ceuta and

<sup>8</sup> Prodi, R. (2002, June 18). *Speaking Points concerning the Seville European Council*. Brussels. Regarding Prodi's references to illegal immigration, see: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-02-290\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-290_en.htm)

Melilla<sup>9</sup> and the so-called “cayuco”<sup>10</sup> crisis. Greater emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen cooperation agreements with sending countries during this period and development aid and technical assistance became a more important facet of dialogues maintained with these states. The government also launched an extraordinary regularisation campaign hinging regularisation on proof of existing labour relations between Spanish employers and foreign nationals lacking official work permits, an action praised by many Spanish civil society organisations but heavily criticised by some other EU states. Key instruments for funding regional and local governmental efforts to foster the social integration of immigrants (the Support Fund for the Reception and Integration of Immigrants and their Educational Support) as well as civil society initiatives in this area (competitive grants for the development of integration programmes targeting immigrant communities), which will be addressed at greater length in point 2 of this document, were also devised during this period.

In early October 2005, approximately 650 people – the majority Sub-Saharan Africans seeking to enter Europe – rushed a section of the six-meter-high razor-wire fence delimiting the boundary between Melilla and Moroccan territory. Several people died in the course of additional charges that took place over the next few days as a result of shots fired by Moroccan police forces attempting to repel the assaults. As a result of these fatalities, increased border protection collaboration between Spain and Morocco and the implementation of SIVE along Spain’s Mediterranean coastline, irregular migration began to flow along an alternative, more southeasterly route. Southern Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal became maritime points of departure for migrants seeking to reach Europe via the Canary Islands from these countries, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Gambia and other points of Central Africa and Asia.

The Spanish government undertook a series of actions focusing on Sub-Saharan African countries in response to the cayuco crisis and pushed for the implementation of similar measures at the EU level. It also launched diplomatic initiatives that culminated in the formulation of Spain’s National Action Plan for Sub-Saharan Africa 2006-2008<sup>11</sup> and the international Rabat Conference on Migration and Development hosted by France and Morocco.

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<sup>9</sup> During September and October 2005, hundreds of migrants entered Spanish territory by scaling the fence marking the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Moroccan and Spanish border guards harshly repressed these attempts, during which eleven immigrants were killed and many more were wounded.

<sup>10</sup> The upswing in irregular migration from West Africa to the Canary Islands between 2005-2009 is commonly referred to as the *cayuco* crisis. *Cayuco* is a term used in Spanish to describe the small Senegalese and Mauritanian fishing vessels in which most migrants were transported along this route.

<sup>11</sup> Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006). *Plan Africa 2006-2008*. General Directorate of External Communication.

### Box 1. Africa Plan, a regional framework for relations with countries of origin

Spain's first Africa Plan 2006-2008, which was formulated in the hope of securing greater cooperation on the part of Sub-Saharan countries in migratory flow management and the fight against human trafficking, was launched in response to a crisis that arose when migrants from Western African countries such as Senegal, Mali and Mauritania stopped attempting to enter Spain via Moroccan territory and began to pursue more perilous maritime routes to the Canary Islands in small boats referred to as "cayucos". The plan was articulated by means of a series of "second generation" agreements on technical assistance similar in essence to Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements that entwined migratory and international development policy objectives.

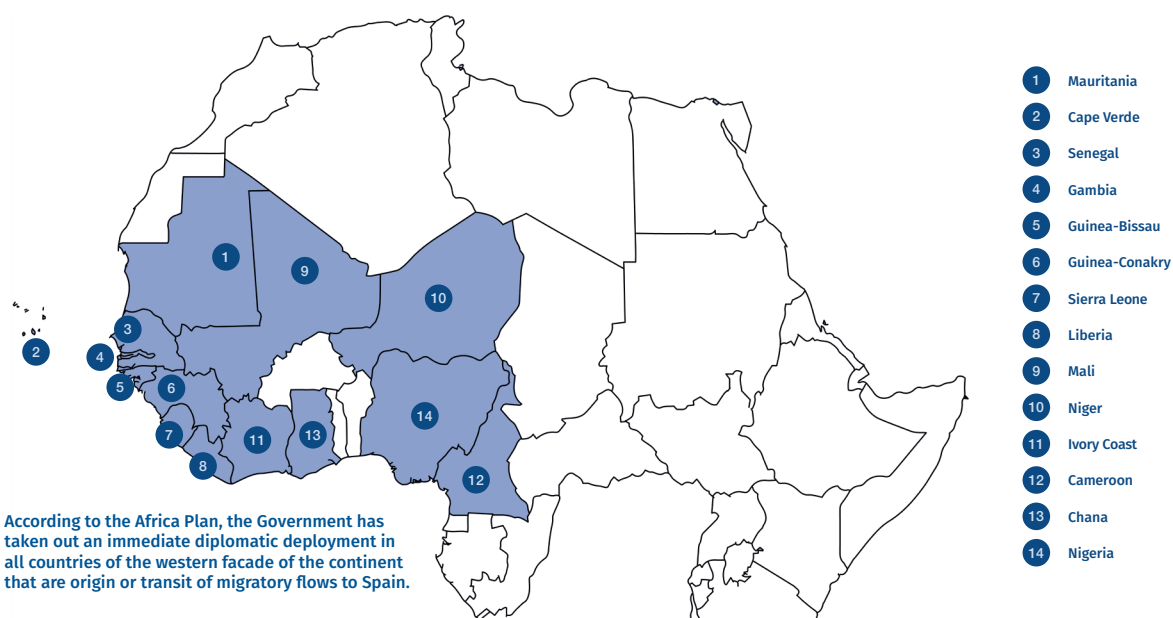
Objectives and lines of action pursued during the implementation of this three-year plan included:

- Strengthening Spain's political and institutional presence in Africa (especially Western Africa) and the impact of its diplomatic, development assistance and security agreements with African countries by means of high-level political contacts and visits with key individuals in these states, the opening of new embassies, technical assistance offices, trade offices and the posting of additional diplomatic and specialist personnel to the region.
- Encouraging cooperation between Spain and African countries on the regulation of migratory flows, negotiating migration and readmission agreements, and fostering multilateral initiatives such as the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rabat).
- Contributing to the consolidation of democracy, peace and security in Africa.
- Contributing to the fight against poverty and supporting the development agendas of Sub-Saharan African countries.
- Promoting trade and investment between Spain and African countries by means of concessional finance provided through development aid funding (DAF) and the Viability Studies Fund and the enhancement of Spain's network of Economic and Commercial Offices in the region.
- Strengthening cultural and scientific cooperation projects such as the "Casa África" project based in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

The idea was to strengthen bilateral relations with countries of origin and transit, and introduce a new model of migration cooperation agreement (**Figure 3, Table 2**).

Such second generation agreements have taken an integrated approach to migration issues and been designed to achieve a broad range of objectives that includes managing migrant labour flow (by means of quotas); engaging signatory countries in the fight against irregular migration (through the inclusion of readmission clauses); promoting broader acceptance of the concept of voluntary return; articulating a dual commitment to support migrant workers' integration into the receiving country's labour market (through training courses and other measures) and to foster their social integration there; combating human smuggling and trafficking; and establishing a link between migration and development (via technical assistance, projects, etc.). To date, Spain has signed framework agreements on cooperation on matters related to migration and readmission with Gambia (2006), Guinea (2007), Cape Verde (2008), Mali (2008) and Guinea-Bissau (2009); a cooperation agreement on migration management (2007) with Mauritania) and an 'Agreement on cooperation on the prevention of migration by unaccompanied Senegalese minors and their protection, return, and reintegration' with Senegal (made ad referendum in 2006 and subsequently published in the Spanish Official State Gazette).

**Figure 3. Spanish “migratory diplomacy” in Sub-Saharan Africa**



Source: Plan Africa 2006–2008, General Directorate for External Communication, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

**Table 2.** Bilateral migration agreements between Spain and other countries (2000–2008)

Date	Country	Type
21/05/01	Colombia	Agreement on management and regulation of labour migration flows
29/05/01	Ecuador	Agreement on management and regulation of labour migration flows
17/12/01	Rep. Dominicana	Agreement on management and regulation of labour migration flows
23/01/02	Romania	Agreement on management and regulation of labour migration flows
21/05/02	Poland	Readmission agreement
07/02/03	Guinea-Bissau	Readmission agreement
01/07/03	Mauritania	Readmission agreement
28/10/03	Bulgaria	Agreement on management and regulation of labour migration flows
07/11/03	Switzerland	Readmission agreement
23/12/03	Morocco	Memorandum on minors
18/02/04	Algeria	Protocol on the movement of persons
06/07/04	Peru	Cooperation on migration matters
06/02/06	Macedonia	Readmission agreement (ad referendum)
12/09/06	Mauritania	Extradition convention
09/10/06	Gambia	Cooperation agreement on migration matters (ad referendum)
09/10/06	Guinea	Cooperation agreement on migration matters (ad referendum)
10/10/06	Senegal	Cooperation agreement on migration matters
23/01/07	Mali	Cooperation agreement on migration matters
20/03/07	Cape Verde	Cooperation agreement on migration matters
10/05/08	Niger	Cooperation agreement on migration matters

Source: Pinyol-Jiménez, 2008.

### ***The “standby” period***

The third and final period, which began with the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, would mark a new point of inflection in that migration discourse in Spain from this point on would not be solely about immigration (now occurring on a diminished scale) but also about emigration. The impact of the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and the Syrian war have made the issue of forced mobility an integral part of the debate on migration as well. The brusque reduction in incoming migratory flows during this period explains Spain’s gradually waning interest in developing coordination mechanisms with sending countries and instruments facilitating the contracting of workers in countries of origin to meet labour market demand. The most noteworthy trends

during this period have been continued migration related to family reunification and a rise in the number of applications for asylum being presented, a phenomenon that will be discussed in greater detail in section 3 of this report (**Figure 4**).

Since 2014 the government has issued a higher volume of first-time residence permits, a significant number of which have been related to family reunification. Statistics for 2017 indicate that the number of work and residence permits, and non-lucrative residence permits being conceded to foreigners remains steady and that applicants' motives for seeking visas in this category vary according to national origin. Chinese and Moroccan nationals mainly apply for family reunification permits while US and Russian nationals account for the greatest number of non-lucrative residence permits. In 2017, 198,356 temporary residence permits were issued to foreigners under the *Regimen General*, 2,708 (1.4%) more than in 2016. Almost half of this number were renovations or modifications of prior permits and 32.7% were first-time authorisations (**Figure 5**).

What has most characterised this period (which extends from the outbreak of the financial crash of 2008 to the present and has seen the dismantling of integration policies and mechanisms and the liquidation of entities such as the Delegate Committee on Migration Affairs)<sup>12</sup> is not so much structural or regulatory changes as a shift in narrative context. While irregular immigration continues to be a major issue, discourse on the topic has taken on harder and more security-focused edge than before<sup>13</sup> and been tinged with a xenophobic tone similar to that which has increasingly coloured political discourses in many other EU countries. Anti-immigrant narratives pursued by non-parliamentary parties during the December 2018 regional election campaigns in Andalucía have been adopted by some leaders of mainstream Spanish political parties as well.

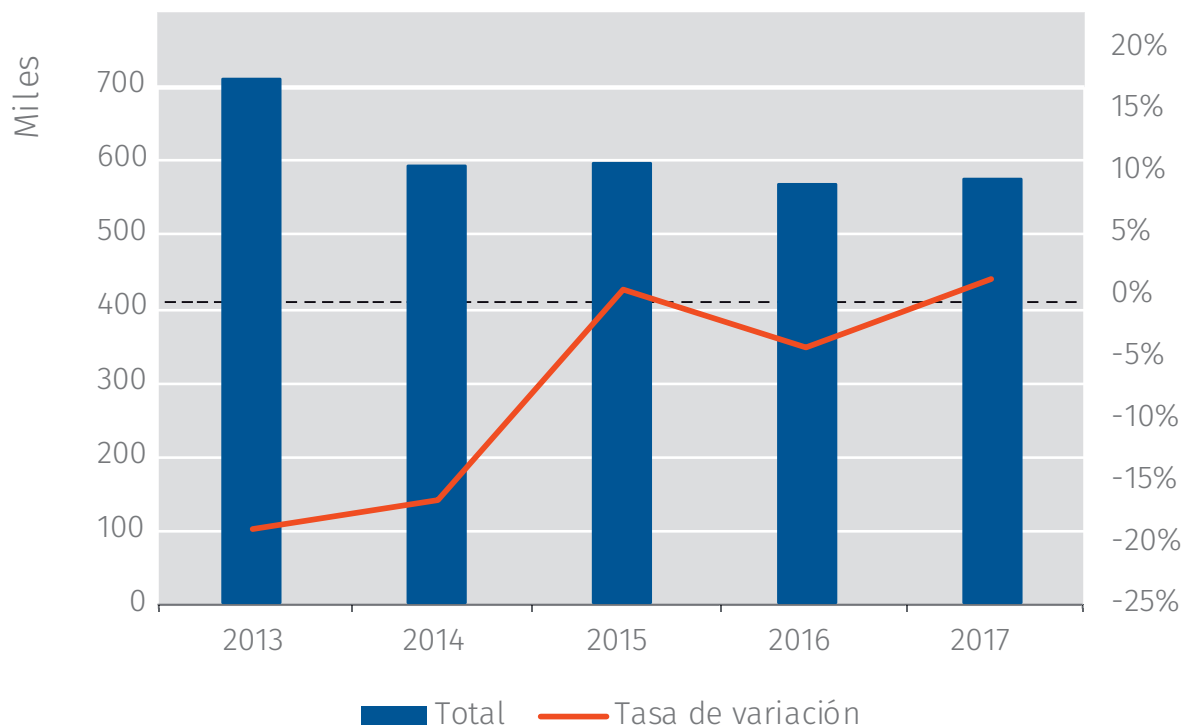
## Migration flows and the labour market

A quota system introduced in 1993 constituted Spain's first attempt to establish a mechanism for the orderly regulation of migratory flows. Although created with the consensus and participation of the country's principal economic players, this sys-

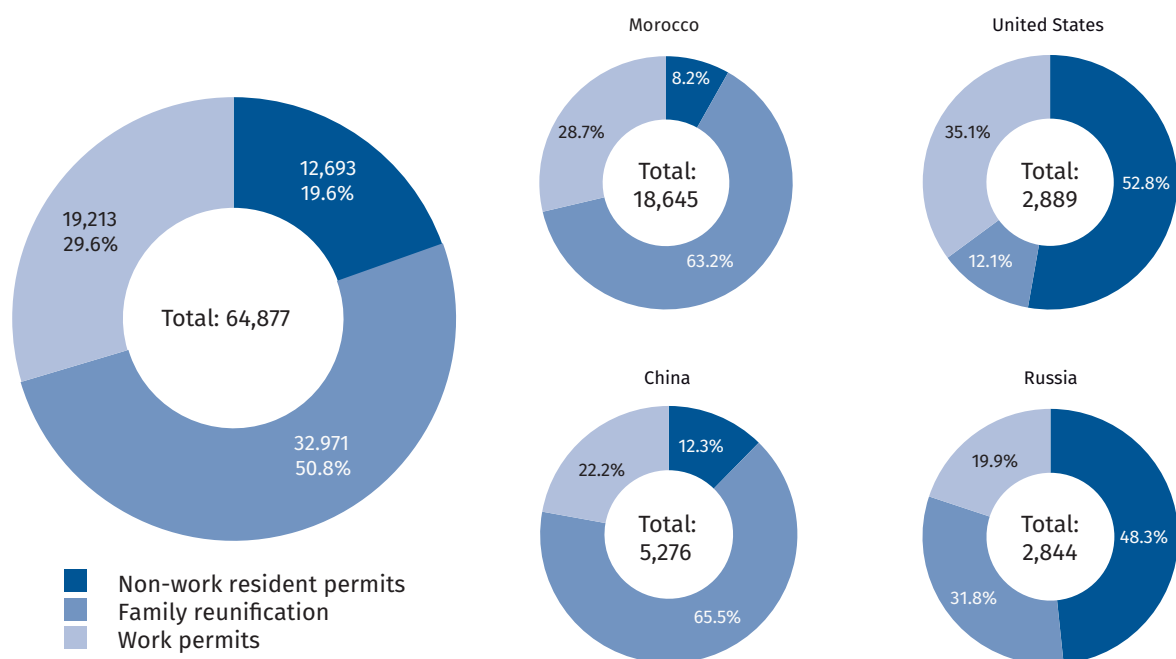
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<sup>12</sup> The present government has expressed an interest in reviving this and other initiatives, although it is yet unclear if it will happen soon.

<sup>13</sup> Irregular migratory flow management has become a priority in national security strategy. See Office of the Presidency of the Government of Spain (n. d.). *Ordenación de Flujos Migratorios*. Departamento de Seguridad Nacional. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/sistema-seguridad-nacional/qu%C3%A9-es-seguridad-nacional/%C3%A1mbitos-seguridad-nacional/ordenaci%C3%B3n-flujos>.

**Figure 4.** Overview of residence permits issued to migrants in Spain 2013-2017 (in thousands)

Source: Flujo de Autorizaciones de Residencia Concedidas a Extranjeros 2017 (Permanent Observatory Immigration, November 2018).

**Figure 5.** First-time residence permits issued in Spain in 2017 by nationality of origin and category

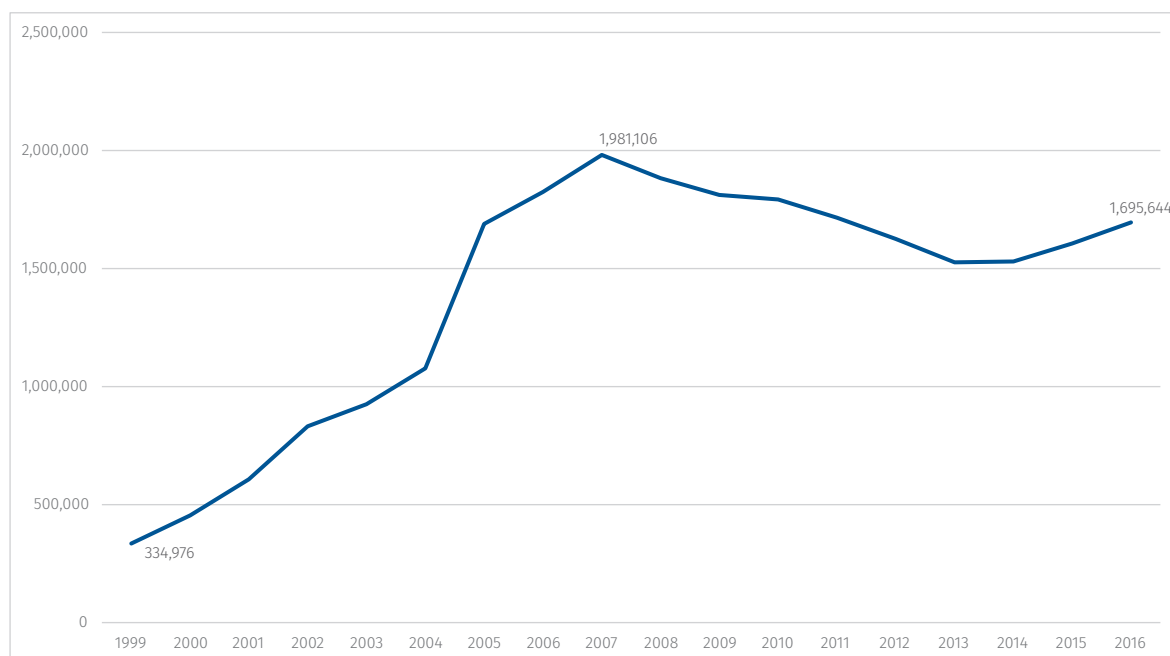
Source: Flujo de Autorizaciones de Residencia Concedidas a Extranjeros 2017 (Permanent Observatory on Immigration, November 2018).

tem proved difficult to implement in practice. Disparities between established quotas and the real demands of the labour market led many migrant workers to bypass the system and seek jobs in the informal economy. The quota system was a reactive mechanism that gave the Spanish economy the indirect access to the manpower it required. Moreover, the highly segmented nature of Spain's labour market has meant that newcomers to the workforce (traditionally young people and women, but more recently immigrants) have normally been given temporary contracts (González and Garrido, 2005).

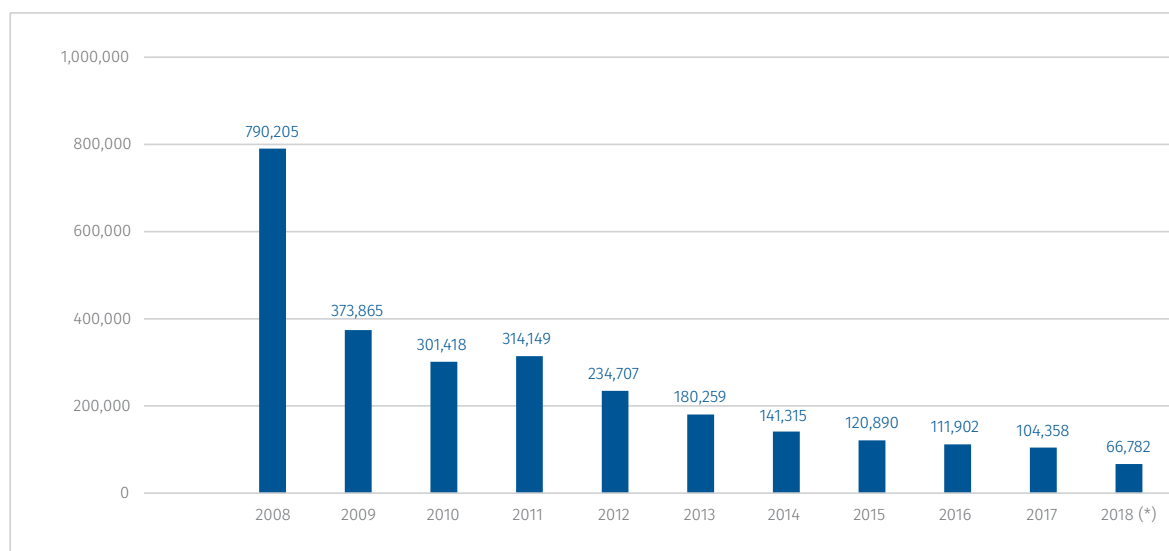
In 2000, the Spanish government implemented GRECO, a structured plan for improving the quota system that established admission criteria, annual quotas and mechanisms for contracting and training workers in their countries of origin (Cachón, 2004). However, as it only covered roughly 30% of true labour market demand, the system of quotas it introduced (referred to as *contingentes* in Spanish) fell dramatically short of the mark. The Catalogue of Hard-to-Fill Occupations, a new mechanism introduced in 2009, was a further attempt to align autochthonous and foreign job seekers with positions being offered and the real needs of the Spanish labour market. The outbreak of the crisis broadened the gap between supply and demand in spite of the implementation of this measure and a voluntary return programme. Initiatives intended to attract highly qualified foreign workers had an equally minimal effect given that the sectors in Spain generating the bulk of employment opportunities were offering mainly low-skill jobs for which many foreign workers were overqualified (Cebolla and González, 2013).

The only new migration management instrument introduced during the last ten years (a period heavily marked by the impact of the economic crisis) has been the Catalogue of Hard-to-Fill Occupations, which continues to be updated by the Tripartite Commission or the Ministry of Labour, Migrations and Social Security's Large Businesses and Strategic Collectives Unit (UGE-CE), which since 2013 has also processed entry and residence authorisations for individuals falling into other categories such as investors, entrepreneurs, researchers and foreign nationals employed by a company or group of companies established in Spain and their family members (**Figure 6**).

The economic crisis has therefore had a clear impact on migratory flow. According to the Permanent Observatory on Immigration's 2016 annual report, there has been a sharp decline in immigration since 2009 that is reflected in the numbers of residence and work visas issued (**Figures 7, 8 and 9**).

**Figure 6.** Foreign workers registered in the Social Security System 1999-2016

Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Security.

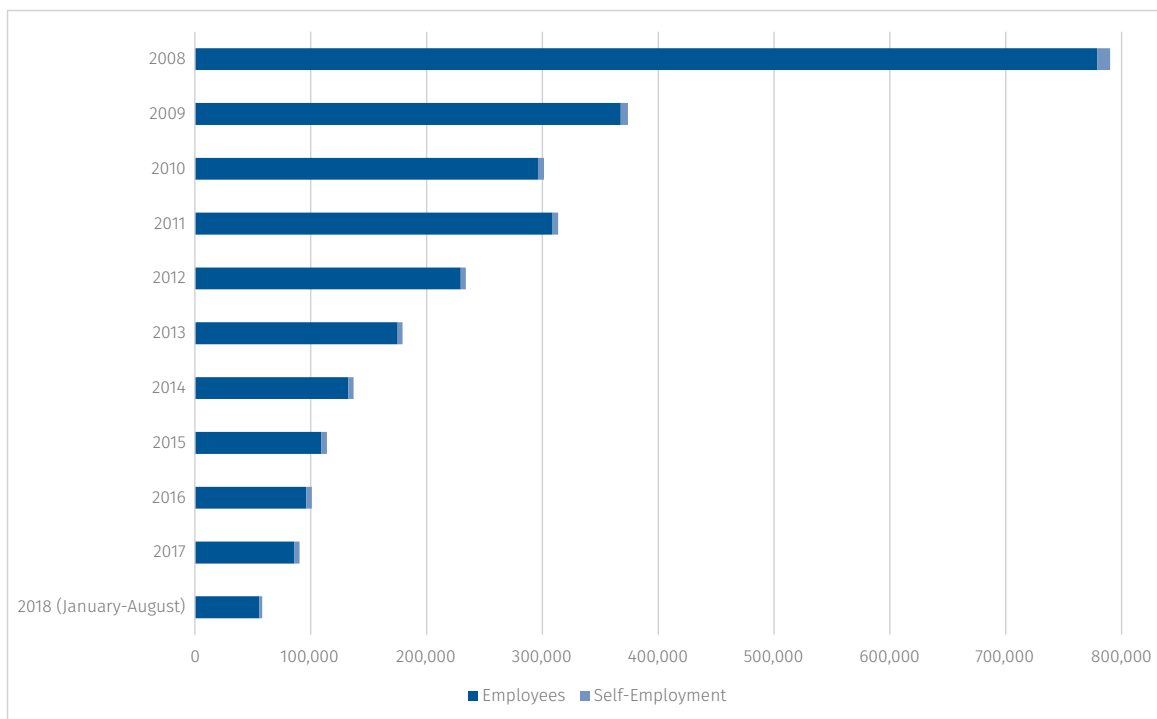
**Figure 7.** Work permits issued to foreigners in Spain 2008-2018

\* Statistics for January-August 2018.

Source: OPI. Ministry of Employment, Migration and Social Security (2018).

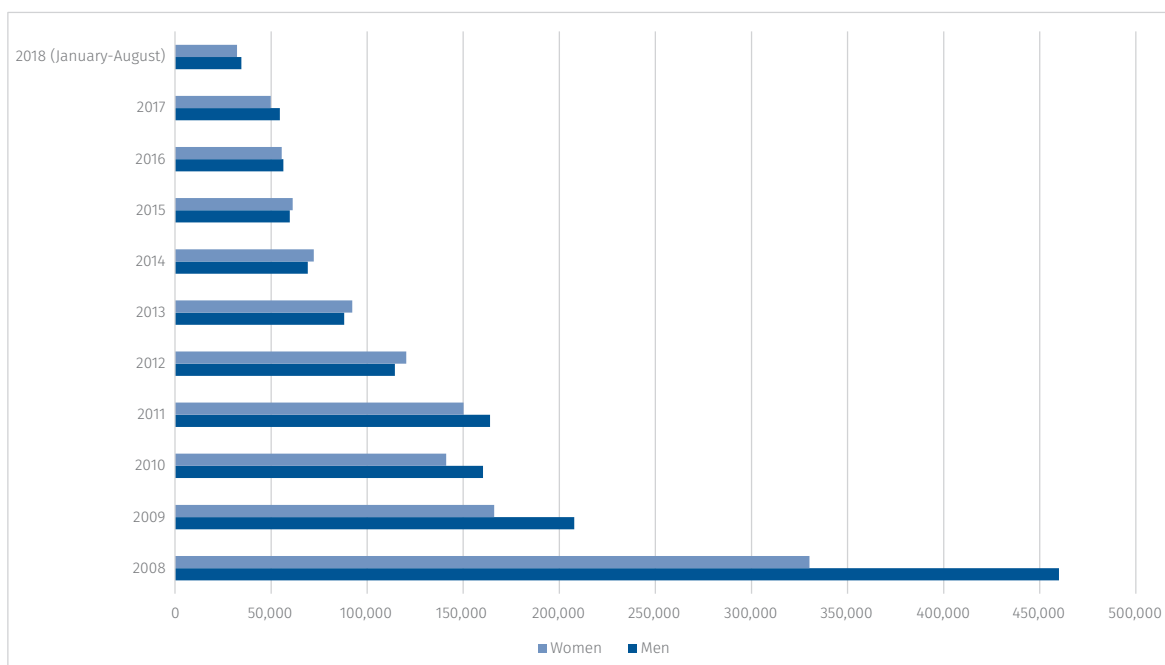
In terms of labour market dynamics, it is interesting to note that the activity rate of foreign workers remains higher than that of the autochthonous workforce despite the greater impact the contraction of the job market has had on this group. Although the

**Figure 8.** Volume of work permits issued to foreigners in Spain 2008-2018 by category of employment status



Source: Ministry of Employment, Migration and Social Security.

**Figure 9.** Gender distribution of work permits issued to foreigners in Spain 2008-2018



Source: Ministry of Employment, Migration and Social Security.

employment rate of foreign workers rose in proportion to that of the autochthonous population during Spain's economic expansion, foreign workers suffered significantly higher unemployment rates during the peak period of job contraction in Spain and employment rates rebounded later for this group (2015 rather than 2014) (**Figure 10**).

The majority of foreign workers in Spain are employed in the services sector (81.08%). The rest work in the industrial (9.11%), construction (8.53%) and agriculture (1.28%) sectors.<sup>14</sup> The economic crisis has supposed, among other things, a transfer of immigrant labour from construction sector (in which the majority of the male foreign workers had been formerly employed) to the industrial and service sectors. The greater part of the female foreign workforce is currently concentrated in the services sector, an area in which the majority of female foreign workers have traditionally been employed in Spain (**Figure 11**).

Given the largely economic motives of the vast numbers of third country nationals that have migrated to Spain over the past few decades, it is not surprising that an overwhelming percentage are working-age adults. This demographic anomaly explains the dramatic difference between the activity rate of foreign workers (74%) and that of the autochthonous population (57%). At one point, foreign residents accounted for as much as 13% of the total population. This percentage fell following the crisis and stood at 10% in 2016.<sup>15</sup>

As a general rule, the model of migratory management pursued in Spain to date has linked admission and residence authorisation to employment by means of instruments devised at the national level in consultation with the authorities of the country's autonomous communities<sup>16</sup> and the Tripartite Labour Commission on Immigration, an entity in which leading representatives of the country's business community have a major voice.<sup>17</sup> The objective has been to facilitate the entry of foreign manpower (and the regularisation of undocumented foreign workers already in the country) at moments of high

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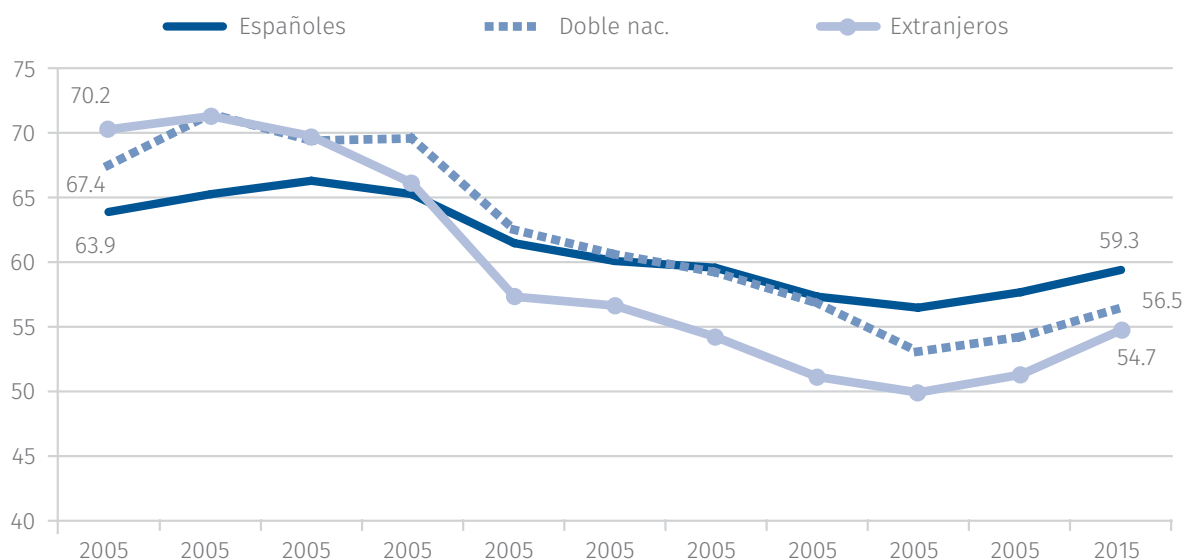
<sup>14</sup> Observatorio de las Ocupaciones (2016). *Informe del Mercado de Trabajo de los Extranjeros Estatal Datos 2015* (p. 28). Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal. Available at: [http://www.sepe.es/contenidos/que\\_es\\_el\\_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf\\_mercado\\_trabajo/imt2016\\_datos2015\\_estatal\\_extranjeros.pdf](http://www.sepe.es/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_mercado_trabajo/imt2016_datos2015_estatal_extranjeros.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> López-Roldán, P. & Kostova Karaboytcheva, M. (2015). *Trayectorias laborales de la población*. CIDOB.

<sup>16</sup> The Sectorial Conference on Immigration was created in 2003 as a coordinating body between the central government of Spain and regional governments on matters related to immigration. This entity comprised of representatives of the government of Spain and of its autonomous communities as well as observers from the local government level is considered by many to be a lost opportunity due to its lack of organisation and low level of activity.

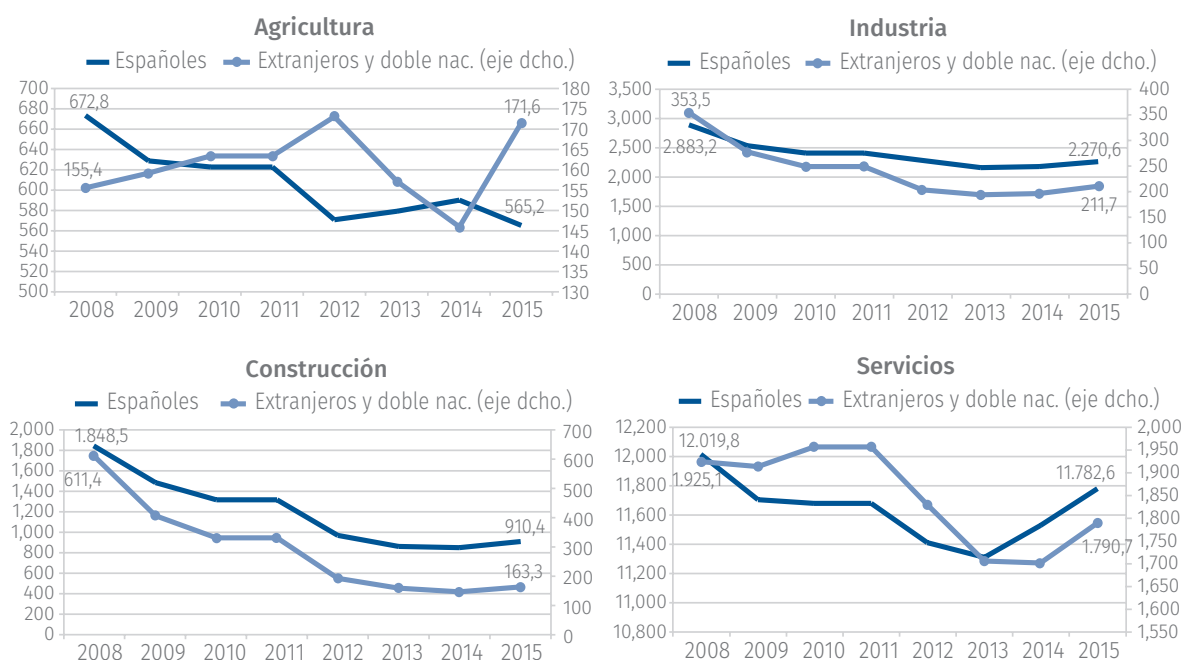
<sup>17</sup> The Tripartite Labour Commission on Immigration is a collegiate entity attached to the Secretariat of State for Migration that facilitates dialogue between the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security and leading representatives of the business community and trade unions concerning the management of labour migration.

**Figure 10.** Average yearly employment rates in Spain 2005–2015 for Spanish, dual, and foreign nationals between the ages of 16 and 64



Source: Permanent Observatory on Immigration (2016)

**Figure 11.** Average yearly number of Spanish and dual nationals in the active labour force in four major sectors 2008–2015



Source: Permanent Observatory on Immigration (2016)

demand and to curtail the incoming flow of migration during periods of market contraction. This model has unfortunately not functioned as well as expected for a number of reasons, among them the existence of ‘niches’ in the labour market that encourage informal hiring practices, the access (albeit indirect) to the Spanish employment market that family reunification gives (a factor that has not been always been adequately taken into account when setting annual quotas) and the fact that it has not led to an increase in the number of cases in which regularisations have been granted for motives of existing irregular employment situations (*arraigo laboral*). Linking the entry of immigrants to the demands of the labour market has, in fact, led to distortions in the way that immigrant policy has been handled, because private sector business interests, in their capacity as potential employers, have created a pull factor for immigration without weighing the capacity of the overall labour market to absorb new arrivals. In this sense, immigration policy has been used as an instrument for satisfying short-term demands for manpower – especially in certain sectors – without taking into consideration issues such as the impact of the social integration of foreign workers into local communities.

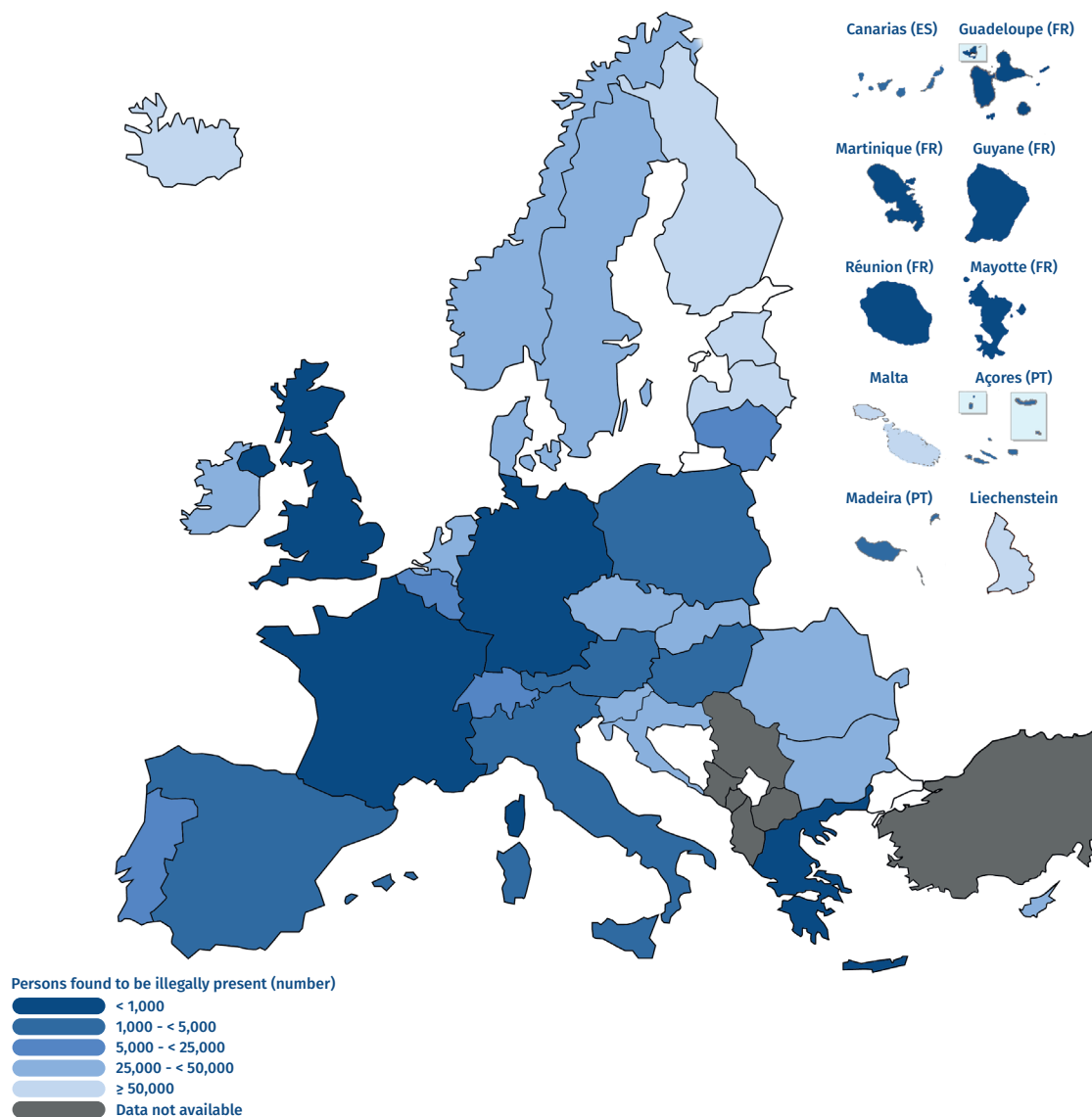
## An overriding emphasis on the fight against irregular immigration

Spain has been perceived, since its incorporation into the European Union, as a major entry point of irregular immigration in general and irregular maritime immigration in particular into Europe. Although the drama and import of irregular maritime migration to Spain should in no way be discounted, the fact is that the vast majority of foreigners in an irregular situation residing in the country have entered legally and subsequently overstayed their visas (**Figure 12** and **Table 3**).

Over past three decades, the Spanish government (regardless of the party in power) has relied on two mechanisms in particular to stem irregular migratory flows toward Spain and to deal with residents in an irregular situation: regularisation processes and maritime border protection. Another instrument employed, which should not be forgotten, is the Schengen visa, which individuals entering Spain from Latin American countries have been required to hold since 2005.

Spain’s relatively recent transformation into a receiving country has meant that regularisation processes have been undertaken there decades after those implemented in other European states with longer histories of attracting foreign nationals. The first coincided with the passage of early legislation on the subject and a total of four regularisation campaigns were carried out by the early 2000s. The most recent, conducted

**Figure 12.** Irregular third country nationals in Spain in 2017



Source: Eurostat.

in 2005, was referred to as a ‘normalisation’ process because it required applicants to demonstrate an established employment relationship with a Spanish firm. The number of people identified by the end of this campaign as being engaged in some form of irregular employment, which was close to 600,000, exposed both the deficiencies of the immigration mechanisms then in place and the astounding scope of the underground economy in Spain. Stamping out irregular economic activities became a priority of the newly formed Ministry of Labour and Immigration, which carried out a normalisation process to fight irregular work and irregular recruitment later aligned with the EU directive on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying

**Table 3.** Irregular third country nationals in Spain 2001-2008

	TCNs on the Padrón (A)	TCNs with residence permits (B)	TCNs with student permits (C)	TCNs irregularly staying (A-B-C-D = I)	% of irregularity I/A × 100
<b>2001</b>	927,978	589,517	28,816	260,645	27%
<b>2002</b>	1,457,661	777,708	29,402	572,551	39%
<b>2003</b>	2,042,083	971,446	23,756	949,881	46%
<b>2004</b>	2,358,040	1,208,755	30,254	998,031	42%
<b>2005</b>	2,894,712	1,478,416	36,545	1,231,751	43%
<b>2006</b>	3,164,302	2,169,648	30,640	747,014	23%
<b>2007</b>	2,769,664	2,089,305	33,267	438,092	16%
<b>2008</b>	3,070,484	2,432,705	42,852	353,927	12%

\*Asylum seekers have not been included due to their small number.

\*\*Number of residence permits refers to 31 December of previous year, i. e. one day earlier than the reference date of Padrón. The number includes both permits obtained through the general regime, the common way for TCNs, and those obtained through the communitarian regime, applied to those TCNs with familiar links with EU citizens.

\*\*\*Bulgarians and Romanians have been excluded as they became regulars from 1 January 2007.

Source: Clandestino.

third-country nationals (2009). The harshly critical reaction of other EU countries to the 2005 process was reflected in the initial draft of the 2008 European Pact on Immigration and Asylum,<sup>18</sup> which called upon Member States to refrain from conducting general regularisations (**Table 4**).

**Table 4.** Regularisation processes in Spain 1986-2005

Year	Number of people regularised
1986	46,800
1991	110,100
1995	21,300
2000	398,500
2005	573,270

Based on data published by Ferrero-Turrión and Pinyol-Jiménez in 2008.

<sup>18</sup> For the final version, see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:jl0038&from=EN>

The Spanish government has relied on the Spanish Integrated Surveillance System (SIVE) to protect its maritime borders since 2002. The first stretch of this technically sophisticated manned network to be inaugurated, strategically located on the Strait of Gibraltar, employs radar and satellite detection devices to detect small seaborne vessels bearing irregular immigrants headed for the Spanish coastline. SIVE now covers all points of Spain's maritime boundaries considered vulnerable to irregular entry by sea from the Canary Islands to the Balearic Peninsula.

This system has occasionally caused shifts from traditional irregular migration routes to others of a secondary nature<sup>19</sup> not as closely monitored but longer and more dangerous. The implementation of SIVE installations along the Western coastline of Andalucía, for example, had the unintended effect of redirecting irregular migrant flows originating in Africa further south to the Canary Islands.

All Spanish governments, whatever their political stripe, have stressed the need to strengthen European cooperation mechanisms related to the protection of the EU's exterior borders and placed a special priority on FRONTEX actions and deeper cooperation with third countries.

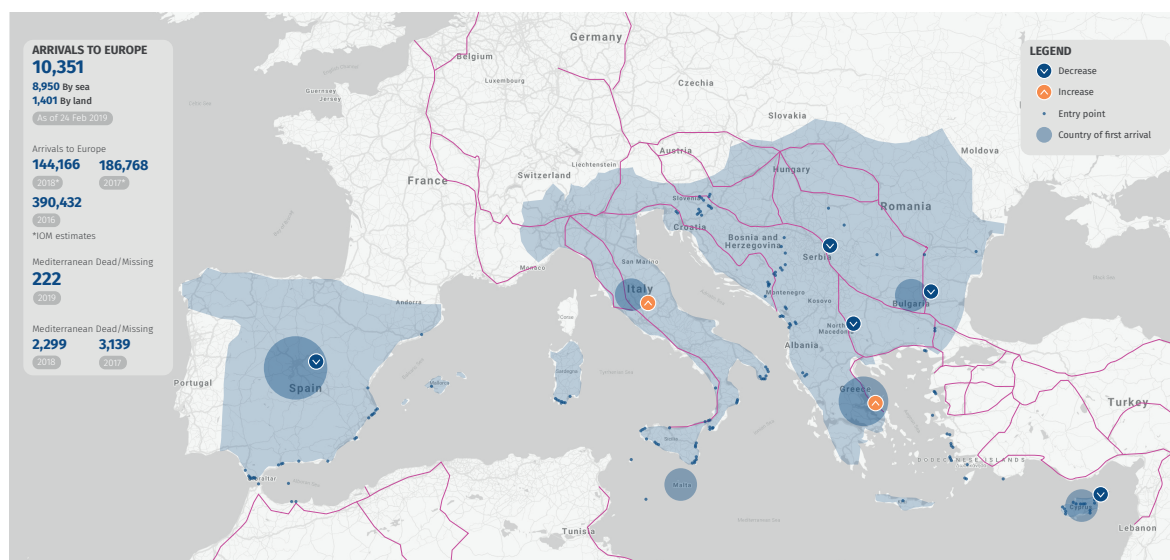
Over the past few months, following the recent closure of the eastern and central migrant routes to Europe, greater numbers of people have shifted back to the less perilous western route (**Figure 13** and **14**).

The situation of unaccompanied minors arriving in Spain (referred to as *menores extranjeros no acompañados* or *MENAS* in Spanish) is of particular concern. The supervision of the legal, psychological and social attention these youngsters must be guaranteed under the international legal framework for children's rights has been a sensitive issue in border control.

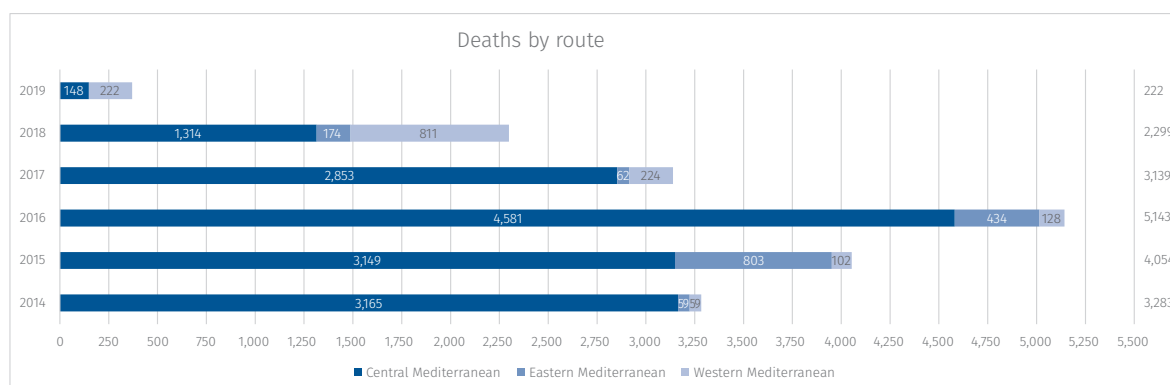
A narrow emphasis on irregularity, which political leaders, the media and civil society organisations alike have made central to the discourse on immigration in Spain, has distorted the way in which the issue is framed there and the manner in which resources are distributed among the various systems designed to manage it. For example,

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<sup>19</sup> Sánchez Gómez, R. D. & Espinosa Navas, F. (2018). *La inmigración irregular y las políticas públicas de seguridad: caso de España y República Dominicana* (pp. 8-10). Available at: [www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_trabajo/2018/DIEET04-2018\\_Inmigracion\\_PolPubSeg\\_Espana-RepDom.pdf](http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_trabajo/2018/DIEET04-2018_Inmigracion_PolPubSeg_Espana-RepDom.pdf)

**Figure 13.** Irregular migration flows in the Mediterranean: arrivals to EU countries as of date 11/02/2019

Source: IOM: Flow Monitoring Europe 2019. <https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals>.

**Figure 14.** Casualty figures for Mediterranean migration routes

Source: IOM.

far more funding has been allocated for border protection than for the reduction of irregularity on Spanish territory.

## Reception, integration and inclusion policy

Integration policy has become a major pillar of Spain's overall immigration policy alongside collaboration with third countries and the management of legal immigration flows (and, by extension, the fight against irregular entry). Integration became a

policy issue in Spain once it became clear that the country was not merely a stepping-stone in migration routes leading to other European countries and growing numbers of applications for family reunification indicated that immigrant workers sought to settle permanently there. Long-term efforts on the part of many cities throughout the country to reach out to their immigrant populations (a commitment autonomous communities would later make as well) have been crucial to the ongoing process of immigrant integration in Spain. Generally construed as an instrument of social cohesion, integration policy in Spain is bottom-up and locally focused. The role of what is known in Spain as the *padrón municipal* has a special relevance in this context.

### **Box 2. A hallmark of Spanish exceptionality: the municipal *padrón***

The Registro Municipal de Población Municipal, also referred to as *padrón municipal*, is a registry maintained by every municipality in Spain in which all of the inhabitants of that jurisdiction are required by law to be inscribed and that serves as their proof of residence status there. The personal data it contains is subject to national legislation and regulations on the protection of data and local administration. All municipal governments in Spain are required to create, manage and maintain such a registry. A computerised, continually updated system of municipal registers was implemented throughout Spain in 1996. Since 1998, this system has been used to compile annual electronic census surveys of the country's population as of the first day of January of each calendar year. Registration in the *padrón* guarantees access to public social services including health care services. Authorities use this database for such things as determining the number of school age children in a given municipality, identifying individuals subject to different types of taxes and compiling electoral rolls. Decisions regarding the transfer of government funds from the national to the local level and what services should be provided at the local level are also based on statistical information culled from this system.

Although not designed to serve as an immigration management tool, the Spanish *padrón* system has nevertheless had an impact on the circumstances under which immigrant integration takes place in Spain as opposed to other countries. All residents of Spain are required by law to register themselves on a permanent or temporary basis in the *padrón* maintained by the municipality in which they currently reside. The *padrón* facilitates the identification of rights holders (and duty holders) in a given community irrespective of their administrative situation. A legislative reform enacted in 2000 extended social benefits (which, generally speaking, consist of health care and education but may include other types of social assistance to families in risk of

exclusion and irregular migrants such as basic income payments) to all individuals registered in the system. The government passed a Royal Legislative Decree in 2012 that drew a link between health care, legal residence status and social security registration and narrowed the scope of access provided to irregular immigrants to minors under the age of 18, pregnant women and emergency care. The governments of certain autonomous communities (all of which administer their own health care systems) reacted by refusing to comply with this measure and some even passed regional-level legislation guaranteeing universal access to health care. In the course of a lengthy court battle that ensued, these regional laws were temporarily sustained by the Spanish Constitutional Court in a preliminary order (239/2012) but later declared unconstitutional in its final judgement on the matter (STC 134/2017). New legislation enacted in 2018 (Royal Legislative Decree 7/2018 of 27 July on Universal Access to the National Health System) has provided a global solution to the problem by dissolving all previously established links between access to health care and registration in the Spanish social security system and *padrones municipales* alike.

Generally speaking, the *padrón* as an institution and the role it plays in the integration of resident foreigners (including those in an irregular situation) enjoy broad support. Municipal governments are satisfied with the system because it facilitates the identification of residents' needs and allows them to forecast more realistically and pursue more effective integration policies, and a wide segment of civil society supports it out of the conviction that guaranteeing basic rights such as access to health care and education enhances the wellbeing of society as a whole.

## The Spanish model for integration: framework and instruments

While Spain cannot be said to have a conceptualised model of integration as such (Cebolla and González, 2013), the “non-model” or “absent model” approach it has applied to integration management has been basically anchored in the idea of managing diversity, guaranteeing inclusion and maintaining social cohesion (Terrón, 2010). While debates in Spain on migration, citizenship and national community remain open, several regional and local governments have been embracing an intercultural logic in pursuit of alternatives to traditional assimilationist and multicultural models. In any case, the majority of discussions on migrant integration linked to residence and the rights of residence are based on an understanding of citizenship not as a legal condition referring to nationality but rather as a ‘de jure residence’ implying the intention

to settle permanently in a specific community that also evolves as it incorporates new diversities (Ferrero-Turrión and Pinyol-Jiménez, 2009).

No legislation or standards regulating the social integration of foreigners existed prior to the mid-1990s. The initial version of the Law on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners made no reference to it. The topic, which was taken up politically for the very first time in the context of a 1991 parliamentary debate, became a pillar of Spanish immigration policy following the approval of the Plan for the Social Integration of Immigrants in 1994. This initiative marked the beginning of a new period in which public authorities began to consider aspects of immigration management other than border control.

A clear indicator of this shift in political perspective is the set of 'rights and liberties of foreigners in Spain' established in Organic Law 4/2000 and maintained in subsequent modified versions of that legislation. Point C of Article 2 bis of this document articulates the Spanish government's commitment to social integration in general terms. Article 2 ter enters into greater detail, providing a long list of objectives that includes ensuring foreign residents' familiarity with the rights, duties and values enshrined in the Spanish Constitution, guaranteeing their access to compulsory education, training and employment and facilitating their acquisition of the official languages of the regions in which they reside. The same legislation underscores the commitment of the national government to collaborate with regional and local authorities on integration issues within the framework of a multi-year strategic plan. The Forum for the Integration of Immigrants, a tripartite consultative body composed of national, regional and municipal government officials and representatives of immigrant associations and entities that provide support for immigrants such as labour unions and business associations was formulated the same year this legislation was passed.

The creation of the Secretariat of State for Immigration and Emigration under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour in 2004 broadened the framework for action on integration. A government fund was created to support integration efforts at the regional and local level and the new Secretariat of State was tasked with drafting the government's first Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration (PECI 2007-2010).

The Support Fund for the Reception and Integration of Immigrants and Their Educational Support was implemented in 2005. Its purpose, as its name suggests, was to channel supplementary funding to regions and municipalities with rapidly growing populations that were struggling to cover the burgeoning costs of immigrant reception and other services provided to foreign and native residents alike such as health

care and education. The fund, which was closed in 2012, distributed assistance to autonomous communities on the basis of objective criteria and marked a first in the sense that it enabled the financing of integration initiatives led by local authorities.

The first Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration, which was approved in 2007 and covered the period 2007–2010, was designed to provide a framework and guidelines for public sector and civil society integration initiatives. The introductory section of PEI 2007–2010 was padded with theoretical baggage intended to give meaning and substance to what its authors wished to present as a consolidated plan for integration articulated at the national level, albeit somewhat belated and trailing in the wake of programmes of this nature carried out for some time by local and regional governments. This plan, which was extended as PEI II (2011–2014), was anchored in three principles:

- Equality and non-discrimination, which implies equating the rights and obligations of the immigrant population with those of the autochthonous population within the framework of basic constitutional values.
- Citizenship, which supposes the recognition of full civic, social, economic, cultural and political participation of immigrant men and women.
- Interculturality, a conceptual framework within which persons of different origins or cultures can interact with mutual esteem and respect for cultural diversity.
- Objectives set out in PEI included:
  - Guaranteeing that immigrants were fully able to exercise their civil, social, economic, cultural and political rights.
  - Adapting public policies, particularly in education, employment, social services, health and housing, to meet new needs related to the rising number of immigrants in Spain. According to the PEI, this process needed to be both quantitative, responding to the increase of new citizens and users needing to be attended to by public service providers, and qualitative, in the sense that it acknowledged and accommodated the growing diversity of the country's population.
  - Ensuring immigrant residents' access to public services (particularly education, employment, social services, and housing), in equal conditions to those of the autochthonous population.

- Establishing a reception system for newly arrived immigrants and immigrants identified as being particularly vulnerable, until they gain access to general public services.
- Fostering immigrant men and women's acquisition of knowledge regarding the European Union's basic values, the rights and obligations of persons living in Spain, the official languages in the country's different autonomous communities, and the social norms and customs of Spanish society.
- Combating manifestations of discrimination, racism and xenophobia in all areas of social life, in both the public and private spheres.
- Stimulating the development of public policies and measures facilitating immigrant integration and cooperation at every level of government and in every aspect of civic life.

The plan stressed the importance of its mission to immigrant and autochthonous residents alike, underscoring the notion that integration was a matter of concern to all members of society. PEGI II was poorly implemented, and no new strategic plan was launched following its conclusion in 2014, a lapse that has caused deficiencies in certain areas signalled by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its 2018 Spain Report, which noted "there is no longer any national funding for important integration measures such as language courses" (ECRI, 2018).

Another key social integration policy instrument is the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE), an institution whose work mainly entails compiling and analysing data on racism and xenophobia, promoting the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and the fight against racism and xenophobia, and collaborating and coordinating with other key national and international actors in the public and private sectors in the prevention of, and fight against, racism and xenophobia.

Although transversal thinking and multilevel cooperation are considered on paper to be key elements of migrant integration policy, neither has occurred in Spain to the degree envisaged. Cooperation between national authorities (the level of government responsible for immigration policy under which integration logically falls), their counterparts in Spain's autonomous communities (which hold legally recognised competences in this area and are responsible for the better part of public services provided in their jurisdictions) and local governments (which have the most direct contact

with constituents and also provide public services) has been difficult to achieve. The plethora of integration, citizenship and diversity plans generated at the regional and local level in addition to plans developed at the national level constitute a patchwork of integration initiatives.

## Topics on the Spanish integration and integration agenda

As previously noted, the discourses of Spain's national, regional and local governments on integration and social cohesion have traditionally placed great emphasis on residence criteria. Debate regarding immigration has almost always hinged on residence and the rights of residents (as *de facto* citizens). Residence in this context is viewed from a broad perspective not limited to legal status that takes migrants' presence, participation and sense of belonging in their host community into account as well.

The better part of public and political debate on integration in Spain has focused on an analysis of the process immigrants go through to become citizens of the places in which they settle, beginning with what host communities must do to facilitate their adaptation and what immigrants themselves should be expected to bring to the table. Less thought has gone into another aspect of the equation, which is whether legislative measures and plans introduced have produced change at the administrative and public level that truly facilitates foreigners' visibility in, and incorporation into, the communities in which they reside. The current lack of clear integration indicators makes it difficult to assess the real circumstances of immigrants in areas such as education, employment, health care and housing needed to develop more effective policies (ECRI, 2018, p. 27).

Integration and inclusion policies should address every phase of a migrant's experience, from arrival to his or her full incorporation into the national and local labour market, educational system and social and civic life.

Welcome and reception policy in Spain is implemented mainly at the municipal level. Cities and towns take responsibility for welcoming foreign newcomers and familiarising them with available social services and other aspects of local life. Municipal authorities have developed (or not) their own individual sets of reception and integration tools for helping immigrants to become autonomous, exercise their rights, fulfil their obligations, acquire basic language skills, enter the labour market and participate in local social life as well as their own measures for addressing the needs of particularly vulnerable individuals. Although regional governments sometimes oversee and regulate the work municipalities

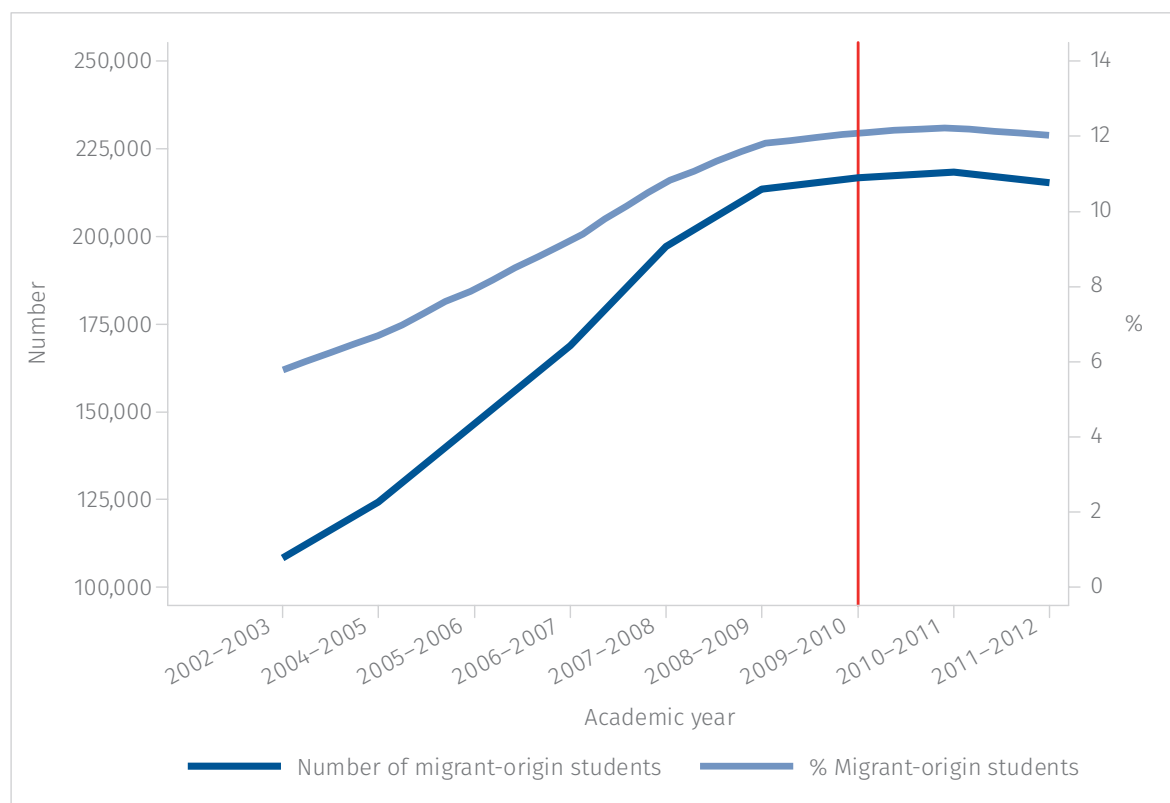
perform in this area, in other cases local authorities enjoy an ample margin of freedom to design their own programmes and offer the services they feel are needed the most.

The strong link the present Spanish model for migratory management draws between immigration and labour market demand has made Immigrant participation in the labour force a cornerstone of integration policy. Although employment policy is considered to be a national competence in Spain, the country's autonomous communities also play a regulatory and instrumental role in related areas such as education and training. Employment, as a determinant factor in whether or not an individual has access to the goods and services needed to live in dignity, is considered a pillar of integration policy. Organic Law 4/2000 contemplates the concession of residence and work permits to foreign nationals in their countries of origin under circumstances in which the "national employment situation" is fully considered (see section 2.2).

Spanish legislation on immigration guarantees foreign residents under the age of eighteen the right to an education in equal conditions with Spanish citizens. This implies access to free basic compulsory education, scholarships and post-compulsory public education. It also states that an effort will be made to provide foreign residents special courses that facilitate their integration while acknowledging and respecting their cultural identities.

Education is a decentralised competence administered at the regional level in Spain, and the country's autonomous communities take different approaches to the integration of foreign students. Whereas some have implemented 'welcoming classrooms', others have developed mechanisms for providing more punctual support. Some city school systems team up with parent's associations (AMPAs) to boost immigrant parents' engagement in their children's education. The inordinately high ratio of immigrant children attending public rather than publicly funded private schools (referred to Spain as *escuelas concertadas*) has recently become the focus of broad debate (**Figure 15**).

As previously noted in Box 2, there has also been much debate about immigrant access to health care services, another competence in the hands of autonomous communities. The legal foundation for public health care in Spain is contained in article 43 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which defines health care as a social right. The General Healthcare Law 14/1986 of 25 April 1986, which acts on this mandate to provide universal health care, paved the way for the creation of Spain's national health system. Spanish law recognises the right of foreign residents registered in a municipal *padrón* to receive health care on an equal footing with Spanish nationals (Pérez Arredondo 2008).

**Figure 15.** Number and percentage of migrant students in Spain, 2002-2012

Source: Gil-Hernández, C. and Gracia, P. (2018). Adolescents' educational aspirations and ethnic background: the case of students of African and Latin American migrant origins in Spain. *Demographic Research*, 38, 577-618.

As mentioned previously, a Royal Decree Law introduced in 2012 linking the validity and future issuance of National Health Services access cards to legal residence status and contributions to the Spanish social security system severely curtailed irregular immigrants' access to health care by limiting the services to pregnant women and minors under the age of eighteen. Although this decree was withdrawn in 2015 (largely due to the refusal of various regional governments to implement the legislation), the governments of certain autonomous communities continue to hinge access to health care in their jurisdictions on legal residence. A more recent decree issued in 2018 has established universal access to health care in Spain.

**Social services** is a national policy area in which much authority has been delegated to regional and local governments. Law 4/2000 states that "resident foreign nationals shall have the right to social services and benefits, basic and general as well as specific, in the same conditions as Spaniards" and that "foreign nationals, regardless of their administrative situation, have the right to basic social services and benefits". The governments of Spain's autonomous communities have established their own regulations concerning

irregular immigrants' access to social services and benefits provided in their jurisdictions. Civil society organisations and NGOs do their best to address needs not covered by programmes currently in place for residents falling into this category and provide humanitarian aid to particularly vulnerable segments of this community.

Provision for the **political participation** of third country nationals is a national competence. Spanish law gives resident foreign nationals the right to vote in local elections and the Spanish government has reached bilateral agreements guaranteeing reciprocal voting rights with various countries. To date, the majority of immigrants from non-EU countries have only gained the right to vote in elections at all levels by obtaining Spanish citizenship.

Regional and government authorities assume most of the responsibility for fostering the **social participation** of immigrants in Spain. Immigrant participation in regional and local political life takes various forms in Spain, the most common being regional and local forums and consultative committees that articulate immigrant concerns and provide input on issues that directly affect the immigrant community. Immigrant participation in trade unions and neighbourhood, parents' and professional associations is considered a priority, and civil society organisations, associations and local governments in a number of autonomous communities make a concerted effort to engage immigrants at this level to foster peaceful coexistence and social inclusion.

Competence for **fostering positive public attitudes towards diversity and fighting discrimination** is shared by authorities at all levels. Awareness raising initiatives related to integration and inclusion have focused on a single objective: eliminating discrimination and xenophobia. National, regional and local governments have developed agencies and policies centred on the fight against discrimination and xenophobia, the majority of which engage in or involve public information and awareness campaigns and public and private sector capacity building. Collaborating NGOs also carry out work in this area. The European Commission on Racism and Tolerance's fifth monitoring cycle report on Spain recommended that Spanish authorities adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and either create an independent body devoted fully to equality issues or ensure the complete independence of the Council for the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and grant that organism further competences and powers.<sup>20</sup> ECRI also highlights in this report the need for stronger measures regarding non-discrimination and the inclusion of the Roma population in Spain (ECRI, 2017).

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<sup>20</sup> ECRI Fifth Monitoring Cycle Report. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-spain/16808b56c9>

## Asylum and refugee policy in Spain: a pending challenge

If Spain's first immigration policy came about as a result of its need to fulfil certain requisites for membership in the EEC, its asylum policy can equally be said to be an outcome of its membership in the EU. The relationship may even be clearer in the case of the latter, given that the first legislation related to asylum in Spain, adopted in 1984, has only been amended twice: once in 1994 and a second time in 2009, for which the passage of certain regulatory provisions is still pending a decade later.

### The legal framework for international protection in Spain

Unlike the German Constitution, the Spanish Constitution (in Art. 13.4) stipulates that the terms under which citizens of other countries and stateless persons may enjoy the right to asylum in Spain will be determined by law. The first legislation enacted in Spain concerning asylum was Law 5/1984, which established asylum procedures, guarantees and rights attached to the concession of asylum status, as well as the criteria for, and consequences of, rejection. This was amended in 1994 to, among other things, eliminate the dual regulation of asylum and refugee status provided for in the 1984 legislation, include a fast-track process that facilitated the swift rejection of applications deemed obviously unjustifiable and establish a procedure for rapidly determining whether a given application should be submitted in Spain or in another country.

Law 12/2009 of 30 October Regulating the Right of Asylum and Subsidiary Protection (LRASP), which was enacted in 2009, remains in force. The LRASP represents an advance over prior legislation for being the first legal instrument in Spain to explicitly include the right to subsidiary protection, establish persecution based on gender or sexual orientation as grounds for asylum, expressly mention non-state agents among the so-called "agents of persecution" or "originators of serious harm", envisage the adoption of measures required to ensure that, when appropriate, individuals are treated differently on account of their sex or condition of vulnerability during asylum interviews, and include the possibility of an asylum seeker extending protection status to other members of his or family and applying for family reunification. LRASP also classifies EU nationals as ineligible for international protection in Spain, eliminates the possibility of requesting asylum at Spanish embassies and

consular offices<sup>21</sup> and includes a greater number of motives for exclusion than previous legislation.

While the passage of its regulatory provisions remains pending, Royal Decree 203/1995 enacting the regulation implementing Law 5/1984 remains applicable in so far that it does not contradict the LRASP.

The LRASP delegates authority on asylum matters to the Office of Asylum and Refuge (OAR), an organ of the General Sub-Directorate of Asylum of the Ministry of the Interior, the government ministry charged with the implementation of Spain's international protection system. The OAR is responsible for, among other things, processing applications for international protection and making initial decisions concerning refugees, displaced and stateless persons and subsidiary protection. Responsibility for reception and integration policy lies with the General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration, which answers to the Secretariat of State for Migration.

The concession of asylum status as well as other forms of protection granted for humanitarian motives (subsidiary protection) is made on an individual case basis to better determine whether applicants fulfil the requisites of refugee status or qualify for other types of subsidiary protection. Draft decisions prepared by the Office of Asylum and Refuge are forwarded to the Inter-Ministerial Asylum and Refuge Commission, which is composed of representatives of relevant government ministries and a non-voting representative of the United Nations Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

## Asylum procedures and the reception system

OAR procedures for processing asylum applications are governed by pertinent Spanish legislation. The LRASP provides for three types of international protection: asylum for refugees on the basis of principles established by the Geneva Convention, subsidiary protection, and exceptional protection granted for humanitarian reasons. Article 3 of the LRASP acknowledges as a refugee any person from a non-EU country or stateless person who, having a well-founded fear of being persecuted in his or her

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<sup>21</sup> Article 38 of the Law of Asylum contemplates the possibility of presenting applications for international protection at Spanish embassies or consulates but leaves the evaluation of circumstances surrounding petitions and decisions as to whether to facilitate the transfer of petitioners to Spain to the discretion of diplomatic personnel. Such conditions are not comparable to the possibility of requesting asylum at an embassy.

homeland for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinions, belonging to a particular social group, gender or sexual orientation, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it. Article 4 of the same document extends the right of subsidiary protection to non-refugees who do not want to return to their native countries for reasons that imply a genuine risk they could face the death sentence, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or serious threats against their lives or integrity by reason of indiscriminate violence if they returned. The LRASP also provides for, in exceptional cases, the concession of international protection for humanitarian motives to persons not meeting the requisites for the prior two categories (Art. 46.3). These include vulnerable individuals such as minors, unaccompanied minors, the disabled and elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minors, individuals who have been tortured, raped or subjected to any of form of physical or psychological violence and victims of human trafficking.

Applications for internal protection may be presented at border control checkpoints as well as on Spanish territory (including at immigrant internment centres). Persons submitting a request for international protection at an internment centre must do so within a month of their entry into Spain. Applications must contain required personal information and be accompanied by any documentation and evidence the applicant may possess supporting his or her case. Once an application has been presented, the applicant has the right to remain in Spain until such time that his or her case is resolved. During this period these individuals have access to legal counsel, an interpreter in their native languages and their case files and the right to receive healthcare and social services.

The admissibility of an applicant is determined by either the OAR or border police, depending upon the circumstances under which an application is lodged. In the event that admissibility is denied, an applicant has the right to appeal through administrative or judicial channels. People requesting international protection at a border checkpoint must receive a decision regarding their admissibility within four days of the presentation of their applications and, in the event their petitions are denied on the grounds of ineligibility, have the right to request a re-examination of their applications. The OAR has a month to determine the admissibility of the applications it reviews. If this deadline is not met, an application is automatically considered admitted by means of mechanism referred to as 'positive silence'. Once an application has admitted, it is forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior, which has a period of six months under regular procedure and three months under urgent procedure to examine its merits and decide whether it should be approved or rejected. In the event that

it is accepted, the applicant receives either refugee status, subsidiary protection or protection granted on humanitarian grounds. Should an application be rejected, the applicant may initiate an administrative or judicial court appeal.

The reception system, on the other hand, covers international protection applicants' basic needs by means of access to social services, education and health care. Whereas the national government has authority over asylum, international protection and refugee settlement procedures, authorities at the regional and local level are responsible for implementing social integration policies covering the employment, education, health care, well-being and housing of immigrants, including refugees, in their respective jurisdictions.

Article 30 of the LRASP states that applicants for asylum who lack the financial means to maintain themselves shall have access to services guaranteeing their basic needs are met. Spain has an integrated system that covers the basic needs of asylum seekers whose applications have been admitted ('red card' holders) and gives them access to the reception system. As a general rule, assistance is provided for a maximum of 18 months, although this period can be extended to up to 24 months for especially vulnerable individuals.

The asylum reception process in Spain is broken down into three six-month phases during which assistance is gradually reduced to ensure beneficiaries become autonomous and are socially integrated by the end of the cycle. During the first 'reception' phase of this itinerary applicants are housed either in refugee reception centres (CARS) or designated apartments located at various points throughout the country. In addition to the basic orientation and counselling they receive to foster their integration into Spanish society, they also receive monthly allowances and are reimbursed for documented incidental expenses related to such things as public transportation, medical expenses, clothing and translation and interpretation fees. Throughout the second or 'integration' phase, applicants continue to receive basic financial support but are expected to become less dependent upon the system. They are transferred from CARs to subsidised housing units and no longer receive monthly allowances. During the third and final phase they receive further financial support for a range of specific expenses. Certain expenses are considered reimbursable during these final two stages. A backlog of unresolved petitions led to the introduction of an additional initial reception phase in 2014 during which applicants were provided room and board in a hostel or hotel while waiting to receive an interview with an OAR caseworker. Legal provision for this measure was established in Royal Decree 816/2015 of 11 September 2015 regulating the direct grant, of exceptional character for humanitarian reasons, for the extraordinary

expansion of resources of the reception and integration system for applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection (**Table 5**).

## Accommodation

The Spanish reception system is a mixed system that combines a network of communal housing units consisting of refugee reception centres (*Centros de acogida de refugiados* [CARs]) and temporary stay centres (*Centros de estancia temporal para inmigrantes* [CETI]) and a reception and care network managed by NGOs as subcontractors of the Ministry of Employment and Social Services. More NGOs became involved in this aspect of asylum policy when the system was expanded in 2015 to fulfil the provisions of Royal Decree 816/2015 and a new initial assessment and referral phase related to the temporary placement of applicants in hotels and hostels was added to the reception process. The system provides daily allowances and covers the costs of applicants' lodging, transportation and hygiene needs during this period.

## Employment

Asylum seekers have the right to take up paid employment six months after their applications for asylum have been admitted. At this point they may request new red cards certifying their authorisation to work in Spain during the period for which these

**Table 5. Breakdown of financial assistance provided to asylum seekers in Spain in 2017**

<b>Basic personal expenses allowance</b>	Adults €51.60 (per month)	Minors under 18 €19.06 (per minor per month)
<b>Clothing allowance</b>	€181.70 per person (allotted a maximum of two times a year)	
<b>Transport allowance</b>	Distributed on a monthly basis Taxis covered in extraordinary and justifiable circumstances.	
<b>Other categories of assistance</b>	Healthcare expenses Educational expenses (school materials and fees, etc., limited in the case of university education to €250.13 per student and academic year) Training expenses (enrolment fees up to €1,364.31 per person per year and €250.13 per person for materials related to training programmes and courses) Leisure time activity expenses Expenses related to bureaucratic procedures	

Based on Resolution of 27 February 2015 of the General Secretariat of Immigration and Emigration establishing for the year 2015 the minimum and maximum amounts of financial assistance to beneficiaries of Refugee Reception Centres integrated in the network of Migration Centres of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security Official Gazette No, 81, 4 April 2015

cards are issued. Although they are not required to fulfil any additional criteria or requirements to obtain a work permit (which allows them to seek employment in any sector), there are a number of obstacles that nevertheless make difficult for them to compete in the Spanish labour market. Reception centres offering vocational training and language training programmes have been established to facilitate their social integration and incorporation into the labour force. Labour inclusion initiatives provide different kinds of support in this area such as personalised counselling sessions, pre-employment and vocational training and active job search assistance.

### ***Education and training***

All children in Spain have the right to an education, and schooling is compulsory for all youngsters between the ages 6 and 16 there. Although not explicitly covered by Asylum Act, the right of all children, regardless of their administrative situation, is guaranteed by other regulations concerning aliens and children. Competence for issues concerning the protection of minors in Spain has been delegated to its autonomous communities, which manage the public education systems in their jurisdictions and are charged with ensuring that all minors within their territories have access to a proper education. Children seeking asylum are provided access to a public school education in the autonomous communities in which they reside or are hosted. Some schools have developed special preparatory classrooms for foreign children or assign tutors to regular classes that foreign children attend while others have opted not to implement additional or special integration measures.

### ***Health care***

Spanish law guarantees asylum seekers full access to the Spanish public health care system on an equal basis with Spanish citizens and foreign nationals legally residing in Spain as well as specialised treatment required by persons who have suffered torture, severe physical or psychological abuses or traumatising circumstances.

### ***The special needs of vulnerable groups***

The Spanish reception system makes a concerted effort to place asylum seekers in reception facilities that best suit their personal profiles and needs. Extenuating personal circumstances are carefully considered when defining reception and integration

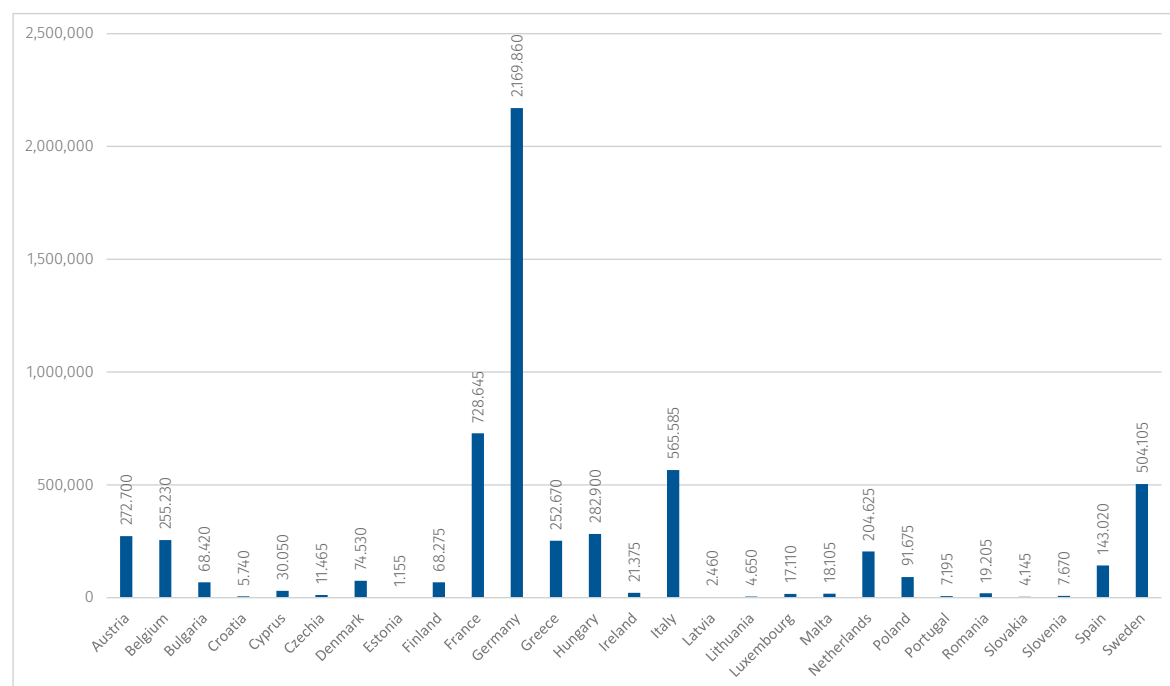
itineraries, which in the case of vulnerable individuals may last as long as 24 months rather than the habitual 18. The system nevertheless lacks the resources needed to deal with many special cases and is not always able to guarantee placement in reception facilities that address the needs of certain categories of applicants such as victims of human trafficking or torture and individuals suffering mental disorders. Unaccompanied minors are transferred to general custodial care centres for young people maintained by authorities at the regional level.

## The ongoing challenges of asylum policy in Spain

Spain does not rank among the EU countries receiving the greatest numbers of asylum applications. A breakdown of applications for asylum lodged in EU countries (and especially the EU 15) during the period 2008-2016 quickly reveals a significant difference between the number filed in Spain (56,880) and Member States of a similar geographic size such as Italy, which has received 400,000 petitions and Greece, which has received close to 150,000 (**Figures 16 and 17**).

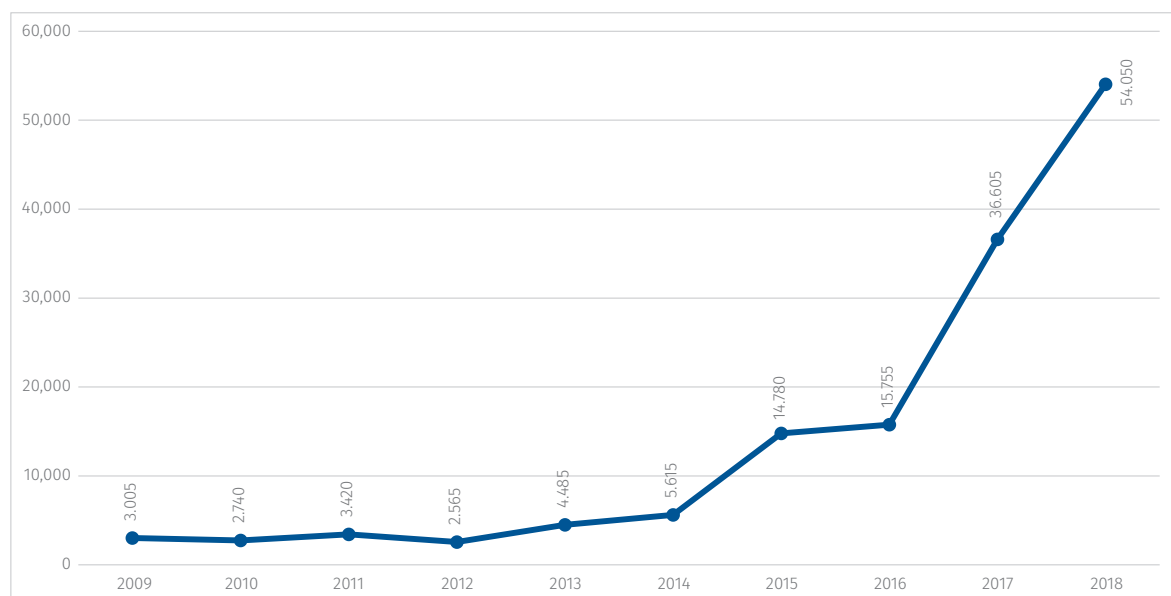
Venezuelans have filed more applications over the last two years for which data has been released than any other group (3,960 in 2016 and 10,350 in 2017). However, Spain

**Figure 16.** Numbers of asylum applications in the EU countries 2008-2017



Source: Eurostat.

**Figure 17.** Applications for asylum presented in Spain 2009-2018



Source: Eurostat

has rejected 99% of the petitions for international protection filed by citizens of that country.<sup>22</sup> Syrian, Colombian, Ukrainian and Palestinian nationals account for the next four largest groups currently filing asylum applications in Spain (**Table 6**).

This increase has led to the collapse of a system unprepared to handle such a large volume of applications. Spain's centralised system, which relies on a diverse range of civil society organisations for essential support services, does not appear to be capable of ensuring that asylum seekers arriving in Spain are attended to in what could be construed as a timely manner (at present, initial applicant interviews are being scheduled as far into the future as 2020) or in conditions that guarantee their well-being and rapid integration.

## Conclusions

Over the past few decades, Spain has been forced to implement new mechanisms for dealing with increasingly diverse incoming migratory flows. During this period, the Spanish government has made an ongoing effort to align migration policy instru-

<sup>22</sup> CEAR (2018). *Informe 2018 Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa* (pp. 74-75). Available at: <https://www.pear.es/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Informe-CEAR-2018.pdf>

**Table 6.** Applications and granting of protection status at first instance in 2017 (Breakdown by countries of origin)

	Applicants in 2017	Pending at end 2017	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Rejection	Refugee rate	Sub. Prot. rate	Rejection rate
Venezuela	10,627	12,818	16	0	1,493	1.10%	0%	98.90%
Syria	4,277	2,426	19	3,528	97	0.50%	96.80%	2.70%
Colombia	2,503	2,572	9	0	199	4.30%	0%	95.70%
Ukraine	2,312	4,059	27	273	3,001	0.80%	8.30%	90.90%
Algeria	1,176	485	8	0	415	1.90%	0%	98.10%
Palestine	1,175	1,424	126	141	65	38%	42.50%	19.50%
El Salvador	1,143	1,503	1	0	55	1.80%	0%	98.20%
Honduras	985	1,391	2	0	27	6.90%	0%	93.10%
Cameroon	752	858	3	0	44	6.40%	0%	93.60%
Morocco	531	403	60	0	114	34.50%	0%	65.50%
Total	31,738	35,261	617	4,191	7,083	5.20%	35.20%	59.60%

Source: ECRE with Spanish Office on Asylum and Refuge data.

ments it introduced in the early 2000s with EU migration policy and launched a number of diplomatic initiatives aimed at engaging third countries on migration issues. More recently, Spanish society as a whole has begun to grapple with the concept of integration and what should be done to forge a more diverse society. Since 2005, the Spanish government has underscored the need for the development of a comprehensive migration policy at the EU level.

It has become clear that the model of migration management pursued by Spain has been less than successful at given moments. Recurring administrative bottlenecks and the ongoing existence of a parallel black labour market stand as irrefutable proof of its inability to respond to the actual needs of its labour market. The emphasis the Spanish government has placed on the fight against irregular entry via maritime routes has supposed a negligence of other pressing issues such as the burgeoning presence of foreigners in an irregular situation in non-coastal areas and the need to overhaul the country's asylum system. Mechanisms for coordination and dialogue

between different levels of government have not always functioned optimally and the programmes and actions of regional and local authorities have often lacked sufficient financial support.

Integration management in Spain has not been hindered by the lack of foresight that has continually plagued immigration management in that country. The absence of a standardised model has allowed pro-active authorities at the regional and local level to develop innovative integration instruments and initiatives that have led to positive outcomes and ensured social cohesion. Despite the recent economic crisis, which has caused heightened competition for underfunded social services and dramatically swelled the ranks of the unemployed (a disproportionate number of whom have been foreign-born residents), the tension between immigrant and autochthonous communities that has flared up in other EU countries and that many analysts predicted would also occur in Spain has not materialised. In this sense, the situation in Spain has been substantially different from that in both other countries also simultaneously facing significant waves of immigration and a major economic contraction for the very first time and countries with a longer history of dealing with this particular challenge.

Diversity and anti-discrimination must nevertheless become a greater and more essential part of Spanish public discourse in every sphere, including government circles. It would also make sense to relegate more related competences to regional and local authorities and ensure they receive the funding they require to develop more effective integration and inclusion policies. Last, but not least, is the need for further research and reliable data in this area, which has yet to be addressed. The absence of clear indicators makes it difficult to determine with any precision whether integration policies being implemented are producing the desired outcomes.

Spain must furthermore make a concentrated effort to anticipate and prepare for problems that may arise in the future. Although its foreign-born population has grown exponentially over the past decade, integration is still a relatively new topic. Debate in Spain concerning migration, citizenship and what constitutes a community is relatively incipient, and at present too often prompted and dominated by xenophobic discourses. Public policies that respect diversity and foster inclusion must be promoted and implemented in order to strengthen social cohesion and ensure the peaceful coexistence of all segments of society.

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**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung**

Oficina Madrid

C/Covarrubias, 22

28010 Madrid

Tel: (+34) 91 294 88 80

e-mail: [info@fesmadrid.es](mailto:info@fesmadrid.es)

[www.fes-madrid.org](http://www.fes-madrid.org)

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