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SPAIN – AGENDA REMIGRATION

Spain Must Stop Replacing Its Own People



INSTITUTE FOR REMIGRATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spain must halt and reverse population replacement. The Institute for Remigration proposes a national programme to preserve Spain's ethnocultural continuity. Its priorities are to drastically reduce new immigration, maximise remigration and close the routes through which temporary or irregular residence routinely becomes permanent. The programme also calls for a comprehensive reform of naturalisation law, with longer qualifying residence periods, fewer exceptions and clear assimilation standards.

The Current State: Population Replacement in Spain

Between January 2024 and January 2025, the number of residents born abroad rose by approximately 626,000, while the number born in Spain fell by approximately 117,000. The Institute for Remigration's Demography Dashboard estimates that 24.5% of Spain's population at the start of 2025 was born abroad or born in Spain to at least one foreign-born parent. Under the dashboard's baseline assumptions for migration and fertility, the native Spanish population would become a minority in 2057. [5, 10]

Decisions on residence and citizenship shape how immigration leads to permanent settlement. By 30 June 2026, Spain's extraordinary regularisation programme had received 1.17 million applications. In 2025, 56.3% of approvals for Spanish citizenship by residence were granted under a rule that lets nationals of Ibero-American countries and certain other applicants apply after just two years of lawful residence in Spain. In that same year, Spain recorded 53,700 orders to leave, but only 5,705 returns to third countries following an order. [23, 26, 32]

Cost, Crime and Culture

The paper assesses the consequences of replacement migration for Spain's economy, public safety and cultural life by the metrics of Cost, Crime and Culture.

Cost.

The housing crisis is one of the most striking examples of replacement migration causing negative effects. In 2025, Spain added about 240,000 households and completed about 92,000 new homes. The Banco de España puts the cumulative gap between household growth and new housing supply at about 750,000 dwellings over 2021–2025. A study of Spanish provinces estimates that immigration accounted for around 60% of the real increase in advertised purchase prices and 41% of the real increase in advertised rents

between 2018 and 2025. The long-term cost also shows up in the public finances. Under Fundación Disenso's undiscounted baseline, a worker who arrives at 18 and earns €20,060 a year has a modelled lifetime fiscal balance of −€158,000. A Spain-born worker of migrant origin on the same wage has a balance of −€423,000. The modelled four-person family has a combined balance of −€1.50 million. [43, 54, 55]

Crime.

In 2025, Spain registered final convictions for 15.3 per 1,000 foreign-national adults, compared with 6.1 per 1,000 Spanish-national adults. The police data also show higher rates of arrests and investigations among foreign nationals in the categories examined, including sexual offences and robbery with violence or intimidation. These comparisons use current nationality, so naturalised citizens are counted as Spanish. The paper separately examines organised gangs, international drug trafficking and jihadist networks. Its case studies document naturalised Spanish migrants' involvement in organised crime and serious offences, a distinction the nationality figures cannot capture. [64, 66–91]

Culture.

Migration has reshaped Spain's religious landscape and helped to establish parallel societies and closed quarters. The number of recorded Muslim places of worship roughly doubled from 988 in 2011 to 1,983 in 2025. Evangelical places of worship rose from 2,944 to 4,763 over the same period, with Latin American immigration contributing to that expansion. El Puche in Almería and Salt illustrate how entrenched segregation can take hold in housing and schools. The paper proposes neighbourhood programmes in both places to tackle the conditions that allow parallel societies to take root. [58–63, 92–99]

The three groups

The paper distinguishes three groups according to their legal status and the measures that would apply. The programme combines enforcement of return decisions with reforms to residence, citizenship and neighbourhood policy.

Group A - People in irregular residence, asylum seekers and people under protection. The strategic objective is comprehensive repatriation wherever return can lawfully proceed. Readmission agreements and return hubs support the enforcement of return decisions. Externalising the asylum system is a separate pillar of the programme. Spain should negotiate agreements for asylum processing and protection in partner countries and use model cities to provide long-term infrastructure.

Group B - Lawfully resident foreign nationals who pose a cultural, criminal or economic burden. Group B is a subset of Spain's lawful foreign-resident population. The programme calls for systematic permit reviews and for withdrawal or non-renewal where an individual assessment establishes statutory grounds. Where the right to remain ends and an obligation to leave arises, the case moves into the return procedure.

Group C - Non-assimilated Spanish citizens. The strategy addresses entrenched parallel societies through neighbourhood policy and other measures that apply regardless of origin. Any review of acquired citizenship would follow separate, individually established grounds and procedures. Spanish citizens are not subject to removal.

The paper's population figures provide demographic context. The figures for A, B and C use different definitions and dates, and some overlap. They cannot be added to produce an estimate of how many people would be affected by the programme.

The national programme

I. Stop the Inflow – Close the Open Door.

Introduce an immigration moratorium on selected admission routes while Spain assesses its capacity and sets new rules. Put "Automation Before Importation" into practice through a sectoral automation test before authorising labour recruitment from outside the EU. Invest in domestic training and give smaller businesses access to shared technology and equipment. Audit visa routes from issuance to departure or change of status, and strengthen checks at airports, seaports, Ceuta and Melilla. Externalise the asylum system through agreements with partner countries outside Europe. Charter cities would provide long-term infrastructure for housing, education, work and public services.

II. Maximise Remigration – From Decisions to Departures.

Issue more return decisions wherever the legal grounds are met and increase the number of confirmed departures. Give each enforceable case a named officer and a deadline, prioritise serious offenders and start return preparations before release from prison. Improve cooperation with countries of origin on identification, travel documents and readmission. Use visa measures where cooperation persistently fails. Develop third-country return hubs for people with enforceable decisions and expand voluntary return programmes that help people resettle in their countries of origin.

III. Close the Back Doors – End Arraigo and Tighten Citizenship Rules.

Abolish arraigo as a regular route from irregular stay to lawful residence and tighten the rules for granting, renewing and withdrawing permits. Raise the ordinary qualifying period for naturalisation from ten to fifteen years, abolish the blanket two-year preference and require demonstrated assimilation, including C1 Spanish. Review past acquisitions for fraud within the statutory fifteen-year window and examine additional grounds for loss of acquired citizenship. Start neighbourhood programmes in El Puche and Salt, introduce transparency standards for foreign funding and review access to supplementary benefits.

IV. Establish National Leadership – Coordinate Action and Measure Results.

Establish a national remigration authority to coordinate the programme and set common standards for residence and return. Examine whether to appoint a dedicated Minister for Remigration and establish a Ministry for Remigration. Modernise case tracking so that each authority can follow a decision through to its outcome. Establish a Demography and Assimilation Monitor to publish aggregate findings on population change, residence, naturalisation and returns, alongside indicators on Cost, Crime and Culture. Its findings would inform decisions on admissions and the assessment of proposed naturalisation ceilings.

The First 100 Days

In the first 100 days, the government should designate the lead minister, publish the proposed scope of the immigration moratorium, establish the return caseload and prepare legislative proposals on residence and citizenship. It should also start the visa audit, open talks on readmission and external asylum partnerships, and bring Spain's reform agenda to the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council. The parliamentary term provides the timetable for legislation, implementation and review. The moratorium should remain in place until the capacity assessment has been published and debated and the new admission rules are in force.

INTRODUCTION

Why Spain Must Halt Population Replacement Now

This policy paper develops a national strategy for preserving Spain's ethnocultural continuity and reversing population replacement. It brings immigration, residence, asylum, return and citizenship into a common framework. Its central proposition is that demographic development must become an explicit concern of government policy, rather than remain the cumulative and chaotic outcome of decisions taken separately across different government departments.

Ethnocultural continuity means the transmission of Spain's inherited languages, culture, institutions, national identity and regional diversity across generations. Preserving that continuity requires both demographic renewal and a remigration strategy that reduces immigration, increases returns and ends the automatic progression towards permanent settlement. Employment growth, aggregate GDP and immediate labour demand cannot, on their own, determine the country's long-term demographic direction.

Remigration must become the guiding principle of migration policy. It is understood here as a coordinated field of government policy: enforce departures, expand voluntary return, support reintegration in countries of origin and tighten the rules on entry and residence. Remigration maximisation provides the programme's operational priority. Assimilation supplies a distinct standard for assessing lasting identification with Spain's national community, language and culture; it is not interchangeable with employment or superficial integration.

The paper proceeds from an assessment of Spain's demographic and migratory development and the associated economic, security and cultural consequences. It then defines the strategic framework, distinguishes the relevant population groups, and examines transitions between legal statuses. The measures translate this analysis into a domestic programme, a European and international reform agenda, and priorities for the first 100 days and the parliamentary term. Existing administrative powers and proposals requiring legislative or international reform are considered within that common framework.

Spaniards Are the Indigenous People of Spain

Spain's historical distinctiveness is the essence of its ethnocultural continuity. Its inheritance comprises the demographic characteristics, material achievements and wealth of preceding generations, as well as the cultural and religious traditions through which a society reproduces itself. Spain is not a neutral arena, an empty space waiting to be filled by anyone.

The underlying concept of this paper is that the current generation is an heir to the country whose streets, squares, industry, and infrastructure were built through the efforts of previous generations, including one's grandparents and great-great-grandparents. The present generation consists of legitimate shareholders in its country, no less than an investor who is entitled to shares in a company. That heritage includes culture, traditions, ways of speaking and ways of being - an endless number of intangible goods that, in most cases, are learned, and can only be learned, from one's parents and neighbours who share a common experience. Society is, as Edmund Burke put it, "a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born." [1]

Present-day Spaniards exhibit a marked genetic continuity with ancient Iberian populations, [2, 3] which is particularly striking given this country's history. They are heirs to the same stock that gave rise to the genius of Seneca, Saint Isidore, Cervantes, Goya, Miguel Servet, Unamuno, Picasso, Dalí, Ramón y Cajal, Severo Ochoa and many others. Hence, the ethnocultural continuity of the Spanish people must be understood as a fundamental and irreplaceable good.

Mainstream opinion wants us to believe that merely noting this historical fact implies some kind of prejudice against other peoples. But it is a logical consequence of the laws of evolution that a people living in a particular place over generations will develop a distinctive character of its own. This is, in fact, real diversity. Every distinct people contributes to the beauty of creation, in all its ethnocultural diversity. Every people, including the Spanish, has the right to strive to reproduce and perpetuate its identity over the centuries. This simply means that each generation should be able to live, raise its children and pass on its culture.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (General Assembly Resolution 61/295, September 13, 2007) recognises that "indigenous peoples possess collective rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development as peoples." [4] Article 8 calls on States to provide effective mechanisms to prevent actions that deprive peoples of "their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities."

The underlying principle, that the continued existence and cultural identity of a people deserve protection, provides a normative reference for Spain as well. Why should the Spanish people's wish to preserve their identity in their own homeland be denied the same consideration? Recognising this does not mean that Spain should shut itself off from the world. Cultural identity is formed in exchange, distinction and dialogue with others. A people is a dynamic entity that changes over time. Migration has been a part of this process. But there must always be a bedrock, and a thread of ethnocultural continuity, or a people ceases to exist. This existential danger now threatens the "Spanishness" of Spain. Denying the Spaniards the right to remain the dominant cultural group in the space they have inhabited for millennia is a crime against their inalienable right. Stopping demographic replacement and pursuing a policy of remigration therefore is not extreme, but a way of rectifying an injustice and normalising an unstable and untenable situation.

There needs to be a serious and open debate about the on-going population replacement in Spain and the necessity of a coherent policy of remigration. With this paper, we are laying the facts on the table and inviting everyone to participate in this debate.

THE CURRENT STATE: POPULATION REPLACEMENT IN SPAIN

Half a Million More Foreigners, 117,000 Fewer Spaniards

Spain is gaining residents while the population born in the country is shrinking. In 2024, deaths among residents exceeded births by about 116,000, yet Spain's population grew by roughly half a million, reaching 49.13 million at the start of 2025. The annual census shows how that growth changed the composition of the population. The number of residents born abroad rose by about 626,000, while the number born in Spain fell by about 117,000. In a single year, the foreign-born share rose from 18.2% to 19.3%. [5, 6]

Table 1. Population by country of birth and nationality

Indicator	1 January 2024	1 January 2025	Change
Total residents	48,619,695	49,128,297	+508,602
Foreign-born residents	8,838,234	9,464,210	+625,976
Spain-born residents	39,781,461	39,664,087	−117,374
Foreign nationals	6,502,282	6,911,971	+409,689
Spanish nationals	42,117,413	42,216,326	+98,913

Two forces drive this shift. The first is sustained net immigration. In 2024, Spain recorded approximately 1.29 million arrivals from abroad and 662,000 departures, leaving a net gain of 626,268 residents. That was the third-highest net figure of the preceding decade, after 2022 and 2023. The second is persistently low fertility. Spain recorded 318,005 births in 2024, about a quarter fewer than in 2014. Fertility stood at 1.10 children per woman, well below the level needed for each generation to replace itself. It had fallen among both Spanish and foreign nationals, to 1.07 and 1.27 respectively. The shift is already visible among newborns. One in three children born in Spain in 2024 had a mother born abroad, while one in four had a mother with foreign nationality. [6, 7]

The distinction between birthplace and nationality matters for understanding the scale of population replacement. By October 2026, provisional figures put Spain's population at 49.94 million, including 10.43 million residents born abroad, or 20.9%. Of those born abroad, 3.44 million held Spanish citizenship. Birthplace and nationality therefore capture different aspects of the same population. [8] The national average conceals substantial regional concentration. In July 2026, foreign-born residents accounted for 29.7% of the population in the Balearic Islands, 26.5% in Catalonia, 26.2% in the Valencian Community and 26.1% in Madrid. In each of these regions, more than one resident in four was born abroad. [9] To trace the change across generations, we also need to know how many people born in Spain have a parent who was born abroad.

The Institute for Remigration's Demography Dashboard brings that second generation into view. [10] For Spain, it combines residents born abroad with residents born in Spain who have at least one foreign-born parent. The second generation is reconstructed from Spain's 2021 population and housing survey and aligned with the model's 2025 starting population. On that basis, the dashboard estimates that about 12.05 million

people, or 24.5% of Spain's population, belonged to the first or second generation at the start of 2025. The model includes people with one Spain-born parent and retains naturalised citizens within the relevant demographic category. It measures family origins as defined by the model. [10]

The transformation is more advanced in younger generations. A Funcas study using Spain's 2024 Labour Force Survey found that 39% of children aged under five and 36% of people aged under twenty were born abroad or had at least one foreign-born parent. [11]

The dashboard then projects population development through an annual cohort model incorporating births, deaths, immigration and emigration. Its baseline migration assumptions use average annual flows over 2015–2024, reducing dependence on any single exceptional year. Fertility differs between the modelled population groups, while both use the same mortality schedule. Under these assumptions, the population with an immigration background and its modelled descendants would exceed 50% of Spain's total population in 2057. The projection therefore indicates a substantial long-term population replacement if the assumed patterns persist. It is a conditional scenario: changes in migration, fertility and other demographic behaviour would alter the outcome. The model also maintains population-group classifications across generations rather than simulating assimilation or changing identities. [10]

A complementary reference is the work of demographer Alejandro Macarrón. According to reporting on his 2025 calculations, continuation of the preceding five years' demographic dynamics would bring the corresponding national threshold forward to 2045. The stronger influence of recent migration plausibly contributes to the earlier date. Therefore, the result can be interpreted as a higher-immigration comparison scenario alongside the dashboard's baseline, which uses a longer migration reference period. [12]

The dashboard's principal contribution is thus twofold: it reconstructs the scale and age structure of Spain's first and second generations beyond a citizenship-based count, and it shows how the country's population composition could develop under explicitly stated demographic assumptions.

The national totals show the scale of population change. The breakdown by country of birth shows which groups make up Spain's foreign-born population. Morocco and Colombia were the two largest groups at the start of 2025, and seven of the ten largest groups were born in Latin American countries. The ranking covers residents of any nationality born in those countries. Descendants born in Spain are counted separately in the analysis above.

Table 2. Ten largest foreign-born populations in Spain, 1 January 2025

Country of birth	Residents
Morocco	1,165,955
Colombia	978,041
Venezuela	692,316
Romania	521,181
Ecuador	468,751
Argentina	450,883
Peru	430,277
United Kingdom	281,584
Cuba	252,290
Honduras	220,593

Source: INE, Annual Population Census 2025. Figures are by country of birth and include Spanish citizens. [5]

How Irregular Entry Becomes Spanish Citizenship

The census shows who was living in Spain at a given date. To understand how the population changes over time, it is also necessary to trace how people enter Spain and how their legal status changes after arrival. Some people arrive with permission to work, study or join family. Others overstay a visa, apply for asylum or obtain a residence permit through regularisation. Some later acquire Spanish citizenship. To make sense of these transitions, this paper distinguishes three groups. Group A covers people in irregular residence, those with pending asylum claims and those in the protection categories discussed below. Group B covers other foreign nationals residing lawfully in Spain who pose a cultural, economic or criminal burden on the country. Group C refers to naturalised migrants, who are not assimilated and live in parallel societies. These distinctions help explain why a change in residence status or citizenship matters and where questions of assimilation arise. The strategy section returns to the three groups and brings together the main figures for each, where the evidence allows. [13]

Entry routes and irregular residence

Spain's southern border is where irregular entry is most visible. The Ministry of the Interior recorded 36,775 irregular arrivals by land and sea in 2025, down from 64,019 in 2024. Arrivals fell sharply in the Canary Islands while rising in the Balearic Islands and at the land borders of Ceuta and Melilla. The route breakdown matters because the national total can fall even as pressure increases at particular points of entry. The latest provisional figures show a further shift. By the end of October 2026, Spain had recorded 32,942 arrivals by land and sea, up from 30,263 over the same period in 2025. [14, 15]

Table 3. Principal irregular entry routes, 2024 and 2025

Detected irregular route	2024 revised comparator	2025	2025 share
Canaries by sea	46,843	17,788	48.4%
Mainland by sea	8,598	7,787	21.2%
Balearics by sea	5,882	7,321	19.9%
Ceuta and Melilla by land	2,647	3,850	10.5%
Ceuta and Melilla by sea	49	29	0.1%
Total	64,019	36,775	100%

Border figures capture only one route to irregular residence. People who enter legally and remain after their permission expires do not appear in those figures. Short-stay visa exemptions are an important part of this entry framework. Visa-free travel for Colombian nationals took effect in December 2015 and for Peruvian nationals in March 2016, permitting eligible short visits without granting a right to work or settle in Spain. [16] [17] This is especially important in Spain, where Funcas estimates that the number of non-EU, non-EFTA and non-UK nationals living in an irregular situation rose from about 107,000 in early 2017 to 654,000 in early 2023 and 838,000 in early 2025. Roughly 91% of the estimated 2025 total held citizenship of a country in the Americas. The estimate shows how much larger and differently composed the resident population can be than the population detected at the land and sea borders. It does not establish how many people overstayed after lawful entry or lost a status they had previously held. [18]

Protection, lawful residence and return

The legal distinction between irregular residence, a pending asylum claim and recognised protection matters for return. A person can have a right to remain while a claim is being examined. Recognised refugee status, subsidiary protection, temporary protection and residence on humanitarian grounds also have distinct legal effects. In 2025, Spain's asylum office reported 144,396 applications and 160,951 decisions. The year's outcomes included 7,838 grants of refugee status, 10,103 grants of subsidiary protection and about 57,300 residence authorisations on humanitarian grounds, mostly for Venezuelans. For the population already in Spain, UNHCR reported about 511,000 people in its broader refugee category and 249,000 asylum seekers at the end of 2025. These figures describe the scale of protection and pending claims. They cannot be added directly to the Funcas estimate to produce a single population total. [19, 20]

Work, family and EU free movement also account for substantial lawful residence. At the end of June 2026, Spain's Permanent Immigration Observatory recorded 3.89 million foreign nationals with valid residence authorisations, 3.83 million with EU or EFTA registration documentation or equivalent family documentation, and about 198,000 with Brexit Withdrawal Agreement cards. The residence-authorisation figures include documentation issued under the asylum regime. A breakdown by type of authorisation is therefore necessary when separating ordinary lawful residence from protection categories. [21]

The annual flow of new permits shows the importance of routes beyond labour recruitment. In 2025, Spain issued 635,438 first residence permits to non-EU citizens, the highest absolute number in the EU. Family-related reasons accounted for 275,869 permits, or 43.4%, compared with 115,040 for employment and 105,419 for education. Family formation and reunification therefore constituted the largest category. [22]

Where there is a legal basis to require departure, the next question is whether the decision can be carried out. Outstanding legal proceedings can delay removal. Missing travel documents and a lack of cooperation from the country of return can prevent it in practice. The figures below show the discrepancy between the number of people ordered to leave and the number of returns recorded. In 2025, Spain reported 53,700 people ordered to leave and 5,705 returns to third countries following an order. The returns were equivalent to 10.6% of the year's orders, although the two counts do not track the same individuals. [23]

Table 4. Orders to leave and recorded returns

Year	Orders to leave	Returns all destinations	Returns to third countries	Third-country returns ÷ orders
2020	50,285	5,265	4,855	9.7%
2021	7,865	4,755	4,755	60.5%
2022	45,960	3,790	3,335	7.3%
2023	64,260	5,995	5,995	9.3%
2024	62,930	6,105	6,105	9.7%
2025	53,700	5,705	5,705	10.6%

The 2026 extraordinary regularisation

Spain's ordinary arraigo rules allow some people already living in the country to obtain residence on specified grounds. By 30 June 2026, 542,953 foreign nationals held valid residence authorisations issued through arraigo, 54.7% more than a year earlier. Alongside this expanding ordinary route, Royal Decree 316/2026 opened an extraordinary regularisation programme in April 2026. [24] By 30 June, the government had registered 1,174,978 applications, around 70% more than the 690,679 applications submitted under the 2005 programme. Of the 2026 applications, 79.6% were filed under extraordinary *arraigo* and 20.4% under a separate route for applicants for international protection. About two thirds of applicants came from Central and South America. Colombia alone accounted for 25.9% and Venezuela for 11.8%. [25, 26, 27]

The scheme began changing applicants' position before final decisions were issued. Admission to processing can provisionally authorise residence and work. At the end of October, 490,586 people linked to the scheme were actively registered with Spanish Social Security. The latest figures, from 2 July, indicate that 11,000 applicants had been notified of a favourable decision, an early snapshot of the process. *El Mundo* also reported an estimate from senior immigration police officials that the number of people covered could reach up to three million once family reunification is included. [28, 29, 30]

From residence to citizenship

Spain generally requires ten years of lawful, continuous residence immediately before an application for citizenship by residence. Article 22 of the Civil Code reduces this period to five years for recognised refugees and two years for nationals by origin of Ibero-American countries, Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal, and for Sephardic applicants. A one-year residence requirement applies to several

further categories, notably people born in Spain and spouses of Spanish citizens. For the latter, the marriage must also have lasted at least one year at the time of application, without legal or factual separation. Other one-year categories cover specified family, guardianship and related circumstances. These provisions establish eligibility to apply, rather than automatic acquisition of citizenship. Time spent in irregular residence does not count towards the qualifying period. [31]

The general ten-year requirement governs only a minority of successful residence-based applications. In 2025, the preferential two-year route accounted for 124,559 grants, or 56.3% of the total, compared with 37,670, or 17.0%, under the ten-year rule. The one-year routes for applicants born in Spain and spouses of Spanish citizens accounted for a further 15.9% and 8.8%, respectively. Together, these three accelerated pathways represented 81.0% of residence-based grants. [32] These figures illustrate the continuing relevance of Finotelli and La Barbera's analysis of a citizenship regime in which exceptional provisions became the principal avenues of access. [33] The OPI figures count favourable decisions; the INE series below counts registered acquisitions and therefore measures a different stage of the process.

The scale of citizenship acquisition was already increasing before the extraordinary regularisation. In the INE's comparable series, 225,793 foreign residents acquired Spanish citizenship in 2013. The annual total fell to 66,498 in 2017, then climbed to 144,012 in 2021, 252,476 in 2024 and a series high of 299,732 in 2025. Of the 2025 acquisitions, 253,836 were by residence. The annual figures show how quickly the legal composition of Spain's population can change. Changes in residence status and citizenship determine who may remain permanently and who becomes part of Spain's citizen population. [34]

What Replacement Immigration Really Costs Spain

Spain's immigration debate often focuses on the immediate gains from a larger workforce. Employers can fill vacancies, and workers in formal employment pay taxes and social security contributions. A serious economic assessment must also ask how much those jobs contribute to public finances over time, where new households will live, and what happens to wages and investment when businesses can continually recruit at low pay. The Institute for Remigration argues that Spain should judge its immigration policy against those longer-term costs as well as potential immediate gains.

Public Finances and Welfare

Spain's reception system puts a concrete figure on one part of the fiscal cost. The annual budget for contracted services in the international protection reception system

rose from €373.3 million in 2023 to €558.9 million in 2025, an increase of nearly 50%. The system provides accommodation and support to applicants and beneficiaries of international or temporary protection who lack sufficient resources. It assisted 69,573 people in 2025. The 2025 budget covered costs incurred in both 2024 and 2025. [35, 36]

The welfare system shows a further dimension. In May 2026, 150,679 of the 862,859 registered claimants of Spain's minimum income benefit, the *Ingreso Mínimo Vital*, were foreign nationals, a share of 17.5%. The nationality breakdown covers the person in whose name the benefit is paid. Other members of the same household can also receive support through the claim. [37]

This 17.5% refers to persons with a foreign nationality, not to persons with an immigrant background in general. Importantly, foreign-born residents, including those who have been naturalised and hold Spanish citizenship, make up a larger percentage of Spain's population (20–21% as of mid-2026 per INE Continuous Population Statistics) than foreign nationals alone (15%). The percentage of IMV recipients with an immigrant background is therefore almost certainly higher than 17–18%. [37] Foreign nationals also account for substantial shares of recipients in other welfare programmes. In 2023, they represented 28.89% of Regional Rentas Mínimas de Inserción (Minimum Income Schemes) benefit holders in the reporting autonomous communities, rising to 46.61% in Navarra and 46.69% in La Rioja. [38] They accounted for approximately 13.4% of unemployment benefit recipients in December 2025 and approximately 8% of non-contributory pension recipients in December 2024. [39, 40] Their representation varies considerably between programmes, with the clearest over-representation in regional minimum-income schemes.

Immigration also changes future expenditure as migrant cohorts age. Funcas reports that Spain's immigrant population aged 55 and over grew by 42% between 2021 and 2025, compared with 25% among those aged 20–54. By 2025, 22% of immigrants were at least 55 years old. Current contributions must therefore be assessed alongside the pension, healthcare and care expenditure associated with ageing. [41]

Increasing immigration cannot permanently stabilise the age structure without further inflows. The Banco de España's 2023 Annual Report calculated that keeping Spain's dependency ratio constant over the following thirty years would require a foreign-born working-age population three times as large as envisaged in the INE projection used for that exercise. The calculation illustrates the scale required to offset ageing through migration. [42]

The longer-term fiscal question is whether earnings generate enough tax and social security revenue to cover public expenditure over a lifetime. Using Spanish data and constant 2022 euros, Fundación Disenso modelled a man who arrives at 18,

earns €20,060 a year, works continuously until 66 and lives to 90. With no discounting, his lifetime fiscal balance is −€158,044. A man of African origin born and educated in Spain who starts work at 22 and earns the same wage has a modelled balance of −€422,946. A four-person family scenario produces a combined balance of −€1.50 million across the four lifetimes. In that scenario, both parents arrive at 18, the mother stops working at 28, and both children go on to earn the report's sex-specific averages for workers of African origin. [43]

The estimated lifetime balances depend substantially on earnings and discounting assumptions. Under the baseline, the two individual profiles require annual gross earnings of approximately €31,670 and €45,150 respectively to break even. Using the report's alternative discount rate turns the first worker's balance positive, while the Spain-born and family profiles remain negative. [43]

Other European countries show how large the fiscal differences can be. Denmark's Finance Ministry calculated that in 2019, non-Western immigrants and their descendants had a net fiscal balance of −DKK 27 billion, while Western immigrants and their descendants contributed +DKK 11 billion. In the Netherlands, a study using national administrative data estimated an average lifetime balance of −€167,000 per first-generation non-Western immigrant, compared with +€42,000 per first-generation Western immigrant. [44, 45]

For Germany, Bernd Raffelhüschen, Stefan Seuffert and Florian Wimmesberger estimated in 2024 that continued net immigration of around 293,000 people per year would widen the country's long-term fiscal gap by approximately €5.8 trillion compared with a scenario without future migration. The projection uses the age-specific fiscal profiles of foreign nationals already living in Germany and assumes a six-year integration period for new arrivals. In a separate scenario with a higher share of vocationally or university-qualified arrivals, the projected fiscal burden was smaller. [46]

Belgium's central bank found that first-generation immigrants born outside the EU contributed €2,506 less per person than the Belgian average in its 2016 tax-and-transfer comparison. Lower employment and lower wages both contributed to the gap. Even among people in work, the average net contribution of non-EU immigrants aged 20 to 64 was about half that of employed Belgian-born residents with Belgian-born parents in the same age range. The Belgian figures make the link to Spain's lifetime estimates concrete. Employment raises contributions, but persistent differences in pay and employment can leave a substantial gap in what reaches the public finances. [47]

Wages, Productivity and Innovation

A steady supply of low-paid migrant labour can entrench a low-wage, low-productivity model. When employers struggle to recruit, they have a reason to raise wages, improve working conditions, redesign jobs or invest in machinery. Ready access to labour at existing wages weakens that pressure. For an individual firm, hiring another worker may be cheaper and easier than changing how it produces. Across a sector, repeated reliance on that option can keep labour-intensive business models viable and delay investment in more productive methods.

This effect is most visible where machinery can take over routine tasks. In Germany, a study of immigrant allocation found that a larger local labour supply reduced automation-related innovation, with the effect concentrated among large manufacturers in tight labour markets. [48] In Denmark, firms adopted fewer robots in municipalities where immigration expanded the local workforce. [49] In the United States, innovation accelerated in technologies for the crops most affected by the loss of seasonal labour after the Bracero programme ended. [50] A separate study found no clear gains in domestic farm wages or employment. [51]

For Spain, the issue is what kind of economy this recruitment model sustains. In its accounting decomposition for 2022–2024, the Banco de España attributes 0.7 percentage points of average annual GDP-per-capita growth to the foreign-born population. The employment-rate component contributed 0.5 percentage points, while the hourly-productivity component contributed −0.2. The positive overall contribution therefore rested primarily on employment rather than productivity growth. [52]

The sectoral concentration is pronounced. In 2024, hospitality, construction and domestic service employed nearly 35% of foreign-national workers, compared with 13.2% of Spanish-national workers. The Banco de España identifies these sectors as having lower value added per hour than other branches of the economy. [52]

That aggregate gain can coexist with weaker incentives to raise wages or modernise production in particular sectors. Where firms repeatedly fill vacancies at low wages, they can expand production while postponing changes to pay, work organisation and technology. Over time, this can lock entire sectors into a model that depends on a continuing supply of cheap labour. This is the structural cost that Automation First addresses in the policy chapter. [52]

The assessment must also consider the countries from which Spain recruits. Where emigration removes scarce professionals, it can weaken essential services and transfer the benefits of publicly financed education to wealthier destination countries. The WHO's safeguards against active recruitment from vulnerable health systems

recognise this problem. Spain's labour needs should therefore be assessed alongside the development needs of the countries supplying its workforce. [53]

Migrant Housing Pressure

Spain formed approximately 240,000 net new households in 2025, while only 92,000 new dwellings were completed. The Banco de España estimates that the cumulative gap between new households and new housing supply reached about 750,000 dwellings over 2021–2025. Six provinces accounted for 52.5% of that gap: Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante, Valencia, Murcia and Málaga. [54]

Net immigration has driven Spain's recent population growth, adding housing demand where supply responds slowly. The Banco de España identifies constraints on developable land and planning, alongside demand for tourist accommodation and second homes in some markets. Migration policy therefore directly affects the scale of the housing challenge. [54]

A provincial-level study by Daniel Fernández and Santiago Calvo estimates that immigration accounted for approximately 60% of cumulative real growth in advertised purchase prices and 41% of real rental growth between 2018 and 2025. Using historical settlement patterns to identify migration-driven demand, the authors find substantial effects even after controlling for pre-existing price trends. These estimates place immigration among the major drivers of Spain's rising housing costs. [55]

The IFR estimates the potential scale of relief under an illustrative return scenario. It starts from Funcas's estimate of roughly 840,000 residents in an irregular situation on 1 January 2025. If that entire group left Spain, at an assumed average of three people per dwelling and with half of the implied dwellings becoming fully vacant, the calculation yields approximately 140,000 dwellings released. That is equivalent in scale to 18.7% of the Banco de España's cumulative gap. The number of homes actually released would depend on how many people left, how they shared accommodation, and whether the vacated homes became available in the areas with the largest shortages. The calculation uses the pre-regularisation population estimate. [18, 54, 56]

The shortage also constrains the formation of independent households. In 2025, the estimated age of leaving the parental home was 30.2 years in Spain, compared with 26.3 across the EU, making access to housing a central concern for a demographic strategy that seeks to support family formation. [57]

Residential Segregation and Concentrated Local Costs

Immigration's local costs extend beyond housing. Concentrated settlement can place additional demands on schools, public services and neighbourhood infrastructure that national employment and fiscal figures do not capture. El Puche and Salt illustrate these demands.

In El Puche, Almería, almost half the population was born abroad according to the municipality's intervention plan, drawing on a 2023 assessment. The plan identifies substandard housing and particularly low participation in education beyond compulsory schooling. The Andalusian Ombudsman documents shortages of public facilities and services despite previous interventions. [58, 59, 60] Addressing these conditions requires sustained public spending. Almería's ERACIS+ programme for 2024–2028 has a budget of €7.43 million, including €2.11 million in municipal funding, and recruited 26 professionals to work across four disadvantaged areas, including El Puche. [61]

In Salt, every public primary and secondary school was classified as a school of maximum complexity in the municipality's March 2024 education agreement. The agreement linked the substantial migrant-origin population and widespread household disadvantage to additional educational needs, while identifying insufficient resources and an uneven distribution of vulnerable pupils. [62] In July 2026, Salt submitted a €25 million neighbourhood programme with 47 proposed interventions, including housing rehabilitation, civic facilities and educational provision. [63]

Migration policy must account for these concentrated local demands. Admission and settlement decisions have consequences that municipalities, schools and neighbourhoods must manage for years. Spain must make local capacity and the public cost of sustained intervention central to decisions on future immigration and settlement.

Imported Crime

In 2025, the rate of adults with a registered final conviction was 15.3 per 1,000 foreign nationals and 6.1 per 1,000 Spanish nationals, a ratio of 2.5 to one. Among 14- to 17-year-olds the rates were 10.2 and 5.6 respectively. Spanish nationality is the reference throughout. It includes naturalised citizens. The figures are classified by current nationality, and the available data do not supply comparable rates by ancestry, birthplace or strategic group. [64] [65]

Table 5. Final convictions registered by INE

INE final conviction measure	All residents	Spanish nationals	Foreign nationals	Foreign ÷ Spanish
Adults per 1,000 adults, 2025	7.4	6.1	15.3	2.51
Ages 14–17 per 1,000, 2025	6.2	5.6	10.2	1.82
Adults per 1,000 adults, 2024	—	6.2	15.7	2.53

Sexual Offences

INE recorded 4,531 adults with a final conviction for sexual offences in 2025. In a separate series, the Interior Ministry recorded 14,711 people arrested or investigated. This is a different population and stage of the justice process. The police rate was 88.3 per 100,000 foreign nationals and 20.4 per 100,000 Spanish nationals, or 4.3 times the Spanish rate. The ten nationality groups in the table correspond to the countries covered in the analysis of the largest foreign-born populations. The numerators and denominators in this table both use current nationality. [64] [66] [67]

Table 6. People arrested or investigated for sexual offences by current nationality

Current nationality	Residents	Suspects	Per 100,000	Ratio to Spanish rate
General population	49,128,297	14,711	29.9	—
Spanish nationals	42,216,326	8,611	20.4	1.00
All foreign nationals	6,911,971	6,100	88.3	4.33
Morocco	968,999	1,222	126.1	6.18
Colombia	676,534	870	128.6	6.30
Venezuela	377,809	266	70.4	3.45
Romania	609,270	304	49.9	2.45
Ecuador	132,372	255	192.6	9.44
Argentina	148,585	111	74.7	3.66
Peru	260,544	373	143.2	7.02
United Kingdom	266,462	92	34.5	1.69
Cuba	88,367	52	58.8	2.88
Honduras	177,929	135	75.9	3.72

The denominators are the corresponding resident populations at 1 January 2025. These are crude rates and are not adjusted for age or sex. The Interior Ministry's dedicated sexual-offences report supplies the detailed breakdown used here. Its total differs slightly from the general crime series. [66] [67] [68]

The differences also appear within a narrowly defined age and sex group. For boys aged 14–17, CEU-CEFAS reports an average annual sexual-offence conviction rate of 180 per 100,000 African nationals in 2022–2024, compared with 40 among Spanish nationals—a ratio of 4.5 to one. The rate among American nationals was approximately twice the Spanish rate, while the Asian-national rate was substantially lower. However, this category entails very different groups, like Pakistanis and Japanese. [69]

Table 7. Boys aged 14–17 convicted of sexual offences, annual average, 2022–2024

Current nationality	Convicted persons per 100,000 boys aged 14–17
Spanish	40
Other European	53
African	180
American	82
Asian	13

Source: CEU-CEFAS, November 2025, Figure 15, using INE conviction and population statistics. [69]

The report estimates that approximately 22% of Spanish nationals in this age group were children of foreign immigrants. Their convictions remain within the Spanish category. CEU-CEFAS argues that excluding them would lower the remaining rate if their offending rates resembled those of first-generation immigrants. It does not establish that assumption or provide a numerical adjusted rate. The figures therefore identify a limitation of nationality-based statistics, rather than measure offending among descendants of immigrants directly. [69]

The police figures above classify suspects by current nationality. Naturalised citizens are counted as Spanish, without separately identifying their migration background. Individual convictions make this distinction concrete. They include serious sexual offences committed by naturalised Spanish citizens, as well as cases in which naturalised citizens and foreign nationals offended together.

In Pamplona in 2021, a Peruvian-origin naturalised Spanish citizen received a two-year suspended prison sentence for sexually abusing his unconscious 19-year-old employee

with penetration. In Las Palmas, a case reviewed by the Canary Islands High Court in February 2025 involved two Venezuelan-origin perpetrators, one a Venezuelan national and the other naturalised Spanish. Their sentences of two and eight years for sexual offences against the same victim were maintained on appeal. [70] [71]

The European dimension is illustrated by Souhayl M., a Moroccan-born Spanish citizen raised in Spain. In March 2017, Düsseldorf's Regional Court sentenced him to five and a half years' imprisonment for rape, robbery and bodily harm after he attacked a 90-year-old woman in October 2016. He already had convictions in Spain and told the court that he had moved to Germany to avoid imprisonment there. His case connects a criminal history in Spain with a subsequent serious sexual offence in another European country. [72] [73]

A further cross-border case concerned Ángel Gonzalo G. J., a Spanish citizen of Ecuadorian origin, sentenced by the Audiencia Nacional to 15 years in 2023 for raping his 13-year-old step-granddaughter in Ecuador. After returning to Spain, he was arrested there. His Spanish nationality led the court to refuse extradition and prosecute him in Spain instead. [74]

Violent Offences

Foreign nationals were arrested or investigated at higher rates than Spanish nationals in each of the violent-offence categories examined. For completed intentional homicide and murder, police recorded 152 foreign nationals and 349 Spanish nationals. This corresponds to 2.20 and 0.83 per 100,000 respectively, or 2.66 times the Spanish rate. Robbery with violence or intimidation shows the widest gap among the categories in the table. [67] [68]

Table 8. People arrested or investigated for violent offences

Offence, 2025	Spanish count / rate	Foreign count / rate	Foreign ÷ Spanish
Intentional homicide and murder, including attempts	1,147 / 2.72	658 / 9.52	3.50
Completed intentional homicide and murder	349 / 0.83	152 / 2.20	2.66
Injuries (lesiones)	32,294 / 76.50	17,826 / 257.90	3.37
Family ill-treatment	53,746 / 127.31	32,647 / 472.33	3.71
Habitual family ill-treatment	8,476 / 20.08	4,031 / 58.32	2.90
Robbery with violence or intimidation	10,138 / 24.01	12,423 / 179.73	7.48

Rates are per 100,000 residents of the relevant nationality. Spanish counts are the published all-nationality counts minus published foreign-national counts. Ratios use unrounded rates. The tables count arrests and investigations. [67] [68]

Conviction data provide a further comparison within the male population. CEU-CEFAS calculates that, in 2023, the rate of convictions for completed or attempted intentional homicide among men aged 18–70 was approximately four times the Spanish-national rate for both African and American nationals. Restricting the comparison to men within the same broad age range reduces some demographic differences, although it does not fully standardise the groups' age structures. [69]

Table 9. Persons convicted of completed or attempted intentional homicide, 2023

Current nationality	Convicted persons per 100,000 men aged 18–70
Spanish	2.1
Other European	6.0
African	8.7
American	8.4
Asian	3.3

Source: CEU-CEFAS, Demografía de la delincuencia en España, November 2025, Figure 2, using conviction and population statistics. These figures include attempted offences and therefore differ from the completed-homicide police figures above. [69]

CEU-CEFAS also presents an illustrative adjustment for naturalised citizens. Assuming that naturalised Spaniards had the same offending rates as nationals of their countries of origin, it estimates that the remaining Spanish-national rate would fall from 2.1 to approximately 1.6. This is an assumption-based scenario, not an observed rate: the underlying nationality statistics do not separately identify offending among naturalised citizens. [69]

Unlawful Occupation of Property

Unlawful occupation connects crime with housing and neighbourhood conditions. CEU-CEFAS reports 168,891 police-recorded incidents of unlawful entry or occupation of property between 2010 and 2024. In 2023, foreign nationals accounted for 51.8% of arrests or investigations in this category. The recorded incident rate in Catalonia during 2022–2024 was 3.6 times that of the rest of Spain. [69]

The report additionally estimates that the arrest or investigation rate among foreign nationals was 6.1 times the Spanish-national rate when compared against populations aged 18–69. This calculation assumes that all recorded suspects belonged to that age range and should be read as an approximation.

The category combines different offences involving unlawful entry and occupation of property; it is not a count solely of occupied private homes. [69]

Gangs and Organised Crime

Violent Latin American gangs such as the Trinitarios and Dominican Don't Play (DDP) have established organised structures in Spanish towns and cities. Their activities include territorial intimidation, recruitment of minors, drug dealing and attacks against rivals. In November 2025, the Interior Ministry described the Trinitarios-linked AB7 group in Toledo as hierarchical, territorially organised and recruiting through social media. [75]

The gangs bring together foreign nationals and Spanish citizens with a migration background. In Collado Villalba, a Trinitarios chapter used an occupied residential building as accommodation and a meeting place while operating a drug-distribution network. Fourteen defendants were convicted in 2016, including three Spanish citizens born in the Dominican Republic and Colombia. [76] In Valladolid, three Trinitarios members received 11-year prison sentences each in June 2026 for attempting to kill a DDP member. Two were Colombian nationals and the third a Spanish citizen born in Ecuador. [77]

Police operations also show the continued presence of rival chapters. Eleven suspected DDP members were arrested in Madrid's Carabanchel district in July 2025 in an investigation concerning attempted murder, weapons offences and criminal-organisation membership. A June 2026 operation targeted another DDP chapter in Zaragoza over alleged confrontations with rival gangs. [78, 79]

These networks extend across European borders. Following the January 2025 murder of Gregory Castillo Volquez in London, Benito Ramirez Kones, Carlos Akum Metumbe and Luiggi Perelli Santana received life sentences in September 2026, with minimum terms of 22–23 years. Metumbe and Santana fled to Spain before their extradition. El País identified all three as Trinitarios members and Kones and Metumbe as Spanish nationals. It reported that the fugitives sought shelter through relatives and gang contacts in Spain. [80, 81]

International Drug-Trafficking Networks

Alongside the Trinitarios and DDP, other criminal networks use Spain as a base for international drug trafficking. An investigation announced by Europol in October 2023 identified Moroccan nationals based in Spain who organised cannabis deliveries into the country and onward shipments to distributors in Italy. The coordinated operation resulted in 78 arrests - 20 in Spain and 58 in Italy. Investigators also uncovered a connected money-laundering network using an informal banking system operated mainly by Chinese nationals. The case illustrates how trafficking networks combine locally established organisers with international distribution and financial infrastructure, extending their operations from Spain into other European countries. [82]

Jihadism and National Security

Jihadist terrorism is one of the gravest security threats Spain has faced. The Madrid train bombings of 11 March 2004 killed 193 people and injured more than 2,000, according to the Interior Ministry. The threat encompasses terrorist cells, individual attackers and networks engaged in recruitment, propaganda, financing and preparations for violence. It includes foreign nationals, naturalised Spaniards and members of the generation born or raised in Spain. [83] [84] [85]

Interior Ministry figures reproduced in the prosecution service's 2026 annual report record 46 arrests in Spain for jihadist terrorism-related offences in 2022, 78 in 2023, 81 in 2024 and 100 in 2025. The International Observatory for Terrorism Studies (OIET) identifies 41 Spanish nationals and 28 Moroccan nationals among the 100 people arrested in 2025. Other nationalities included Pakistani, Algerian, Lebanese and Syrian. The threat therefore extends across different citizenship and residence categories. [86] [87]

The Ripoll cell associated with the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks of August 2017 illustrates the problem across generations. Elcano Royal Institute research identifies its leader, Abdelbaki Es Satty, and most other members as Moroccan-born. Its younger members were descendants of Moroccan immigrants, born or raised in Spain. Mohamed Houli Chemlal, born in Melilla to parents from Nador, was the cell's only Spanish citizen. In November 2023, the Supreme Court upheld his 43-year sentence and the 36-year sentence imposed on Driss Oukabir, a Moroccan national. Their convictions concerned terrorist-organisation membership, explosives offences and offences arising from the Alcanar explosion; neither was convicted of the murders committed by other cell members in Barcelona and Cambrils. [84] [88] [89] Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas, known as Abu Dahdah, was a Syrian-born Spanish citizen convicted of leading Al-Qaeda's Spanish cell. In 2006, the Supreme Court upheld his 12-year

sentence for that leadership role while overturning his separate conviction for conspiracy connected with the September 11 attacks. [85] [90]

The recruitment of younger generations makes this a continuing concern. OIET recorded 13 minors among those arrested in Spain in 2025; a further 35% were aged 18–24. Across the EU, Europol recorded 24 completed, failed or foiled jihadist attacks and 347 arrests that year, including 108 suspects aged 18 or younger. Spain reported the highest number of jihadism-related arrests, ahead of France. Jihadist recruitment thus remains a domestic and European security problem, involving foreign nationals and citizens alike, with online networks extending its reach into new generations. [87] [91]

Loss of Spanish Culture

Islam in Public Space

The expansion of Islamic places of worship is one of the clearest visible changes associated with immigration. The Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso recorded 988 Muslim places of worship in June 2011 and 1,983 in September 2025. The recorded total has therefore approximately doubled, establishing a substantially larger religious infrastructure across Spain. These sites include mosques and prayer rooms, rather than exclusively purpose-built mosque buildings. [92] [93]

The development of larger religious complexes also extends their role beyond collective prayer. In Seville, EFE reported that the proposed Islamic cultural centre in Polígono Sur would occupy more than 6,000 square metres, with approximately 1,000 devoted to the mosque and the remainder accommodating parking and facilities including exhibition rooms, offices, cafés, shops and multipurpose spaces. The project generated political opposition and demands for consultation with local residents. The city ultimately granted the building licence in July 2026, stating that the project complied with the applicable requirements. [94]

The use of municipal facilities for Islamic celebrations has also become a source of political conflict. In Jumilla, the municipal council approved a motion in July 2025 to initiate restrictions on non-sporting activities in public sports facilities. These venues had previously accommodated collective Muslim prayers marking the end of Ramadan. The proposed restrictions brought the use of shared public infrastructure for religious celebrations into national debate. [95]

In January 2025, Spain expelled the imams of La Jonquera and Figueres following separate investigations into radicalising activities. Reporting the expulsions in February, El País cited police sources who said that both preachers had engaged in activities contrary to national security. The expulsions were carried out on 9 and 16 January respectively. [96]

On 13 November 2026, an imam in Lepe, Huelva, was expelled to Morocco following a joint Guardia Civil and CNI investigation. According to the Guardia Civil, he used his religious authority to promote social segregation, rejection of democratic values and confrontation with the surrounding society. The expulsion followed an administrative national-security procedure. [97]

Evangelical Expansion and Religious Change

Immigration is reshaping Spain's religious landscape beyond the growth of Islam. Latin American immigration has contributed to the expansion of evangelical and Pentecostal churches, bringing different forms of worship, religious leadership and community organisation into a historically Catholic society. Shared language and Christian roots coexist with substantial changes in Spain's religious institutions.

The expansion is measurable. The Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso recorded 2,944 evangelical places of worship in June 2011, compared with 4,763 in September 2025 - an increase of approximately 62%. Catalonia accounted for 1,010 sites in 2025, followed by the Madrid region with 855, Andalusia with 744 and the Valencian Community with 510. [92] [93]

In the Madrid region, evangelical places of worship now outnumber Catholic parishes: 855 evangelical sites in September 2025, against 690 Catholic parishes across Madrid, Getafe and Alcalá in the Church's 2024 report. Evangelical congregations have established an extensive institutional presence alongside the historic Catholic parish network. [93] [98]

Reporting by El País describes how this development is changing neighbourhood life. In Carabanchel, churches occupy converted industrial and commercial premises, combining worship with assistance, employment contacts and social support. The newspaper connects their expansion to Latin American immigration, affordable premises and established religious networks brought from countries of origin. Their growing public visibility extends to large religious events and contacts between evangelical leaders and political parties. [99] The expansion of evangelical churches is changing Spain's historically Catholic religious landscape. Latin American immigration is contributing to a growing network of congregations, social institutions and public religious events, extending the transformation beyond private belief into neighbourhood and public life.

THE COUNTER-STRATEGY

Spain must stay Spanish

The evidence is clear that replacement migration is not beneficial to Spain: it generates economic problems by undercutting wages and inhibiting technological innovation, while eroding social ties, destabilising neighbourhoods, and producing segregation and ethnic fragmentation. Immigration is also a major public concern. In September 2024, 30.4% of respondents to the CIS barometer named it among Spain's three main problems, placing it first overall. [100] In September 2026, it remained third at 19.7%, while housing ranked first at 37.5%. [101] However, as already shown, housing and immigration are intrinsically linked with each other.

Replacement migration fundamentally changes the culture of the nation and imports large-scale crime - including jihadism, drug trafficking (notably South American networks), and gang violence. Above all, however, replacing the Spanish population would lead to the destruction of the ethno-cultural tradition. Without the Spanish people, there can be no Spanish politics.

Spain's first political objective should therefore be to **halt and reverse population replacement and secure the country's ethnocultural continuity.** That requires a policy of remigration, which guides admission, residence, regularisation and citizenship policy. Remigration maximisation means systematically increasing both the number of return decisions and the departures that follow. Spain must expand the grounds for ending residence, consistently withdraw or refuse to renew permits where those grounds apply, and carry the resulting cases through to departure. Alongside enforcement, it must expand voluntary return and reintegration programmes and close the routes by which temporary or irregular stays routinely become permanent. Demographic renewal through family policy and demanding standards of assimilation must complete this strategy.

Latin America and the Great Replacement

A substantial share of Spain's foreign-born population comes from Latin America, including countries formerly belonging to the Spanish Empire. The immigration lobby exploits this fact in two ways:

1. It is claimed that this creates a moral obligation to take these people in and grant them a fast track to citizenship.

2. An argument often shared by conservatives is that these immigrants are essentially already culturally assimilated and, due to their language skills and ethno-religious roots, do not represent a real change for Spain.

We dispute both arguments and wish to present a new perspective. First, accusations of moral guilt do not provide a basis for realistic decisions on migration policy. This way of viewing history and politics is completely unrealistic and selective. No one expects former great empires - be it Mongolia, Persia, or the Ottoman Empire - to act in a similar manner. The past imposes no obligation on current generations of Spaniards to give up their homeland and their culture. There is absolutely no such thing as collective moral guilt for entire nations. Spaniards who genuinely feel an individual responsibility toward former colonies can fulfill that responsibility by helping with development efforts on the ground there. Secondly, a population exchange involving residents of Latin American countries would also spell the end of Spain's unique culture. The transformation and the final outcome would be less drastic than in the case of an Islamic-dominated replacement migration. However, this does not change the fact that Spain, as we know it and as it has existed for millennia, would cease to exist.

Spain's capacity to accept residents from Latin America is certainly greater than its capacity to accept residents from Africa, but even so, there must be a natural limit, a system, and a clear objective in this regard.

The Institute for Remigration takes the view that all migration, including migration from Latin America, should take place only if it benefits Spain. It must not place a cultural, economic, or criminal burden on the country, nor should it overstretch the cultural capacity of the Spanish people to assimilate newcomers. Since Spain's native population is steadily shrinking, while parallel societies are growing, we believe this capacity limit has been reached.

Added to this are numerous problematic side effects, such as gang crime, which undermine the immigration lobby's naïve belief in the uncomplicated mass assimilation of Latin Americans. Ultimately, the question Spaniards must ask themselves is a very simple one. If the native population is replaced by immigrants from Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Honduras, will Spain necessarily come to resemble Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Honduras more closely in terms of culture, the economy, and the rule of law? Is this what the Spanish people want? Do the Spanish people, as a nation, have the right to reject replacement immigration from Latin America? We answer that question with a clear "yes." Any form of replacement immigration must be rejected.

Instead, Spain should embrace its imperial heritage by taking advantage of the great benefit of the spread of its language. Through intensive economic ties, education, and then repatriation of foreigners from Latin America, it should help develop these regions and build a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Three Groups

Remigration does not mean indiscriminately expelling every foreigner from the country. It is a complex system with different categories and target groups. To clarify the debate and elevate it to a serious level, we will outline three categories that could serve as target groups for remigration. The demographic totals presented in this chapter are not deportation targets. The figures accompanying Groups A, B and C differ in date, definition and coverage, and some overlap. The paper does not provide a numerical estimate of the total population affected by its proposed measures.

Group A - Irregular residents, asylum seekers and people under protection. The scale of this group is best understood through separate figures. Funcas estimated that about 838,000 people were living in Spain in an irregular situation at the start of 2025. [18] At the end of 2025, UNHCR reported 511,079 people in its refugee category and 248,715 asylum seekers in Spain. [20] The UNHCR refugee category is broader than Spanish grants of refugee status in any one year. The estimates use different dates and definitions and do not give a combined Group A total. Annual applications for international protection rose from 14,887 in 2015 to 167,749 in 2024, then fell to 144,396 in 2025 according to the provisional year-end release. [19] The Interior Ministry's yearbook records 16,544 (2016), 31,740 (2017), 55,749 (2018), 118,446 (2019), 88,826 (2020), 65,482 (2021), 119,240 (2022) and 163,642 (2023). [102]

In 2025 Spain granted refugee status in 7,838 cases and subsidiary protection in 10,103. The applications and decisions record activity during the year. The UNHCR figures above show how many people were in each category at year-end. For Group A, Remigration calls for full repatriation. There must be no general amnesty and no path to citizenship through irregular entry. Anything else would be a massive pull factor for further illegal immigration. The distinction between this strategic objective and immediate removability is set out in Measure 5.

Group B – Lawfully resident foreign nationals who pose a cultural, criminal or economic burden. Group B covers only part of Spain's lawful foreign-resident population, the figures below describe that wider population, not a removal target. Spain's Permanent Immigration Observatory recorded 7,909,008 people with valid residence documentation on 30 June 2026. [21] These comprise 3,885,177 residence authorisations, 3,825,658 EU/EFTA registrations or corresponding family documents

and 198,173 UK Withdrawal Agreement cards. Some residence authorisations fall under the asylum regime and must be distinguished from the population considered here. These figures describe the wider lawful foreign-resident population, not the size of Group B or a removal target. Group B comprises those within that population who pose a cultural, criminal or economic burden on Spain. Determining its size would require more in-depth research. Authorities should systematically review residence permits and withdraw or refuse to renew them wherever individual assessment establishes the applicable statutory grounds. Fraudulent or no longer justified stays should be brought to an end rather than allowed to become permanent. Where lawful residence ends and an obligation to leave arises, the person moves from Group B to Group A. Failure to comply with an enforceable departure obligation should lead to removal.

Group C - Non-assimilated Spanish citizens. By this, we mean holders of a Spanish passport who, however, do not identify with the Spanish nation but rather, as a rule, with another country and its goals. They live in parallel societies, have a strong tribal identity, and tend to view the state and mainstream Spanish society as prey. The available statistics show how many residents have acquired Spanish citizenship and how many Spanish citizens were born abroad or have immigrant parents. Group C is not synonymous with citizens of migrant origin. The figures below are demographic context, not a list of people designated for citizenship deprivation or removal. The measures distinguish neighbourhood policy from individually established grounds for annulment or proposed deprivation of acquired citizenship.

From 2013 to 2025, INE recorded 2,197,469 acquisitions of Spanish citizenship by residents, including a record 299,732 in 2025. [34] Of the 2025 total, 253,836 acquired citizenship by residence. Separately, on 1 October 2026, Spain had 3,437,792 residents who were born abroad and held Spanish citizenship. [8] This stock includes people who were Spanish from birth as well as people who acquired citizenship later. A study based on the 2021 census identified about 1.46 million Spain-born residents with immigrant parents who held Spanish citizenship. [103] A separate 2021 survey estimate put the broader Spain-born population with at least one immigrant parent at around 2.65 million, across nationalities. [104] Labour Force Survey figures also put the number of people with Spanish and another nationality at about 1.5 million in 2021. [105]

Moving from this demographic picture to non-assimilation requires examining concrete patterns of conduct, cultural identification and national loyalty. The Crime chapter provides concrete examples of Spanish citizens with a migration background involved in jihadist organisations, Latin American gangs and serious sexual offending. These include Mohamed Houli Chemlal and Abu Dahdah, the Spanish citizens convicted in the Collado Villalba and Valladolid Trinitarios cases, and Souhayl M.,

convicted in Germany. Assimilation, as understood in this paper, extends beyond compliance with the law to lasting identification with Spain's national community, its history, language and culture. Under the concept of assimilation adopted in this paper, participation in jihadist organisations, organised gang violence and the serious sexual assaults described above are treated as indicators of non-assimilation: such conduct fundamentally violates the norms governing life in Spanish and European societies. Citizenship, years of residence or upbringing in Spain do not override that assessment.

These cases illustrate the conduct relevant to Group C. However, they do not establish its numerical size or justify extending that classification to people who just happen to share the offenders' origins. Developing measurable criteria, including national identification, everyday language and social ties, and estimating the size and distribution of the non-assimilated citizen population would be a core task of the Demography and Assimilation Monitor proposed in the following policy chapter.

It is important to note that this proposed remigration framework does not intend to create a group of second-class citizens or a list of people who are supposed to be non-assimilated. Instead, it explores legal and structural measures that affect all citizens alike and are intended to break up parallel societies. It must be reiterated here that the Institute for Remigration does not advocate the deportation of citizens or the arbitrary revocation of citizenship. Nevertheless, the problem of unassimilated parallel societies cannot be denied, and a serious remigration strategy requires a solution that is both effective and in accordance with the rule of law.

Status Transitions as the Strategic Lever

Spain's immigration system changes the composition of the resident population through decisions made long after entry. A grant of residence can move a person from Group A to Group B. Expiry, non-renewal or withdrawal of a permit can move someone from B to A when no independent right to stay remains. Naturalisation takes a person out of Group B. Whether that person could fall within Group C depends on assimilation. These transitions can alter the scale of permanent settlement without any change in recorded border crossings.

Return and reintegration measures can take effect at each relevant transition. Before a temporary permit expires, authorities can arrange departure and support in the country of origin. When a return decision becomes enforceable, a named authority can follow it through to confirmed departure. Lawful residents who wish to leave can also take up voluntary return and reintegration support. Family policy complements these measures by addressing Spain's low birth rate.

FROM STRATEGY TO POLICY

The strategy sets the objective. The measures below identify the decisions Spain can take to achieve it, from limiting new admissions and enforcing returns to reforming residence and citizenship. Four blocks set out the domestic programme. The European and international agenda, the first 100 days and the parliamentary-term timetable follow.

Remigration maximisation is central to that strategy. Spain must systematically increase both the number of return decisions and the departures that follow by expanding the grounds for ending residence, withdrawing or refusing to renew permits where those grounds apply, and enforcing the resulting obligations to leave. It must also expand voluntary return and reintegration, reduce new immigration and close the routes by which temporary or irregular stays routinely become permanent. The programme translates these priorities into four areas of action.

I. Stop the Inflow – Close the Open Door

Reduce new admissions, replace dependence on low-wage recruitment from abroad with automation and domestic training, strengthen border enforcement and develop agreements for external asylum processing and protection in partner countries.

II. Maximise Remigration – From Decisions to Departures

Systematically increase the number of return decisions and completed departures. Review cases where residence is no longer justified and carry enforceable obligations through to confirmed exit. Strengthen case management, readmission and transport, and expand voluntary return and reintegration.

III. Close the Back Doors – End Arraigo and Tighten Citizenship Rules

End regularisation through arraigo, tighten the granting and renewal of residence permits, and expand and enforce grounds for withdrawal. Raise naturalisation requirements and address entrenched segregation through measures focused on neighbourhoods, schools and local institutions.

IV. Establish National Leadership – Coordinate Action and Measure Results

Give a central national authority responsibility for coordinating the programme. Track demographic change, admissions, residence decisions, naturalisations and completed returns, and assess migration's wider effects through Cost, Crime and Culture.

I. Stop the Inflow – Close the Open Door

Reducing immigration is the first step towards reversing population replacement in Spain. The government should suspend selected routes, end the economy's dependence on low-wage recruitment abroad and enforce entry requirements at the border. It should also negotiate partnerships for asylum processing and protection outside Spain.

1. The Immigration Freeze: No More Low-Wage Imports

Spain should suspend new admissions through designated immigration routes, starting with direct recruitment from outside the EU. The government should publish the routes covered and set clear transitional rules for existing permits and pending applications. The moratorium should remain in force until Spain has reinvented and restructured its immigration and citizenship law.

Temporary exceptions should be limited to demonstrable shortages in essential services and critical sectors. Employers should bear the burden of showing that they have sought to recruit workers already in Spain and that better pay, working conditions or work organisation cannot meet the need. Each exception should apply to a defined occupation and carry a published cap.

The government should publish its findings and proposed rules for public and parliamentary debate. It should then make an explicit decision on each suspended route and explain which will reopen, at what level and on what terms. The moratorium should end when the new rules take effect.

2. Automation Before Importation: End the Cheap Labour Addiction

Spain should end its dependence on low-wage recruitment from abroad. Labour shortages should drive higher wages, domestic training, better organisation and investment in labour-saving technology. Continually expanding the supply of cheap labour weakens these incentives and sustains low-productivity business models.

Spain should also help Spanish citizens abroad who wish to return. INE recorded 3.20 million Spanish nationals living abroad in January 2026, including approximately 861,000 born in Spain. Existing return programmes should connect them with suitable jobs and address barriers involving qualifications, relocation and housing. [106] Recruitment abroad must also account for shortages in origin countries, particularly in essential services, and support training and productive reintegration on return.

Introduce a sectoral automation test before approving recruitment from outside the EU. Identify which shortages can be met through commercially viable technology, domestic training or better working conditions, and reduce recruitment quotas accordingly. Employers seeking foreign workers must demonstrate a genuine shortage after offering competitive pay and reviewing how work is organised.

Examine an employer levy on recruitment from outside the EU to strengthen incentives for domestic training and automation. Employers must bear the full cost, without deductions from workers' wages. Assess appropriate rates and whether the proceeds could fund vocational training and shared automation infrastructure.

Make automation affordable for smaller businesses through regional centres offering equipment leasing, shared maintenance and technical training. Target investment support at measurable productivity gains. Trials by the Instituto Tecnológico Hotelero and Magic Costa Blanca in Benidorm already provide an example of collaborative robots used for cleaning and internal deliveries. [107]

Where essential shortages remain, allow capped recruitment for approved jobs and fixed periods. Employers must cover recruitment and return travel, meet wage standards and report early termination. Workers should have an independent channel to report abuse and a limited opportunity to transfer to another approved vacancy. Review sectoral allocations against progress in domestic recruitment, training and automation.

Reform GECCO into a strictly temporary seasonal programme. Remove subsequent residence pathways, including the transition under Article 191.6(b) of Royal Decree 1155/2024. Participation must provide no route to permanent settlement, citizenship or conversion into another residence category. Separately established residence rights remain governed by their own rules. Employers, consulates and immigration offices must track departures, with further participation conditional on compliance with return commitments. [108, 109]

3. Seal the Border: Secure Airports, Ceuta and Melilla

Spain must enforce common entry standards at airports, seaports and land crossings. Verify travel documents, the purpose and conditions of stay, sufficient funds where required, previous overstays, document fraud and active entry bans. Direct additional checks towards documented patterns of abuse, with individual decisions based on the evidence.

Digitalise the *carta de invitación* through electronic letters with unique verification numbers and accept verifiable digital evidence of funds. The competent ministries should amend Orders PRE/1283/2007 and PRE/1282/2007 by ministerial order, with the Interior Ministry and National Police implementing the invitation procedure. Changes to conditions established by Royal Decree 1155/2024 require a Royal Decree approved by the Council of Ministers. Neither instrument requires a parliamentary vote. [108, 110, 111]

Use European information systems to track outcomes and identify breaches. EES records short-stay entries and exits, VIS holds Schengen visa applications and decisions, and SIS carries alerts, including return and entry-ban alerts. Their functions and access rules differ. Further links between consular information, these systems and national residence records require a specific legal basis. Interior can issue instructions for checks already authorised, including carrier compliance. Frontex deployments should follow the applicable operational plan. [108, 112, 113, 114]

Audit every visa route from issuance to departure or change of status. Publish figures on visas issued, recorded entries, lawful extensions and status changes, confirmed breaches and unknown outcomes. Use the findings to tighten checks, eligibility and renewal rules where warranted. Report visa-exempt short stays separately. [108]

- **Short-stay Schengen visas:** Review tourism, business and family visits separately. Verify bookings, invitations and business appointments, and identify patterns of false documentation, unauthorised work and overstaying.

- **Airport transit visas:** Verify onward bookings, travel documents and eligibility to enter the destination country. Investigate repeated itinerary breaks with airlines and border authorities.

- **Study, training, internship and volunteer visas:** Verify enrolment, participation and completion. Require providers to report non-enrolment and early withdrawal, compare outcomes by institution and investigate placements concealing ordinary employment.

- **Research, employment and seasonal work visas:** Verify sponsors, posts, pay and actual commencement of work. Check qualifications and corporate relationships for highly qualified recruitment and intra-company transfers, genuine projects for researchers, and timely departure for seasonal workers. Inspect sponsors with recurring discrepancies.

- **Self-employment, entrepreneur and remote-work visas:** Verify actual activity, contracts and income, and reassess compliance at renewal.

- **Family visas:** Apply each route's rules, including those for relatives of Spanish and other EU citizens. Verify relationships and applicable dependency requirements, and investigate evidence of forged documents or marriages of convenience.

- **Non-lucrative residence and recovery of long-term residence:** Verify continuing resources and compliance with restrictions on work for the former, and prior status and grounds for restoration for the latter. Record both separately from first-time labour admissions.

Enforce airlines' and ferry operators' passenger-data and document-checking obligations, with penalties for established breaches. Missing exit records or unused return tickets should trigger checks against other travel records and subsequent permissions to stay. Refer confirmed violations to the responsible authority for follow-up

On the Atlantic and Mediterranean routes, establish a common operational plan covering surveillance, rescue coordination, disembarkation and registration. Assign responsibility at each stage, provide medical and interpretation capacity, and transfer complete case files promptly. Refer substantiated doubts about age to specialist teams and the competent authorities. Request Frontex personnel, document specialists and equipment against identified operational gaps.

Strengthen the special border regime for Ceuta and Melilla through operational instructions and legislation where necessary. A PP bill published in July 2026 proposed expressly extending the regime to attempted irregular entry at both land and maritime borders, providing a concrete reference for reform. [115] Require officers to record interventions and identify and refer protection needs. Maintain reserve personnel, interpretation and registration capacity, with clear mobilisation authority, so Spain can retain border control and process individual cases during large-scale arrivals.

4. Externalise the Asylum System: Protection Outside Europe

Spain should make asylum processing and protection outside Europe the organising principle of its asylum policy. The objective is to replace arrival followed by settlement in Spain with a system in which claims are examined and protection is provided in partner countries. Recognition should lead to secure residence there, rather than admission to Spain.

European cooperation provides a starting point. The Netherlands, Denmark, Malta and Sweden are exploring external processing partnerships, while the EU has widened the circumstances in which the safe third country concept can be applied. Spain should join these efforts and pursue the further reforms needed for comprehensive externalisation. [116, 117] The discontinued UK–Rwanda partnership offers lessons for agreement design and legal scrutiny. [118]

Agreements should cover reception, asylum decisions and the arrangements following either recognition or refusal. Partner countries must provide recognised refugees with legal status, access to work, education and essential services. Where claims are rejected, agreements must assign responsibility for onward return and provide a defined status where return cannot be carried out. Transfer decisions require individual assessment, an effective remedy and protection against onward removal to persecution or serious harm.

Spain should explore partnerships with Mauritania and Senegal for the Atlantic route and with willing Latin American countries, including Costa Rica and Colombia. Negotiations should establish capacity, financing, responsibilities and benefits for host communities. Spain should seek European partners to share investment and develop several locations capable of expansion.

Model cities should form the long-term infrastructure of this system. A Charter City would be a planned settlement developed by agreement with the host state, combining housing, schools, healthcare, vocational training and business activity under clearly defined administrative and economic rules. Its purpose would extend beyond temporary accommodation: people granted protection should be able to work and build a life locally. The host region should benefit through infrastructure, employment and investment. The Bidi Bidi project in Uganda provides a reference for phased urban development, rather than a complete model of asylum administration. [119]

Agreements must settle land rights, administration, policing, residents' rights, infrastructure ownership and public oversight. Private investment can support construction and employment, while public authorities retain responsibility for asylum and protection. Implementation may proceed in stages, but each stage should build

towards a functioning system with substantial capacity. Small transfer pilots alone would not fulfil the objective of externalising asylum processing and protection.

II. Maximise Remigration – From Decisions to Departures

Spain must systematically increase both the number of return decisions and the departures that follow. This requires reviewing residence permits, expanding the grounds for withdrawal or non-renewal, and bringing cases into the return procedure once lawful residence ends. Readmission cooperation must produce usable travel documents, enforcement must lead to confirmed departures, and voluntary programmes must deliver durable returns.

5. Enforce Deportations: Turn Decisions into Departures

The strategic objective is comprehensive repatriation of Group A, rather than merely improving the enforcement rate of existing decisions. This does not make every person currently included in Group A immediately removable. Pending claims, continuing protection and eligibility for third-country transfer require distinct individual decisions. Spain should therefore systematically establish which cases can enter the return procedure and carry them through to departure. Return hubs under Measure 6 can provide an intermediate destination for people with enforceable return decisions. External asylum processing and protection in partner countries, including the model cities proposed in Measure 4, provide a separate pathway for applicants eligible for transfer.

Amend Organic Law 4/2000, including Articles 53, 55 and 57, so that unlawful residence consistently triggers a return procedure unless a legal exception applies. Cover both existing unlawful residence and cases arising from refusal, withdrawal or non-renewal of a residence permit. Each decision must establish an obligation to leave, a departure period and responsibility for follow-up. Where that period expires and no lawful ground prevents enforcement, proceed to removal. Payment of a fine must neither discharge the obligation to leave nor close the case. [112, 120]

Establish a national inventory recording outstanding cases, their age, enforceability and principal obstacles. Assign each enforceable case to a named officer with a next action and deadline. Standard reviews should distinguish legal proceedings, identity and travel-document problems, loss of contact and transport needs. Review inactive cases regularly and escalate unresolved obstacles to a supervisor. Keep potential

overstays and unresolved protection cases separate until their status is verified. Prioritise serious violent, sexual and organised crime offenders and repeat offenders.

Begin identity, residence-status and readmission checks during imprisonment. Establish reliable information exchange between prisons, courts and the Policía Nacional, including notification of release dates and subsequent changes. Assign responsibility for resolving missing information before release. Separately, assess eligible foreign prisoners for transfer to complete their sentences in their country of nationality or established residence. A dedicated coordination function should resolve documentation, applicable consent requirements and receiving-state acceptance during imprisonment.

Propose a seven-day standard period for voluntary departure, with individual extensions and expedited enforcement where applicable. Prepare documents and travel arrangements in parallel, using reporting requirements and proportionate measures where an established risk of absconding warrants them. Establish remigration centres to coordinate cases and departures, keeping this function distinct from detention.

Review the CIE system and propose increasing the statutory detention ceiling from 60 to 90 days where necessary for lawful removals. Examine detention outcomes, release reasons and documentary delays alongside the allocation of administrative and judicial responsibilities under Articles 61, 62 and 64. Assess whether administrative detention orders followed by prompt judicial review could meet constitutional requirements. Any proposal allowing detention beyond 72 hours without an independent judicial decision must identify the constitutional amendment required. Individual detention must remain necessary, proportionate and subject to judicial control, with release when its legal conditions cease to apply. [112, 121, 122, 123]

Apply entry bans where warranted and close cases only after verified departure, including through cooperation with Schengen partners. Publish the proportion of executable cases completed and the main causes of delay.

Implementation.

Interior can organise the inventory and case follow-up through internal instructions involving Government Delegations, Subdelegations and the National Police. Expulsion replacing a criminal sentence under Article 89 of the Criminal Code remains a judicial decision. The seven-day statutory default requires amendment of Article 63 bis.2, and the 90-day detention ceiling requires amendment of Article 62.2. Changes to organic provisions governing absconding risk likewise require an Organic Law, approved by an absolute majority of Congress in the final vote on the bill as a whole. The Council of Ministers can subsequently adapt implementing rules by Royal Decree. Amendments must preserve required individual assessments and extensions and follow the EU

framework applicable when they take effect. Use SIS and SIRENE procedures under Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 to confirm departures. [112, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126]

6. Readmission or Visa Restrictions: Make Countries Take Their Citizens Back

Prioritise negotiations by the number of unresolved returns and the obstacles preventing departure. Assign a lead department and responsible embassy for each priority country. For Morocco, distinguish the readmission of Moroccan nationals from that of third-country nationals who entered Spain through Moroccan territory. The latter is covered by the bilateral agreement signed in 1992 and definitively in force since 2012. Publish implementation figures and identify obstacles to its use. [127, 128] Agreements must specify identity requirements, responsibility for travel documents, response deadlines and transfer arrangements. Establish a central consular liaison function maintaining country-specific requirements, forms, contacts and escalation procedures. Track document requests, issuance, refusals, nationality disputes, response times and completed readmissions. Escalate persistent obstacles through diplomatic channels and link cooperation to the reintegration and development partnerships in Measure 7.

Where cooperation remains poor, use diplomatic leverage and the EU's visa instruments. Spain should support an expanded Article 25a mechanism permitting targeted suspension of visa issuance in response to persistent readmission failures. [129] Foreign Affairs should lead negotiations with Interior. Contact points and operating procedures can be established within existing agreements, while substantive new obligations require the appropriate amendment or international instrument under Law 25/2014. Where Article 94.1 of the Constitution applies, prior parliamentary authorisation is required. Article 74.2 provides for approval by a majority in each chamber, with a joint committee to resolve disagreement and, if necessary, a final decision by an absolute majority in Congress. Under Article 25a of the EU Visa Code, Spain can notify the Commission of insufficient cooperation. The Commission may propose measures for adoption by the Council through qualified majority. [121, 130, 131]

Develop third-country return arrangements with European partners, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Austria and Greece. Explore participation in or adaptation of the Netherlands–Uganda initiative, alongside Spanish-led partnerships elsewhere, including Latin America. [132] These arrangements should cover defined categories of people with enforceable return decisions and specify admission, supervision, maximum stays, onward return and responsibility where onward transfer

fails. They serve a separate function from the external asylum system proposed in Measure 4.

7. Paid Return, Permanent Stay: Voluntary Remigration That Lasts

Voluntary return should offer a credible opportunity to build a future in the country of origin. Returnees can bring savings, professional experience, business contacts and new skills into local economies. Spain should support programmes that turn these resources into viable employment, businesses and stronger local services, benefiting both returnees and the communities receiving them. Reintegration support should therefore be designed with local employers, training institutions and community organisations. [133] [134]

Offer dedicated case managers and practical support before departure and on arrival. The programme should be able to arrange temporary housing, training, job placement and support for viable businesses through partners in the destination country. Tie payments to verified milestones and check for repeat applications. Recover payments obtained by fraud. Track sustained residence abroad and subsequent lawful readmission so the programme can be judged on departures that last.

Subsidised voluntary return should finance permanent resettlement, not a temporary absence followed by renewed residence in Spain. Abolish preferential readmission and simplified restoration of residence associated with participation. For new reintegration grants, examine replacing fixed non-return periods with an indefinite undertaking not to resume residence in Spain, including enforceable repayment conditions where recipients subsequently return to settle. Identify the legislative changes and exceptions required by independently established rights and binding obligations. Distinguish these grants from the advance payment of earned unemployment entitlements under APRE.

The Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration can expand reintegration support through its existing voluntary return grant programme. SEPE administers APRE, which allows eligible workers to receive their remaining contributory unemployment benefit in advance when they return voluntarily to their country of origin. Any reform of APRE's statutory three-year non-return commitment would require Parliament to amend Royal Decree-Law 4/2008 through an ordinary law. The Council of Ministers would then adapt Royal Decree 1800/2008 and set out the rules for future applicants. [135] [136] [137]

III. Close the Back Doors – End Arraigo and Tighten Citizenship Rules

Admission controls will have limited effect if settlement follows through routine regularisation, weak renewal checks or accelerated naturalisation. Spain should reform those status transitions and act where separation is becoming entrenched in particular neighbourhoods.

8. Abolish Arraigo: End the Amnesty Machine

Abolish arraigo as a regular route from irregular stay to lawful residence and end recurring extraordinary regularisations. VOX has already proposed abolishing arraigo. [138] Time spent without authorisation should cease to provide a route to residence. Define transition rules for pending files and protect independently established entitlements. Strengthen inspections against fictitious employment, false enrolment, sham relationships and document fraud. Refer cases with no independent right to remain to the return process under Measure 5. Abolishing arraigo as a statutory route would require an organic law amending Article 31.3, approved by an absolute majority of Congress in the final vote on the bill as a whole. The Council of Ministers would then adapt the immigration regulation. [112] [121] [108]

9. Residence Is a Privilege, Not a Right: Tighten Grants and Withdrawals

Check whether the substantive conditions of residence are met at grant and renewal. Verify actual employment and social security payments, attendance and progress on study routes, and family or financial grounds where applicable. Use targeted cross-checks and investigate suspected fraud or deliberate evasion. Make fraud and serious violent, sexual or organised offending, and relevant repeat offending, grounds for withdrawal or refusal of renewal where an individual assessment supports that decision. Establish a direct handover to Measure 5 once a decision is enforceable and the person has no independent right to stay.

Commission a review of a general suspension of family reunification. Examine its possible scope separately for the different residence and protection categories, identifying what Spain could implement nationally and what would require changes to EU rules or international arrangements. The review should establish the available options and necessary reforms before the government determines the scope and duration of a suspension.

Immigration offices and consulates can start by making better use of the checks they already carry out when granting or renewing permits. Where a case turns on employment records, the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate can help establish the facts. Any decision to withdraw a permit should follow the applicable procedure in Articles 199–203 of Royal Decree 1155/2024. New grounds based on criminal conduct need to be considered separately for each type of residence permit. The Council of Ministers can amend the regulation by royal decree where the law allows it. A change to an organic provision requires an organic law and an absolute majority in Congress in the final vote. EU free movement cases are governed by their own rules. [108] [121] [139] [140]

10. Citizenship Requires Full Assimilation: No Automatisms

Make the ordinary residence period the rule. Raise the standard qualifying period from ten to fifteen years, allowing longer assessment of applicants' durable attachment to Spain. Abolish the five-year preference for recognised refugees and the two-year preference based on nationality of origin under Article 22. The latter accounted for 56.3% of residence-based citizenship grants in 2025, making accelerated naturalisation the dominant route rather than a marginal exception. [31, 32] Review the one-year periods for applicants born in Spain and spouses of Spanish citizens, with a view to extending both to five years. Together, these routes accounted for 24.7% of residence-based grants in 2025. Review the remaining exceptions individually, preserving binding obligations and safeguards against statelessness. These reforms concern naturalisation by residence, not citizenship acquired at birth. [32]

Require demonstrated assimilation. Set a minimum of C1 Spanish, supported by a language certificate, a structured interview and documented evidence of sustained participation in Spanish public life. Apply common standards and train assessors. Examine annual, origin-specific naturalisation ceilings informed by historical experience and assimilation data supplied by the proposed Demography and Assimilation Monitor. Any ceiling would complement individual requirements, with existing entitlements and narrowly defined family exceptions addressed separately.

Employment in Spain should not automatically culminate in settlement and citizenship. Support workers who wish to return in applying their skills and savings productively in their country of origin.

Implementation. Parliament must amend Article 22 of the Civil Code to change residence periods and Law 19/2015 to raise the language requirement. These reforms would follow the ordinary legislative procedure, generally requiring a simple majority. The Council of

Ministers would update Royal Decree 1004/2015, with Instituto Cervantes adapting the language test. [31, 121, 141, 142]

Audit fraudulent acquisitions within the fifteen-year window. Review acquisitions from the preceding fifteen years for false statements, forged evidence and concealment of material facts. Prioritise credible evidence and cases approaching the statutory deadline. Civil Registry and nationality authorities should refer actionable findings promptly to the Public Prosecutor, who must bring the annulment action within the fifteen-year period established by Article 25.2. Annulment requires a final court judgment. Examine Israel's narrowly defined administrative procedure for recent fraud cases as a comparator for procedural reform. [31, 143]

Examine additional grounds for deprivation. Assess whether final convictions for intentional violent or sexual offences, serious organised crime or repeated serious offending should trigger a post-naturalisation assimilation review, and which narrowly defined offences could justify deprivation. Distinguish the threshold for opening a review from that required for deprivation, with individual proportionality assessment, judicial review and protection against statelessness. Establish each person's nationality status before proceeding. Article 11.2 of the Constitution protects Spanish nationality *de origen* against deprivation, including where that status was acquired later through routes such as the Democratic Memory Law. [121, 144] A VOX bill published in July 2026 provides a further reference for proposed reforms concerning loss of nationality other than nationality *de origen*. [145]

11. Break the Parallel Societies: Neighbourhoods, Funding and Benefits

11.1 Stabilise Neighbourhoods

Use Denmark's binding area designations as a starting point for a Spanish neighbourhood programme. Publish an annual index combining housing conditions and crowding, employment, school outcomes and recorded crime. Select areas by transparent thresholds. Agree named delivery leads, budgets and outcomes with the autonomous communities and municipalities, backed by national coordination. [146, 147]

Build the initial programme around El Puche in Almería and the Centre and El Veïnat areas of Salt, using existing neighbourhood structures. In Almería, build on ERACIS+ and its local coordination commission. [148] In Salt, connect the programme to the March 2024 school-equity agreement and the neighbourhood-renewal framework. [62, 63, 149] Extend coordination to housing inspectors, school authorities, police and labour inspectors, with named responsibilities and funding for any additional tasks. Enforce

housing and labour standards, address school segregation and provide access to voluntary return under Measure 7. Where inspections uncover evidence of residence fraud or grounds for withdrawal or non-renewal, refer individual cases to the competent authorities under Measure 9. Transfer enforceable return cases to Measure 5. Publish results on housing, schooling and safety alongside voluntary returns and verified residence decisions.

11.2 Transparency of Foreign Funding

Introduce common transparency standards for foreign funding of religious and comparable non-profit organisations. Require disclosure of substantial overseas donations, foreign-government funding and direct financial support for religious personnel. Review existing reporting duties, identify gaps and establish proportionate sanctions for concealment or false declarations. Apply the same standards across denominations and organisations.

11.3 Reform Access to Supplementary Benefits

Commission a programme-by-programme review of restricting access by non-citizens to supplementary, tax-funded benefits. Examine citizenship requirements, longer qualifying residence periods and contribution-related conditions for additional cash grants, housing subsidies and other supplementary support. Distinguish discretionary programmes from statutory entitlements, and earned social-insurance benefits from non-contributory assistance. Identify which restrictions Spain could introduce nationally, which require legislative or EU-level reform, and which are precluded by binding equal-treatment obligations. Preserve provision for essential needs and assess the fiscal and household effects of each option.

IV. Establish National Leadership – Coordinate Action and Measure Results

Remigration requires a permanent owner at national level and a consistent account of the demographic and social outcomes the programme is intended to change.

12. A Minister for Remigration: One Central Authority

Create a national authority with a statutory mandate and a designated minister accountable to Parliament. Consider a dedicated ministry if the scale of the work warrants it. Build operational delivery on the existing Unidad Central de Repatriaciones and the competent territorial services. The proposed ministerial leadership would coordinate policy across departments, while the police unit would retain its operational

responsibilities. Identify staffing, information and coordination gaps before establishing additional structures. [150] Give the authority responsibility for national return standards, case handovers and tracking, remigration centres, voluntary return, readmission delivery and municipal referrals. Require departments to exchange case information and meet common deadlines, while competent bodies retain their decision-making powers.

Make the modernisation or replacement of ADEXTTRA an explicit implementation priority, building on existing projects. Provide end-to-end case tracking, named case ownership, deadline alerts, current legal-status information and supervisory reporting, with access governed by each authority's responsibilities and applicable data-protection rules. [151] Publish regular performance reports showing completed departures, unresolved barriers, programme spending and delivery against agreed milestones.

13. Monitor Demographic Normalisation: The Assimilation Monitor

Commission INE, supported by independent researchers, to establish a baseline and publish an annual monitor. Link data on arrivals, departures, births, residence, changes of status and naturalisation. Examine options for measuring migration background across multiple generations, beyond parents alone, through statistical linkage and representative surveys. Publish aggregate findings with clear definitions and coverage limits. Publish results by cohort, time in Spain, generation and place where sample size and disclosure safeguards permit. Bring the paper's three dimensions into the same reporting framework. Cost should cover public finances, wages, employment, housing and service capacity. Crime should distinguish police and court data and use consistent population baselines. Culture should examine everyday Spanish, social contacts, neighbourhood concentration, civic participation and perceptions of coexistence. Report economic participation and assimilation separately so each can be assessed on its own evidence.

Use the published findings to inform Parliament's decisions on admission ceilings and quotas, beginning with direct labour recruitment from third countries. Where legally available, assess country- or region-specific quotas and partner-country arrangements against the evidence and Spain's absorption capacity. Treat ceilings as maxima. Extend this capacity-based approach to naturalisation by examining annual, origin-specific ceilings, as proposed in Measure 10. The Monitor should supply the historical data and assimilation findings needed to assess those ceilings and refine individual assessments, including the C1 standard and structured interviews. Quotas would complement individual requirements, with each applicant assessed on their own evidence.

The Monitor would publish aggregate statistical findings. It would neither classify named individuals as non-assimilated nor determine residence or citizenship decisions. Such decisions would remain with the competent authorities under separate individual procedures.

V. Spain's European and International Reform Agenda

Build a European coalition. Bring Spain's agenda before the Justice and Home Affairs Council. Seek joint action on external asylum processing and protection, third-country return arrangements and a European Readmission Compact with priority partners. Combine visa leverage with EU support for documentation and transport, measurable readmission targets and clear responsibilities for oversight and failures by partner countries.

Make return decisions effective across borders. The EU's October 2026 return rules initially make mutual recognition voluntary. Spain should seek mandatory recognition of enforceable decisions once the responsible state is ready to execute them. Movement between member states must preserve the case record and clear responsibility for enforcement. Establish common standards for exchanging files, verifying procedures and confirming departures, supported by cooperation on identification, travel documents and transit. [152]

Address procedural delays and clarify common standards. Review why decisions are suspended, overturned or left unenforced, distinguishing judicial stays from incomplete files, procedural errors and administrative inactivity. Appeals do not automatically suspend enforcement in every case. Improve decision quality and seek prompt review, early decisions on suspensive effect, coordinated jurisdiction and firm timetables. Consolidate claims and restrict duplicate proceedings presenting no material new facts or grounds, while preserving effective judicial protection where fresh risks arise, particularly arguable risks under Article 3 ECHR.

Seek common standards for safe-third-country and onward-return decisions based on conditions in partner countries, credible assurances and monitoring. For Article 8 assessments, build on the Chișinău Declaration to give clearer weight to public safety and repeated or serious offending. [153]

Review international commitments. Publish a review of Spain's obligations under the ECHR, the Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and the Convention against Torture. Identify options through domestic and EU reform, treaty interpretation, amendments and new agreements. Assess withdrawal as a last resort, specifying its consequences and the

obligations that would remain, including Article 78 TFEU and Article 18 of the EU Charter. Submit recommendations and any proposed treaty action to Parliament.

VI. The First 100 Days

The government should use its first 100 days to establish responsibility, bring forward its first decisions and start the work that requires parliamentary or international action.

Priority	Action in the first 100 days
National leadership and measurement · 12–13	Designate a lead minister and interim coordination unit. Commission the monitor and agree an initial data plan.
Admissions and labour · 1–2	Publish the scope of the proposed moratorium. Start the capacity assessment and sector reviews in agriculture, food processing and hospitality.
Visas and border · 3	Open the visa-route audit and agree standard identity and case-handling rules. Begin operational work in Ceuta and Melilla.
Asylum partnerships and readmission · 4 and 6	Open separate negotiations on external asylum processing and protection, model-city development, and readmission. Identify prospective partners, capacity requirements, financing and responsibilities.
Return decisions and voluntary return · 5 and 7	Prepare systematic residence reviews and the legislative changes needed to increase return decisions. Inventory executable cases and their age; prioritise serious offenders; assess staffing, workloads, CIE outcomes and transport capacity; identify sites for coordination centres; and prepare revised voluntary-return terms. Compare scheduled flights, joint operations and charter options by cost, capacity and operational requirements.
Residence and citizenship · 8–10	Submit reform proposals on arraigo, residence permits and naturalisation. Define priority residence reviews and the first tranche of citizenship files within the fifteen-year fraud-annulment window.
Neighbourhoods, funding and benefits · 11	Agree initial interventions with Almería, Salt and their regional authorities, building on existing programmes. Begin reviews of foreign-funding transparency and access to supplementary benefits.
European and international agenda	Invite a coalition to the Justice and Home Affairs Council, prepare proposals on return and external processing, and commission the treaty review.

Publish a Day 100 report that distinguishes steps already implemented, proposals submitted to Parliament, negotiations opened and decisions still awaiting evidence.

VII. Implementation Timeline for the Parliamentary Term

Use the first year to establish the legal, operational and evidentiary foundations, the middle years to put the measures into operation and expand those that work, and the final year to evaluate results and decide what should become permanent.

Measures	By end of year 1	Years 2–3	By end of term
1–2 · Admissions and labour	Publish review method and start automation pilots.	Debate capacity findings and introduce new rules. Expand proven pilots.	Assess admission and productivity outcomes.
3–4 · Border and asylum	Complete the initial visa audit and negotiate externalisation agreements, including model-city capacity and financing.	Implement visa reforms and begin external processing and protection arrangements, expanding functioning capacity.	Assess visa misuse, processing and protection outcomes, capacity and partner performance.
5–7 · Return	Establish the outstanding caseload, launch systematic residence reviews and prepare revised voluntary-return terms.	Increase return decisions and completed departures. Expand readmission, case tracking and reintegration.	Assess decisions issued, confirmed departures and sustained residence abroad.
8–10 · Residence and citizenship	Submit legislative proposals and start targeted audits.	Apply new rules and review actionable files.	Assess fraud, status transitions and citizenship decisions.
11 · Neighbourhoods, funding and benefits	Agree local responsibilities and baselines. Review foreign-funding disclosure and supplementary-benefit rules.	Implement local interventions and approved transparency and benefit reforms.	Assess results and expand effective measures.
12–13 · Authority and monitor	Assign authority and establish the data baseline.	Publish findings and use them to assess admission and naturalisation ceilings and quotas.	Report to Parliament on outcomes and permanent arrangements.

The moratorium should end once the capacity assessment has been published, debated publicly and translated into new admission rules that are in force. The legislative timetable sets milestones for the work, and the assessment and reform process determines the moratorium's duration.

SUMMARY

Remigration is an orderly and complex system designed to address Spain's biggest issue: the replacement of its population. The programme proposed in this paper seeks to reverse the cumulative effects of sustained net immigration, low fertility, and rapid naturalisation, which together threaten Spain's ethnocultural continuity.

The goal of remigration is to achieve a stable demographic majority and demographic security for Spanish people. It prioritises the transmission of Spain's inherited languages, cultures, institutions and national identity across generations, ensuring that Spaniards remain the dominant cultural group in the homeland they have inhabited for millennia.

Remigration is multifaceted and does not treat every migrant the same. It recognises that assimilation is possible and that many migrants are in favour of remigration themselves. The Remigration Agenda is not driven by a rejection of other cultures, but rather by an appreciation of and love for the cultural diversity of peoples. The goal is the respectful coexistence of all nations and the preservation of Spain's unique and admirable culture.

Ultimately, this document is an invitation to a serious debate without taboos or censorship. It calls for an open discussion of what it means to be Spanish today and how Spanish identity can be brought into the 21st century, grounded in evidence on demography, rather than in abstract moral claims or selective historical guilt. We invite everyone to join this debate, and we want the Institute for Remigration in Spain to contribute to it.

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