

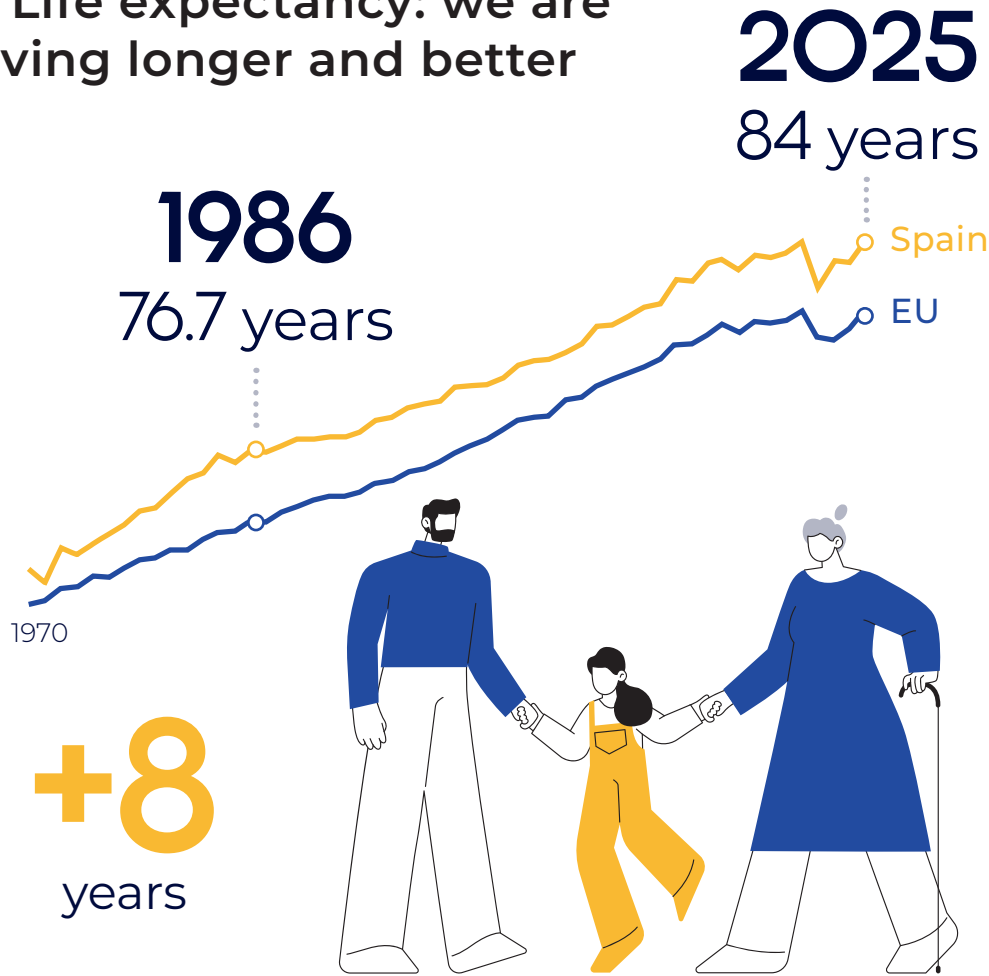
# 40 YEARS OF SPAIN IN THE EU

## 40 INDICATORS

### AND A STORY OF PROGRESS



### 1. Life expectancy: we are living longer and better



In 2025, life expectancy at birth in Spain—at 84 years—is above the EU average (81.5 years), reflecting significant progress.

*Ministry of Health, Eurostat.*

### 2. Leading in longevity

**1st** in the EU



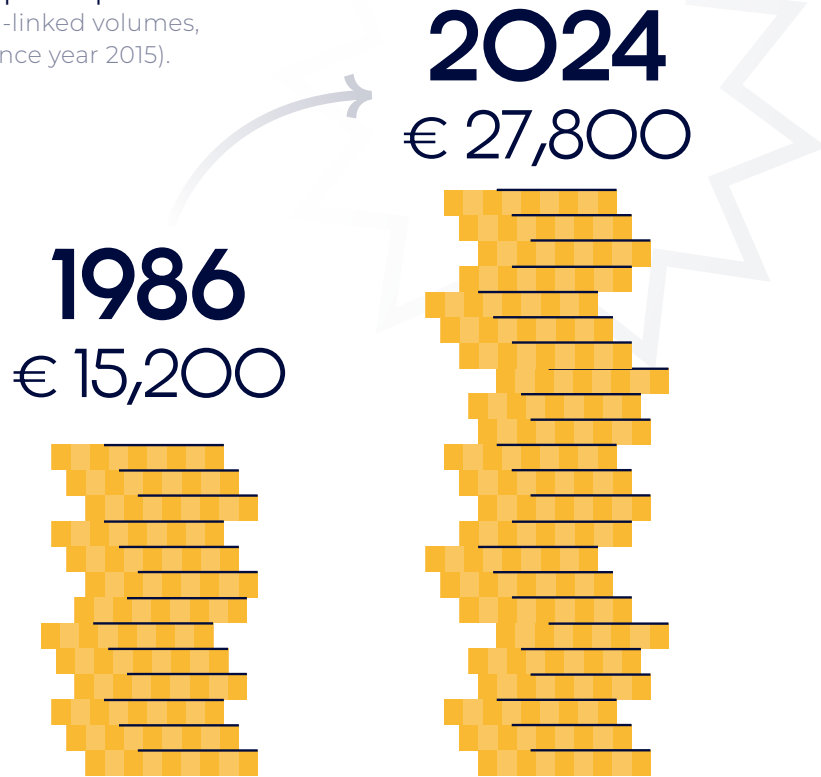
**3rd** in the world

Life expectancy in Spain is the highest in the EU and third highest in the world.

*Eurostat, OECD.*

### 3. GDP per capita has almost doubled

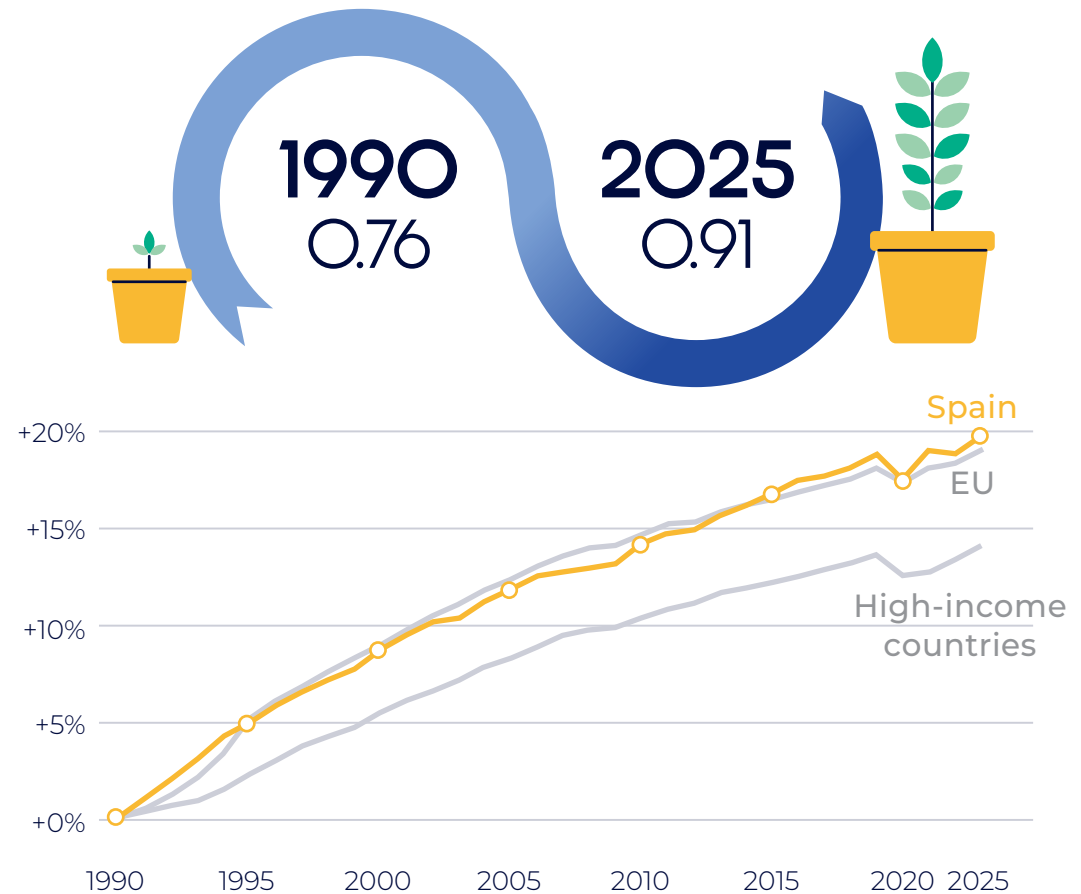
GDP per capita .  
(chain-linked volumes,  
reference year 2015).



Since Spain's accession to the EU, GDP per capita has practically doubled. This increase, which reflects the country's integration into the EU market and the sustained growth of its economic activity, has gone hand in hand with a tangible improvement in standards of living.

AMECO, European Commission.

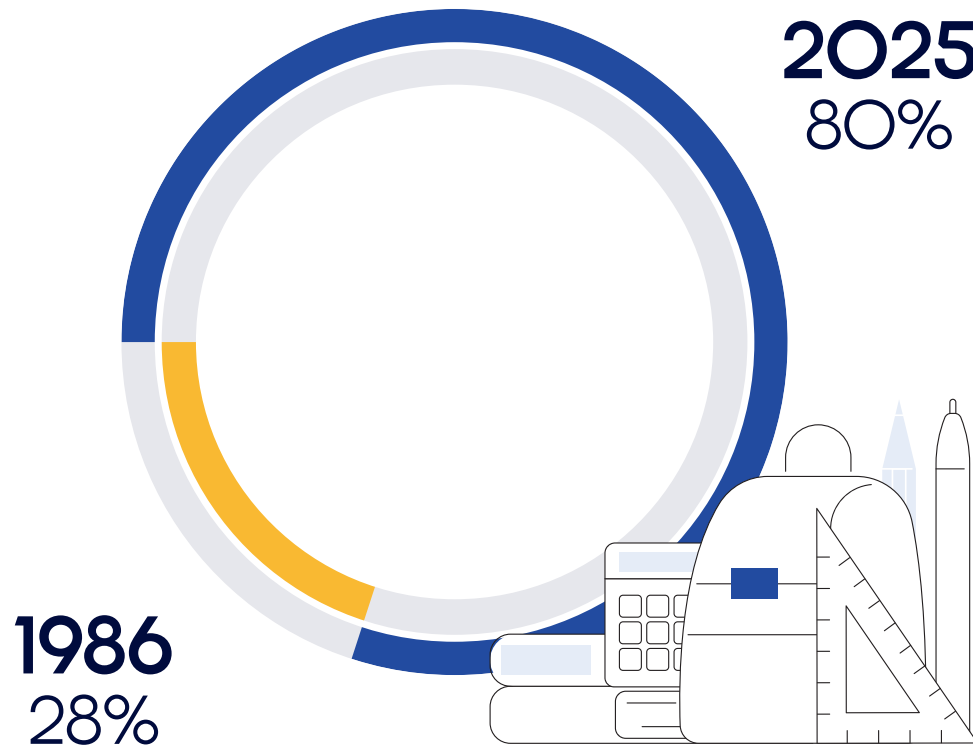
### 4. A leap forward in human development



Spain is among the 30 highest-scoring countries in the life expectancy and education indicators of the United Nations Human Development Index. It also performs above the EU average in these areas.

PNUD – HDI Trends.

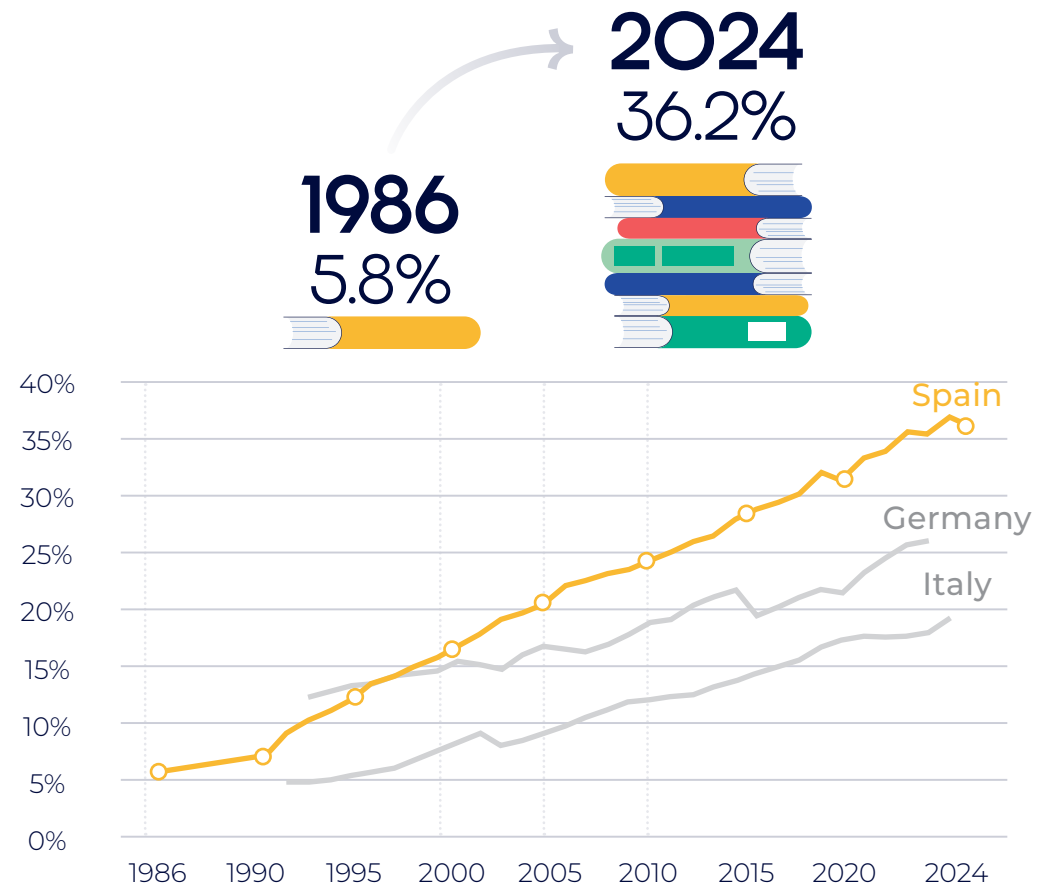
### 5. An almost threefold increase total net school attendance rate for 18-year-olds



8 out of every 10 Spaniards aged 18 years are still receiving schooling. Moreover, mean years of schooling—an indicator for one of the three basic dimensions of human development—has almost tripled. The percentage of the population without any formal education fell during the first 20 years following Spain's accession to the EU from 25% to the current figure of 0.7%.

*Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports, National Statistics Institute.*

### 6. More women in higher education



Spain is a leader among major EU countries by percentage of women aged 25+ that have attained at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent (cumulative).

*World Bank.*



# 40 YEARS OF SPAIN IN THE EU 40 INDICATORS

## 1. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING



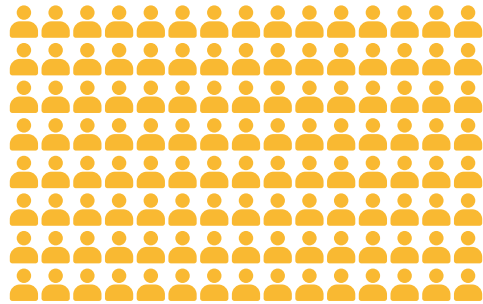
### 7. More than one million Spanish students have participated in the Erasmus programme

Spanish students in the Erasmus programme.

**1987**  
95

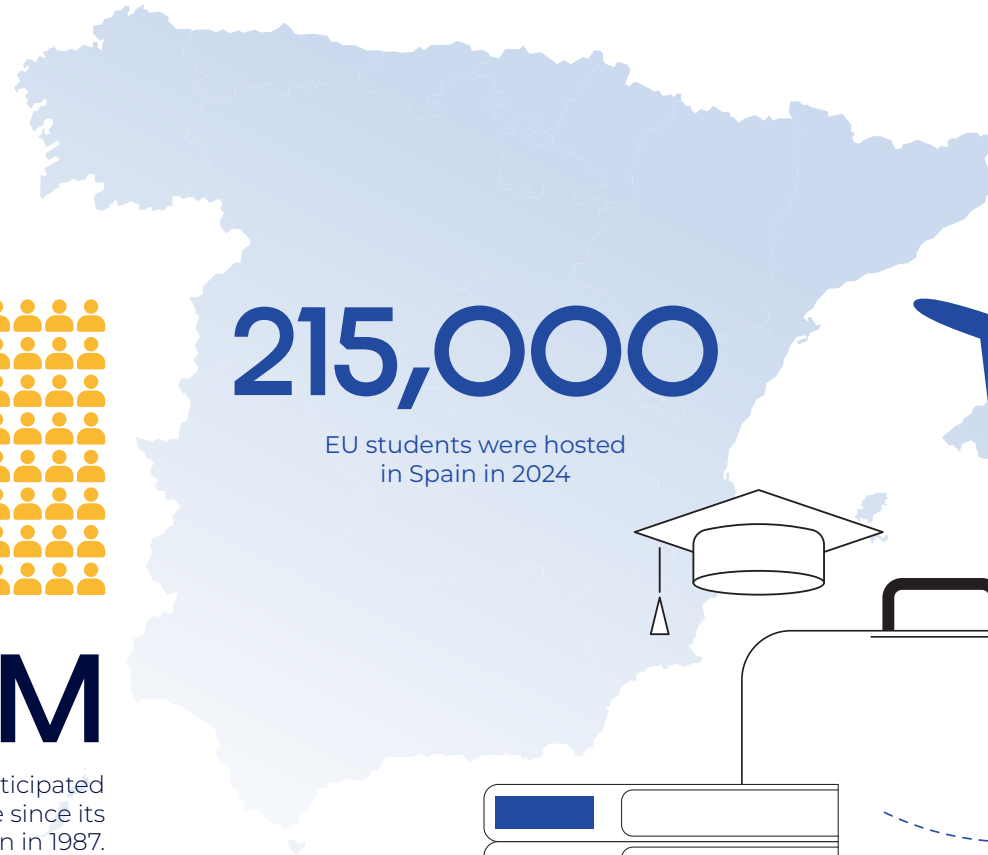


**2025**  
153,717



**+1M**

Spanish students have participated in the Erasmus programme since its inception in 1987.



**215,000**

EU students were hosted in Spain in 2024

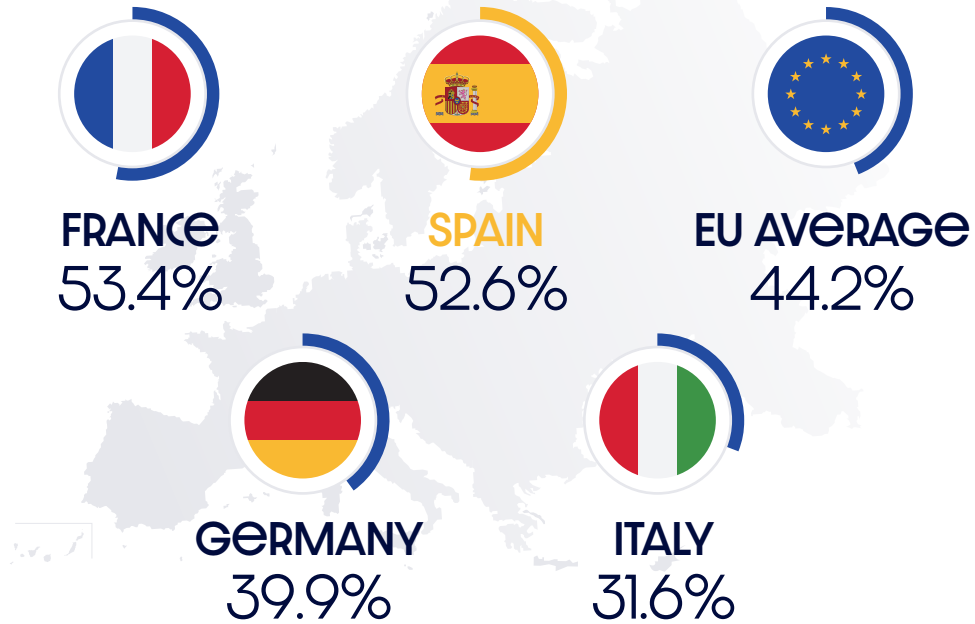
Spain hosts more students than any other programme country.



Spain is the programme country that hosts the most students and among those that send the most students each year. In 2024, France hosted 109,000 students and sent 182,000. Germany hosted 115,000 and sent 164,000. Italy hosted 148,000 and sent 130,000.

*Eurostat, European Commission, Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.*

### 8. Young people (aged 25-34) that have attained tertiary education in 2024: the best qualified generation

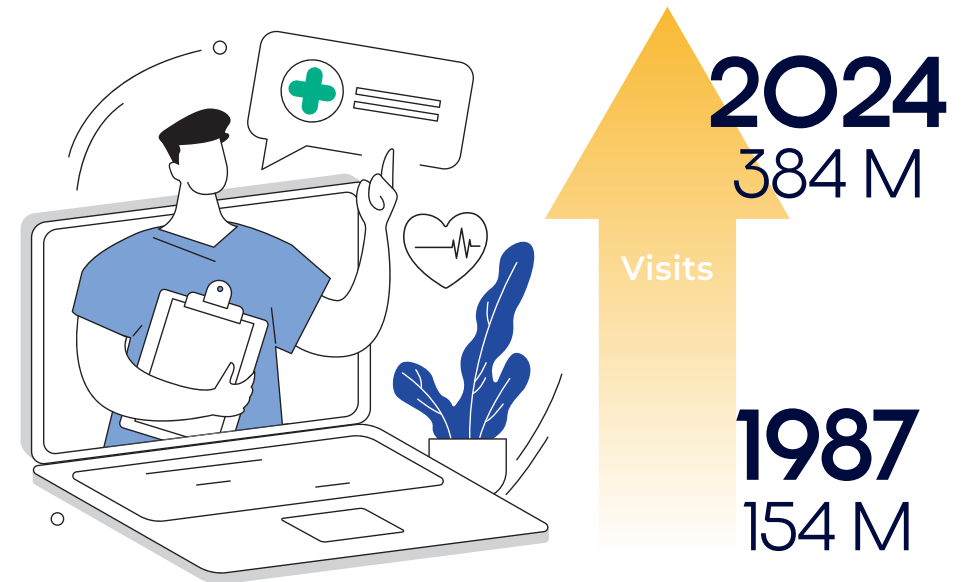


Spain is one of the European countries with the highest proportion of young people that have attained tertiary education, ranking above the EU average and ahead of Germany and Italy. This reflects the significant expansion of the university system that began in the 1990s, and the consolidation of the education system with a significant increase in human capital. Spain has 92 universities (50 public and 42 private) and more than 1.8 million students enrolled on university courses, 300,000 of them on master's programmes and almost 100,000 on doctoral programmes. Moreover, access to higher education is the same across all of Spain's Autonomous Communities, reflecting a more uniform distribution than in some of Spain's European neighbours.

*Eurostat, Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports, National Statistics Institute.*

### 9. A considerable increase in the capacity of Spain's primary care services

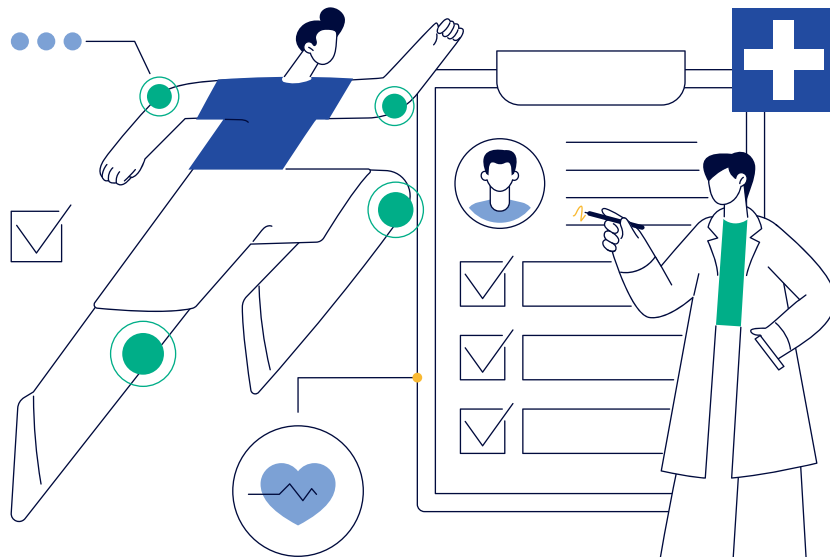
The number of **primary care consultations** has risen by 150%, over the past 40 years, compared with **population growth of 30%**.



In Spain, the population has grown by almost 30% over the past 40 years, while the primary care provided has more than doubled. For 1987, the year following the entry into force of the General Health Act, the total number of consultations was 154 million (4 per inhabitant and year). The 2024 report on Spain's National Health System gives a figure of 384 million consultations for that year (241 million with physicians and 143 million with nurses), equivalent to almost 8 appointments per inhabitant /year.

*National Health Service, Ministry of Health.*

### 10. Spain outperforms the OECD average in 8 of the 10 core indicators that measure health status



Spain's health system is among the best in the world in terms of universal coverage, absence of out-of-pocket expenditure, health professionals and equipment. The results are better than the OECD average in 8 out of 10 core indicators measuring health status and risk factors for health: preventable and treatable mortality, suicide rate, poor health, insufficient physical activity, obesity and air pollution. Spain also stands out in key aspects of general health such as life expectancy at birth, vaccination rate, access to healthcare, satisfaction with availability of quality healthcare and number of practising physicians.

*Health at a Glance 2025, OECD.*

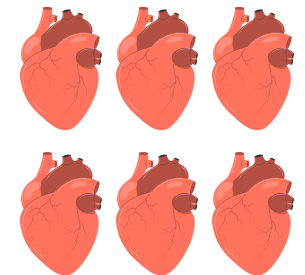
### 11. Spain is the world leader by number of organ transplants and donations, with 132 transplants per million people

The total number of transplants has increased six-fold.

1986  
1,100



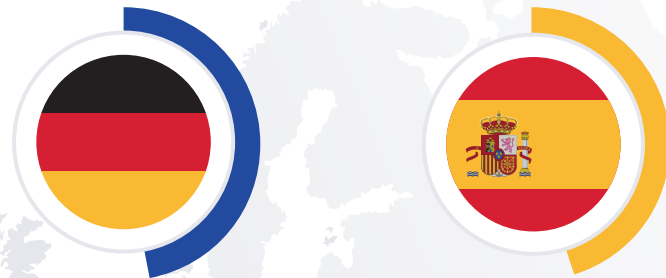
2024  
6,464



In 2024, the rate of transplants performed in Spain was 132.8 per million people (pmp), while the donor rate was 52.6 pmp. Spain has been the world leader in pmp donor and transplant rates for decades. The rate of Spanish donations is double the EU average of 22.9 donors pmp. In 2023, Spain accounted for 23% of EU organ donations, despite representing just 11% of the EU population.

*Ministry of Health, WHO.*

### 12. Spain exceeds the EU average in number of physicians per 1,000 inhabitants



**GERMANY**  
4.7

**SPAIN**  
4.5

**EU AVERAGE**  
4.1

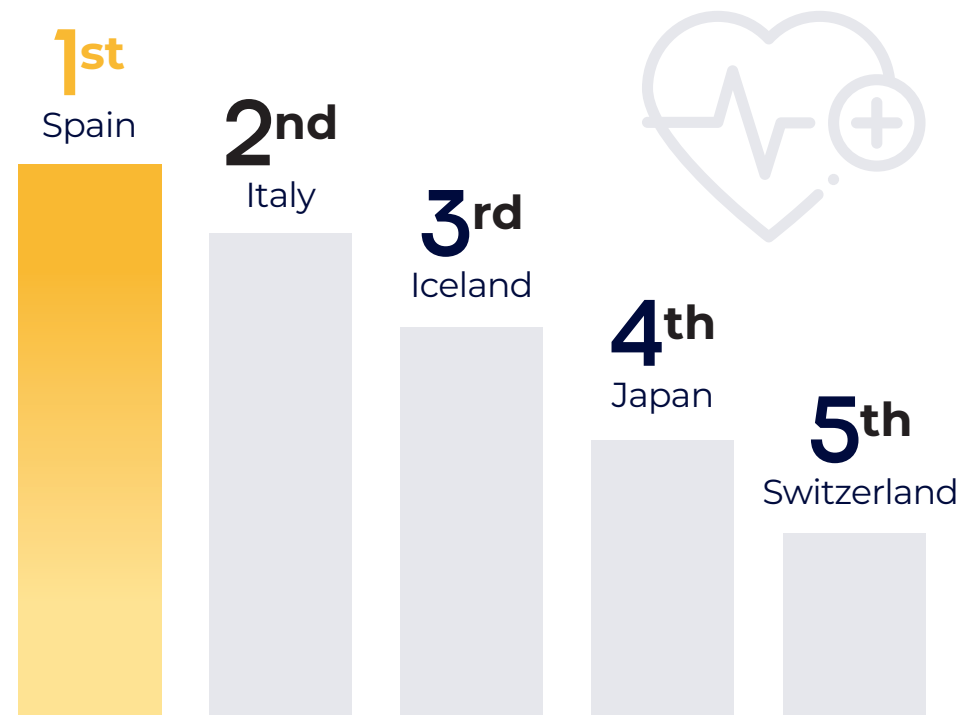
**FRANCE**  
3.9

Spain is among the countries with the highest number of practising physicians per inhabitant, outperforming the EU average. This indicator reflects the quality, accessibility and resilience of the Spanish health system.

*Health at a Glance (2025) OECD, Country Profiles.*

### 13. Global health: “the world’s healthiest country”

Spain heads the Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index.

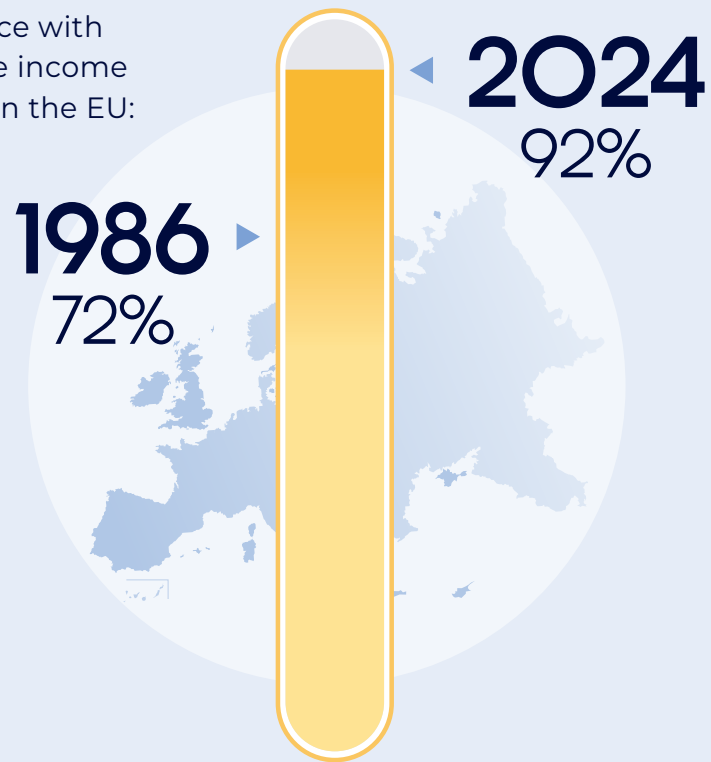


Thanks to its Mediterranean diet, standard of living and healthcare system, Spain heads this global health index with a score of 92/100 followed by Italy, Iceland and Japan.

*Bloomberg, 2024.*

## 14. Convergence with the European Union—a twenty-point increase

Convergence with the average income per capita in the EU:



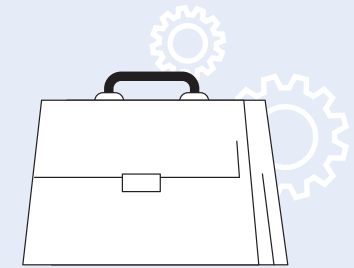
EU average GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP).

In less than four decades, Spain has closed the gap with respect to EU average income by twenty points. Convergence has been rapid since 1986 and was consolidated by Spain's entry into the euro area. This progress reflects broad-reaching economic integration, sustained modernization of production processes and a wide-scale improvement in standards of living.

*Eurostat.*

## 15. Unemployment has been halved

**1986**  
19.5%



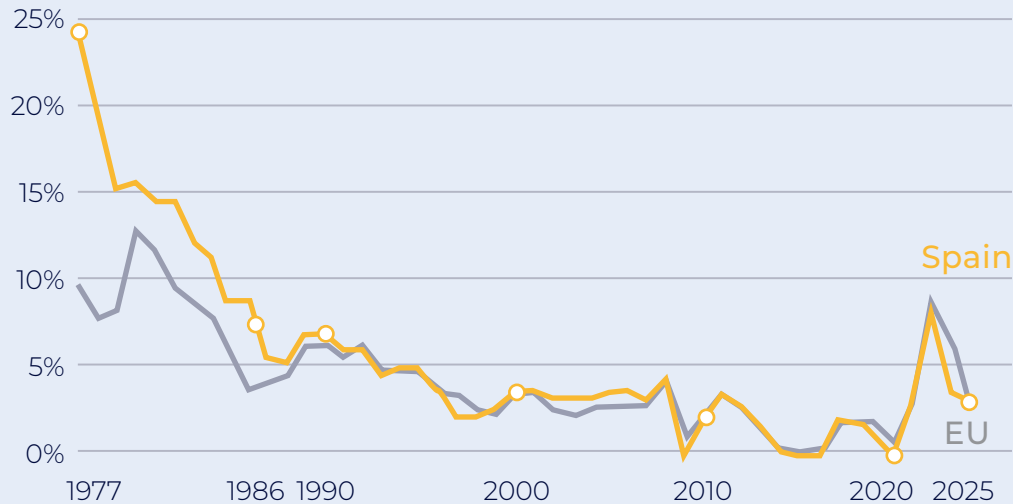
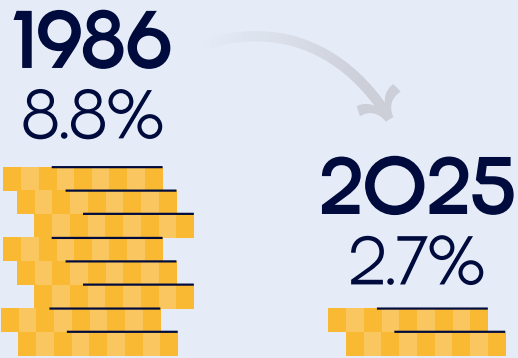
**2025**  
9.9%

Spain's unemployment rate is at a historic low and more than 600,000 jobs were created in 2025. This improvement reflects a gradual transformation of the job market, a greater capacity for job creation and an ever more diversified economy.

*National Statistics Institute, Eurostat.*

## 16. Prices have stabilized

Year-on-year inflation rate:



Spain has experienced significant price stabilization since the country's entry into the Economic and Monetary Union.

*Our World in Data, World Bank.*

## 17. Transfers from the European Union budget to Spain



Transfers from the EU in % of Gross National Income during 2021-2024



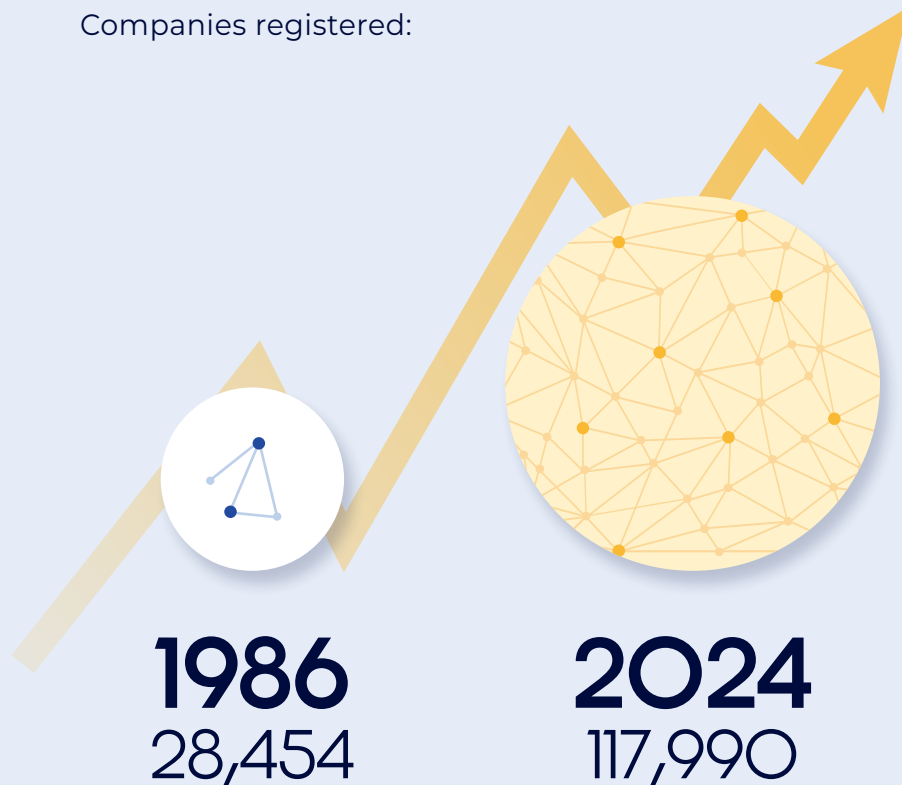
\*Spain has been a net recipient of the EU budget in 37 of the 40 years since its accession in 1986. On average, these transfers have represented 0.8% of Spain's annual Gross National Income.

Since 2020, Spain has received almost 55 billion euros from NextGenerationEU funds—the EU instrument for post-pandemic economic recovery. The European funds from which Spain has received most resources are the ERDF, the Cohesion Funds, the EAFRD and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. These funds have contributed to financing key infrastructure (transport, water, sanitation, clean energy), supporting farmers and protecting natural heritage, and to investment in RDI, SMEs, telecommunications and digitalization.

*Eurostat, European Commission.*

## 18. The number of companies has quadrupled

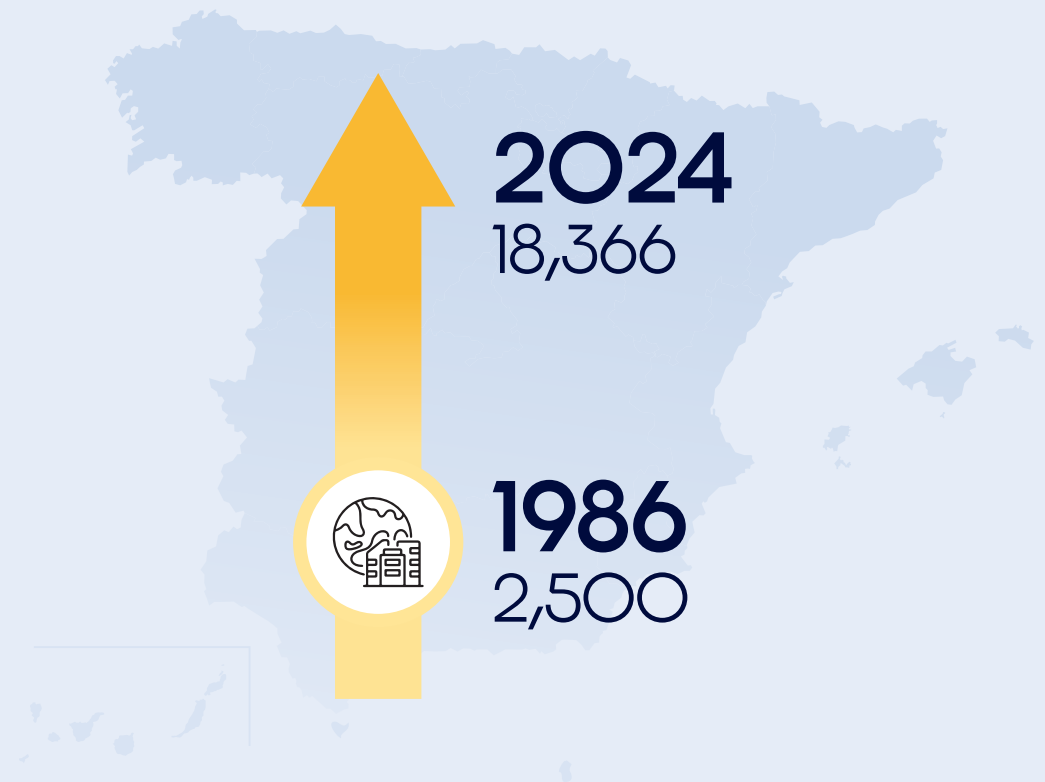
Companies registered:



The number of companies has increased four-fold since 1986. Business creation has notably benefited from the country's participation in the single market.

*National Statistics Institute, Company Register.*

## 19. Foreign businesses in Spain: a seven-fold increase



The number of foreign companies in Spain has increased seven-fold, from 2,500 in 1986 to more than 18,000 in 2024. This increase reflects Spain's integration into international investment flows and its consolidation as an attractive destination for business activity. Most foreign companies and subsidiaries in Spain are from other EU countries.

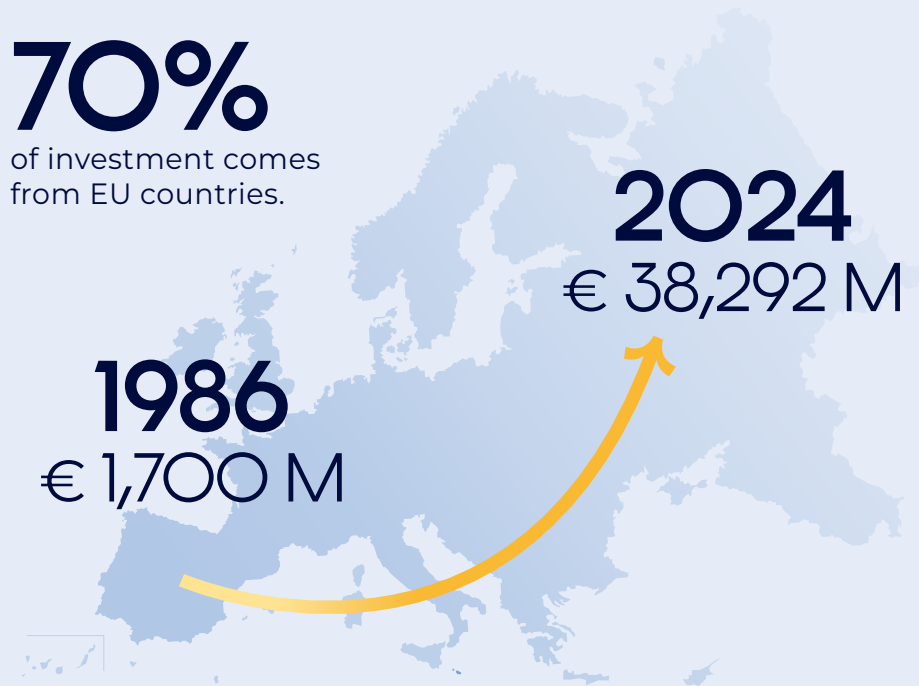
*Investment Register (Spain), OECD.*

## 20. Foreign direct investment: a well-established destination

Foreign investment in Spain totalled **38,292 million euros in 2024.**

**70%**

of investment comes from EU countries.



In 2024, Spain obtained its second best figure on record. Foreign direct investment generates 2 million direct jobs, accounting for 9% of the working population. Spain ranks eleventh in the world and third in the EU in terms of foreign investment (as a % of GDP). Most foreign investment in Spain comes from the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy.

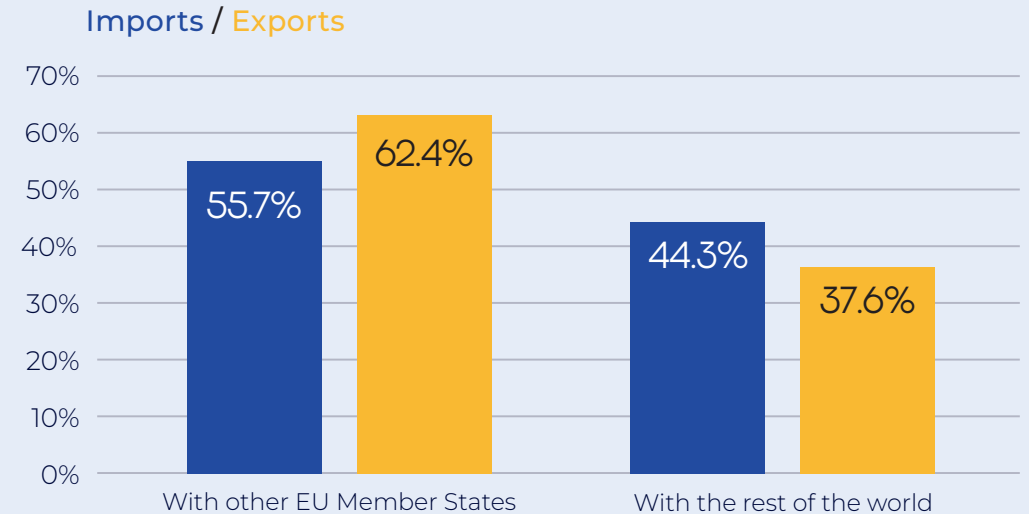
ICEX – Invest in Spain, Multinationals with Spain, FUNCAS.

## 21. An open and competitive economy: exports have doubled

Exports as a % of GDP:



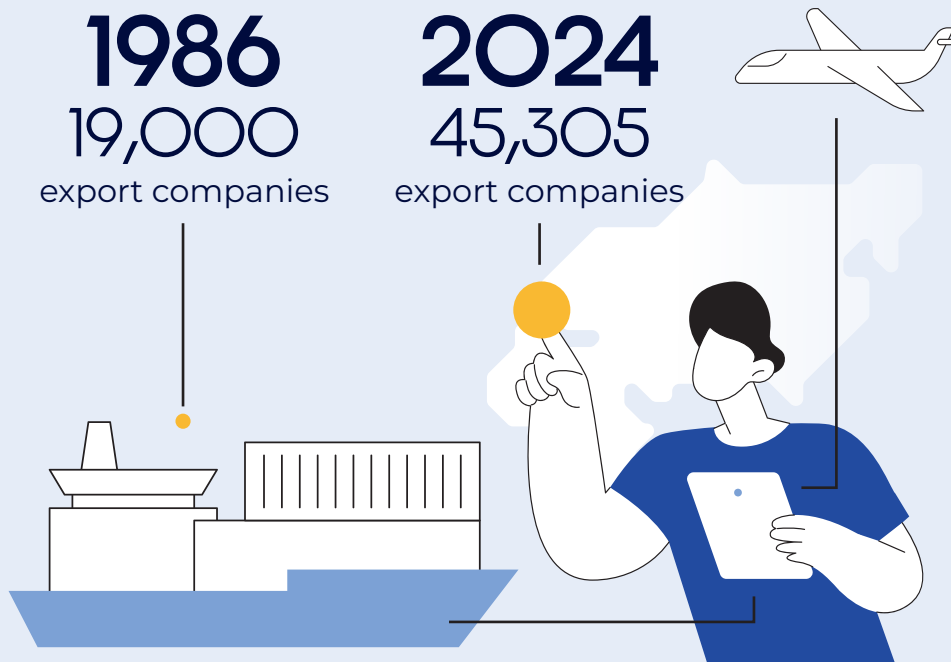
Spain's exports and imports as a % of GDP:



Spain is converging with the biggest exporters, maximizing the competitive advantage of being in the single market. **More than 60% of Spanish exports are to EU countries.** The main export markets for Spain are France, Germany, Portugal and Italy.

World Bank.

## 22. The number of export companies has more than doubled in four decades

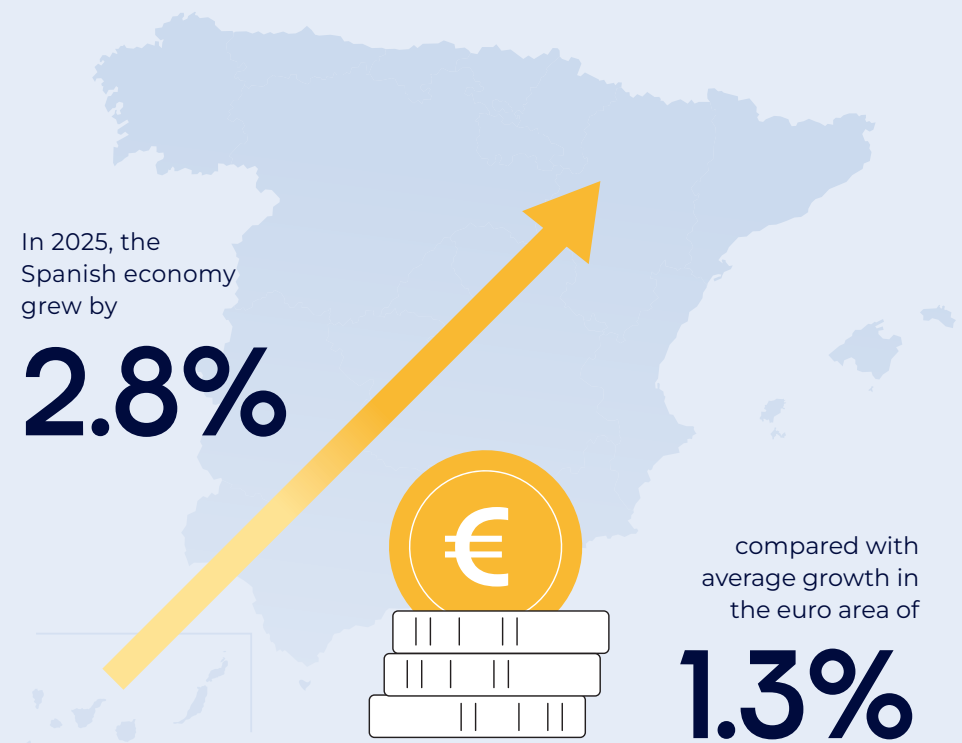


Spain is the **largest producer of oranges, watermelons and strawberries**, as well as the **biggest exporter of olive oil, garlic and ham** in the EU. In industrial sectors, Spain is the second largest European manufacturer of **vehicles: more than 80% of cars manufactured in Spain are for export.**

*Bank of Spain, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business, Comtrade, National Statistics Institute, European Commission.*

## 23. Spain, Europe's standout economy

Over the past four years (2021-2025), the average growth of the Spanish economy has been one and a half percentage points higher than in the rest of the euro area.

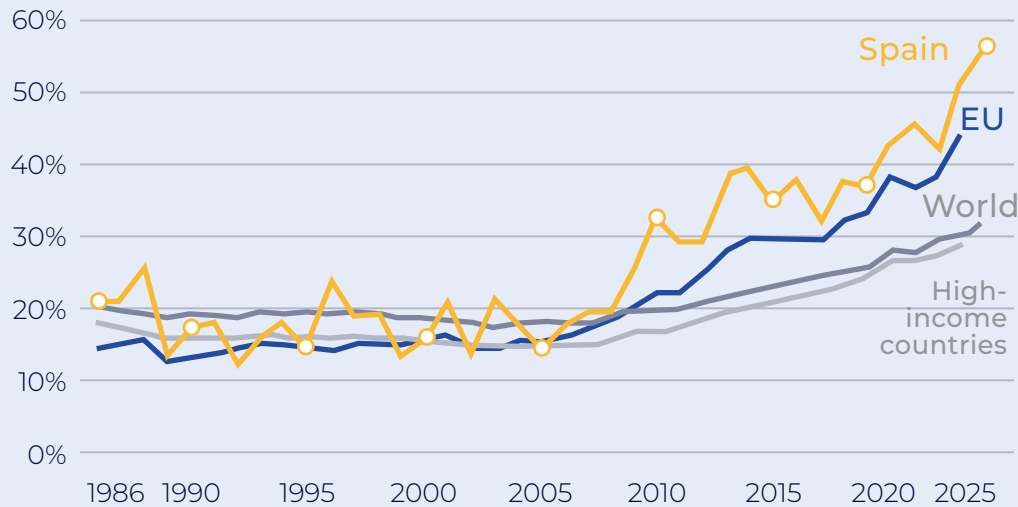
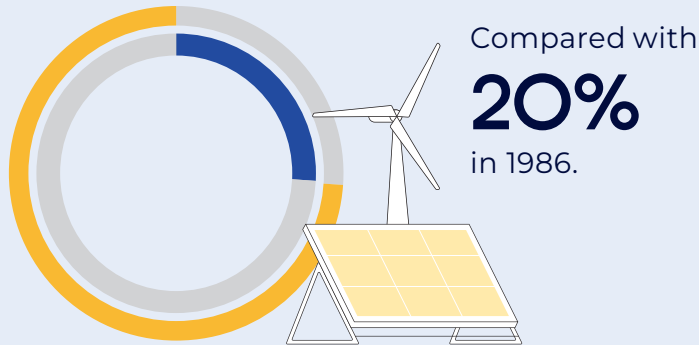


*European Commission, Financial Times (2025).*

## 24. Generation of renewable electricity: leading the European transition

# 57%

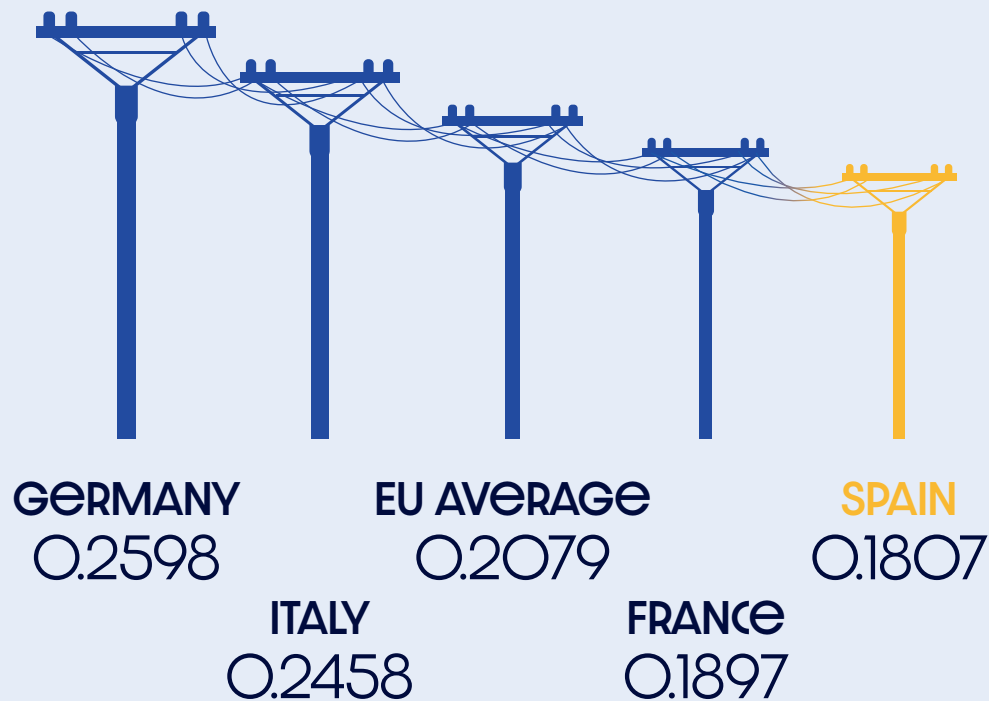
of electricity in 2025 was generated using renewable sources.



The proportion of electricity generated using renewable energy sources in Spain is above the EU average. In 2025 Spain reported a record 57%. The main sources are: wind (22%), photovoltaic (19%) and hydro (12%).

Red Eléctrica de España, Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Eurostat.

## 25. Electricity prices: the lowest among the largest

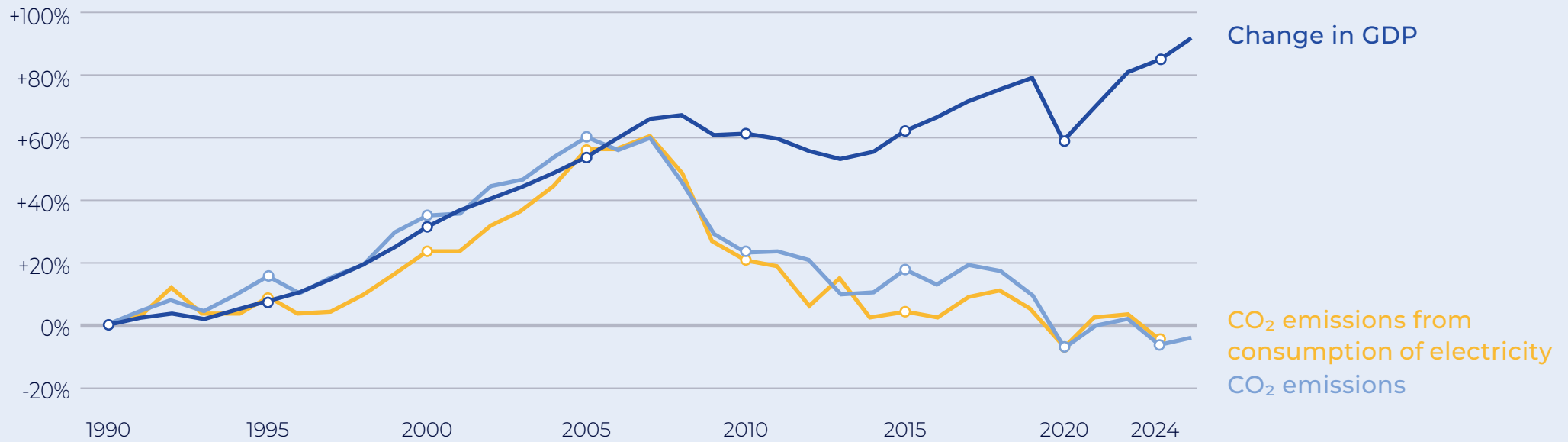


Electricity prices for household consumers  
Euros per KW/h, first half of 2025.

Among the largest EU economies, Spain provides the cheapest electricity to its consumers. This reflects the greater competitiveness of the electricity market and the rise of renewable energy, among other factors.

Eurostat.

## 26. Growth has been decoupled from CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita



GDP and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita, Spain

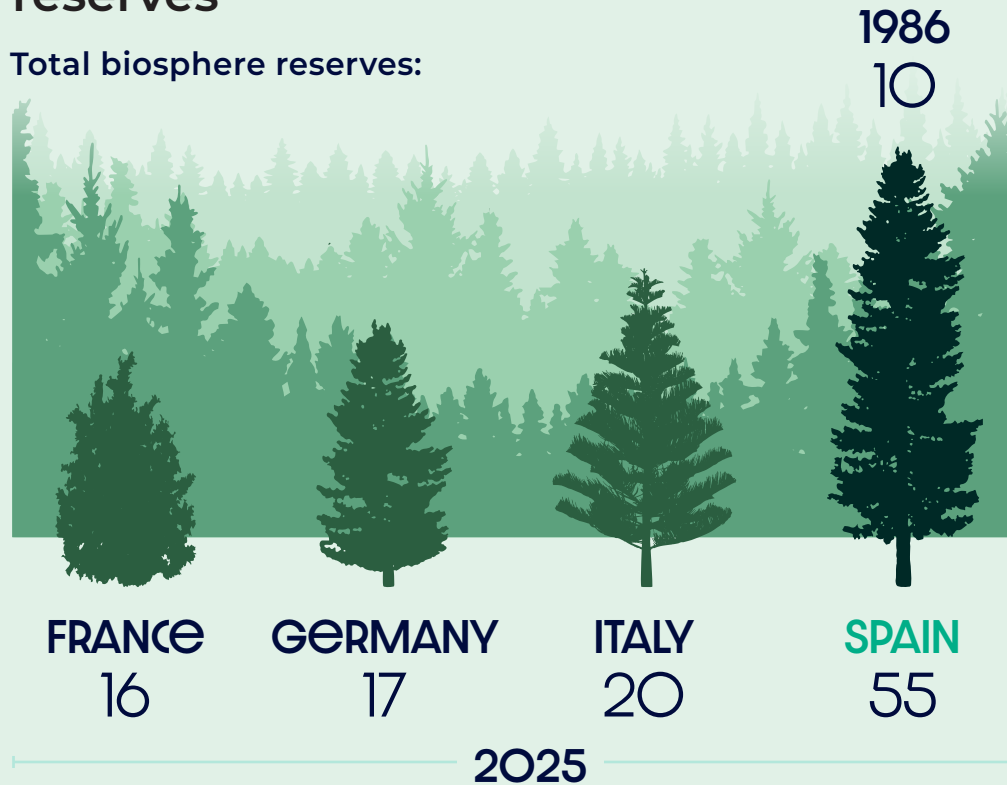
Source: Our World in Data, Eurostat, OECD, IMF, World Bank, Global Carbon Budget (2025) / GDP is measured in international dollars at 2021 prices.

Spain has achieved a structural decoupling between economic growth and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. During the past decade, the economy has experienced sustained growth while total emissions and emissions per inhabitant have fallen.

*Red Eléctrica de España, Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Eurostat.*

## 27. World leader in UNESCO biosphere reserves

Total biosphere reserves:



Spain has the world's largest number of biosphere reserves recognized by UNESCO. They are located across 16 of Spain's Autonomous Communities and represent approximately 12% of its national territory, totalling some 6.2 million hectares. Protection and restoration programmes have been established for these natural reserves using national and EU public funding. They include five of the seven Canary Islands, Doñana, Guadarrama, Montseny, Irati, Urdaibai and Terra do Miño.

UNESCO.

## 28. Spain: a country of heritage

5<sup>th</sup>

country in the world



3<sup>rd</sup>

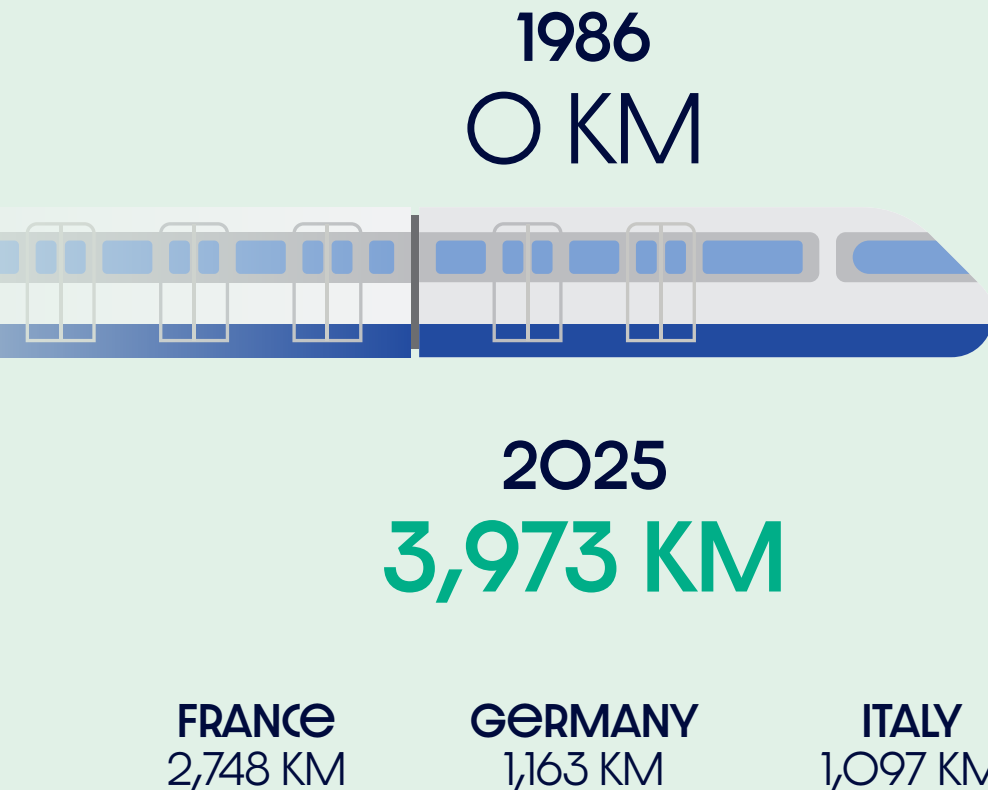
in Europe

In 1986, Spain had 14 designated sites  
In 2025, it has 50

The Alhambra in Granada, the Burgos Cathedral, the Historic Centre of Cordoba, the Monastery of El Escorial, and the works of Antoni Gaudí are among the first 50 World Heritage sites designated by UNESCO. They are understood to be sites of "cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity". Spain also has 22 elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including the Silbo Gomero whistled language of the island of La Gomera (Canary Islands), the Valencia Fallas festivity, the Castells human towers and Flamenco music and dance.

UNESCO.

**29. High-speed rail network (AVE): leader in Europe**



Over the past two decades, Spain has built the most extensive high-speed network in Europe and the second largest in the world.

*Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, Eurostat, ADIF.*

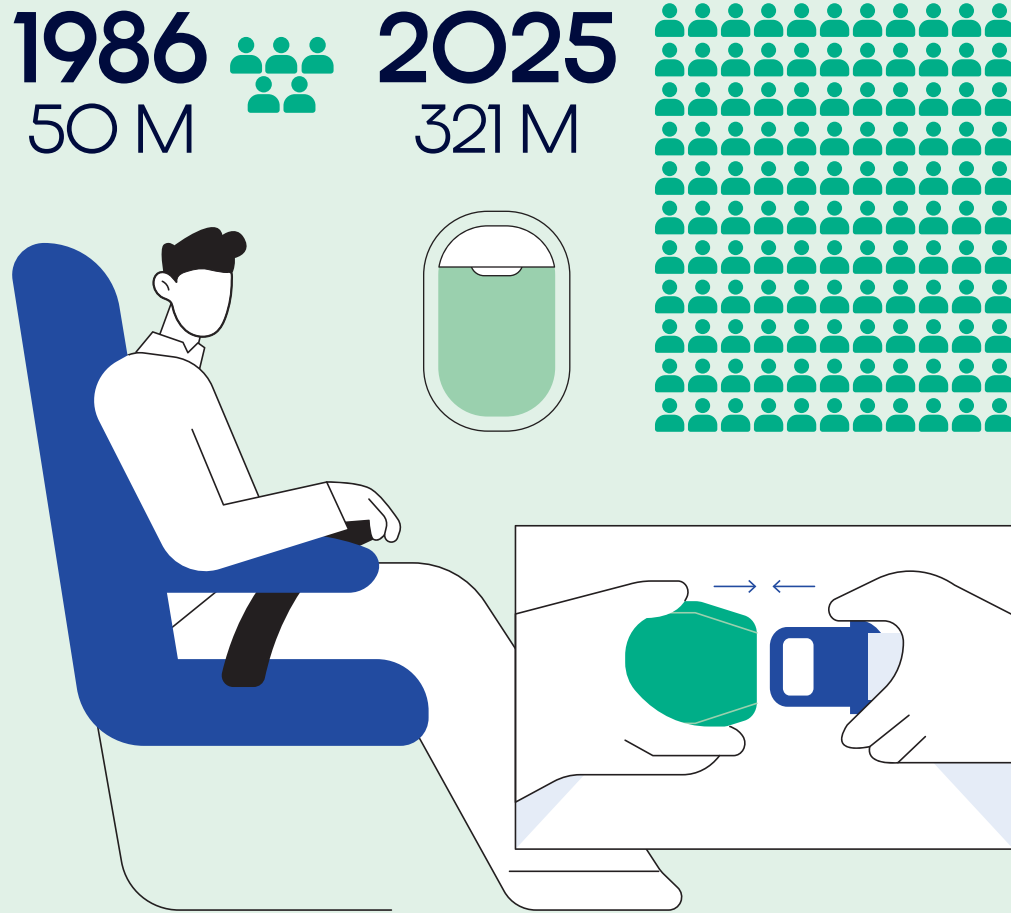
**30. The largest network of highways and motoways in the European Union**



Spain is the top-ranking country in the EU and third in the world in terms of the total length of its high-capacity roads.

*Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, UNECE.*

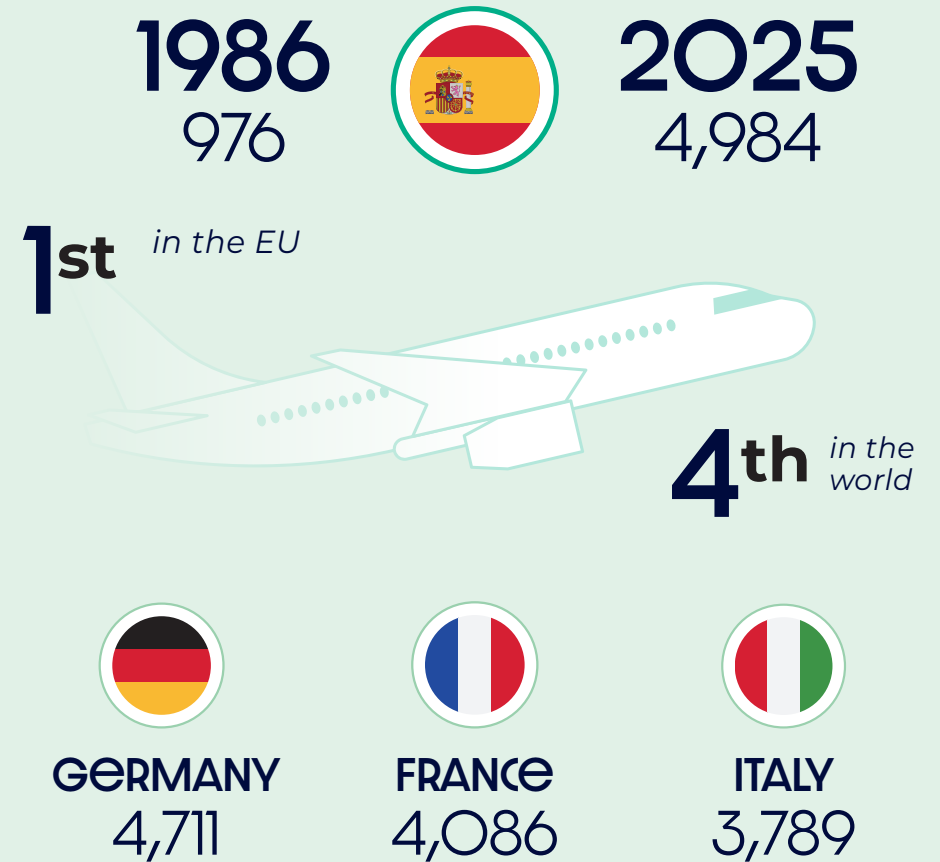
### 31. Air passenger traffic



Spain is one of the main air hubs in Europe today.

Ministry of Transport, National Statistics Institute, European Commission, Aena.

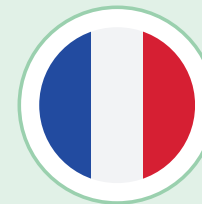
### 32. Leader in daily flights



Eurocontrol, Forbes.

### 33. Spain, 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular destination in the world

Second most visited country in the world.



**FRANCE**  
102 M



**ITALY**  
57 M



**GERMANY**  
37 M



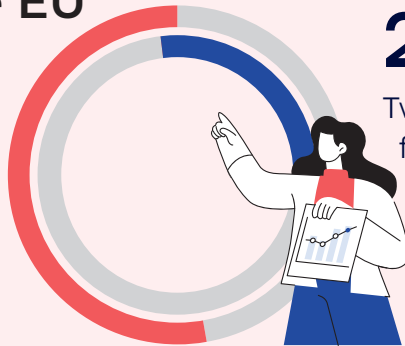
In 2025, Spain was the second most visited country in the world by number of arrivals of international tourists, outperformed only by France. The figures for France, Italy and Germany are for 2024.

*UNWTO, National Statistics Institute.*

### 34. Female workers: the greatest change in the EU

**53%**

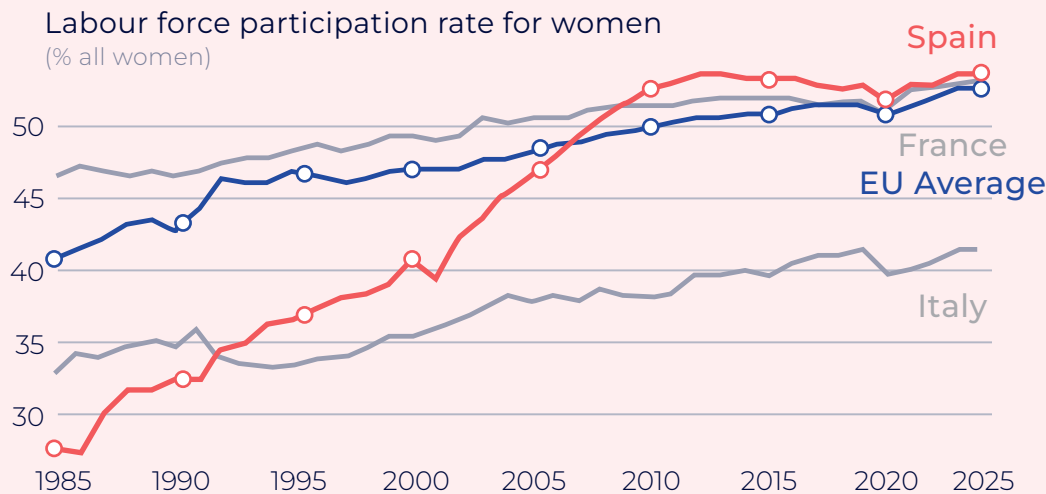
of women participated in the workforce in 2025.



**27%**

Twice the figure for 1986.

Labour force participation rate for women (% all women)



The labour force participation rate for women has doubled, from 27% in 1986 to the current figure of 53%. This reflects the change in women's access to education and employment, and a progressive improvement in labour equality standards.

World Bank.

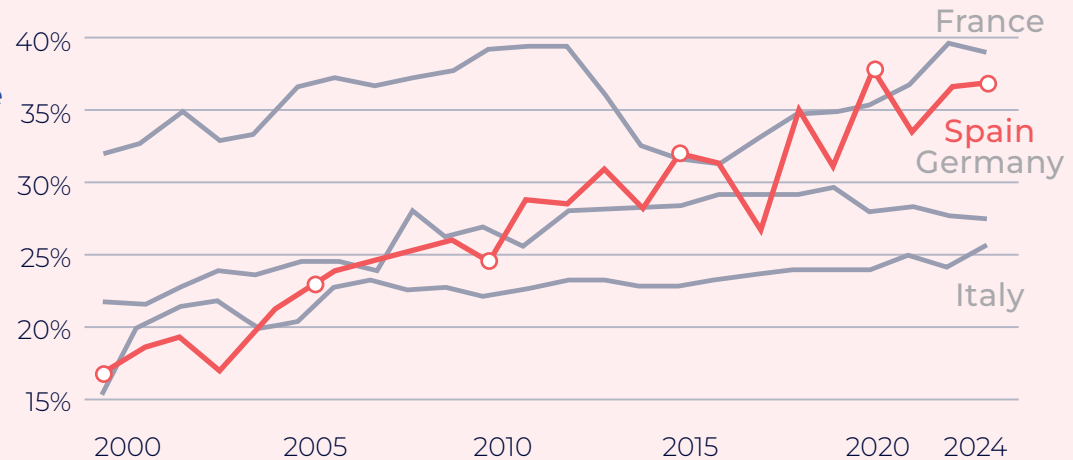
### 35. Women on the boards of directors of IBEX35 companies

**41%**

of members of IBEX35 boards of directors in 2024 were women.



Proportion of senior and middle management positions held by women in the public and private sectors



Women who hold decision-making and management positions in the public sector, as well as in major companies and institutions.

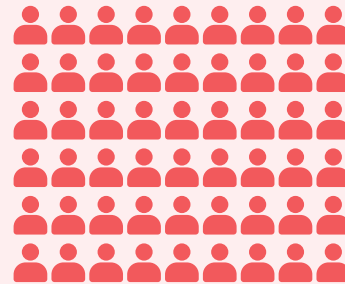
Our World in Data, ILO (2025).

## 36. Gender parity in the Congress of Deputies

Number of female deputies:

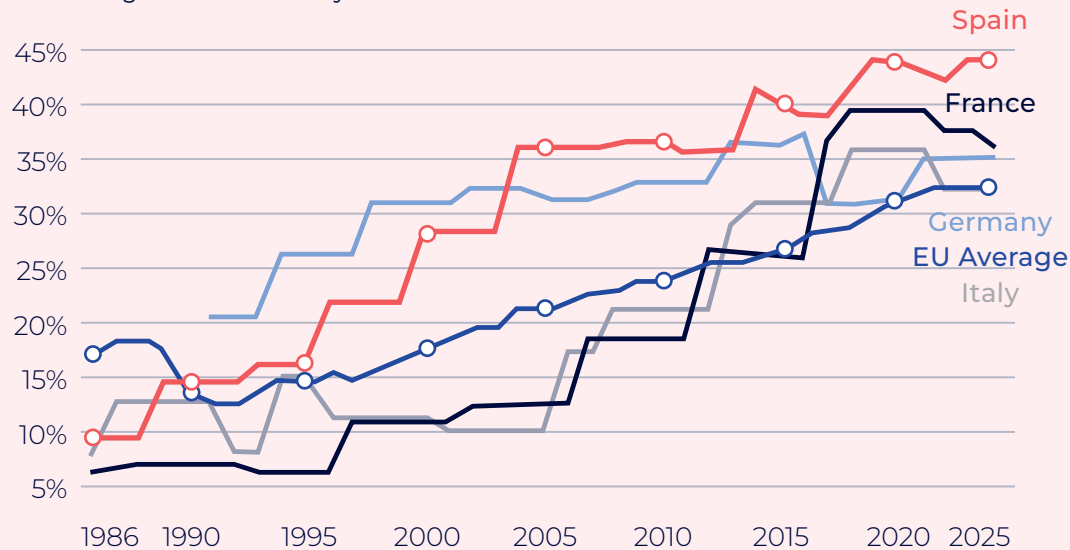
**1986**  
33 (9.4%)

**2025**  
154 (44%)



Congress of Deputies.

Percentage of seats held by women in Parliament:



The change in political culture is reflected in the gender parity in the Congress of Deputies, with a notably higher proportion of women than the EU average.

*Our World in Data, V-DEM.*

## 37. Public spending on social protection per capita has increased by almost 50%

Social spending represents

# 40%

of total public spending in Spain, in line with the EU average



**2024**

**€6,054**  
per capita

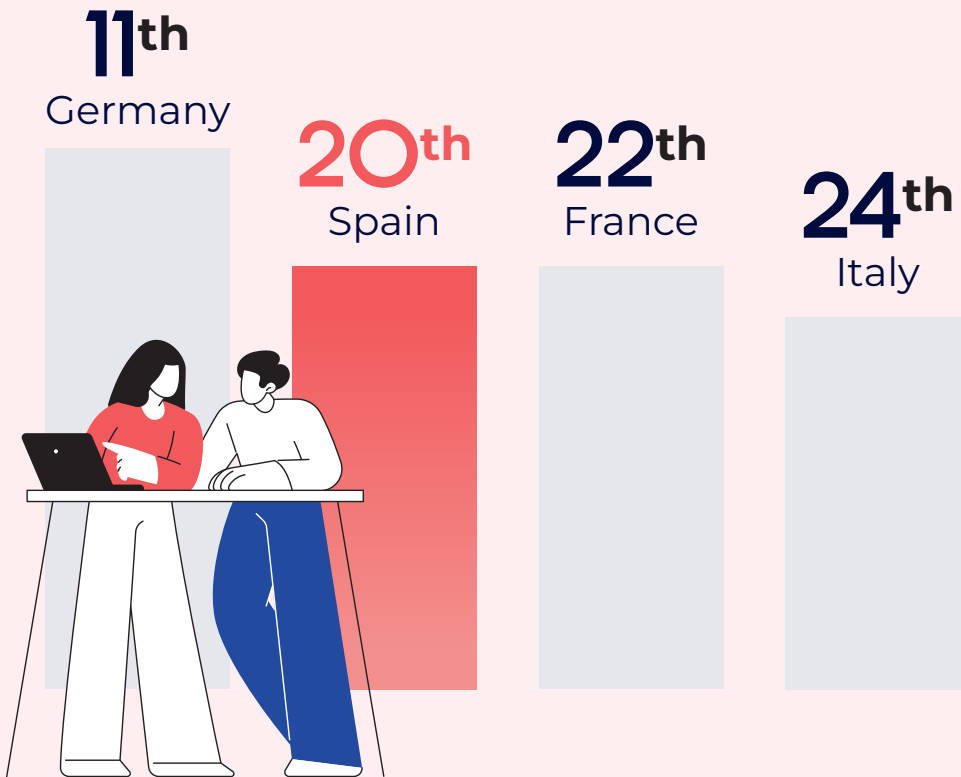
**1986**  
**€4,200**

This increase of almost 50% reflects the expansion and consolidation of the welfare state, with growth in resources for pensions and diverse social benefits—both contributory and aimed at vulnerable groups. Currently, social spending amounts to 40% of total public spending, in line with the EU average.

*Bank of Spain, European Commission.*

## 38. Equal opportunities

In the **Social Progress Index** Spain ranks 20 out of 170 countries in terms of equal opportunities.



The opportunity dimension of this index comprises: Rights & Voice, Freedom & Choice, Inclusive Society and Advanced Education.

*Social Progress Index.*

## 39. Democracy Index

*The Economist 2025*

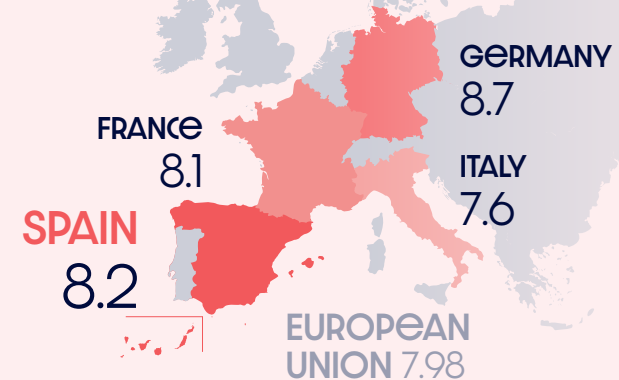
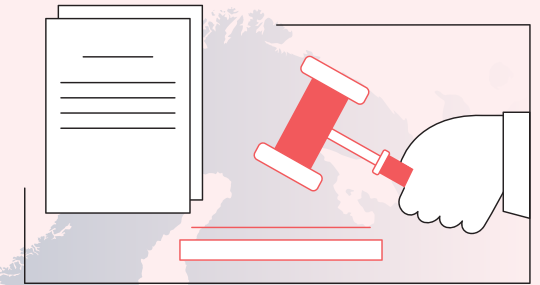
Spain's score is the

# 22<sup>th</sup>

*in the world, and the*

# 10<sup>th</sup>

*in the EU.*



Spain is one of the highest ranking countries in the world for quality of democracy, as measured in **The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2025**. With a score of 8.2, Spain outperforms the European average as well as France and Italy. Spain maintains high scores for political participation, civil liberties and functioning of government.

*Democracy Index, 2025.*

### 40. Freedom in the World 2025

Political Rights **37 / 40**

Civil Liberties **53 / 60**



**GERMANY**  
95 / 100



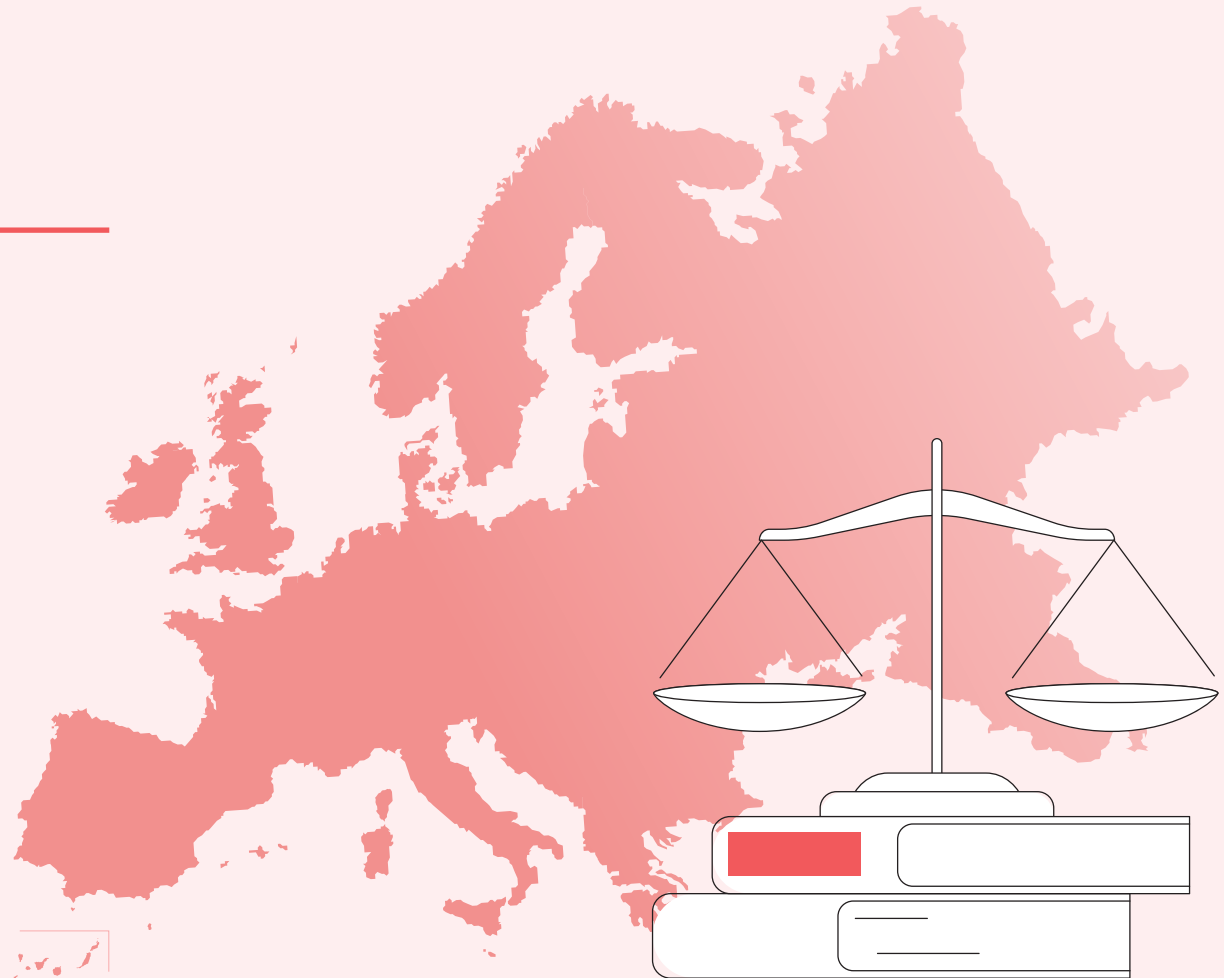
**FRANCE**  
89 / 100



**SPAIN**  
90 / 100



**ITALY**  
89 / 100



This index assesses aspects such as the integrity of elections, political pluralism, freedoms of expression, media, association and belief, as well as procedural safeguards and equality before the law. With 37/40 for political rights and 53/60 for civil liberties, Spain ranks among the highest scoring countries for democracy and civil liberties.

