### INTRODUCTION TO SPAIN

The crowns of the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were united by the marriage of Isabella I and Ferdinand II in 1469. This unification settled the basis for the Spanish Empire and modern Spain. In the 16th century and first half of the 17th century, Spain became the strongest kingdom in Europe and the leading world power.

In the 20th century, Spain remained neutral in World Wars I and II but suffered through a devastating civil war from 1936 to 1939. After the civil war, Spain is marked by the 36-year dictatorship of General Francisco Franco until the death of the dictator in 1975. Nowadays, Spain is a democratic constitutional monarchy with a National Parliament, formed by the Congress of Deputies and the Senate, that is elected every 4 years.

Spain has an area of 505,955 km², with the mainland located on the Iberian Peninsula, delimited to the west by Portugal and to the north by Andorra and France. The rest of the territory is two groups of islands, the Canary Islands located in the Atlantic Ocean and the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, Spanish dominion includes two autonomous cities - Ceuta and Melilla - bordering Morocco in Northern Africa.

Due to the baby boom in the 1960s, Spain's population increased from 18,616,630 inhabitants in 1900 to 39,433,942 in 1991. In 2009, the population of Spain officially reached 46 million people. Spanish is the official language nationwide, however, three other languages are co-official: Basque, Catalan and Galician.

Spain is the world's ninth largest economy with nominal GDP at US $1.395 trillion, corresponding to US $30,588 per capita. The President of the European Central Bank, Mr. Jean-Claude Trichet, affirms that Spain's performance in reducing unemployment from 1997 to 2008 has been remarkable. However, Spain has finished the year 2009 with one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe (18.9%).
LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

- 59.8% of the total Spanish population is in the labor force, which includes persons age 16 and above.8

- The economically active population in Spain is projected to increase from 21.9 million in 2007 to 22.7 million by 2020. The “economically active population” comprises all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labor for the production of goods and services during a specified time reference period.8

- The unemployed rate went from 13.9% in November 2008 to 19.3% in September 2009. Spain and Latvia have the highest unemployment rate among the European Union.9

- In 2008, the number of average hours worked by Spanish employees was 34.7 hours per week in comparison to 37.6 hours in France and 40.1 hours in Greece.8

- In 2008, 12.5% of the total labor force was working part-time.10

- 15.8% of the total civilian employed labor force reported being self-employed in 2008.10

Figure 1a. Employed as Percent of Total Population
- Selected Regional Countries (Age 15+), 2008

Source: ILO8

59.8% of the Spanish population is employed, compared to 49.3% in Italy and 53.5% in Greece.

Figure 1b. Employed as Percent of Total Population
- Selected GNI Countries (Age 15+), 2008

Source: ILO8

59.8% of the Spanish population is employed, compared to 67.8% in Canada or 66.0% in United States.

http://www.bc.edu/agingandwork
Spain has one of the lowest rates of employment for women (54.9%) in the 15-64 age group. The male employment rate was instead 73.5%, slightly higher than France and Italy.

Figure 2. Employment Rate, Ages 15-64, by Gender, Spain and Comparable Countries

Figure 3. Employment Rates in Spain, within age group, 2007

The distribution of the employment rate within age groups follow similar patterns in all the countries considered. France and Portugal are the nations characterized by highest employment rates while Italy’s employment rates are the lowest.

Figure 4. Employment Rates in Spain Compared to Selected Regional Countries, within age group, 2007
The economically active population in Spain is expected to increase in correspondence of all the age groups considered.

Figure 5a. Current & Projected Economically Active Population Estimates and Projections in Spain, within age group, 2008 and 2020

Figure 5b. Current & projected % of Total Population Economically Active in Spain, by gender, 2008 and 2020

Both the male and female economically active population is expected to increase for individuals older than 45, and decrease among those aged in the age group of 20-44.
GDP growth in Spain has been the highest from 2000 to 2008 among countries considered.

Spain’s public debt was the lowest in 2008 among countries considered. Italy’s public debt was the highest.

**ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Gross Domestic Product per capita in Spain was $30,589 in 2008. This compares to $34,205 in France, $30,631 in Italy, and in $47,440 in the United States in the same year.5

2. The gross domestic product of Spain grew at an average of 3.3% during the period of 2000-2008. Growth rate peaked in 2000 at 5.0% and was 0.9% in 2008.9

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**Figure 6. GDP Growth, Spain and comparable countries, 2000-2008**

Source: Eurostat

**Figure 7. Total Public Debt as Percentage of GDP, selected regional countries, 2008**

Source: CIA
DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

In 2009, the Spanish population was 46,661,950, compared to 58,126,212 for Italy and 64,057,792 for France.¹

According to The World Factbook, total fertility rate for Spanish women is 1.3 children per woman, the same rate that Italy. In the other hand, fertility rate for France is 1.98.¹ Total Fertility rate indicates the number of children to be born to a woman during her reproductive span of her life.

In Spain the ratio of the population aged 65 and over to the total population is 18.1 in 2009 (est.). This ratio is 20.2 in Italy, 20.3 in Germany and 16.4 in France.¹

Figure 8. Median Age, by Gender, Regional Comparisons, 2008

Source: CIA¹

Figure 9. Life Expectancy at Birth [Regional Comparisons, 2008] [developed nations comparable by GDP, developing nations comparable by region]

Source: CIA¹

http://www.bc.edu/agingandwork
In Spain, the distribution of the population is characterized by a high concentration of individuals between the ages of 30-49, for both males and females. Similar population distributions are observed for Italy and France (see Figures 10a-10d-10g).

Over time, the Spanish population distribution is expected to constantly increase in the 75+ age group.

Figure 10a. Population Distribution of Spain, 2009

The distribution of the Spanish population in 2009 is characterized by a high concentration of the population in the 30-49 age group, for both males and females.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 10b. Population Distribution of Spain, 2025

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
The distribution of the Italian population in 2009 is similar to the Spanish population, characterized by a high concentration of the population in the age group 30-49, for both males and females.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Source: US Census Bureau

Source: US Census Bureau
REFERENCES


ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Established in 2007 by the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, the Global Perspectives Institute is an international collaboration of scholars and employers committed to the expansion of the quality of employment available to the 21st century multi-generational workforce in countries around the world.

The Global Perspectives Institute focuses on innovative and promising practices that might be adopted by employers and policy-makers.

The Institute’s research, publications, and international forums contribute to:

- a deeper understanding of the employment experiences and career aspirations of employees of different ages who work in countries around the world;
- informed decision making by employers who want to be employers-of-choice in different countries; and
- innovative thinking about private-public partnerships that promote sustainable, high-quality employment.

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College promotes quality of employment as an imperative for the 21st century multi-generational workforce. We integrate evidence from research with insights from workplace experiences to inform innovative organizational decision making. Collaborating with business leaders and scholars in a multi-disciplinary dialogue, the Center develops the next generation of knowledge and talent management.

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Marc Grau i Grau, is a doctoral candidate in Social Policy at the University of Edinburgh. Marc has obtained a MBA from ESADE Business School and a MA in Political and Social Sciences from University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain. Currently, Marc serves as a Research Assistant at the International Center of Work and Family in IESE Business School. Marc is involved in IFREI project and different projects that focus on Work Family Balance, and has worked as a Western European Travel Manager in Henkel Group.

Country Context Team Leaders

Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Director, Sloan Center on Aging and Work
Tay K. McNamara, Director of Research, Sloan Center on Aging and Work
Jungui Lee, Postdoctoral researcher, Sloan Center on Aging and Work
Global Statistical Profile 01 - Japan
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