

# **2021-2024** **FOREIGN ACTION** **STRATEGY**



# 2021-2024 FOREIGN ACTION STRATEGY





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to Act 2/2014 on State Foreign Action and the Foreign Service, this Foreign Action Strategy aims to establish the basic lines, principles, and instruments that will guide Spain's foreign action for 2021-2024.

The Strategy's design is based on a diagnosis of the current realities of a new global scenario, whose turning point was the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the underlying trends influencing the international situation, which will be accelerated by the pandemic.

These underlying forces are characterised by growing challenges to the international order designed after World War II, and a crisis of multilateralism as an associative mechanism for states to manage global affairs in an increasingly fragmented world. The backdrop to this scenario is greater global interdependence and an increase in complexity, resulting from the emergence of many new actors and factors. Noteworthy among these are innovation and technological change, which are changing reality at a speed that makes it difficult not only to manage, but also to interpret a world that is filled with uncertainty.

These underlying forces are generating four major fault lines on our planet, and our strategy will have to respond to them. The first is a socio-economic fault line, with increasingly concentrated wealth generation, a playing field that is becoming less level by the day, and growing inequalities within countries, compounded by the lack of a new economic paradigm since the Great Recession of 2008. The second is an ecological, climatic, demographic and biodiversity fault line, which translates into constraints for human development and well-being and entails, among other issues, major migration challenges. The third is a technological fault line, with rapid change widening the development gaps between economies, countries, regions, and social groups, and bringing with it huge challenges but also

enormous opportunities. Finally, and more cross-cutting in nature, there is a political and governance divide, related to a loss of public confidence in institutions.

We live, then, in an increasingly volatile and fragmented world, which tends to generate two possible types of response: a centrifugal tendency, of disunity, marked by the rise of populism, exclusionary nationalism, and power politics; and a centripetal one, with the generation of inclusive responses to global challenges and common threats. Both impulses are likely to coexist and feed off each other in the years to come.

Spain's position in the face of these underlying forces and global fault lines must take into account our role in the world as an actor that aspires to manage global challenges and global goods on the basis of specific interests and capabilities, which are due to a certain added value of different aspects of our foreign action—such as our language and culture, or our singular geography and history. This position is also defined by our membership in the European Union, which is not only the main channel for Spain to have a greater say on the world stage, but also the backbone of our foreign action as a whole, permeating all of its pillars; in short, an extension of it.

Based on its strengths and singularities, and with a univocally pro-European multilateral calling, Spain aspires to play a more prominent role in the international arena, with a higher profile, anticipating trends and projecting the values and principles that define us as a society: freedom, peace, equality, solidarity, justice, diversity, democracy, sustainability, and progress. It will do so through proactive foreign action, centred around four main guiding principles: committing to “More Europe”, with a more integrated and autonomous European Union (EU), which assumes a leading position in the world; promoting Better Multilateralism, which exploits the

nodal and unifying aspect of our country as a facilitator of better global governance and management of interdependence; advancing Strategic Bilateralism, which is more selective in the prioritisation of our bilateral relations according to our interests and opportunities; and deepening our Committed Solidarity through a new vision of development cooperation. All the while using the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a roadmap and guiding principles, and European external action as the main vehicle.

Spain's responses to these global challenges will be structured along four main lines of action. First, the promotion of full and guaranteed human rights as a distinctive feature of our foreign action, including support for democratisation processes and the promotion of more effective collective defence and security mechanisms, as well as the promotion of a feminist foreign policy that furthers diversity, equality, and non-discrimination. Secondly, the commitment to an equitable economy and an integrated and inclusive society, which revises the parameters of growth and well-being, works towards the creation of a new global and intergenerational social contract, promotes fairer norms on a global level, and addresses the major issues affecting the development of our societies, including the multiple dimensions of the demographic and migratory challenge. Thirdly, the defence of a more sustainable, resilient, habitable, and greener planet, where we aspire to be at the forefront in terms of climate diplomacy, environmental management, energy transition, preservation and restoration of biodiversity, combating desertification, and promoting global health. And finally, a determined commitment to the improvement of global governance mechanisms, starting with strengthening the European project itself, intensifying its social dimension and proximity to citizens, supporting the processes of convergence and

integration in other regions of the planet, and serving as catalysts for a more integrated, effective, and strengthened multilateralism, which reforms its instruments and adapts them to the needs of our time, and focuses on meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

In sum, these lines of action constitute a decisive response to the erosion of multilateral governance systems, to the growing regression in rights and freedoms taking place in many parts of the world, as well as to the gradual dissolution of cohesion which threatens the stability and progress of our societies. These responses will be the reference point in the development of our specific geographical priorities, with the main vectors being the immediate European environment, the relationship with Latin America, the Mediterranean neighbourhood, and the transatlantic relationship, without forgetting such especially dynamic regions as Asia-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa.

To achieve these objectives, this Strategy proposes the need to improve the human and material resources of our international action, with a modern, flexible, and digital Foreign Service, committed to Spanish citizens abroad and backed by public diplomacy and by economic, cultural, educational, scientific, and technological stakeholders. Updating cooperation for sustainable development appears as a key instrument here. Emphasis is also placed on mechanisms to improve integration and coordinated action by all levels of government in the area of foreign action, complementing and enriching this more strategic approach with the rest of the actors having a presence and influence beyond our borders, such as Spain's armed forces and State security forces, corporations, foundations, universities, educational centres and programmes, think tanks, and non-governmental organisations. Collectively they constitute a broad ecosystem of foreign action that we must cultivate, strengthen, and leverage.



# **1. PRESENTATION**

# Presentation

This document summarises the **basic lines of Spanish foreign action for 2021-2024**, identifying the major global trends that Spain will have to face, establishing its position in this regard and setting priorities according to its capabilities as a country. It is based on the consideration of foreign policy as a state policy, in the formulation of which all relevant actors must actively participate in order to generate a broad national consensus.

The immediate predecessor of this text is the Foreign Action Strategy 2015-2018, which already emphasised the growing importance of the international dimension of the State's action for our national project. Far from receding, **this prominence of foreign action has only continued to increase**. The previous Strategy was a document still marked by the 2008 economic crisis and the multilateral drive which helped to shape the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Financing for Development Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Today we face a very different situation, which has been deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its uncertain long-term effects. The foreseeable future will also be marked by major issues that have been present for some time, but have emerged strongly in recent years. In particular, the rivalry between the USA and China, and Europe's search for its geostrategic place in a new global order. All these issues will determine the context in which Spanish foreign action will be deployed, characterised by the growing contradiction between an increasingly geopolitical global reality and the management of an increasingly complex interdependence.

The definition of a Strategy of this kind entails establishing **principles to guide the intended actions**. It must be based on an analysis of the global scenario and a vision of Spain in the world that serves as a starting point for formulating proposals that are in line with our principles and aspirations as a country. In addition to identifying **priorities**, it is essential to reflect on the **instruments** available, especially human and material resources. Underlying this document is a desire to ensure that our country's international weight and commitments are translated into the strengthening of its **presence** and **influence** worldwide.

The presentation of this Strategy is in accordance with Act 2/2014, 25 March, on State Action and Foreign Service. Although the design of this initiative corresponds ex lege to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (MAUC), this does not imply that the Strategy is limited to this Ministry, or even to the General State Administration. The Act itself calls on all "constitutional bodies, public administrations, and the bodies and institutions under their aegis which act abroad" to participate in its preparation (Art. 34 et seq.), always respecting the **principle of unity of action**. The economic estimate of the resources allocated to the objectives and actions of the Foreign Action Strategy will be adjusted according to the items determined in Spain's annual budgets which make it possible to specify and quantify each of the actions to be undertaken, and the resources—both material and human— allocated to each objective.

## Table 1.1. Spain's Foreign Action Strategy

This Foreign Action Strategy is consistent with other international and national texts relevant to foreign action. Among the main international references, the *2030 Agenda* is central, along with the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, the *Paris Agreement*, and the *New Urban Agenda*. The *EU Global Strategy* also serves as a key reference and alignment framework. Other important guides are the *European Consensus on Development and Humanitarian Aid*, and programmes of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In addition to its predecessor, national benchmarks include the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*; the *National Security Strategy*; the *Fifth Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation 2018-2021*; the *Strategy for the Internationalisation of the Spanish Economy 2017-2027*; the *TURESPAÑA Strategic Marketing Plan 2018-2020*; the *National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021-2030*; the *Strategy for Safe, Sustainable and Connected Mobility*; the *Spanish Urban Agenda*; the *National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030*; and the *Humanitarian Action Strategy 2019-2026*.

The general nature of the exercise will require, in some cases, a focused and detailed development, through specific geographic and thematic documents. The *Strategic Vision for Spain in Asia*, approved in 2018; the *Africa Plan*, approved in 2019; and *Spanish Cooperation's Joint Response Strategy for the Covid-19 Crisis*, approved in 2020, are examples of sectoral documents produced before the publication of this Strategy, but they all complement and are in compliance with it. There are also other sectoral and regional strategies which are currently being drafted (for example, the *Strategy on Technology and Global Order*, the *Feminist Foreign Policy Strategy*, and the *Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy*), which will be fully in line with this document.

The 2021-2024 Foreign Action Strategy aims to contribute to the **renewal and improvement of Spain's foreign action** at a time of accelerated change which has no shortage of uncertainties.

With the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a roadmap this Strategy seeks to achieve our country's national interests, defined as furthering our progress and improving our citizens' living conditions, which will only be possible in a more peaceful, developed, and prosperous world.

Under the mandate of Act 2/2014, the implementation of the Foreign Action Strategy, the actions carried out, and the objectives achieved will all be included in an **Annual Foreign Action Report**. To this end, an intense monitoring and evaluation effort will be undertaken, enabling a comprehensive accountability exercise. Moreover, this process will make it possible to adapt this Strategy to changes on the international scene, providing an opportunity to identify and follow up on good practices.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



An aerial, high-angle view of a dense urban skyline at night, heavily tinted with a dark blue color. The image shows a variety of skyscrapers and buildings, some with illuminated windows, creating a complex pattern of light and shadow. The perspective is from a high vantage point, looking down on the city.

# **2. GLOBAL SCENARIO**

# Global scenario

The **global geopolitical scenario has changed** significantly since the publication of the first Spanish Foreign Action Strategy in 2015. The Covid-19 crisis has opened up a new scenario that would surely have made obsolete a strategic exercise carried out only a few months before the pandemic. However, the previous five years had already seen far-reaching changes, motivated by major underlying forces. Although in 2015 there were already signs of the end of the post-Cold War unipolar order, along with increasingly radical questioning of the liberal international order established after World War II, few anticipated such events as Brexit (the first exit of an EU member in 60 years of European construction); the rapidly widening divergences in the transatlantic relationship; the crisis of multilateralism; and the attack on democratic principles, values and institutions, including the questioning of electoral results and the peaceful transition of power in consolidated democracies.

The **Sino-American rivalry**, the central phenomenon that has been shaping international relations and will continue to do so during the period of this Strategy, has also seen an unprecedented acceleration in recent years as a result of the shift in US foreign policy and China's definitive conversion into a player with global political and economic influence. This rivalry is particularly intense in the field of technology, with a latent race for control of the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in all areas and of the rules that will govern the digital era and the fourth industrial revolution, in which we

are already immersed. This trend towards greater confrontation, embodied in growing trade and investment disputes and regional geopolitical differences between the two powers, coexists with progress—especially within the EU and many of its Member States—in the development of an international policy based on the promotion of human rights, fair rules, and the principles of sustainable development.

The **change of government in the USA** may lead to less tension and open up new scenarios for cooperation. The new Biden administration is opening up a more optimistic scenario in terms of a commitment to multilateralism as a mechanism for consensus-building and the management of global affairs—an opportunity that must be seized constructively and proactively.

Many of these phenomena were foreseeable, but it was impossible to gauge the intensity that they ended up acquiring in recent years. An example of this is the **Covid-19 pandemic** itself: the enormous disruptive effect that a pandemic could have was anticipated, but not to such an extent. The question is whether, or how, the present crisis will accelerate and deepen these underlying trends; whether it will reverse any of these dynamics; or whether it will unleash as yet unfathomable new forces. Whether this is an era of change or, on the contrary, a definitive change of era, the State's foreign action must contemplate both of these scenarios, and all of their ramifications.

## Table 2.1. The post-Covid world: accelerating trends

The Covid-19 crisis has revealed an unpredictable world. Although the risk of a global pandemic had been anticipated, few foresaw the enormous impact it would have on our lives and in such a short space of time. Distance and perspective is indeed needed to fully appreciate the significance of this crisis. It is not the first pandemic to hit humanity, nor is it the most lethal.

However, it is the first episode of this nature to take place on a planet with this degree of interconnectedness, resulting from both economic globalisation and information technologies. It also comes at a time when the pillars that have sustained the international order that has prevailed since the end of World War II are now being questioned.

The interpretation of the current situation has given rise to all sorts of predictions. Some say that we are on the threshold of a new foundational era, as happened in 1945: the inability of existing international governance structures to respond to the new dynamics would make it necessary to break away from the present global order. For other analysts, Covid-19 will represent an important turning point, but of lesser significance: a moment of reform more comparable to 1989, marked by an adjustment in the balance of power between hegemony; in this case, with China claiming a leading role in the international arena. There are also voices pointing towards a more modest outcome, similar to that of a temporary shock to the system which motivates some institutional adjustments (e.g., a reform of the global health system, including a World Health Organization endowed with greater capacity for action, management, and financing) but which would not call into question the underlying balance of power. The historical parallel here would be episodes such as the emergence of the G20 versus the G7 (later G8) after the 2008 crisis, or the change of thematic priorities on the international agenda that took place after the September 11 attacks of 2001, when international terrorism rose to the top of the agenda. Finally, some observers suggest that the lasting effects of the pandemic will be even smaller: for them, the Covid-19 crisis could belong to the category of episodes with high immediate media impact, but almost no long-term transformative capacity (such as the 1962 Cuban missile crisis).

There is, therefore, no consensus diagnosis of the meaning and depth of this crisis. What seems undeniable is that Covid-19 is accelerating many of the major underlying trends that were already operating in our economies and societies, such as the widening of certain divides and the rise of disinformation, making more urgent the need to address the shared challenges facing humanity.

## 2.1 Major underlying forces

A strategic positioning exercise in foreign action requires an assessment of the nature of the **four major underlying forces that are transforming the world** and determining its dynamics: interdependence, complexity, speed, and uncertainty.

**Global interdependence** is the defining characteristic of our time. Globalisation means living in a world in which human

communities, organised into States, are increasingly dependent on each other to achieve their goals, blurring the distinction between domestic and foreign policy. The local and the national become global, and vice versa. Interdependence, which was already very present through the processes of economic, political, and cultural globalisation resulting from technological and informational hyper-

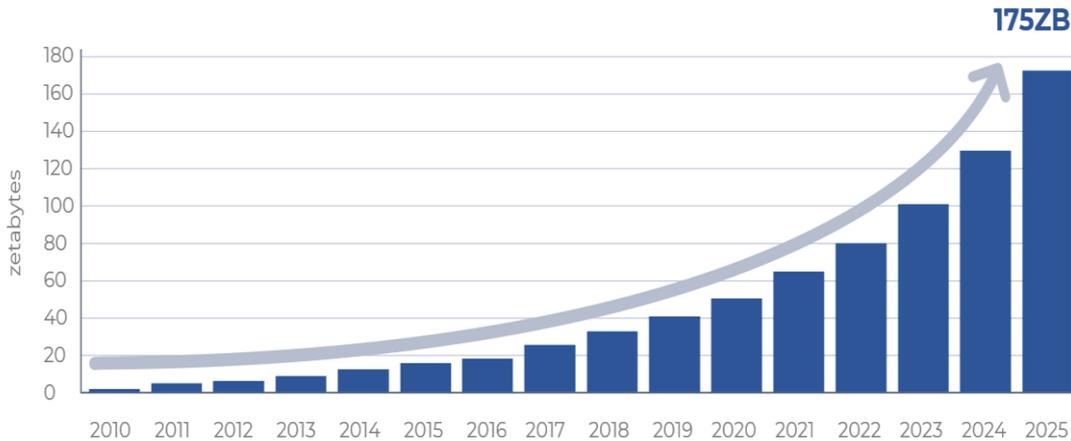
connectivity, takes on a truly systemic dimension. None of Spain's foreign policy priorities can be achieved without taking into account this interaction between our country and its context. International relations are changing, and require an understanding of the domestic realities of third countries, without which it is impossible to properly interpret the phenomena that affect us, including major global trends. It remains to be seen to what extent there will be a decoupling of the global economy brought about by the intention of the USA and China to reduce their mutual dependence, and whether the Covid-19 crisis can qualify or temper some of the aspects that characterise our current interdependence, as we have seen with the disruption of international mobility and tourism, and the search for greater resilience in value chains. Spain's foreign action must aspire to effectively manage both this systemic and global interdependence and to adequately prepare for possible scenarios of deglobalisation in some sectors, as well as reorganisation and change (reglobalisation) in others.

**Complexity** is related to interdependence, as myriads of factors increasingly complicate the functioning of the world we live in. Our systems are increasingly sophisticated and difficult to manage, requiring a degree of specialisation that hinders the holistic view, which paradoxically more necessary than ever. Human beings are increasingly challenged, as the ability to make sense of this complexity is no longer within the reach of any individual, even when acting collectively. Our traditional parameters are increasingly

limited in order to make such a complex world more intelligible and interpretable, which requires increasing interdisciplinarity, as well as breaking down the barriers between scientific communities and areas of knowledge. Spain's foreign action has to contemplate the challenges that this greater complexity poses in terms not only of management and governance, but also the interpretation of the current situation.

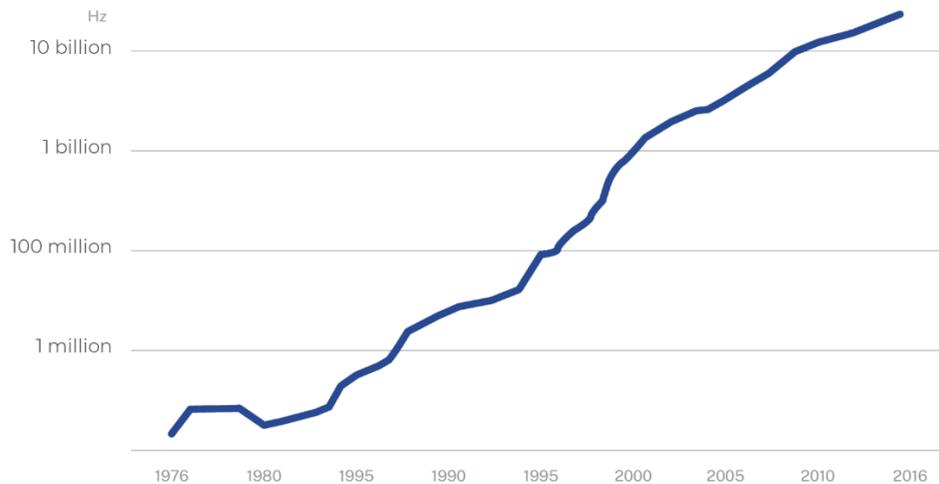
**Speed** also defines our times. The world is changing at a frenetic pace, but our capacity to understand and govern it is not advancing accordingly; therefore, certainties and benchmarks are becoming less and less relevant, making it difficult for public authorities to take decisions. Innovation and technological change are key variables in this respect, as they cause change to take place over ever shorter periods of time. Their transformative potential is so profound that it is necessary for the entire international community to decide together on their regulation for the benefit of all, and to place the human being at the very core. Today, the way we learn, live, and work can change more than once in the course of a single generation. The challenge is that this speed of change coexists with governance structures that do not evolve at the same pace, resulting in institutions that are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the expectations placed on their work. Faced with this challenge, the rate at which things are changing will require our foreign action to look forward and adapt quickly, in order to anticipate trends and channel them appropriately.

### Annual increase in data volume (in zettabytes)



Source: *The Digitization of the World. From Edge to Core*, IDC White Paper. IDC Global DataSphere, 2018

### Microprocessor clock speed (1976-2016)



Source: *The Singularity Is Near When Humans Transcend Biology*. Ray Kurzweil (2005, updated in 2016).

Finally, all these trends converge in a general propensity for **uncertainty**. We live in a new and different world, which generates concerns and insecurities in the face of the unknown, fuelling disorientation and unease. Nothing seems stable. Everything is open to question: freedom and rights; the institutions that have established our economic, social, and political organisation; and the model of material progress that has prevailed for decades.

Even the very concept of the human being seems susceptible to mutation in the face of the limitless horizon offered by AI, biotechnology, and robotics. Uncertainty fuels a sense of fragility, which particularly affects the multilateral order. In the face of this great underlying force, it is essential for foreign action to provide anchors and guidelines in a context devoid of overarching narratives that provide meaning.

## 2.2 Major fault lines in our world

The underlying forces discussed above are **generating four deep fault lines**. Although these are long-standing fault lines, they are now widening, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

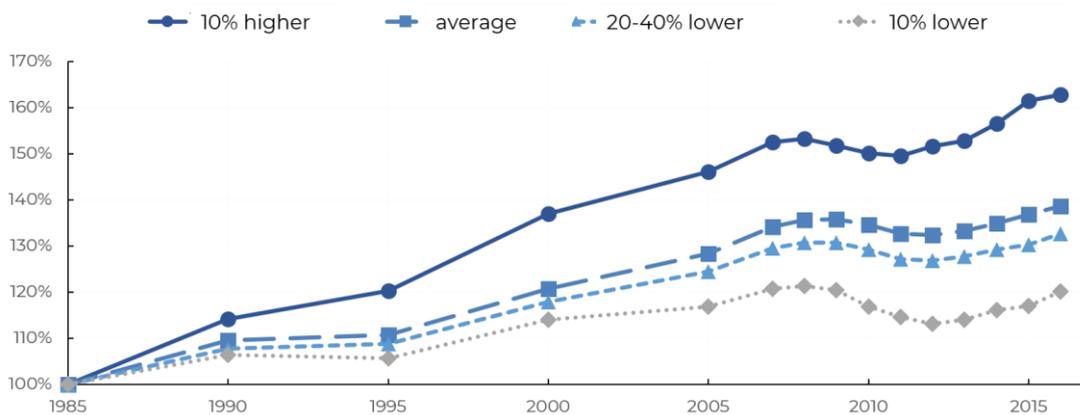
The first major fault line is **socio-economic**, and it is related to the radical questioning of the economic and social model that has prevailed in recent decades. Globalisation creates winners and losers. It is true that for years the exponential increase in trade and the internationalisation of value chains have enabled spectacular wealth creation and poverty reduction in absolute terms. However, labour productivity growth seems to be experiencing a period of stagnation, especially in advanced economies.

More importantly, wealth is increasingly concentrated: hunger and poverty continue to affect millions of people, while inequalities within countries are growing, especially for those who suffer from any kind of discrimination, which also implies the breakdown of social justice. One of the most visible elements is a loss of the sense of general progress, along with decreased social mobility, in high- and middle-income countries, where for the first time there are no prospects of the next generations being more prosperous than the previous

ones. Moreover, in a world of global economic activity, the lack of shared governance undermines the tax bases of states, sapping the public revenues needed to maintain the sustainability of their welfare systems. Consequently, social cohesion itself is called into question, giving rise to protests that demonstrate the erosion of the values and principles of coexistence that integrate and unify our societies.

All of these factors require economic policies, both fiscal and monetary, to provide an effective response in a context of uncertainty and growing need. It is therefore essential to promote economic governance and improve regulation at an international level to achieve, through consensus, formulas to overcome the current crisis and guarantee support for a new model of sustainable, balanced global development. This international collaboration must provide support to those countries which are lagging behind, in order to strengthen them and improve their response capacity. To this end, it is important to substantially increase the support given to international organisations, forums, and initiatives which are promoting the necessary international and domestic policy reforms..

## The evolution of income inequality trends in 17 OECD countries (1985-2016)



Source: OECD Income Distribution Database

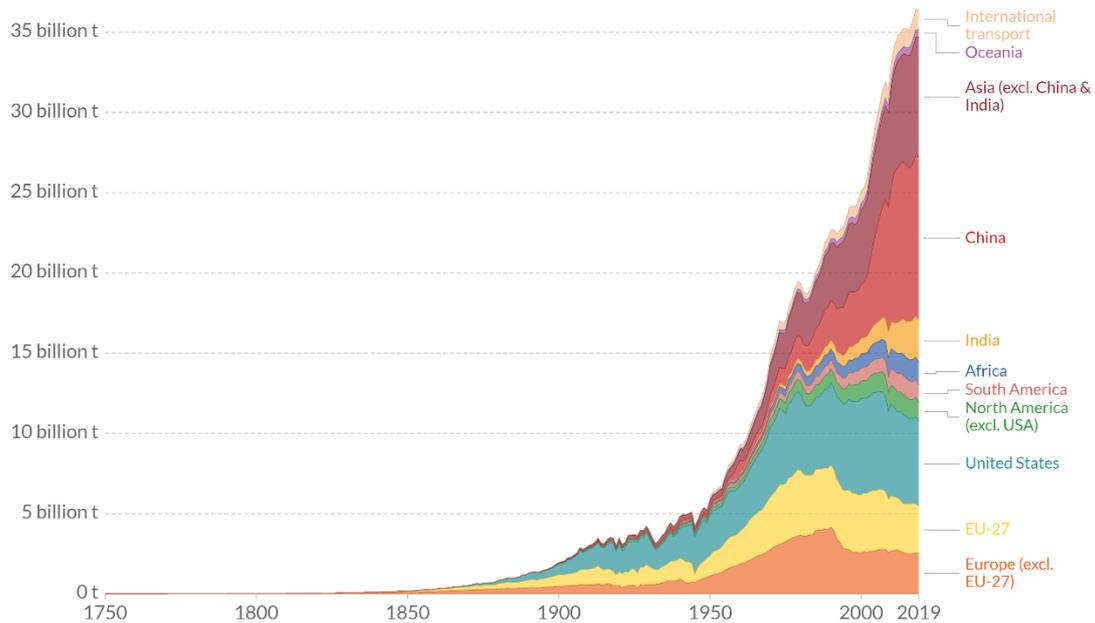
Since the 2008 economic crisis and the Great Recession, there have been calls to make the economy and globalisation more inclusive and sustainable, and to redefine the parameters of the social contract. The 2030 Agenda represents a paradigm shift in this regard, and is based on promoting a more humane economy and society, focused on well-being, inclusion and environmental sustainability. However, we are witnessing a moment when the current economic model and the idea of material progress are under review, as well as the redefinition of capitalism itself—even though no new alternative paradigm has emerged.

The second major fault line is the **ecological** fault line, in its multiple dimensions. The notion that we are reaching the limits of environmental sustainability and the depletion of planetary resources is not new; however, as with the socio-economic crisis, the perception of urgency is heightened and is generating an unprecedented crisis with regard to the model of progress and intergenerational solidarity. The fight against climate change will continue to be one of the great challenges of our generation, with consequences that go beyond global

warming and include the loss of biodiversity, the sustainability of food chains, and the management of basic resources.

While there is a general awareness of the magnitude of the transformation needed to address these challenges, the challenge is how to move from theory to practice. There is a growing interest in leveraging the post-pandemic economic recovery to rebuild countries' economies and social fabrics, clearly integrating the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement into recovery plans. It has been understood that the exit from the pandemic offers an opportunity to build back better, putting sustainability, people, and social justice at the heart of decisions. Even so, beyond the individual actions of citizens and governments, collegial and responsible management of global public goods is needed through a strengthened and renewed multilateralism, especially as we witness a new race for national colonisation of the last virgin spaces: the poles, the oceans, the air, even outer space. Consolidating protocols to manage these final frontiers on the basis of respect for future generations will be a major agenda for the international community in the coming years.

## Annual global CO2 emissions (in million tonnes)



Source: Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center (CDIAC) / Global Carbon Project (GCP)

The demographic challenge, in its many ramifications, is the other major dimension associated with the ecological divide. Continued population growth puts increasing pressure on ecosystems. Rising life expectancy and urban concentration, as well as the depopulation of certain territories, are trends that affect every continent, presenting both challenges and opportunities. The coming years will see an acceleration of the divergence between hemispheres that has marked the last half century: ageing in the North and the consequent challenge to the viability of welfare systems, and a demographic explosion in a South with limited means to meet the demands of a young population with growing expectations.

The intelligent management of migratory flows is emerging as the only possible response to this dilemma, and may also offer solutions to others, such as territorial imbalances and the gap between regions and between urban and rural areas. However, we still lack a

global governance framework to address these challenges.

The third major fault line is the **technological** fault line, which is already dividing our planet, both in terms of the positioning of countries with regard to technology itself, its regulation and management, and in terms of peoples' access and opportunities, especially visible in regard to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on education and work for vulnerable groups and women.

Technological change is inherent to human activity, but it has never transformed our world so quickly, rapidly changing the way we learn, live and work. If not properly managed, technological change risks widening the gap between winners and losers, widening the gaps in our economies and societies, and posing serious challenges to the very survival of our species.

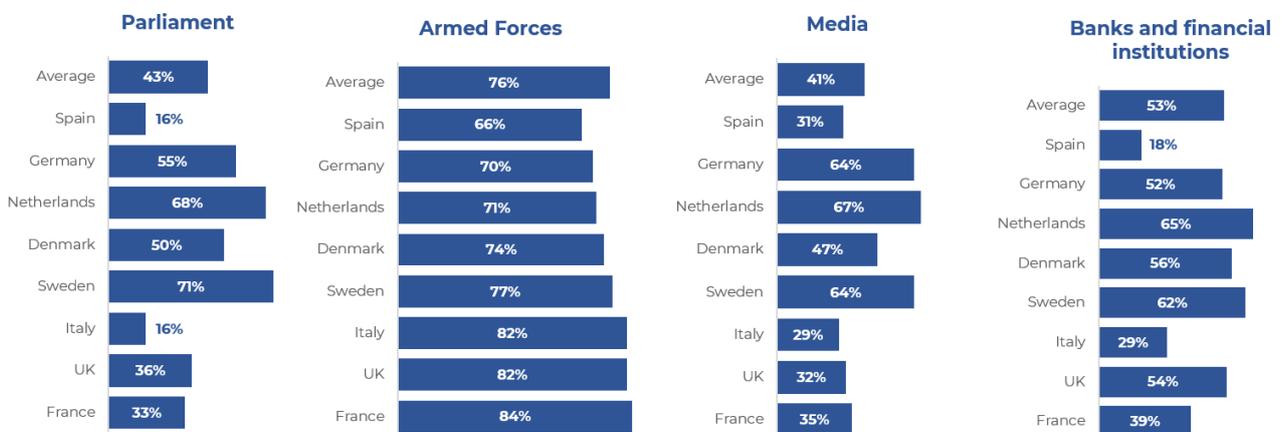
The governance model for technology is divided according to the position of each country or actor in the current

balance of power. This is reflected in debates on the taxation of the digital economy, autonomous weapons, cybersecurity, cryptocurrencies and new means of payment, consumer rights protection, the dichotomy between security and privacy, and research and development in areas such as AI and biotechnology, which raise a number of ethical dilemmas, but also opportunities in terms of investment, economic growth, and competitiveness.

Finally, we are also witnessing a **political and governance** fault line, which cuts across the other three: the political crisis stems from them, but at the same time it is the inability of government systems to respond to the challenges of our time that widens the other three fault lines. The divergences that arise around all these challenges, as well as their

transnational nature, cause a breakdown in the very space of democratic dialogue and a growing institutional fragility. The common territory for the meeting and exchange of ideas is shrinking, with positions increasingly festering and restricted to their respective ideological spheres, where too much information warps into disinformation. Fake news and questioning expert knowledge, not to mention questioning facts themselves and the rise of post-truth, have become particularly virulent in recent years and contribute—together with phenomena such as corruption, discredited political parties, interest groups capturing the system—to the breakdown of public confidence in all institutions, which ultimately has repercussions on the solidity of democratic systems.

### Trust in institutions in Western Europe



Source: Pew Research Center, 2017

The crisis of the political and institutional order that we have seen at the national level extends into the international arena, generating greater instability at a global level. The functioning of many international institutions is being called into question and their weaknesses are being exploited to benefit the interests of certain major powers. This phenomenon is magnified by the

**transition from a unipolar to a multipolar, even non-polar,** order, which is increasingly volatile and fragmented. We are witnessing a hardening of international relations and the return of power politics, making collective action more difficult, with the narrative of globalisation (in which apparently everyone wins) giving way to the paradigm of geopolitics (in which one's gain is perceived as another's loss).

The result is a less cooperative and more aggressive international atmosphere in which unilateralism and coercion take precedence. As the National Defence Directive 2020 points out, the last decade has witnessed a remarkable erosion of multilateralism and the international order, with the threat of the use of force increasing, seriously raising the risk of inter-state conflict.

Added to this geopolitical scenario is the question of the European Union's own capacity for international leadership—an objective to which Spain must contribute—and its willingness to assume greater strategic autonomy in

certain areas. There is also the possible emergence of new actors, whether state or non-state, with the capacity for systemic influence. There is a growing erosion of the monopoly that states have traditionally exercised over the global order, based on the concepts of identity, sovereignty, and belonging, which opens up a crisis of global governance that external action cannot ignore. At the same time, all these forces, which are undoubtedly generating great uncertainty and disorientation, represent windows of opportunity in the search for new political, economic, social, and cultural paradigms.

## Table 2.2. Major trends

The 2018 and 2019 Annual National Security Reports, prepared by the Department of National Security of the Office of the Presidency of the Government, provide a broad overview of the major global trends that will mark the foreseeable future of our country, and their particular impact in the case of Spain.

At an international level, the McKinsey Global Institute identified three major global macro-trends in 2019: (1) the intensification of disruptive change; (2) the growing polarisation between those who embrace change and those who reject it; and (3) the mobilisation towards a more inclusive society. In its latest *Global Trends* report, the US National Intelligence Council adds to this scenario by anticipating increased tensions both between and within countries in the coming years, which will make progress in international cooperation more difficult. The future will be marked by the interaction between three scenarios, with different dominant forces: what the report termed Islands (countries), Orbits (regional spheres of influence) and Communities (subnational actors with transnational reach).

The consultancy firm Roland Berger, for its part, has produced projections of the main trends between 2020 and 2030 (many of which will have to be revised in the light of the Covid-19 crisis):

1. **POPULATION:** 8.3 billion people will be living on the planet. Population growth will be 20%, but the rate will be slowing compared to the previous 20 years. 59% of the world's population will live in cities.
2. **GROWTH:** Global real GDP will grow by 4% to USD 135 trillion, more than double the current level. The growth rate will also slow down compared to the previous 20 years.
3. **RESOURCES:** Primary energy consumption will increase by 26% and annual water demand by 53%. Half of the world's population will live in areas of high water stress.

4. **CLIMATE:** CO2 emissions will increase by 16%, although per capita emissions will remain more or less stable.
5. **TECHNOLOGY:** The number of solely mobile phone users will grow by 34%. 60% of the world's population will have access to broadband, the speed of which will grow by a multiple of 100 or more.
6. **KNOWLEDGE:** Internet users will consume an average of 3 GB of data per day. 91% of the world's population will complete primary education (88% today). 55% will complete secondary or higher education (50% today).

In the face of all these deep fault lines, we can identify different types of response. On the one hand, there is **centrifugal movement** towards a certain deglobalisation in certain areas, with a more fragmented and less collaborative international order. These tendencies can lead to more nationalist, populist leaders, who view the global arena as a territory of competition and zero-sum games. There is also **centripetal movement**, pushing towards convergence and greater collaboration in the face of global challenges and common threats. These trends could drive gradualist reform, or even a more far-reaching refounding of the multilateral system, overhauling its foundations, architecture, and principles.

In practice, the coming years are likely to see a **combination of both dynamics:** responses that combine confrontation and less collaboration in some areas (e.g., international trade, security, border control, with declining development aid in some countries) and greater cooperation and interdependence in others (e.g., health, climate change). The key will be determined by the prevalence of certain socio-economic and political models over others, in a

context of redefinition of the main vectors that underpin the organisation of our societies, such as the role of the State, the importance of democracy, and human rights. Another force will be the absolute necessity to promote a strengthening and renewal of multilateralism in order to counteract initiatives aimed at undermining it, as well as those seeking to manipulate it from the logic of the lowest common denominator.

In one way or another, our foreign action calls for a **strategy to face this diverse, uncertain, complex, and sometimes contradictory world.** The multilateral order established after World War II is based on the implicit conviction that the progress of humanity is a shared responsibility, hence its universalist imprint. However, this order is challenged by its limitations in responding to new dynamics and challenges of a different nature and magnitude. The world has changed faster than the rules and institutions that govern it, generating imbalances and a sense of insecurity and mistrust. It is essential to adapt the mechanisms for managing interdependence to this new reality, both in terms of content and working methods.



# **3. SPAIN'S POSITION**

# Spain's position

In the more than 40 years since the adoption of its 1978 Constitution, **Spain has become actively integrated into the international arena**, overcoming the isolation it suffered as a result of its recent history. This integration makes us more aware of the interdependence, complexity, speed of change, insecurity, and uncertainty that are typical of modern, open, and interconnected societies. It makes us more vulnerable to

the challenges posed by these dynamics, but also more open to seizing opportunities for the benefit of our development and our people. Therefore, Spain's national interest lies in actively contributing to a peaceful, collaborative, and effective global order in our response to the major challenges of these times, in line with the defence and projection of our interests as a country.

## 3.1 Spain's assets and added value

Spain's foreign action inevitably involves responding to challenges not only as a country, but also as a member of the international community. This response involves building on our strengths. Spain is one of the 15 largest economies on the planet, thanks to intense modernisation: It has highly qualified human capital; it possesses modern digital infrastructures; it has multinationals that are recognised in their respective sectors; and it plays a

leading role in areas with a promising future. These include industries linked to the ecological transition and the fight against climate change, in particular renewable energy, fibre optics, and agribusiness, and the bio-health sector. Although there is still much room for improvement, the Spain of 2021 is a dynamic and internationalised economy, whose foreign sector has been a prime mover in the recovery of recent years.

**Table 3.1. Spain in different international rankings**

Index	Position
Population 2019 (UN World Population Prospects)	30/235
Human Development Index 2019 (UNDP)	25/189
Nominal GDP 2019 (World Bank)	13/203
Global Competitiveness Index 2019 (World Economic Forum)	23/141
Doing Business 2020 (World Bank)	30/190
Democracy Report 2020 (V-Dem Institute)	9/202
Democracy Index 2020 (The Economist Intelligence Unit)	18/167
The Global State of Democracy 2019 (International IDEA)	13/158
Rule of Law 2020 (World Justice Project)	19/128
World Press Freedom Index 2020 (RSF)	29/180

Global Gender Gap 2020 (World Economic Forum)	8/153
Women, Peace, and Security Index 2020 (Georgetown Institute)	15/167
Women's Workplace Equality Index 2020 (Council on Foreign Relations)	4/189
Healthiest Country Index 2019 (Bloomberg)	1/169
Health Efficiency Index 2020 (Bloomberg) {pre Covid}	4/57
Global Health Security Index 2019 (Johns Hopkins)	15/195
World Energy Trilemma Index 2020 (World Energy Council)	15/108
Sustainable Development Report 2020 (Cambridge University Press)	22/166
Environmental Performance Index 2020 (Yale University)	14/180
Sustainable Development Goals Index 2020 (Bertelsmann Stiftung)	21/166
Work-Life Balance, Better Life Index 2020 (OECD)	4/40
The Global Innovation Index 2017: online participation	7/127
EU Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020	11/28
Global Cybersecurity Index (ITU)	7/193
Inclusive Internet Index 2020 (The Economist Intelligence Unit and Facebook)	10/100
Global Law and Order (Gallup)	9/144
Global Diplomacy Index 2019 (Lowy Institute)	9/61
Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 (World Economic Forum)	1/140
UNESCO World Heritage List	3/167
UNESCO List of Biosphere Reserves	1/124

In addition to its economic weight, Spain is a **leader in social and ecological issues**. Spain is a world leader in the promotion of human rights, especially in gender equality, the fight against gender violence, the defence of diversity, the rights of LGBTI individuals—an area in which the country has been a pioneer with the approval of same-sex marriage and adoption—and legislation on the legalisation of euthanasia. Spain is also at the vanguard of migratory integration, environmental protection, the fight against climate change, energy transition, quality infrastructures, and water and sanitation management. All of this has been possible thanks to innovative policies and a welfare model based on the strength of the public sector and its close collaboration with a

socially responsible, committed private sector.

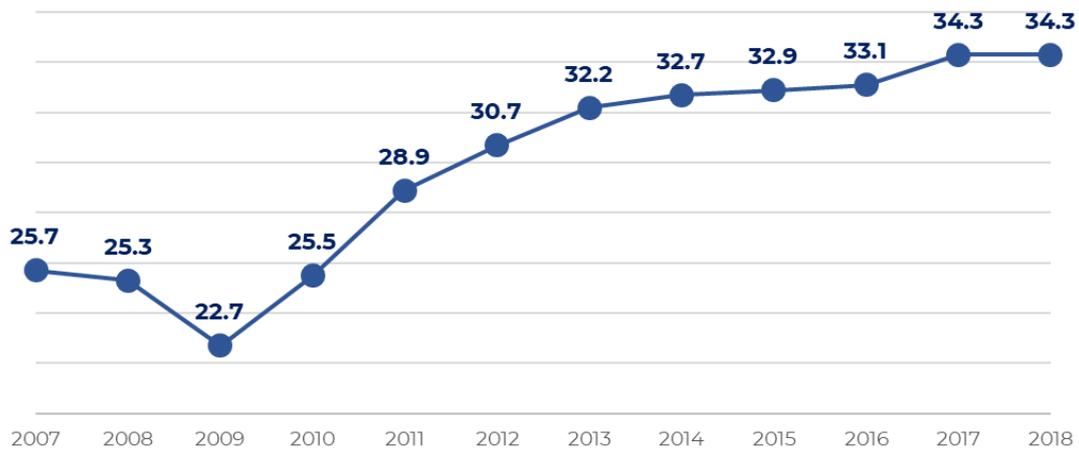
Spain is also a society renowned for its **solidarity**, which is reflected in the high rate of organ donors and transplants, and the broad public support for the national policy on cooperation for sustainable development.

Our country is one of the most committed to the 2030 Agenda, and Spanish international cooperation has gained great prestige over the last 30 years in many regions of the world, especially in Latin America. In 2019, 2.4 million people in Spain collaborated with NGOs, while 20,400 volunteers and 8,800 development aid workers participated in cooperation projects. Spain is, today, a world reference in international commitment and responsibility towards peace and the

improvement of global stability, making us a reliable and valued partner for other countries. Spaniards are resolutely pro-European, above average compared to other EU partners, and have a very positive attitude towards multilateralism. Through the work of its armed forces and its contribution to

peace operations around the world, Spain is a security provider with its own model, the hallmarks of which are respect for the principle of sovereignty and human rights as an element in conflict prevention and as a condition for social development.

### Spanish exports of goods and services (% of GDP)



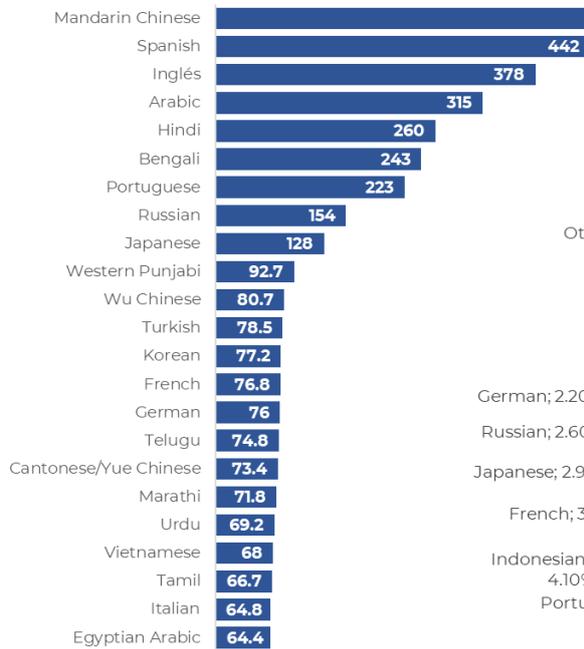
Source: INE, National Accounts of Spain (31 January 2019)

In addition to these factors, there are others that help to shape a true **Spanish soft power**, starting with a clearly differentiated and easily distinguishable identity—something that not all countries have—which is the synthesis of a rich legacy and an enriching diversity. Today, this image combines tradition and modernity, as shown by the capacity of our creative industry to conquer new markets and become an international benchmark in cinema and series, music, cuisine, and sports, to name just a few areas. Cultural, educational, scientific, and technological action, with widespread deployment, whose potential can still be further exploited, is the best feature of this soft power. The importance of the Spanish language worldwide deserves special mention, as it is a unique asset in its own right. The robust network of institutions and activities that feed this soft power, and its steady growth, is a fundamental instrument of the State's

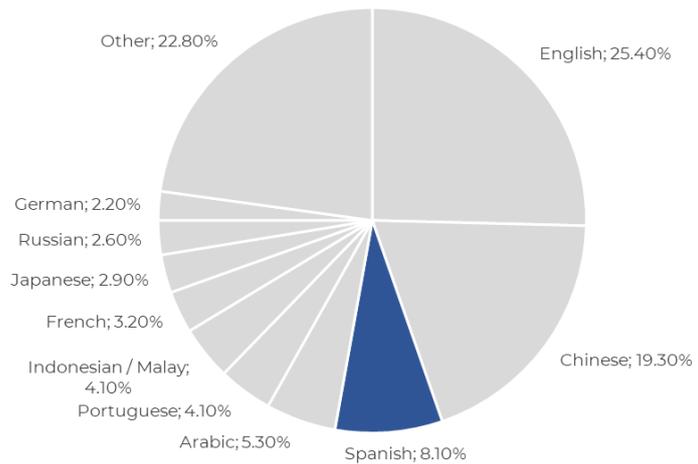
foreign action linked to our image abroad and to our national brand. Through these channels, Spain has been able to project an image of a country with its own style and quality of life, genuine and unique in its identity, but global in its appeal.

This capacity for projection has a lot to do with our singular geography and history. We are a country with a **global calling and a multidimensional identity**, which, in addition to its European essence and Mediterranean roots, has deep and irrevocable ties with Latin America, a transatlantic commitment, and intense relations with Africa. Our unique strategic position between Europe and Africa, straddling the connection between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, make Spain an ideal interlocutor which can provide a comprehensive vision and has the capacity for dialogue in multiple regional and cultural contexts.

## Languages with the largest number of native speakers in 2018 (in millions)



## The most widely used languages on the Internet (2019)



Source: Ethnologue, *Languages of the World*, 2018 / Internet World Stats, 2019

This geographic location, together with our pro-European and multilateral values, has enabled Spain to be a **major player in the most recent phases of European integration and a strong promoter of the global agenda** outlined by the United Nations (UN), in particular the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Moreover, Spain is an active partner in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and NATO, a leading player in other international forums such as the OECD, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, and a champion of the Ibero-American system. Spain is also the only permanent guest of the G20, the main global forum for economic governance which brings together the world's leading economies and in which we will work to consolidate Spain's status and influence.

These positive factors should contribute to **overcoming the challenges** that Spain shares with other countries, but

sometimes with particular local characteristics or intensity. These are challenges such as the maintenance of our welfare state; the necessary transformation of the productive structure towards greater digitalisation, productivity, and competitiveness; excessive sensitivity to recessionary cycles with immediate effects on unemployment, especially youth unemployment; an ageing demographic profile; vulnerability to climate change, especially desertification and water scarcity; the unequal distribution of the population; insufficient investment in R&D&I; and limited capabilities of some of the population for taking advantage of technological and digital change. In addition to these and other issues, there is a special concern: the progressive erosion, after more than four decades of progress in democracy, of political and social coexistence, marked by growing tension, polarisation, and questioning of our model of territorial organisation.

The crux of the matter is to **transform these challenges into opportunities**, actively reinterpreting our complexity and diversity as a strength and a factor of enrichment in our external projection. Spain has shown signs of resilience and the capacity to overcome adversity,

most recently after the serious economic crisis of 2008, and it has no shortage of strengths and instruments to emerge from the current situation caused by Covid-19 with greater strength and dynamism, with foreign action as a key element.

### **Table 3.2. The perception of Spain in the world**

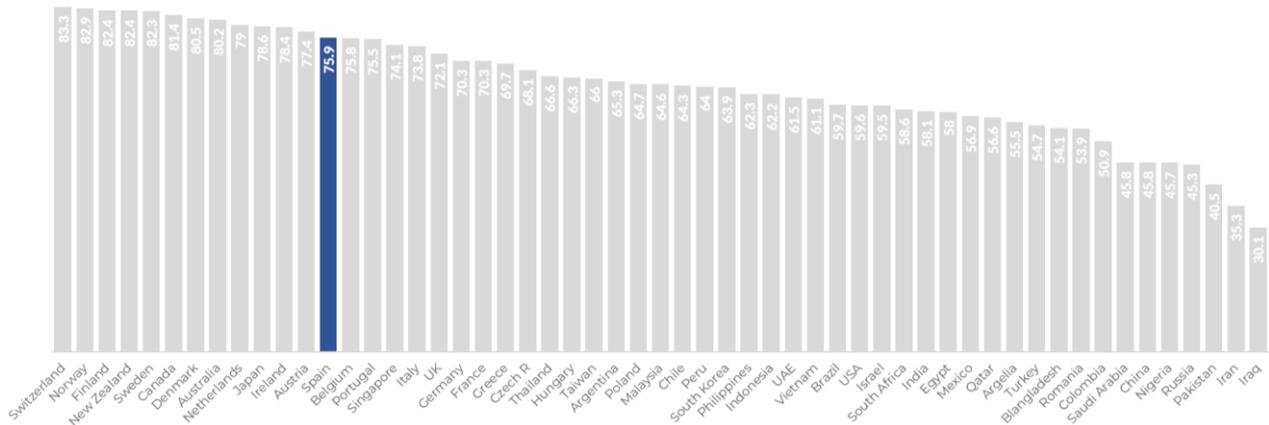
The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has shaken economies in countries around the globe, including Spain. However, the indicators and surveys published in recent months by independent organisations make one thing very clear: Spain's brand is solid, and its international reputation remains strong and among the best in the world.

One of the latest studies to demonstrate this, published in November 2020, is Brand Finance's *Nation Brands 2020*, based on the opinion of 55,000 respondents in more than 100 countries. It maintains that Spain's brand value remains on the threshold of the top 10 most valuable country brands in the world, in 11th place, the same position it occupied in last year's edition, moving up seven positions since 2013 and 2014, when it was in 18th place in the ranking. According to this study, the country brand value ranking of Spain stands above other nations with a high reputation, such as Australia (12th), the Netherlands (13th), Switzerland (15th), Ireland (19th), Sweden (23rd), and Norway (25th).

Another report on countries' reputations, the *Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index 2020*, assessing the image of the world's top 50 economies, also places Spain 11th in the global ranking, the same position as in 2019. Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and France, lead the ranking. According to this study, for which more than 20,000 online interviews were conducted in 20 countries during the months of July and August of that year, Spain stands out especially in the area of tourism, where it is in fourth place in the ranking, surpassed only by Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, with its urban social life as the main strength within that category. Spain also enters the top 10 of the ranking in the areas of culture (with sport at the top) and society (with the welcoming nature of Spaniards as the trait most valued by respondents). In the other areas analysed (immigration, investment, exports, and government), Spain ranks above the global average, in the top 20.

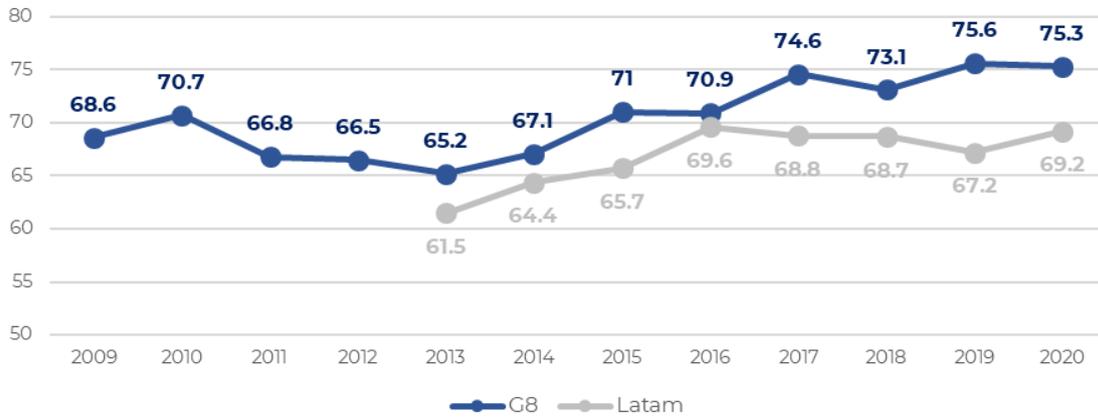
Another report, one focusing on Spain's reputation worldwide, prepared by the Reputation Institute in collaboration with the Elcano Royal Institute, presented in September 2020, concludes from 33,000 surveys in 22 countries that, in general terms, the positioning of Spain's reputation is considered internationally to be strong and robust. It places Spain 13th in the global ranking, ahead of neighbouring powers and large European economies such as Italy (16th), the United Kingdom (18th), Germany (19th), and France (20th). The gap widens against the two major superpowers, the USA (34th) and China (50th). Spain's position remains strong compared to previous years, demonstrating its resilience despite the multilevel ravages of the Covid-19 crisis. In addition, the self-perception of Spanish citizens has improved (76.5 out of 100), and for the first time in many years is slightly above the international rating (75.9). (75,9).

## Spain's reputation in the world



Source: Country RepTrak 2020, Real Instituto Elcano / Reputation Institute

## The evolution of Spain's reputation in the G8 and Latin America



Source: Country RepTrak 2020, Real Instituto Elcano / Reputation Institute

# 3.2 Guiding principles for Spain's foreign action

The reality of Spain in 2021 is that of a relevant middle power with the potential to gain more importance in the world. A country that is perceived by the rest of the international community as a reliable and predictable partner,

which generates trust and credibility. This gives us room to take on a **more high-profile international role**, with greater capacity for initiative and the possibility of mobilising other countries

around the agendas we believe in and where we can contribute added value.

To activate this potential and make it effective, Spain must develop a foreign action strategy that adequately leverages its **strengths and comparative advantages**, minimises its weaknesses, and complements its shortcomings. This means acting intelligently, projecting our influence fundamentally through Europe, but also adding to this commitment a strategic and selective bilateral action, and bringing to the international community a constructive and supportive approach that defends a reformed and strengthened multilateralism and an open international order.

If the world is increasingly functioning as an interconnected network, our country's nodal character becomes an added value. Spain can make a more decisive and strategic contribution in its bilateral relations, play a relevant role in the construction of Europe and as a bridge between the EU and other regions, and become a central player in an effort to **modernise multilateralism and global governance**.

In light of all these elements, **four main principles** summarise the conception that this Strategy formulates with regard to Spain's foreign action, each responding to its three-fold European, multilateral and bilateral dimension:

- **More Europe:** Europe is a natural extension of our country and its policy is therefore the main priority of Spanish foreign action. The deepening of European integration is essential for Spain, which is firmly committed to a more integrated and federal European Union. One which places citizens at the heart of its actions and which occupies the level of global protagonism that its geopolitical and economic stature and differentiated model of transnational governance deserve. This can only be made possible through speaking with one voice. During 2021-2024, Spain aspires to

greater leadership and a more central role in building Europe over the coming decades, working closely with EU institutions and forging a consensus with Member States around specific agendas that we can co-lead through from different angles. The three pillars that will define this external action in favour of More Europe will be: fostering greater political, economic, social, and cultural integration; supporting greater strategic autonomy that makes us more resilient and less vulnerable in key areas and allows us to be responsible for our own future; and promoting a greater global projection of the EU and its values. The centrality of Europe in Spain's foreign action determines that the European dimension and perspective permeates all the substantive pillar of this Strategy. Given its special character as the vehicle and objective, the substance and form of Spain's foreign action, this Strategy also addresses in greater detail the main initiatives and lines of action that Spain will promote within the framework of the EU (see section 4.4.1).

- **Better Multilateralism:** Our country's foreign action will have a resolutely multilateral orientation, because it recognises that Spain and Europe can only do well if the world as a whole does well. We will seek and promote global responses to global problems by defending and promoting a reformed and strengthened multilateralism. We will combine our commitment to improving global governance—at a time when the world order is being redefined—with our nodal position, based on the recognition of our unique potential as a relevant actor in regions such as Europe, the Americas, and the Mediterranean, as well being a catalyst for dialogue and consensus on issues in which we have experience and recognised prestige.

Spain aspires to fully exploit the supporting, integrating role that our country can and should play with regard to global issues as a result of our singular comparative advantages in certain agendas. This will translate into taking a more active part in the creation of coalitions of like-minded countries and regions with an open vision of the world, and into deepening our committed efforts to better managing major global challenges. It will also be reflected in the promotion of an in-depth review of both the structure and the functioning of the international system, with the goal of undertaking the necessary reforms to adapt it to the needs of our times and make it more efficient, effective, coherent, transparent, democratic, and inclusive.

- **Strategic Bilateralism:** Bilateralism will complement Spanish foreign action, based on parameters of efficiency and effectiveness. Spain's bilateral action extends to all countries and spheres, but will be selectively deepened, based on recognition of the added value that bilateral action may have compared to European foreign action or multilateral channels. It will seek to rationalise resources, define priorities more clearly, and exploit synergies more decisively. This document outlines a series of thematic lines of action, on a global level, which will mark the priorities of our relationship with different regions (see the corresponding tables), and the main countries within them. Strategic Bilateralism will help to redefine some lines of action and to concentrate our efforts more effectively on countries, regions, and issues where Spain can make special contributions, thanks to our comparative advantage. In this regard, and beyond the priority of our commitment to European integration, Spain will continue to give preference to its ties and mechanisms for cooperation and dialogue with Latin American

countries, those of the Mediterranean basin, and with Africa. Bilateral ties with the world's major economies will also be strengthened, especially the transatlantic relationship, and with countries having affinities with us on the global agenda's major issues.

- **Committed Solidarity:** The fundamental principle of solidarity rounds off Spain's vision for its foreign action in the coming years. Spain can only advance and progress in a world that advances and progresses as a whole, and in which serious gaps in terms of development, poverty, and injustice—in all their forms—are addressed with the urgency and forcefulness they deserve. This requires a redoubled commitment on the part of a country like Spain, with its values of solidarity, with its vocation of responsibility towards the rest of the international community, and with its capacity to help other countries which have a lower level of development and difficulties in achieving the SDGs. Based on our strengths and added value, and in close collaboration with other actors, Spanish foreign action will focus on supporting those who need it most. Sustainable development cooperation will be the main vehicle in this regard, and during 2021-2024 its means and instruments will be strengthened, promoting a profound reform and new vision (see section 5.2).

### **Table 3.3. Leadership, anticipation and projection: keys to optimise the main principles of Spain's foreign action**

To realise the four main principles that will guide Spain's foreign action (More Europe, Better Multilateralism, Strategic Bilateralism, and Committed Solidarity), this Strategy proposes three instrumental elements to guide planning and define our actions:

**LEADERSHIP:** Spain aspires to confidently assume greater international and European leadership. This implies a greater capacity for initiative and being at the forefront of issues and areas where there are gaps and opportunities, through the drafting of courageous and creative proposals that combine ambition and realism. The EU is undoubtedly the main platform to augment this capacity to lead globally, and we must fully capitalise on it. But we must also consolidate our position as a leading country in consensus building and international agendas, and assume leadership with autonomy and our own distinctive identity when necessary, creating ad hoc coalitions with countries at the forefront, on certain issues and policies.

**ANTICIPATION:** Spain wants to anticipate events and contribute to shaping them. This requires improving our forecasting and strategic capabilities, identifying trends, considering different scenarios, and articulating lines of action swiftly in order to gain an advantageous position early on, in the major issues that will shape the future. Increasing our capacity to anticipate requires better coordination between the different actors involved in our foreign action, through early consultation and information-sharing systems. It also entails giving greater importance to climate, science and technology diplomacy.

**PROJECTION:** Spain intends to increase not only its international presence, but also its influence and visibility. To this end, it will strategically and systematically activate all Spanish actors with a global profile and improve the communication of its foreign action priorities, boosting its image as a country committed to the rest of the international community. The promotion of the country's reputation will be undertaken in a holistic, orderly and effective manner, and will most certainly be a priority, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis. Global Spain will identify opportunities in this regard, and will deploy its full potential to take advantage of them.



# **4. SPAIN'S RESPONSE**

# Spain's response

Our foreign action aims to convey its response on a practical level through **four substantive lines of action**: (1) promoting human rights, democracy, security, feminism, and diversity as reference points for Spain's international action; (2) championing a new global socio-economic model,

based on the principles of integration, justice, and equity; (3) strongly defending a more sustainable, habitable, and greener planet; and (4) engaging in activism to improve global governance through greater regional integration and a renewed and strengthened multilateralism.

## 4.1 Human rights, democracy, security, feminism, and diversity as reference points

### 4.1.1 Full and guaranteed human rights

The protection and promotion of human rights must be consolidated as a distinctive and defining element of Spain's foreign action.

Spain will **condemn and combat human rights violations** wherever they occur, and will favour a more preventive and proactive approach to the defence of human rights. Our priorities will be the defence of freedom; the abolition of the death penalty; the fight against any type of discrimination; the promotion of the rights of the disabled; engaging on business and human rights; and advancing the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. Special emphasis will be placed on the active involvement of the private sector in the defence and promotion of human rights and compliance with the principle of due diligence, in line with the principles that inspire the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council, as well as with the EU's due diligence Draft Directive. Emphasis will also be placed on the protection of human rights defenders, especially those who suffer persecution due to carrying out their work.

To make this commitment effective, **Spain will step up its involvement in international human rights forums**, actively participating in ongoing debates and promoting SDG-16 which aims to create just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. Commitment to the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU 2020-2024 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy will be reaffirmed.

Spain will also contribute to improving UN mechanisms, where problems that undermine the credibility of the human rights system have been observed, raising Spain's profile within the UN treaty monitoring bodies in this area, including the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, and supporting its Universal Periodic Reviews and resolutions.

Likewise, the presence of the human rights agenda and the visibility of the issues and problems associated with them will be strengthened within the EU, both in Brussels and on the ground.

At a bilateral level, Spain will go further in its **systematic incorporation of human rights into its relations with other countries**, with actions such as reserving a space to address these issues on the agendas of visits, dialogues and consultations.

In institutional matters, Spain will promote the **strengthening of international law**, through, among other means, the International Court of Justice, as well as universal criminal justice instruments such as the International Criminal Court and ad hoc international criminal tribunals. These actions are aimed at promoting the development of a strengthened international justice system that guarantees human rights. Spain will also reaffirm its commitment to the

European Court of Human Rights as the fundamental guarantor of compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Spain will emphasise the **fight against discrimination affecting certain groups and the defence of diversity**. In this regard, we will lead multilateral initiatives of international scope and we will strengthen dialogue and advocacy on a bilateral level with third countries. Our country aspires to be a world leader in the promotion of rights for all vulnerable groups. It will also champion special protection for children, specifically those in vulnerable situations, and the universal promotion of the rights included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 4.1.2 A more democratic world

Enhancing and consolidating democratic processes will also be vectors of Spain's foreign action, contributing our own historical and institutional experience to **promoting democratising forces** wherever they may be. Beyond the defence of formal democracy, emphasis will be placed on initiatives that have an impact on the quality of democracy, particularly in a context where it is being questioned.

In the multilateral sphere, our country will redouble its **commitment to international instruments for the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of the rule of law**, both in terms of transition and consolidation. In particular, we will step up our role of mediation and facilitation in those democratisation processes where Spain can contribute added value, bilaterally and through European mechanisms. We will work closely with all countries that promote initiatives to advance and improve the quality of democracy. We will support electoral observation and assistance missions, and we will promote a more active participation in institutions such as the Council of

Europe and the OSCE, where we will seek to raise our profile.

The defence of democracy and the rule of law necessarily implies the **defence of freedom as a fundamental value**. In its foreign action, Spain will defend the promotion of all the liberties and freedom that guarantee the democratic functioning of societies, including freedom of expression, opinion, association, worship, the press, movement, and choice. It will also promote the defence of those institutional and regulatory frameworks that favour the market economy and business initiatives, as opposed to other models that clash with our values and distort competition.

Through coordinated efforts with other EU partners, we look forward to working closely with the new US Administration to promote freedom and democracy as the best form of government.

Through the **Diverse Spain** initiative, our country will position itself as an international reference for diversity promotion as a key value for strengthening democracy. A report will

be produced that will reflect the diversity of Spanish society as an asset of our foreign action, and how to integrate it more effectively into our global projection.

Spain will also place special emphasis on **combating corruption** in all its forms. We will promote greater commitment to international anti-corruption instruments and mechanisms, and we will be zealous in developing initiatives to tackle corruption and to promote greater transparency and accountability. We will work towards protecting public institutions from private interests. We will also continue to work with our corporations to make them models of good practice.

Another key area of importance will be the **fight against disinformation activities**, which undermine the health of our democracies and whose pernicious impact destabilises our societies and institutions. To this end, we will strengthen ongoing international efforts to prevent destabilising interference, particularly within the EU and NATO, and we will be at the forefront of defending the right to freely communicate and receive verified information, essential for the debate that every democracy needs. Here, our National Security Council will play a decisive role. Spain will promote cooperation in all relevant forums in this area..

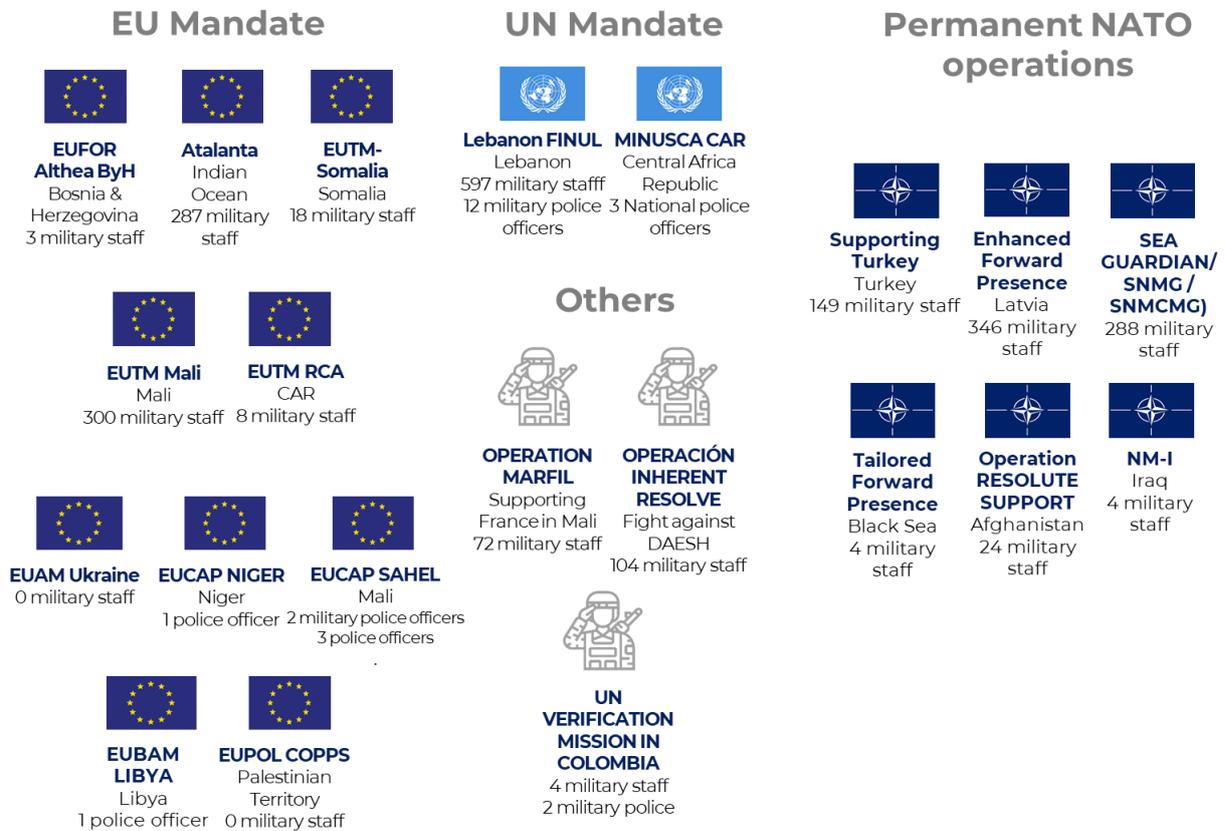
### **4.1.3 Human security at the heart of the agenda**

The maintenance of international **peace and security** is a fundamental requirement, essential for development and progress. As such, our foreign action will pay particular attention to peace, security, and defence issues, with a **holistic and comprehensive approach to human security** and human dignity.

Spain will actively promote compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law to ensure the **protection of the civil population during armed conflicts**, especially particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children.

We will prioritise a **preventive, anticipatory, and deterrent approach** to conflict, centred on diplomacy and mediation, reaffirming our commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect and the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping. Our armed forces and law enforcement will always be able to provide a proportionate and robust response to threats from any geographical area, from both State and non-State actors. To this end, a cooperative approach to security will be prioritised. Without interfering with the capacity to intervene nationally when necessary, our preferred option will be to act within a multilateral framework.

## Spain's participation in ongoing international missions



Source: Defence Ministry, December 2020.

Spain will reaffirm its **commitment to NATO** as a central actor in Europe's collective defence, and we will actively participate in the strategic review that the Organisation has undertaken. At the same time, we will continue to promote the **strengthening of the EU's autonomous strategic capabilities**. We will promote its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), remain at the forefront of EU military operations and missions, and strengthen our contribution to civilian missions. We will also focus on the development of the capabilities in our neighbourhood, as well as of all those that require it, particularly through the implementation of the European Peace Facility to ensure the stability of the EU periphery.

Spain will seek to capitalise more actively on the **diplomatic potential of its military operations abroad**, based on more than 30 years of experience. Spain is present in most NATO and EU deployments; there are few partners that maintain such a constant ongoing effort.

As a responsible actor in the construction of a **European Defence**, our national industry also aspires to be present from the outset in the creation of Europe's industrial and technological capabilities, including the development of joint projects and programmes, and participation in pan-European consortiums. This requires associations with European partners, using the **European Defence Agency (EDA)** as a catalyst. EDA, an EU body, is key to the

Common Security and Defence Policy in such important areas as developing military capabilities, stepping up research and technology, supporting operations, ties with broader policies (such as space, and maritime and cyber security), promoting Permanent Structured Cooperation, the coordinated annual defence review (CARD), and the relationship with the Commission's recently created DG DEFIS to strengthen the European Defence Fund. Spain firmly supports EDA in the promotion of the European Defence.

Spain will more closely **coordinate the activity of our armed forces abroad with that of our national law enforcement agencies**. Their presence outside our borders, in areas such as the Sahel, plays an essential role in our internal security. Both these actors, together with the Justice Administration, intervene most directly in confronting threats to international peace and security and to the rule of law itself, such as armed conflicts, organised crime, human trafficking, and international terrorism. Within the framework of European Union missions, we will place special emphasis on combating these scourges in the countries of origin, through training, raising awareness, and the providing the necessary resources to develop national capabilities. We will also put all of our security and defence potential at the service of preserving peace, combating crime, and promoting safe environments in which all individuals can lead full lives.

Our foreign action will combat organised crime in all its forms, in particular terrorism throughout its entire cycle: from the prevention of violent extremism, through countering hate speech and incitement to extremism, to the prosecution, conviction, rehabilitation, and reintegration of terrorists, with particular emphasis on international legal cooperation and engagement with victims. To achieve this, particular attention will be paid to new challenges related to the return of terrorist fighters,

the activities of terrorist groups and organisations in cyberspace, and the threat of the use of drones and biological weapons. We will pursue with particular zeal the connection between terrorism and organised crime, particularly by detecting and combating financing networks. We will work more closely with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, as well as with Interpol and Europol. The 2019 National Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars (prevention, protection, prosecution, preparation) will be the political and strategic reference framework for international aspects of the fight against terrorism.

In this context, it will be necessary to intensify **support for the international regime of non-proliferation** of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament, which is undergoing a phase of unprecedented erosion. Spain will promote the nuclear security architecture designed through initiatives such as the Nuclear Security Summit Process and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. We will also work to ensure that the international community is able to adapt to the new geopolitical balances emerging in the international arena and to the challenge posed by new technologies in the fight against nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. Our foreign action will promote the universalisation of the main international treaties and agreements, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, through the Stockholm Initiative, as well as the full and effective application of international law, participating in international organisations, forums, and initiatives for the control and verification of weapons of mass destruction and promoting proportional and appropriate responses to cases of violation of international norms.

Spain will continue to participate actively in improving and updating the **export control regimes for defence and dual-use goods**, pursuant to its Act on the Control of Foreign Trade in Defence and Dual-Use Material. We will pay special attention to the

development of autonomous lethal weapons systems and the discussions on this subject taking place within the United Nations Convention on Conventional Weapons.

In addition, **particular attention will be paid to the hybrid threats** posed by a growing multiplicity of actors and the development of new technologies. The increasing digitisation of society and the economy also calls for renewed **efforts to ensure the cybersecurity** of our communications, systems, and critical infrastructure. Our action must be aimed at promoting security and stability in a global, open, and free cyberspace with the application of current international law and full respect for human rights, for which our National Cybersecurity Strategy establishes, among other objectives, a broad framework of international cooperation. Likewise, strategic

communication, able to convey truthful, accurate, and timely information, is a critical dimension in the face of crises and hybrid threats.

In the current international situation, it is foreseeable that the UN and the EU, as well as its Member States, will increasingly resort to the **use of restrictive measures** as a fundamental foreign policy instrument. These measures can only be adopted, implemented or supported in accordance with international law. For this reason, our administration must increase its capacity to manage these issues, providing itself with the appropriate means. Moreover, the EU and Spain must be prepared to respond as effectively as possible to the application of extraterritorial sanctions by third States, defending the interests of their companies and citizens.

#### **4.1.4 Spain as an international reference in feminist foreign policy**

The active promotion of **equality** will be a priority and a cross-cutting principle of our foreign action, with a special focus on gender equality.

As a reflection of the values of Spanish society, Spain's foreign policy aspires to be an international reference in its commitment to **gender equality** around the world. Our country will focus fighting discrimination, defending and promoting the rights of women and girls, and making serious commitments to close the many existing gaps, especially with regard to economic issues and equal opportunities.

To this end, a Feminist Foreign Policy Strategy will be developed, with a specific strategy and methodology aimed at **mainstreaming a gender approach into every area of foreign action**, from its formulation to its evaluation. We will make gender equality an internal rule of Spanish foreign action, and feminist policies a principle of that action. But we will also practice what we

preach, promoting a greater presence of women in Spanish foreign action, especially in sectors and at levels that still suffer from under-representation.

Spain is firmly committed to the **prevention and elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls**, in all its manifestations, in compliance with the relevant international conventions, particularly the Istanbul Convention and the Warsaw Convention, which we will fully implement and promote.

Spain will co-lead the coalition on **economic justice and rights** of the Beijing+25 Generation Equality Forum, promoting fairer and more transformative economic policies, steadily reducing the pay gap until its elimination, promoting more inclusive labour markets, favouring the recognition of unpaid care work, tackling the digital divide and facilitating women's equal access to international trade and financial services. We will also

promote the implementation of the commitments made in the UN General Assembly Resolution on the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls.

Within the **Women, Peace and Security** agenda, our country will continue to implement its Second National Action Plan, disseminating and consolidating Commitment 2025. The participation of female troops in peacekeeping operations will be encouraged, and work will be done to acknowledge the role of women, promoting their effective mediation in peace processes and

protecting them from sexual violence, which mainly affects women and girls in war scenarios, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

The fight against **trafficking in human beings, especially women and girls**, is a priority for Spain. We will encourage updating international instruments for the prevention and suppression of these practices, particularly with regard to the traceability of financial flows, exchange of information between countries, use of new technologies, and coordination with the private sector.

## 4.1.5 Commitment to the defence of diversity

The **fight against all forms of discrimination**—based on such grounds as sex, race or ethnic origin, national origin, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ideology, age, disability, health condition, genetic characteristics, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance—has a positive impact on society as a whole, contributing to the free development of all people. The promotion of **diversity**, in all its forms, helps societies to be more open, inclusive, equitable, and tolerant.

**Respect for diversity** requires the implementation, at an international level, of measures aimed at the prevention and eradication of racist, homophobic and transphobic harassment, the promotion of diversity management policies and the fight against discrimination and exploitation in the workplace, the implementation of measures against structural racism, and the social and labour inclusion of transsexual and transgender people. Promoting the **understanding of LGBTI diversity, as well as ethnic diversity, as a value** is particularly important at a time of regression in terms of guaranteeing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex individuals.

We will assert our commitment by actively participating in the **European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points** Network, as well as in ad hoc meetings of the Council of Europe. In the

framework of the United Nations Human Rights Council, we will support the new mandate of the Independent **Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**. Spain will continue to exercise its leadership in the **United Nations LGBTI Core Group**, the platform that promotes the rights and freedom of the LGBTI collective within the multilateral framework. We will work in close coordination with our partners in the **Coalition for Equal Rights**.

Diversity promotion includes the **defence of the rights of indigenous peoples**, Afro-descendants, Roma, and people of other ethnic origins. In particular, we will support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the Special Mechanism for the defence of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, both oriented towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. We will attach particular importance to strengthening inclusive development, addressing the challenges that remain in relation to indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources, and promoting indigenous peoples' participation in climate change decisions. We will assert this in the **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**, and through active participation in the negotiation of relevant resolutions.

# REGIONAL PRIORITIES: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) share with the European Union in general, and with Spain in particular, a set of values, interests and priorities that result in a convergence of positions on the major issues that form the backbone of the international agenda. In a scenario of competition between different international actors and the redefinition of the major geopolitical balances, Spain can and should capitalise on its historical, human, economic, political, and solidarity ties with all Latin American countries to strengthen its presence and actively contribute to the region's development. This is particularly urgent given that Latin America has yet to develop its infrastructures, modernise its economies, and consolidate institutions that guarantee social cohesion, which opens up enormous possibilities for Spanish foreign action.*

*In its relations with LAC, Spain should prioritise strengthening institutions, respecting human rights, resolving crises politically, ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and maintaining its policy of solidarity with the region, an issue that is particularly relevant in the post-Covid-19 scenario. Likewise, it is necessary for Spain to support legal certainty throughout the region and promote open economies, as well as strengthening the link between the European Union and the Ibero-American Community, in all its dimensions.*

**GDP growth (% p.a.) Latin America and the Caribbean**



Source: World Bank (2000-2019) and IMF (projections for 2020-2021)

<b>Total population</b>	<b>648 M</b>
<b>Aggregate GDP</b>	<b>\$4.1 B</b>
<b>Spanish imports</b>	<b>€15.1 B</b>
<b>Spanish exports</b>	<b>€15.8 B</b>
<b>Spanish Embassies</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Spanish Consulates</b>	<b>21</b>

Economic and trade relations between Spain and the region have doubled in the last 15 years. Our exports have grown from €7.1 billion in 2005 to €15.1 billion in 2019. Recorded imports from the region that year reached €15.8 billion. Spain is the leading European investor in LAC, and the second largest in the world, after the USA. The accumulated stock amounts to 131.6 billion euros, and 20% of the profits of 10 of the main IBEX 35 companies come from Latin America and the Caribbean. The number of Spanish companies exporting to LAC has quadrupled in the last 15 years to more than 100,000, of which nearly 22,000 export regularly. Politically, Spain maintains intense bilateral relations with all the countries in the region and is perceived as a defender of LAC interests in the European Union. Our country has also been an important part of its political life: Over the last 40 years we have played a key role in peace processes, crisis resolution, and modernisation of LAC States. Spain's influence in the region strengthens our position in the EU and is recognised by the USA, Russia, and China. It is a multiplier of our political significance at the global level.

Spain has a large network of resident Embassies (22) and Consulates General (21 Consulates and 12 Embassies with a consular section) throughout LAC, and multiple accreditations in the case of the English-speaking Caribbean. Moreover, Spain has a robust institutional presence, with 19 Economic and Commercial Offices; 16 Technical Cooperation Offices (TCOs); three Tourism Offices; four other Offices; an Attaché Office for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; four training centres; and 17 cultural centres (in 15 countries). In the field of education, Spain not only collaborates and provides support through bilateral and multilateral agreements, but is also present in a wide network of educational centres, with more than 16,000 students. LAC is the region where the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) has the greatest presence and where Spain has a solid track record in two strategic areas: strengthening the rule of law and combating poverty. In the coming years, priority action must be strengthened in two other key issues: the fight against climate change and digitalisation in all areas.

The objectives and priorities of Spanish foreign action towards the region over the next four years include the promotion of specific actions in each of the four main areas defined for foreign action as a whole, and the strengthening of EU-Latin America ties.

**Human rights, democracy, security, and feminism:** LAC has been characterised by internal social and political instability, which has come to a halt due to Covid-19 but which will reappear as soon as mobility returns to the countries and political momentum is restored. Regional instability stemming from the Venezuelan crisis has polarised responses and rendered regional mechanisms for consultation and integration useless. Spain will continue to promote a stable region, respect for human rights and the defence of democratic systems with governments fully supported by voters, as well as the search for peaceful and negotiated solutions as a mechanism for conflict resolution. The human rights situation linked to political crises (Nicaragua, Venezuela) and the issue of migration (Central America, Venezuela) are priorities on the bilateral, multilateral and EU agenda. Improvement in the regional security situation is a prerequisite for the development of other areas (such as cooperation, economic, and cultural policies) where Spain will have a prominent impact. Spain also aspires to be a key actor in the promotion of women's rights and the safeguard of human rights defenders' work.

**A global, integrated, just, and equitable economy and society:** The growing trend in trade and investment relations and the presence of Spanish companies must be maintained through support for the multilateral system and open trade. Legal certainty will also be a requirement for the permanence of companies and investments, as well as for the instruments to promote and support these investments. New areas for implementing and maintaining a policy to support post-Covid-19 economic recovery should be identified, including coordination of Spain's policies and actions in international financial institutions (IFIs). Spain will encourage IFIs to provide adequate financing to middle-income Latin American countries according to their specific needs, and promote implementation of the initiative Joint Response for Latin America and the Caribbean to Counter the Covid-19 Crisis. These lines of action should be developed on the basis of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and linked to the formulation of a new fair and inclusive social contract. Greater scientific and technological collaboration geared towards innovation for sustainable development should be promoted, especially within the framework of the Ibero-American Knowledge Space and the Ibero-American Science and Technology for Development Programme (CYTED). The conclusion of strategic agreements (EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, EU-Mexico Global Agreement, modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement) will be crucial, ensuring social and environmental considerations.

**A more sustainable, habitable, and greener planet:** Strengthened dialogue on climate action, environment, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development will be promoted through bilateral and sectoral (business, economic) dialogue and through the promotion of green policies. Development cooperation will provide a greater outlet for the sustainability dimension, to ensure that economic and social progress respects the preservation of Latin America's environmental wealth. Special emphasis will also be placed on institutional strengthening, paying attention to the needs and possible improvements in local administration systems.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** The Venezuelan crisis has jeopardised regional coordination mechanisms. It is necessary to reinforce support for sub-regional

organisations and mechanisms, and to maintain channels with those that integrate the entire region, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)—here, it is necessary to collaborate actively with the Mexican Pro Tempore Presidency so that CELAC recovers its capacity to energise a Latin American agenda—and, at a sub-regional level, the Central American Integration System (SICA), supporting the work of the Secretary General in the integration process. The Ibero-American Summit system is currently the only international body that brings together all of the Ibero-American States. It is essential to support the Ibero-American Conference and the Summit system, strengthening, through actions and commitments, the sense of belonging to the same community, one that shares values and principles (such as cultural identity and language). Indeed, 2021 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Ibero-American Summit system, and Spain will organise, in collaboration with the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), a series of cultural activities to commemorate this landmark, and reaffirm its proactive role in the construction of the Ibero-American space.

At the bilateral level, Spain's priorities are:

- **Argentina:** Strategic partnership country. High-level contacts will be resumed and political consultation mechanisms will be reactivated, with a view to forthcoming official visits. The Strategy Action Plan and the establishment of sectoral dialogues will be updated. The country's accession to the OECD and the coordination of policies and initiatives in the G20 and IFI framework will be supported.
- **Bolivia:** Priority will be given to supporting reconciliation and institutional strengthening processes. The gradual process of normalisation of bilateral relations will be completed.
- **Brazil:** Strategic partnership country. Political consultation mechanisms will be promoted and high-level contacts will be resumed. OECD accession will be supported. The work of Instituto Cervantes in Brazil, promoting the Spanish language, will be stepped up, as well as the monitoring of investment plans in infrastructure and regional development. Spain will work with Brazil in the fight against climate change and the preservation of the Amazon basin, as well as the protection of ethnic minorities.
- **Caribbean:** We will continue to strengthen our close ties with the Dominican Republic and bolster its role in the region, in particular taking into account the political and institutional crisis taking place in its neighbour, Haiti, which will also be given continued attention. The English-speaking Caribbean offers great opportunities, especially in terms of investment in tourism, infrastructure, renewables and the promotion of the Spanish language, as well as in the special context marked by Brexit and Covid-19. Spain could be a partner of reference in the region, which means developing a specific strategy for this area.
- **Chile:** Strategic partnership country. The constitutional reform process will be monitored and assistance will be provided if required. An official visit by Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain will commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the First Voyage around the World and the Passage of the Strait of Magellan. Sectoral agreements and political consultations will be promoted. Follow-up will be given to the modernisation of the EU-Chile Agreement and support to Chile's initiative in the WHO to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response. Antarctic cooperation will be intensified and support will be given to the Chilean initiative to create a special Antarctic ecosystem protection area.
- **Central America:** Central America continues to be one of the most vulnerable and fragile regions in the Americas. Spain has been accompanying and participating in its socio-economic and institutional development, as well as supporting its integration process. In 2021, the region is commemorating the bicentenary of its independence and the 30th anniversary of SICA, which offers an excellent opportunity to renew our commitment to Central America, and to continue supporting initiatives aimed at tackling the challenges and crises threatening this territory, paying special attention to the crisis in Nicaragua.
- **Colombia:** Strategic partner. Priority will be given to supporting the implementation of the peace agreements and strengthening the bilateral consultation mechanism.

- **Cuba:** The new path of collaboration initiated after the trips by the President of the Government (2018) and Their Majesties (2019) will be enhanced, seeking to balance and intensify the relationship, based on the adoption of a regular framework for political consultations (Memorandum of Understanding). The country is currently updating its political and economic model to the Constitution adopted in 2019 and to a new reality that we must boost through critical but constructive support.
- **Ecuador:** Efforts will be made to strengthen bilateral ties by capitalising on the significant Ecuadorian colony in Spain, and support will be given to the presidential election process in the first half of the year. The priorities will be the signing of a Reciprocal Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement and the holding of bilateral consultations with the new government to be elected in 2021.
- **Mexico:** Key partner in the region. The bilateral agenda will be relaunched by convening the Binational Commission and making its conclusions operational. Constructive dialogue on the celebration of the historic anniversaries of 2021 will be encouraged.
- **Paraguay:** The finalisation of the Double Taxation Agreement, an important instrument for promoting and facilitating the presence of Spanish companies in the country, will be promoted.
- **Peru:** Strategic partner. Priorities include the commemoration of the bicentenary in 2021, the promotion of bilateral relations through the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and the Double Taxation Agreement. Spain will support the general election process in the first half of the year and Peru's application to join the OECD.
- **Uruguay:** The renewal of political dialogue mechanisms will be encouraged and Spanish presence in the important infrastructure development projects underway will continue to be promoted, as will triangular cooperation with the countries in the region.
- **Venezuela:** Spain will continue to contribute towards seeking a solution to the political crisis, both bilaterally and through the EU and the International Contact Group. Particular attention will be paid to the humanitarian situation and the response to the political, social and economic crisis. The Quito Process will be followed up as members of the Group of Friends. The priority will be to restore the democratic framework and help the country overcome its political and humanitarian crisis, which has a great impact on the rest of the region.

### Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:

- **Implementing a multidimensional strategy to strengthen the relationship between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, including continued efforts for the ratification of the EU-Mercosur Agreement and the modernisation of the agreements with Mexico and Chile.**
- **Strengthening the Ibero-American Conference and the Summit system.**
- **Continuing to lead efforts towards seeking a way out of the crisis in Venezuela.**
- **Promoting and monitoring the initiatives underway to facilitate access to financing for middle-income countries in the region, and maintaining the solidarity effort in the EU to respond to the health and economic crisis posed by Covid-19.**

## 4.2 A global, integrated, just, and equitable economy and society

### 4.2.1 Promoting a new global and intergenerational social contract

In its foreign action, Spain will promote a more just and sustainable global economy. To this end, we will defend a **more resilient and equitable economic model**, in which growth is a means to achieve greater well-being, and not an end in itself. We will lead efforts to review the parameters for measuring progress, especially within the OECD and other multilateral organisations and think tanks. Our country will also promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the State's foreign action, with public services that respond to the demands and needs of citizens.

The creation of decent jobs, the sustainability of the pension system and the reduction of inequalities depend to a large extent on the interaction of our national economies with the global economy. Our foreign action will be guided by a series of basic principles that we have incorporated into our law and which we consider to be the basis for a just, egalitarian and inclusive international society. In this regard, we intend to take the lead in promoting global mechanisms to ensure economic security for individuals and their families, starting with the promotion of decent work and the improvement of working conditions, including health and safety, as well as the promotion of unemployment insurance, minimum income frameworks and coverage of fundamental public services at the European level. We want to promote these instruments at an international level, so that every human being has their basic rights covered and has access to the opportunities that allow them to lead a fulfilling life.

On a broader horizon, Spain will promote the global construction of a **new social and intergenerational contract**, based on the 2030 Agenda and the full development of political, social, economic and environmental rights. Growing inequalities, job insecurity and shrinking opportunities are fuelling populism and protectionism. In addition to tackling inequalities *ex post*, through redistribution, this must also be done *ex ante*, in education systems, labour markets, health systems, infrastructure and exposure to environmental risks. This new social contract will place special emphasis on eradicating poverty in all its dimensions (SDG 1), promoting social and economic rights (SDGs 2-7), education (SDG 4), work (SDG 8), reducing inequality (SDG 10) and environmental responsibility (SDGs 11-15), as well as promoting peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

The benefits of a strong and inclusive protection model have been highlighted by the Covid-19 crisis. But this strength requires ensuring the solidity and sustainability of public accounts to **guarantee the welfare state and recover some of the progressivity lost in tax systems**, the principle of solidarity and the elimination of the avenues that still exist for evasion and erosion of public finances. It also involves adapting tax systems to the twenty-first century economy, which involves, *inter alia*, taxation that is more in line with the importance of environmental challenges and fairer taxation of digital activities with harmonised global rules, like those we are promoting in the OECD. This will be another aspect of great importance in our

foreign action, in order to promote a global, equitable, integrated and inclusive economy and society on an international level, with particular protection for the most vulnerable.

Likewise, as stated in the Declaration for the Future of Work approved in 2019 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to mark the centenary of its creation, it is imperative to act with urgency to **shape a fair, inclusive, and secure future of work**, with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all. Such a future of work is fundamental for sustainable development that puts an end to poverty and leaves no one behind. Along these lines, Spain will promote social dialogue not only at the national level, but also at the international level, through the ILO itself and initiatives such as the Global Deal. It will also strengthen its commitment to and defence of formal and non-formal lifelong learning.

In line with international agreements, Spain will continue to promote clear rules that protect trade and investment from political considerations, preventing discrimination and ensuring a level playing field. The defence of a **fair and sustainable international trade and investment regime** will be strengthened,

within the framework of an open multilateral system based on common rules and compliance with them, as well as on their necessary modernisation. This position is all the more important in the current context, which is increasingly characterised by economic and trade rivalry and by the risk of fragmentation in the global economy.

Spain aspires to contribute to the **reflection on recovery from the current crisis**, linking exit mechanisms to the necessary long-term transformations in the production and growth model. We will contribute to the EU's leadership in this area, and we will support a strengthened and effective World Trade Organisation (WTO) that can overcome its current institutional challenges. We will also emphasise the need for the **financial economy** to adjust to the needs of the real and productive economy, and we will promote a fairer and stronger framework for international tax cooperation to combat tax havens or legal loopholes that allow tax avoidance and money laundering, favouring organised crime and terrorism. We will promote this vision within the G20, the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD and other international organisations, including the development banks in which we participate.

## 4.2.2 Economic diplomacy for growth and jobs

Our foreign action must contribute to ensuring that the **foreign sector continues to be an engine of growth and job creation** that will drive an early recovery. The increasingly high internationalisation of the Spanish economy (exports of goods and services account for around 35% of GDP, making Spain second only to Germany among the large EU economies) explains why economic diplomacy, understood as the actions undertaken by States to promote their economic interests in the international arena, has become one of the cornerstones of Spain's foreign action and of today's diplomacy.

Promoting a more active economic diplomacy requires **strengthening the**

**economic and political instruments we already have:** those dedicated to promoting competitiveness; the internationalisation of companies and attraction of investment, especially through the work of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism via its State Secretariat for Trade, and the activities of ICEX Spain Export and Investment, the coverage provided by the Spanish Export Credit Agency (CESCE), the financing of the Spanish State-owned Development Financing Company (COFIDES) and the international promotion carried out by Spain's Tourism Institute (TURESPAÑA); a reinforced focus on bilateral relations, especially with those countries in which

setting up in business requires political support; a special dedication to attracting investment, taking advantage of the opportunities represented by the Spanish Economy's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan to attract foreign capital; and maintaining and strengthening coordination between all public administrations and business entities, including high-level visits and trade missions.

In addition, during 2021-2024, an **Economic Diplomacy Action Plan** will be implemented, aligned with the Strategy for the Internationalisation of the Spanish Economy 2017-2027 and the corresponding biennial Action Plans (2021-2022 and successive two-year periods) of the State Secretariat for Trade to promote the internationalisation and improve the competitiveness of Spanish companies abroad.

One of the most relevant manifestations of economic diplomacy in the current context must be the recovery of **international mobility**. In a scenario marked by the pandemic, restrictions on mobility are having a severe impact on business activity and tourism flows. Restrictions have caused delays in the public procurement market and temporarily halted project delivery, as well as business travel, which is a major hindrance to Spain's presence in third markets. Re-establishing safe international mobility, facilitated by the adoption of common criteria between countries, is a priority for business and tourism. Spain will promote, within the European Union, the OECD and with other international organisations, the development of international standards for the recognition of diagnostic tests and vaccination certificates that will gradually make it possible to restore international mobility in a safe and coordinated manner.

The importance of **tourism** as an export industry par excellence, a generator of added value and an engine for attracting economic activity in Spain should be highlighted. Spain's Tourism Offices abroad play a key role in

promoting Spanish tourism worldwide, as specialised, expert bodies at diplomatic missions and under the auspices of TURESPAÑA. Tourism promotion at an international level and the development of tourism on the global agenda will be fostered, given that Spain's position as a tourist destination must be a priority for foreign action. Spain will work closely with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), based in our country, in rebuilding the international tourism sector after Covid-19.

At a more structural level, the traditional support and assistance to our companies in **identifying opportunities and resolving disputes**, provided by the Economic and Commercial Offices of the Spanish Embassies, should be strengthened in the post-Covid-19 scenario, with even closer monitoring of foreign tenders in which our companies may participate and in which political support with regard to our competitors is crucial.

**Economic intelligence and strategic analysis of international macro-trends** (international competition, strategic rivalry, redefinition of value chains, consequences of the introduction of new technologies, decarbonisation, climate change) will be strengthened to help Spanish companies, and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, to identify new opportunities for market positioning and for exploiting markets.

In particular, Spanish foreign action will analyse the opportunities presented by the **new configuration of global value chains and the redefinition of the European Union's trade and industrial policy**. Thus, within the framework of the EU's new concept of open strategic autonomy, Spain is faced with the opportunity to expand its presence in the **Southern Neighbourhood**, becoming a hub for investment and trade with this region. This will strengthen the resilience and diversification of supply chains, while reducing the carbon footprint. Several initiatives linked to the European Recovery Fund offer Spain the

opportunity to improve connectivity with its southern production border, which, over and above the economic aspects, will have a positive impact on issues such as security and migration.

Moreover, the EU will collectively invest in the development of **strategic EU value chains**, with the aim of achieving sufficient economies of scale to compete internationally in the main cutting-edge sectors. This has started with batteries, but will be followed by initiatives in renewable hydrogen, low-carbon industries, the cloud, processors and raw materials. The European Defence Fund and the dual nature of many of the systems that will have diverse applications in their final implementation also offer opportunities for the defence industry. In this context, and in all these areas, economic diplomacy will also help Spanish companies to position themselves both privately and publicly in EU-wide projects.

**Defending Spain's image and economic reputation** abroad is another of economic diplomacy's main lines of action. A strong external image and a positive perception are a source of wealth for a country and its companies, both committed to human rights, the principle of due diligence, inclusive and sustainable development, good corporate governance, social responsibility and socially responsible investment, and the fight against corruption, in accordance with the international codes of conduct recognised by Spain. Resources will be

streamlined and efforts will be concentrated in those markets where the return may be greatest. Image and economic reputation campaigns will be carried out in such markets, with the aim of explaining the realities of Spain and its strengths, as well as those of its companies, along the lines of campaigns such as "Food from Spain", which seeks to promote the consumption of emblematic Mediterranean Diet foods produced in our country. The economic dimension of the Council Foundations will also be fostered to contribute to this objective.

Foreign action will also promote the **attraction of talent**, both foreign and Spanish abroad, in order to encourage the development of entrepreneurial projects and enable Spanish companies to attract critical human capital to advance in their investment and innovation processes. Special emphasis will be placed on attracting female talent.

Finally, economic diplomacy will also be deployed in the **multilateral** sphere. Spain attaches great importance to multilateral cooperation in tackling global economic challenges. Given their impact on the rules of the game of the economic system on an international scale, strategies will be developed in international organisations such as the OECD and the WTO, and forums such as the G20, with the aim of increasing Spain's economic leverage and improving the playing field for our companies.

### **4.2.3 A leading role in demographic and migration debates**

Spain should have its **own voice on the demographic issue**, to which we will give greater prominence in our foreign action, based on our conviction that it plays a central role in achieving a more just and equitable economy and society. We will actively participate in the definition of a future European strategy for the demographic challenge and in

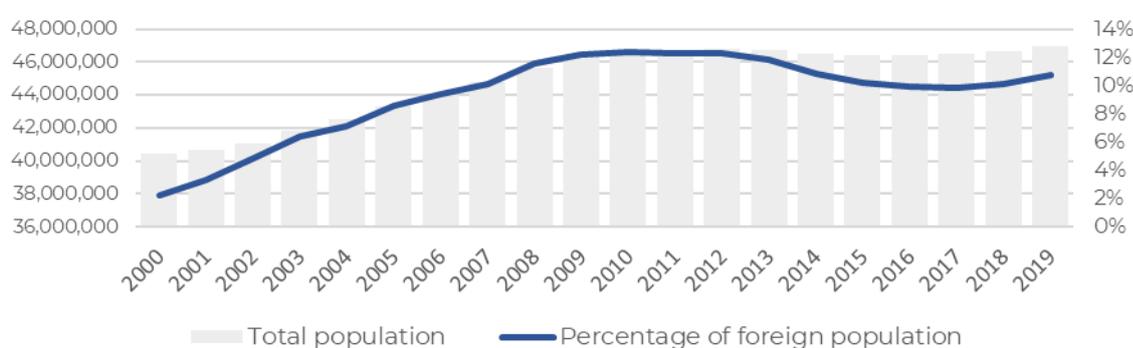
the promotion, together with Portugal, of the Common Strategy for Cross-Border Development approved at the Guarda Summit.

We want to open a necessary debate on the **pressure of population growth** on ecosystems. We also want to make a decisive contribution to other

challenges related to demographic dynamics, such as **ageing and the sustainability** of welfare systems, territorial imbalances and the rural exodus, the liveability agenda and the consequences of an increasingly urban world. We will work on an international level to strengthen the certainty of the sustainability of welfare systems and, in

particular, of social security systems, so that they provide citizens with security and confidence throughout their lives. The aim is to promote a long-term vision, to improve the governance of these dynamics and to catalyse international commitments and agreements in these areas.

### Evolution of the percentage of foreign population in Spain's total population



Source: National Statistics Institute (INE)

In the area of **migration**, and in line with the principles of the Global Compact for Migration, we will focus on cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination; the undertaking of responsibilities by all parties concerned; and development cooperation aimed at strengthening public policies that result in the appropriate management of migration in partner countries. We will take into account the migration context in these countries, including the impact of climate change on migration, focusing on the protection of migrants' human rights, as well as on their integration in those countries which, in addition to being countries of origin and transit, are also the destination of migrants. We will also work on the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents. Spain will ensure the implementation of the Global Compacts on Refugees, based on shared responsibility and solidarity to address forced displacement.

On the European level, we will promote a European Pact on Migration and Asylum and **comprehensive management of the EU's external borders** based on the implementation of the Schengen acquis. We will favour preventive approaches and capacity building at the source, while stepping up pressure and maintaining zero tolerance against human trafficking mafias (see section 4.4.1). The Pact must include the development of a European legal migration policy as a core element, which is necessary to make adequate progress on the Talent Partnership initiative and for the European labour market to function properly.

A comprehensive response must be given to all the medium- and long-term demographic, economic and climate-related challenges we are facing; this will help combat irregular migration. Similarly, the establishment of safe, orderly and regular migration channels in coordination with the countries of

origin means forging an effective cooperative relationship that will make the migration process a source of mutual benefit for the countries of origin and destination, as well as for migrants themselves.

A migration model is needed in which public administrations may help to address the challenges related to

international job seeking and may maximize the synergies and complementary skills between EU workers in the labour markets of the Member States.

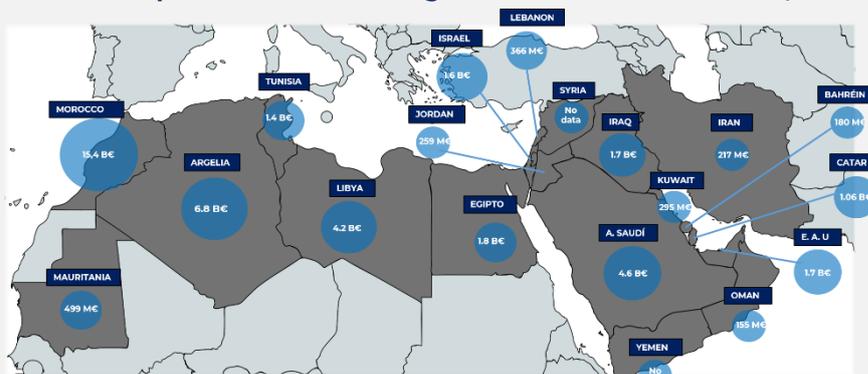
It is essential to develop strategies to identify labour market needs in the search for and attraction of talent, through the effective implementation of legal migration processes.

# REGIONAL PRIORITIES: THE MAGHREB AND THE MIDDLE EAST

*The political situation of the Maghreb and the Middle East, located between three continents, its wealth of hydrocarbons and its historical evolution since the end of World War I explain the strategic importance of this region, a privileged setting for tensions and changes in the world order. It is strategic for Spain because it is so near and because what takes place there and the quality of our relations have a real impact on our country's stability and development.*

*The priority for Spanish foreign action is to promote an area of shared stability and prosperity. Political dialogue and operational cooperation make it possible to confront threats such as terrorism and organised crime. By strengthening economic and trade ties, and paying special attention to energy relations, where we must intensify the link between energy policy and climate diplomacy, we will be able to guarantee the development of the entire region.*

**Volume of Spain's trade with the Maghreb and Middle East countries, 2019**



● Bilateral Trade 2019 (sum of exports plus imports)

Total population	458 M
Aggregate GDP	€3.1 T
Spanish imports	€25.1 B 7.58%
Spanish exports	€21.8 B 7.33%
Spanish Embassies	17
Spanish Consulates	10

Source: DATACOMEX, January 2021

Given that whatever happens in the Maghreb and the Middle East has a direct impact on our country, Spain must aspire to become an essential partner of reference, striving to increase its significance and political and economic presence in the region. Spain's security and stability are affected by security and stability in the Mediterranean and, more specifically, in the Maghreb. Therefore, it cooperates closely with governments on the southern shore to maximize the multiple opportunities for cooperation and to address transnational challenges. High-level political dialogue is frequent. Cooperation between our security forces is close. Spain has the largest deployment of Armed Forces in the UNIFIL peacekeeping operation in south Lebanon, and participates in CSDP, EUBAM Libya and EUPOL COPPS missions. It also fosters intense sectoral dialogue with business, academia and civil society representatives. Economic relations have reached unprecedented levels, with an increase in trade that has made Spain Morocco's leading partner, for example, and a deployment of companies with emblematic projects such as the Mecca-Medina high-speed railway. This expansion explains the increase in the number of Spanish expatriates residing in countries such as the UAE. For more than 15 years, Spain has been developing a global approach to migration in close collaboration with Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania, countries of transit and origin of migrants arriving in Spain. Spain's security forces cooperate closely with their counterparts, especially those from the Maghreb, in controlling migration flows. We should not forget the growing importance of the Maghrebi diaspora in our country.

In keeping with the strategic importance of the region, Spain has Embassies in 19 countries and a significant consular presence in the Maghreb. There are 12 Economic and Commercial Offices, and a Tourism Office in Abu Dhabi; also significant is the presence of TCOs and Spanish cooperation, for which Morocco, Mauritania and Palestine are priorities. The Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf are, moreover, the main destination of Spain's humanitarian aid. Other countries, such as Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, have a special status in the current Master Plan. Morocco is the country with the largest number of Spanish education centres under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, serving more than 4,500 students, and Instituto Cervantes also has a strong presence; the country also has an Office of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Spain's main priorities in the region are: (1) promoting an area of security and political stability to address threats such as terrorism and organised crime; (2) building an area of shared prosperity by strengthening economic and trade ties; (3) promoting democratic values and human rights; (4) fostering cultural and human contacts; (5) fostering regional integration through existing formats such as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the 5+5 Forum; (6) managing the growing migration flows through the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic route; (7) strengthening energy and climate dialogue; (8) contributing to economic recovery through the activity of our companies and economic diplomacy; (9) reorienting, in the short term, cooperation policy towards responding to Covid-19; and (10) contributing to UN efforts to reach a political solution to disputes in the region in accordance with international parameters, including Western Sahara, Libya, Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Spain has welcomed the normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab countries, and trusts that these agreements will contribute to creating an environment conducive to resuming talks between Israelis and Palestinians that may complete the process started at the 1991 Madrid Conference to agree upon a lasting solution based on two States living together in peace and security.

**Human rights, democracy, security and feminism:** Spain will accompany the political reform processes undertaken in several countries in the region and will provide assistance through AECID's Masar governance programme, partnership between institutions promoted by the EU, and other bilateral programmes. In close contact with governments and civil society, it must promote respect for human rights and gender equality.

**A global, integrated, just, and equitable economy and society:** In addition to promoting economic diplomacy for mutual benefit and accompanying Spanish companies in their contribution to the recovery of both the national economy and those of our partners, Spain must explore new windows of economic opportunity through the integration of global value chains in closer and more secure markets in terms of supply. It will also foster the promotion of greater regional integration as regards scientific cooperation.

**A more sustainable, habitable, and greener planet:** Spain must continue to support the ecological transition and the use of renewable energies by our partners, including renewable hydrogen, contributing with its technology and companies to projects of reference for the region. Likewise, it must continue to participate in essential projects for sustainable development such as food security, conservation and restoration of biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, desalination plants, waste management and others.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** We will continue to intensify Mediterranean cooperation in the framework of the UfM. In the sphere of the Western Mediterranean, we will continue to participate actively in the 5+5 dialogue, which will be given fresh impetus during the Spanish Presidency in 2021.

An appropriate **regional outreach** of our foreign action strengthens our position in the framework of our respective bilateral relations. As regards the two Maghreb countries that are key for Spain, the relationship with **Morocco** is defined both by geographical contiguity and by the intensity and breadth of shared interests and challenges. These elements, unparalleled in other countries, require as a priority for action the development of relations of political consultation and multi-sectoral cooperation that are as broad and intense as possible, with the aim of fostering progressive convergence that will ultimately guarantee

the stability of the relationship and the preservation of our national interests. With **Algeria**, the largest African country and a major player in the Sahel, the priority is in terms of regional stability and security, economic momentum, energy supply and migration management. The priority for action is defined by the strengthening of political and sectoral dialogue in priority areas and the promotion of economic interdependence.

### **Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:**

- **Strengthening communication and political dialogue with all the countries of the region and holding political consultations and high-level meetings with the Maghreb countries, especially with Morocco and Algeria, through specific collaboration strategies with both.**
- **Exercising an active presidency in 2021 of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue, as well as organising the Fifth UfM Forum.**
- **Promoting the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the UfM.**
- **Supporting UN efforts to reach political solutions in Western Sahara.**

## 4.3 A more sustainable, resilient, habitable, and greener planet

### 4.3.1 Leadership in climate and environmental diplomacy

Spain sees environmental sustainability as a core line of its foreign action, capitalising even more on its commitment and performance in the leadership already deployed on this front. In this sense, Spain's foreign action will make **climate diplomacy and the defence of the planet** one of its main hallmarks. The fight against climate change will be a priority, as well as adaptation to its impact and progress in the decarbonisation of the economy by 2050. It will also be essential to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and resources, seeking to accelerate the pace over the coming years and to be a driving force behind international agreements in this area, demonstrating by example that it is possible to combine economic growth and sustainability.

Our country will take on an even more active role in global efforts to **strengthen environmental governance**, focusing on its implications for human security and health. We will work to ensure that the international community urgently addresses the geopolitical dimension of the environmental and climate crisis, including the loss of biodiversity and conflicts and displacements relating to climate change. It will also be essential to strengthen international commitments to combat deforestation and to promote the sustainable management of forests at a global level to ensure their key contribution to climate change mitigation. Climate diplomacy will also be promoted to foster the coherence of financial flows with low-carbon development.

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#### Top 15 countries with the higher score for sanitation on the *Environmental Performance Index 2020*

Finland  
Iceland  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Switzerland  
UK  
Malta  
Germany  
Luxembourg  
Sweden  
Greece  
Italy  
Denmark  
Ireland  
Spain



Source: *Environmental Performance Index 2020*. New Haven, CT: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy

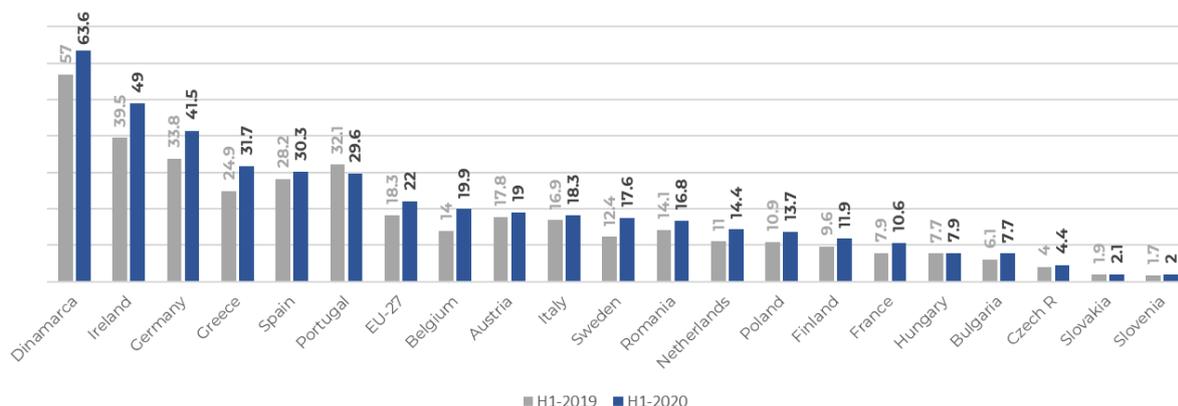
In the sphere of energy, **decarbonisation and security of supply** continue to be a priority of our foreign policy; in the medium and long term it will be necessary to increase the power of our electricity interconnections and make progress in producing renewable energies, in improving energy efficiency, and in promoting energy storage, distributed energy and demand management.

The **energy transition** offers enormous opportunities and is an area in which Spain seeks to be a major player. Our country aspires to be at the forefront of cutting-edge sectors linked to the blue economy, and will decisively support the development of renewable energies on the European continent to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and increase energy autonomy. Among other priorities, we will promote an international coalition on renewable hydrogen. We will also firmly support our companies so that they may play a significant role in the implementation of renewable energies globally, especially in the Mediterranean and Africa, with the ensuing positive impact on the economies and societies of our Southern Neighbourhood. In this regard, we will support the processes of electrification of the economy based mainly on renewable energies, which is key to moving towards climate neutrality. Furthermore, we will promote the strengthening of international commitments to end the use of fossil fuels in accordance with national circumstances and capacities, in coherence with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Spain also wants to be a leading country in terms of environmentally friendly ecological production, logistics and transport, and a promoter of responsible consumption patterns. To this end, we will promote the debate on the sustainability and circularity of our **production, distribution and consumption models**, emphasising the identification of best practices, the sustainable use of resources, the prevention of waste (in particular, plastics) and the advancement of international standards. By making more critical progress on the nexus between economic activity and the environment, we will be able to contribute more effectively to the biodiversity preservation agenda, both within the framework of the United Nations and with new initiatives. Our country will also engage in adaptation strategies against the impacts and risks associated with climate change, focusing on reducing the vulnerability of people and communities.

As an international **mobility** hub, Spain also aspires to promote and become a country of reference in the development of international mobility practices and guidelines that are safer and more sustainable, based on better and more responsible connectivity. We will promote and implement the Spanish Urban Agenda approved in February 2019 in line with a **global urban agenda** fully aligned with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and the UN and EU Urban Agendas.

## Percentage of electricity produced by solar and wind power



Source: *Renewables beat fossil fuels*. Ember Climate, July 2020

### 4.3.2 Biodiversity, pollution control and the reform of global health governance

The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the risks arising from the loss of biodiversity and the growing pressure of human activity on increasingly fragile natural ecosystems. In response to this challenge, Spain will redouble its commitment to the international community's efforts to **conserve, protect, preserve, and restore biodiversity**, especially in the framework of the UN and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We will also develop initiatives against illegal trafficking in and international poaching of wildlife and other specific actions in areas such as the protection and clean-up of the oceans. Among other priorities, we will promote actions for the protection of Antarctica, the declaration and effective management of protected areas, the conservation of endangered species, the restoration of ecosystems and the achievement of the goals of Spain's Action Plan against illegal trafficking in and international poaching of wildlife. Spain will also promote the Amsterdam Declaration and the EU Forest Partnership, promoting the goal of effective

protection of 30% of the land and marine area.

Spain will foster **sustainable fishing and agriculture**. We will promote the principles of sustainable management of Spanish fisheries, within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy, as a source of food and supply of healthy protein with a low carbon footprint, and we will intensify international cooperation in fisheries. Given the global projection of the Spanish fishing fleet, our country, together with the European Union, will continue to play a leading role in the Regional Fisheries Organisations, basic instruments for the governance of the seas and oceans.

Spain will continue to strengthen its role as a country of reference in the integrated management of water resources and water basins. In the framework of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Protocol on Water and Health, we will advance sustainable practices for better water management and the reduction of water-related diseases. We will promote international cooperation

in this field through networks such as CODIA (Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors), RIOCC (Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Offices) and CIMHET (Conference of Directors of Meteorological and Hydrological Services).

We will also promote collaboration in the field of **waste prevention and treatment, and the fight against atmospheric, chemical and water and sanitation pollution, strengthening the link between these policies and those aimed at improving people's health and quality of life.**

In response to Covid-19, Spain aims to promote an exhaustive evaluation process of the global health system and to assume greater leadership in defending and promoting a **more holistic approach to health**, based on the "One Health" approach, improving the connection between the human,

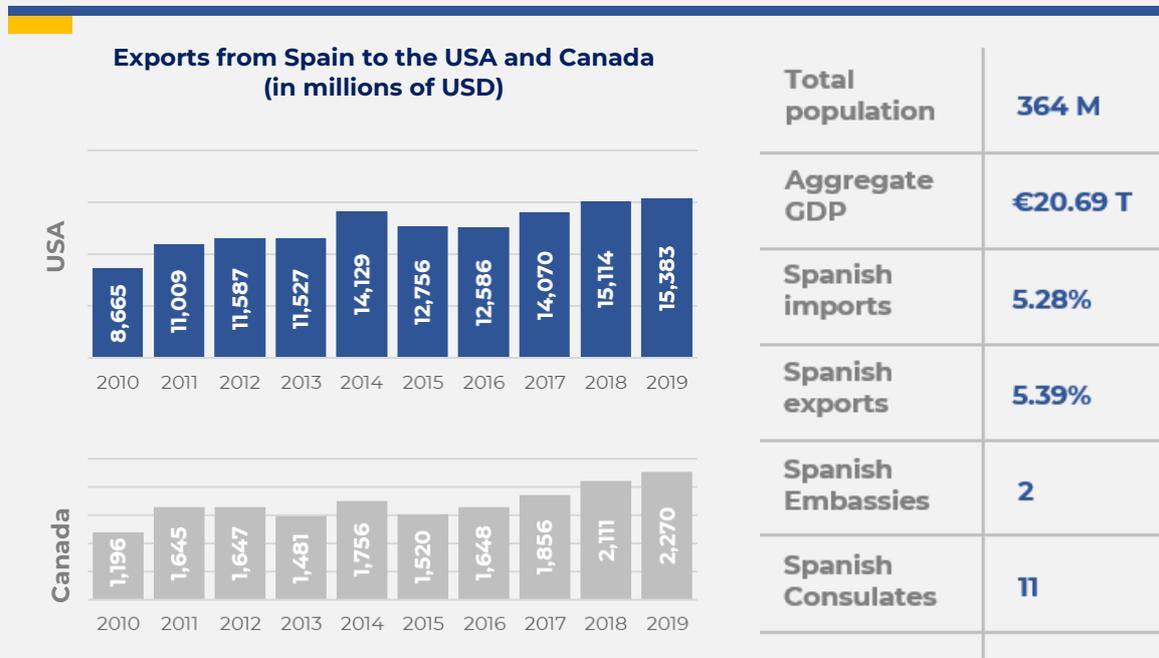
animal and ecological dimensions. In this regard, we will focus on issues such as food safety, animal health and zoonoses, as well as the relationship between human health and planetary health. We will promote a new global health compact that includes equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatments as a core element, and we will promote scientific diplomacy as a key element in these efforts.

Based on its recent experience, Spain will promote international reflection on the **governance of the global health system** and its strengthening. In particular, we will promote greater integration of European policies in this area, as well as the reform of multilateral institutions, and prevention, detection and response mechanisms, with a strengthened World Health Organisation and revised International Health Regulation.

# REGIONAL PRIORITIES: NORTH AMERICA

*The USA and Canada have traditionally been friends, allies, and partners, linked to Spain by close historical, political, economic, social, cultural and military ties. They are global political and economic powers, making a greater presence in the region a priority for Spain's foreign policy.*

*The main strategic priority for the region during 2021-2024 will be to strengthen bilateral relations with the USA in the framework of a strong and intense transatlantic relationship. The new Biden Administration opens up a promising window for dialogue and the opportunity to improve relations with Spain and the EU in numerous fields. Spain aspires to a broader agenda for bilateral relations, especially in the economic and trade and spheres, and to maintain our significant cooperation in defence, a cornerstone of which is the current Bilateral Defence Agreement. It will also develop and maximise cultural ties, capitalising on the historical legacy and links that unite us. Spain's foreign action will also seek to strengthen collaboration with Canada on the many issues on the global agenda where there is a broad convergence of values, such as the fight against climate change and gender equality.*



Source: COMTRADE / Tradingeconomics.com

Spain's relations with North America are very dynamic in the economic and trade sphere. Our exports to the region have grown in the last decade well above the volume of our international trade. The USA is our main economic partner outside Europe, especially in terms of investment. In the area of security and defence, our common membership of NATO and the presence of US troops in our bases are highly relevant. In the political sphere, there is a fluid exchange of high-level visits and cooperation in multilateral bodies. Our cultural and educational exchanges are intense, with a significant presence of Instituto Cervantes and diverse programmes. In 10 years, the number of Spanish students in the United States has doubled, and more than 30,000 students from the region come to Spain every year to study. Our historical legacy is also a valuable symbol of our shared history.

Spain has two Embassies (USA and Canada) in North America. It also has nine Consulates General in the United States and two in Canada. It has seven Economic Offices: five in the USA (Washington, New York, Miami, Chicago and Los Angeles) and two in Canada (Ottawa and Toronto); five Tourism Offices (New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles and Toronto); and

an Office and an Attaché Office for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Washington, also accredited to Canada. There are three Instituto Cervantes centres in the USA (Chicago, New Mexico and New York) and a Virtual Classroom in Canada (Calgary). More than 1,300 Spanish visiting teachers are teaching at primary and secondary schools in the USA and Canada through collaboration programmes between Spain's Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and local education authorities. The Ministry is also present in the International Spanish Academies, i.e. primary and secondary schools in the USA and Canada with which it has signed collaboration agreements. This network currently has approximately 2,400 students in 94 schools. There are also various scholarship programmes, such as the Fulbright programme.

In terms of strategic goals and priorities for foreign action, Spain, as well as the EU, seeks to consolidate the transatlantic relationship, which we will pay special attention to and promote strategically with the new Biden Administration. Likewise, another of Spain's goals is to strengthen the security and defence dimension within NATO, through close cooperation with the USA, as well as to jointly address global challenges such as climate change, trade, proliferation and disarmament. Emphasis will be placed on technological cooperation. In the area of relations with US civil society, the shared interests of public and private actors have multiplied, and efforts will be made to intensify them. Finally, both countries show a growing interest in our language and culture, which must be encouraged. Appreciation and recognition of the heritage we share with the USA will be enhanced, strengthening mechanisms to capitalise on our unique historical and cultural ties.

**Human rights, democracy, security and feminism:** The USA and Canada are two of Spain's and the EU's main partners in aiming to strengthen a rules-based international system and globally promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. With regard to the United States, Spain is working with other partners to achieve the complete abolition of the death penalty, as well as the ratification of the main international human rights conventions.

**A global, integrated, just and equitable economy and society:** The US and Canadian economies are among the most advanced on the planet, particularly as regards science and technology. Many Spanish companies participate in this market of more than 350 million people, and Spain therefore aspires to have a fair relationship with full access to their markets. Spain will seek to lift unfair unilateral trade measures, and promote collaboration with the USA on WTO reform and the reduction of barriers to transatlantic trade.

**A more sustainable, habitable and greener planet:** A considerable proportion of the productive industry of both countries is in the process of advancing rapidly towards a green economy. There is also growing awareness of climate change. To this end, we will promote the Paris Agreement goals with the re-engagement of the USA, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and the reinforcement and orientation of financing flows along these lines. The 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals are also a priority for Spain's cooperation with companies and social partners in both countries.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** The USA and Canada are, in practical terms, a single market in dynamic sectors such as technology, science and academia. Both countries are also key partners in the G-20, NATO, the OAS, the OECD and the OSCE. In view of this, Spain and the EU attach paramount importance to strengthening the transatlantic relationship and to maintaining close cooperation in multilateral organisations such as the UN.

Spain seeks to strengthen its bilateral relations with the region within the framework of an intense transatlantic relationship. We want to provide our bilateral relations with a broader and deeper agenda. There are significant synergies in many areas. Closer trade and investment relations are crucial for our companies, which already have a strong presence in that market as a route to greater participation in global value chains.

Spain also aspires to give a greater role to civil society and to other State institutions in this strengthening of bilateral relations. The role of parliamentary diplomacy will be reinforced,

as well as links and exchanges between different levels of the public administration, especially between large cities focusing on shared public policy agendas. Work with and support for the US scientific community, especially those most deeply rooted in the American system, will also be an important element in the new Transatlantic Agenda.

### **Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:**

- **Strengthening the transatlantic relationship at the European and at the bilateral levels.**
- **Strengthening actions in the areas of parliamentary, scientific, climate, and cultural diplomacy.**
- **Opening an Instituto Cervantes in Los Angeles.**

## 4.4 Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism

### 4.4.1 Higher profile in a stronger, more federal Europe

Deepening **European integration** is not just another area of our foreign action. For Spain, European policy is domestic policy, and therefore, we aspire to continue to give it that status and relevance in the coming years. Spain is stronger to the extent that the EU is more integrated and strengthened. European policy is the *raison d'être* of our foreign action and the main channel for Spain to expand the dimension and scope of its voice and impact on the rest of the world.

For all these reasons, during 2021-2024, Spain aspires to have a greater influence in Europe, actively contributing to the process of deepening the convergence of the Union. This action will be based on **three priorities**: (1) a more politically, economically, socially, and culturally integrated Europe; (2) a more resilient Europe that enjoys greater strategic autonomy; and (3) a Europe with greater global outreach and a unified voice and action in the international arena.

#### Priority 1. A more integrated Europe

Spain will promote a **more federal European Union**. Key to this will be the active implementation of the Recovery Plan for Europe and the new EU budget, as well as the completion of the economic and monetary union, the promotion of social Europe and the European Green Deal, and coordinated border management. But Spain aspires to go even further.

At an instrumental level, Spain will promote the **strengthening the competences of the Union** and the transition from unanimity to **qualified majority voting in a greater number of areas** through passerelle clauses, as a specific reflection of the goal of

achieving an ever closer Union. To this end, we will work with those partners who share these ideas, in alliances that may vary according to the areas in which our country can play a galvanising role. The exit of the United Kingdom will affect the balances in place to date, and Spain should not remain oblivious to the possibilities offered by this new context to increase its presence and influence in the EU institutions, debates and decision-making.

The **Conference on the Future of Europe** provides a unique opportunity to make progress in this regard, and Spain aspires to play a fundamental, proactive and dynamic role in it. Spain's six-month Presidency of the Council of the EU, in the second half of 2023, will provide an excellent opportunity, in close collaboration with previous Presidencies and the EU institutions, to advance in this process of change and renewal.

At the political level, Spain will also promote **more democratic European institutions**, broadening and strengthening the channels for citizen participation in European political and legislative processes, as well as greater transparency, accountability and closeness to citizens. Spain will commit to strengthening the European Parliament and its capacity for co-decision with the Council on more matters. A greater transnationalisation of European politics will also be favoured, leading to a commitment to the progressive adoption of a pan-European constituency and enhanced awareness of belonging to a common citizenry. All of this, together with possible institutional reforms, should

strengthen the legitimacy of the Union. And, of course, emphasis will be placed on maximum respect for the rule of law and freedoms in all the EU countries, a non-negotiable pillar of the European project that has gained new relevance in internal debates and to which Spain reaffirms its commitment.

The **financing** agreement reached at the European Council in July 2020 constitutes a historic milestone, in terms of its scope, its structure and its strong focus on sustainability and on the fight against climate change. **The Recovery Plan for Europe (NextGenerationEU)** is the most important step towards federalisation taken by the EU since the adoption of the euro. The next step must be the consolidation of permanent instruments for pooled debt issuance and the creation of new own resources to finance the European Union that are in line with its needs and are related to the policies implemented by the Union. Along these lines, Spain will seek progressive harmonisation as regards taxation, ensuring effective taxation in the Member State where profits are made and putting an end to tax competition within the EU, as well as a coordinated response to the challenges posed by the taxation of the digital and environmental economy. Only through fair and coordinated taxation within the Union, ensuring equal opportunities and cohesion, will a level economic playing field be achieved.

The **Internal Market** is one of the Union's greatest assets and must be

strategically adapted to the pace of technological progress, maintaining reciprocity with third States and preserving the principles of competition policy. Spain will work actively to ensure that the EU continues to promote a trade policy effectively guaranteeing that our companies may compete on an equal footing with other countries, and that it has effective mechanisms for competition defence. Our country will also promote the implementation of the Economic and Monetary Union, completing the Banking Union and Capital Markets Union and strengthening the international role of the euro. It will also be committed to defending the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a crucial policy for structuring the territory. Spain will also foster European progress towards the necessary **digital and green transitions**, so that they may strengthen each other, favouring the aspiration of European global leadership in this field and ensuring that these transitions are fair. Spain will continue to actively advocate for the formulation of an ambitious European policy to combat climate change that bolsters the leading role of the European Union in this area. The climate emergency constitutes one of the major challenges of this century, and the Green Deal is a cornerstone in the fight against it. This effort has already been transferred to the international arena and must be an essential part of European external action, both diplomatic and commercial..

## **Table 4.1. Bilateral priorities with EU Member States**

**Beyond the central objective of greater European integration and cohesion, which in itself marks relations with our EU partners, it is appropriate to note some bilateral priorities. We will continue to prioritise the relationship of trust with our neighbours, promoting projects that deepen interconnection at all levels and reinforce our ties, strengthening their social and progressive dimension.**

**In particular, Spain aspires to give greater relevance and scope to the bilateral summits we already hold with Portugal, France, Italy, Germany and Poland, making the most of their potential and intensifying regular coordination mechanisms. In addition to the executive, emphasis will be placed on greater involvement by other**

actors, both from other branches of the government and from civil society and the private sector, taking advantage of existing spaces such as bilateral dialogue forums and parliamentary forums, and promoting new formats and initiatives. Efforts will be made to extend this format of bilateral summits to other countries, such as Romania. Portugal, given its proximity and its role in the Ibero-American community of nations, will receive special attention in our foreign action.

Besides the bilateral dimension, Spain will promote its relations with sub-regional groups, such as the Visegrad Group and the Baltic States. Where possible, structured dialogues will be established, strengthening economic, social and cultural interests and ties.

As a highly connected country within the EU, Spain will especially seek to establish partnerships with like-minded countries prepared to go further or faster on specific issues and shared agendas.

Together with greater political and economic integration, Spain will promote the **strengthening of the European social pillar** and the action plan for its implementation to be approved by the Commission in 2021, so that we may renew our national social contracts with a distinctly European dimension. The future of the continent depends on having a more direct impact on citizens' problems, and especially on protecting the most vulnerable.

To this end, Spain will support initiatives underway or planned to **protect labour rights at the European level**, especially those relating to adequate minimum wages, gender pay transparency, working conditions and social protection for workers on digital platforms, the European Strategy for Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027, and the European Action Plan for the Social Economy. Building on the recently created SURE instrument, Spain will continue to promote the creation of a permanent unemployment insurance scheme. It will also focus on strengthening international cooperation in this regard, especially faced with the transnationalisation of labour relations driven by new technologies and service delivery platforms. Spain will address the new challenges facing inspection systems and support the effective

implementation of the newly created European Labour Authority.

**Education and scientific collaboration** have proven to be key elements in promoting European integration and cohesion, and Spain will also place emphasis on strengthening European cooperation in these areas, not only by promoting exchange programmes, but also through greater coordination between authorities and by sharing best practices. More than 40,000 students are currently participating in one of the many programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Europe. A common discourse by all EU Member States regarding foreign action in all these areas will be encouraged, and will be decisively promoted by our country.

Based on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 crisis, during 2021-2021 Spain will support the Commission's efforts to lay the foundations for a **European Health Union**. Better coordination and resourcing of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will be promoted to address future pandemics and health risks, while deepening collaboration between the respective health systems to ensure quality care for all citizens. The pandemic has shown us that common European action is essential in order to

respond to unfavourable circumstances and to foster a sense of belonging to a shared project.

The European **human rights, equality and diversity** agenda will be another top priority. Spain will actively promote human rights dialogues with third countries and the effective implementation of the EU Human Rights Guidelines. Moreover, support will be given to the full implementation of the European **Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**, backing the Commission in the presentation of binding measures in areas such as wage transparency and in the implementation of its Gender Action Plan III (GAP III 2021-2025).

The area of freedom, security and justice is an essential pillar of the European project. Spain will make every effort to strengthen the effectiveness of **police and judicial cooperation mechanisms** to guarantee the free movement of persons enshrined in the Schengen acquis, which is one of the major achievements of the European integration process. A reform of the **European Migration and Asylum System** will be promoted under the principle of solidarity and equitable sharing of responsibility, taking into account the problems of Member States with an EU external border. Lastly, Spain will place greater emphasis on the issue of the demographic challenge and rural depopulation at the European level.

## **Priority 2. A more resilient Europe**

Over and above deepening European integration, achieving a more resilient and autonomous Europe in strategic areas that are particularly **sensitive for its security and future development** is emerging as the second major priority for the EU in 2021-2024. The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the risks of excessive external dependence as regards key health supplies, a concern that the EU had already identified decades ago in areas such as energy and defence. Digitalisation and the

development of new technologies make this challenge even more evident.

Spain will support an in-depth review of those areas where **greater strategic autonomy** is advisable (see table). This will allow both the EU and its Member States to equip themselves with the necessary instruments to become more resilient and less dependent in an increasingly uncertain and volatile international context. We will focus on strengthening Europe's autonomous capacities for certain essential supplies, achieving strategic repositioning in global value chains, and promoting greater competitiveness and autonomy for European industry in certain strategic sectors, especially in cutting-edge technologies with a particular geopolitical dimension.

Spain will place special emphasis on the EU's need to position itself as a leading player in order to **win the technological and industrial future**; this will determine our Union's position of strength on the global stage in the coming years. The digital sphere, big data, AI, quantum computing, 5G networks, biotechnology and renewable energies are aspects of a structural transformation, in which our foreign action will be geared towards ensuring that Europe recovers its entrepreneurial initiative and contributes decisively to defining global rules and standards which, among other objectives, respect the rights of workers and individuals. Attention will be paid to international forums and meetings on information and communication technologies, as well as digital transformation, in order to learn about trends, good practices, regulation and common frameworks. Spain's participation in high-level discussions on AI, such as the Council of Europe's Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence, will also be strengthened. Closer collaboration with the business world will be essential to foster a consolidated European business network in the digital sphere and to create an environment conducive to innovation.

## Table 4.2. European strategic autonomy

In a context of increased geopolitical rivalry, strategic autonomy will allow the European Union to promote its values and interests through partnerships, where possible, and on its own where necessary, while preserving the principle of an open economy. Spain considers that this strategic autonomy has three basic dimensions:

The first would be the development of a Europe of Defence, with military capabilities and a broad and strengthened industrial base. All this should be done without overlapping and in conjunction with NATO, the other great bastion of security in Europe.

The second dimension would be the achievement of greater resilience in strategic supply chains. This greater economic autonomy should not be conceived as opposed to other blocs, but precisely by strengthening trade partnerships with them in order to gain stability and better leverage our internal market through international trade, better integration into global chains, and more balanced and better governed globalisation.

The third and final dimension is technology, where we must address the twofold need to develop our own technological capabilities and to standards and rules aligned with Europe's values in this sphere, such as the defence of privacy and the right to free and accurate information.

Given the importance of this agenda, Spain will support a strategic autonomy initiative at the European level that may give the EU greater regulatory leadership and geopolitical prominence.

### Priority 3. A more global Europe

Finally, the third major line of Spain's foreign action in its European dimension will be **increasing Europe's influence and relevance on the global stage**, seeking, in particular, that the EU has an increasingly leading position in major international issues, a unified voice and fully coordinated action. This will allow for a greater outreach of EU values worldwide and a more effective contribution of our country and of the Union to addressing the great challenges of our time.

The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union constitutes a great **opportunity for Spain to assume greater leadership in favour of a more global Europe**. Our country will promote a strengthened transatlantic relationship, will advocate greater ties with the community of Ibero-American

nations, will promote a more relevant role in the Mediterranean and will support an open trade policy based on common and predictable rules.

To achieve this goal, Spain will work closely with all EU institutions and EU partners, and especially with the **High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**. Spain will promote the implementation of the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy. In close collaboration with the European External Action Service and all relevant actors, Spain aims to make a proactive contribution to the multiple dimensions of European external action: foreign policy, security and defence policy, neighbourhood policy, cooperation and development, humanitarian aid, trade policy and EU enlargement. Our country will work to ensure that Europe capitalises on all its instruments of hard

and soft power, in a more strategic and coordinated manner, with the aim of increasing its presence and influence on a global level and contributing to a more efficient and effective multilateral governance of the major global challenges.

In addition to promoting the **Common Foreign and Security Policy** (CFSP) and the **Common Security and Defence Policy** (CSDP), Spain will promote a robust development cooperation and **humanitarian aid policy**, supporting joint initiatives such as the “Team Europe” package put together by the EU and its Member States to address the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences.

As regards financial cooperation, Spain will support the EU External Investment Plan, which, through a guarantee mechanism, seeks to support private investment in neighbouring and African

countries, with the aim of generating employment and development opportunities in the region. AECID and COFIDES will manage up to 180 million euros in guarantees, via three programmes approved by the European Commission, which will have a particular impact on the sectors of renewable energy, financial inclusion and sustainable cities, and will greatly contribute to achieving the SDGs.

A priority for Spain in the framework of the EU's external relations and in light of **Brexit** will be managing the Agreements on the future relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom. Likewise, on the basis of the initial agreement on Gibraltar reached by Spain and the United Kingdom on 31 December 2020, our country will promote the negotiation process for an Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom with regard to **Gibraltar**.

### **Table 4.3. Relations with non-EU European countries**

Our relations with non-EU European countries will be marked by their interaction with the European Union, but will not be limited to this dimension. Spain's foreign action will foster the principle of intensifying bilateral action in order to advance the agenda of priorities set by the four main lines of foreign action.

Given our close bilateral relations, the United Kingdom will require special and focused attention once the Brexit transition period is over and the implementation of the association agreement begins. We will promote an ambitious framework for the future relationship, commensurate with the breadth and depth of the existing relationship.

In the case of the EFTA countries, we aim to reach greater agreement on the major issues on the international agenda and, with those countries having the potential to do so, the development of reciprocal investment in high value-added sectors.

With regard to the Western Balkans, Spain intends to preserve its European perspective and to consolidate and promote our bilateral relations with the countries of the region, accompanying their progress towards EU accession.

Turkey is an ally in NATO and a strategic partner with which we share important interests. Spain maintains its support for Turkey's European perspective and will work to find avenues for dialogue in the Eastern Mediterranean, where stable and continued cooperation that rejects unilateralist impulses will be necessary.

## 4.4.2 Boosting regional integration mechanisms

In light of the erosion of multilateralism and the cracks that have emerged in the international architecture of the past 75 years, the **EU offers a governance model** that goes beyond traditional notions of sovereignty and can inspire other regions.

In this spirit, and through its action at the heart of the EU's external action, Spain will provide **special support to integration processes** that help create stability and progress in other regions, sharing our experience as a country and encouraging the EU to serve as a reference for others that are still in incipient stages of integration and convergence, while recognising the specificity of each territory and its circumstances.

Spain will **foster inter-regional relations** and promote association agreements between the EU and other

regional organisations, whether on economic or trade matters or on security and cooperation in different spheres. In particular, our country will do its utmost to act as a **catalyst for greater regional integration** in Latin America, especially through the Ibero-American Conference, but also by promoting the European Union-CELAC relationship and strengthening Mercosur by concluding the agreement with the EU.

Mediterranean integration will also be given priority, through the UfM and the 5+5 Dialogue. We will also support African integration, with the promotion of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and greater dialogue with the different regional economic and political integration mechanisms in Africa. Moreover, we will strengthen dialogue with Asian regional organisations, especially ASEAN.

## 4.4.3 Commitment to a reformed and strengthened multilateralism

Spain will promote greater and improved global governance to address the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly connected and interdependent world. The first step in this direction will be to **reform and strengthen multilateralism**: making it more horizontal and coherent, ensuring that it addresses global issues that lack effective governance, and improving the transparency of the multilateral system and its proximity to citizens. In short, our country aspires to spearhead a new multilateralism that is more effective, representative and adapted to the needs of today's world.

To achieve this goal, Spain will actively participate in the ongoing **reform processes** of the multilateral system. The starting point will be the commitment to a United Nations that is capable of fulfilling its mandate and successfully tackling the

agenda set out in the recent Declaration that marked the 75th anniversary of the organisation. To this end, Spain, with nine other countries, has launched the "Together for Stronger Multilateralism" initiative to advance specific actions in the areas of peace, security and justice; human rights; the environment and climate change; global health; inequality; gender equality; digitalisation; and sustainable financing. We will continue to work with these partners and other countries that decide to join the initiative to develop this agenda, and we will continue to forge ad hoc coalitions of like-minded countries to move forward with greater speed and determination on those issues where there is scope to do so.

At an **institutional level**, Spain will strengthen its commitment to Security Council reform within the framework of the Uniting for Consensus group and

under the logic of pluralistic representation. It will also promote the possible remodelling of other fundamental bodies and specialised bodies and agencies of the United Nations system. Similarly, our country will decisively and constructively support efforts to update and adapt the Bretton Woods institutions to the new needs and demands of our time. We will pay particular attention to the reform of the WTO. Spain will also emphasise the need for better international regulation of global public goods in the other international organisations and multilateral fora in which it participates, particularly in those in which we enjoy a relevant position and greater influence. In its bilateral relations, Spain will also seek the support and consensus of other countries for these reform processes.

In terms of **instruments**, Spain's foreign action will promote the strengthening of international law, the development of inclusive, ambitious and binding global standards, and the fostering of more fluid cooperation. We will support the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Summits organised to promote their achievement, in addition to, inter alia, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; the conclusions of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit; the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women; the protection and responsible management of Antarctic marine living resources and the environmental protection of the Antarctic continent within the framework of the 30th anniversary of the Madrid Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty on Environmental Protection.

Spain will also strengthen its **commitment to other international collaboration agendas and agreements**, such as the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda; the Platform on Disaster Displacement; the agreements and projects within the OECD on international tax cooperation and the fight against tax havens; the development of

the connectivity, security and sustainability of human activities involving air and sea travel and transport promoted by the competent international organisations, mainly the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO); and specific agreements such as the OSPAR Convention for the Northeast Atlantic and the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea.

Our foreign action will, at the same time, encourage the promotion of **international agreements that regulate new emerging areas** in which our governance mechanisms are still lagging far behind. We will establish international cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology, as well as agriculture and food security, as a cornerstone to ensure balanced and shared progress. The pioneering nature of many of the policies our country has promoted over the past decade in the areas of inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities have the potential to position us more firmly and more visibly as a leader in global agendas and in the development of international standards on these issues.

Spain will also aspire to play a more central role in initiatives to **overhaul global governance mechanisms**. We will encourage a revision of the *modus operandi* of international institutions, addressing the underlying problems that hinder their functioning and effectiveness: defining mandates, mechanisms for decision-making, financing, transparency, accountability, independence and participation of other actors and voices. We will also identify and promote initiatives and actions to improve the very structure of the multilateral system, emphasising the need for an architecture that responds better to the current challenges.

Finally, Spain will be more active in fostering a **culture of multilateralism**, including the promotion of attitudes favourable to international cooperation through education, information and the endorsement of values associated with concepts such as global citizenship and cosmopolitanism.

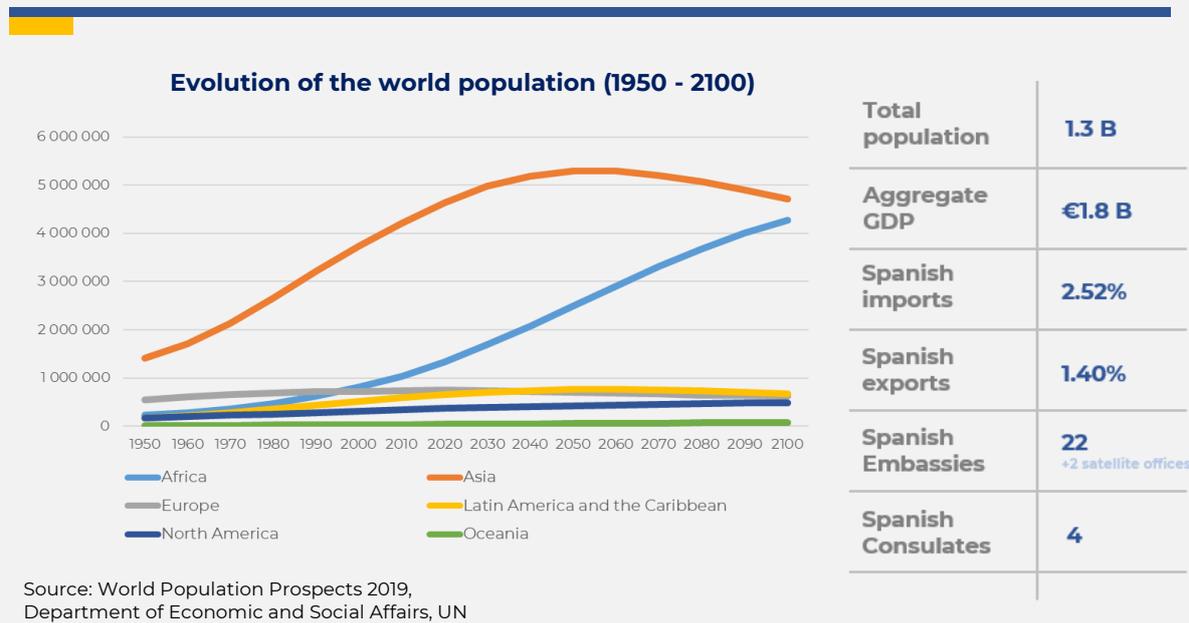
#### **Table 4.4. Specific lines of action within the framework of the UN**

- Step up Spain's profile at the United Nations, both in terms of staffing (civil servants and senior officials) and of our country's participation in elective bodies and its influence in defining policies.
- Consolidate the United Nations Support Base in Quart de Poblet (Valencia) as a technological hub for the entire UN system, adopting measures to support the decision of different UN entities to locate in Valencia.
- Contribute to adapting the Spanish legislative and administrative framework to the regulations of international bodies regarding the financing of international organisations, in particular bringing the regulations applicable to grants and voluntary contributions into line with the recommendations of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the needs of the UN.
- Consolidate Spain's position as a relevant actor in the protection, prevention and mediation agendas with the adoption of a Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy and the drafting of an action plan on mediation. Spain will actively participate in the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).
- Support efforts to open the organisation to economic and civil society actors in order to promote sustainable development and foster social responsibility, particularly through the promotion of the UN Global Compact.

# REGIONAL PRIORITIES: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

*Sub-Saharan Africa is a huge region in Spain's immediate neighbourhood that is undergoing major transformations, in particular exponential population growth. Africa currently represents the challenge-opportunity paradigm. Africa's failure or success will have a direct impact on the future of Europe and Spain.*

*Our country's main strategic priority regarding the region for 2021-2024 lies in contributing to the shared prosperity of Spain and Africa through cooperation in the areas of peace and security, inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic development, institutional strengthening and democratisation, and the management of regular and orderly mobility. Spain's main lines of action in the region are detailed in the Third Plan Africa, which will be developed through the Focus Africa 2023 Action Programme.*



Africa has great development potential linked to its demographic growth, the increase in its urban middle class, and the modernisation of its infrastructure. The realisation of this potential is conditional upon the continuation of peace and security efforts, to which Spain contributes notably through its participation in EU CSDP missions—EUTM Mali, EUTM Somalia, EUTM RCA, EUNAVFOR (Operation Atalanta)—and several bilateral missions (air support for Mali, and cooperative security) and the GAR-SI Sahel Programme, financed by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). Moreover, Spanish Development Cooperation is undertaking significant efforts to improve governance and reduce inequalities through the eight TCOs it has in the region. Spain is a gateway for major African migration flows, which are managed cooperatively with the countries of origin and transit, and through bilateral agreements.

Spain has 22 embassies, 2 diplomatic satellite offices and 4 Consulates General in the region. In addition, there are 8 Technical Cooperation Offices, 9 Economic and Commercial Offices, 2 Cultural Centres, 1 Instituto Cervantes centre (soon to open in Dakar) and 1 Cervantes classroom (soon to open in Abidjan). Spain also has 8 Offices and Attaché Offices of the Interior; 2 of Defence; 1 of Labour, Migration and Social Security; and 1 Office and 1 Attaché Office of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth and the fight against poverty are priority areas for Spain's foreign action in this region. In this area, actions will prioritise the development of green economies, in which food security and the provision of essential services for the entire population are guaranteed. In order to generate social and economic growth, it is essential to implement policies based on security and development. Priority will be given to humanitarian action and to technical and operational training and capacity-building activities for African partner countries. Public institutions will be the pillars of socio-economic recovery after Covid-19. In terms of strengthening African institutions, special attention will be paid to supporting the achievement of gender equality. In the area of mobility, Spain must continue, now more than ever, to develop migration policies based on cooperation in the countries of origin and transit, maintaining a preventive, global and comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of migration and that works with these countries to combat human trafficking networks. Scientific and educational cooperation for the development of the region's human capital will also be promoted.

**Human rights, democracy, security, and feminism:** Spain will support gender equality through all its actions in Africa and especially through its strategic partnerships with multilateral and regional organisations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the G-5 Sahel Women's Platform. The participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution and peacebuilding will also be supported. Spain will maintain humanitarian action as one of its priorities in Africa, supporting the adoption of a comprehensive approach and favouring coordination and complementarity between humanitarian, development and climate change actors.

**A global, integrated, just, and equitable economy and society:** Spain will support countries in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, deepening the synergies of humanitarian action, cooperation, training, investment and research. It will also promote the use of instruments encouraging investment, trade and the creation of decent jobs; and will support the internationalisation of Spanish companies in the region, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

**A more sustainable, habitable, and greener planet:** Spain will promote the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources, the sustainable use of fisheries, livestock and agriculture, the reduction of food waste, mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of climate change, including through nature-based solutions consistent with biodiversity objectives, and collaboration in the field of waste treatment and reduction, and water and sanitation services. Spain must also be at the forefront of sectors at the cutting edge of sustainable development, such as those linked to the blue economy. Spain will also support the development of renewable energies in the region to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and increase energy autonomy.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** Spain's main priorities are to support the integration processes in the African Union and ECOWAS and to monitor progress within the South African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the G5-Sahel. The new African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) should be the object of special support, both from a political and technical point of view. Spain should look to the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other organisations (particularly ECOWAS, but also SADC, IGAD and G5-Sahel) as allies in the defence of a rules-based international order.

At the bilateral level, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria are considered in the Third Plan Africa to be anchor countries, which due to their demographic, political and economic significance have a decisive influence on the stability and development of the countries in their respective sub-regions and can act as drivers of their transformation and modernisation. At the same time, Senegal, Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire, and Tanzania are defined as partnership countries, and, therefore, a priority. Despite having smaller populations and economies than the three anchor countries, they maintain a significant volume of relations with Spain and have stable, solid and open institutions, as well as fast economic growth. Senegal is also a pilot country for the purposes of certain new projects and institutional actions to improve the coordination of Spain's foreign action.

### **Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:**

- **Strengthening cooperation with the Sahel countries and support for their economic and social development and institution-building processes.**
- **Implementing the Action Programme of the Third Plan Africa and applying its evaluation procedure.**
- **Holding the First Spain-Africa Forum on Sustainable Cities.**



# **5. RESOURCES AND TOOLS**

# Resources and tools

The development of the main lines of action identified in this strategy calls for the **alignment of resources and tools in accordance with the priorities defined**. In a difficult context of limited economic resources such as that which we will be facing in the coming years, marked by the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, it will be more necessary than ever to streamline our foreign action based on **criteria of coherence, effectiveness and transparency**. This will entail pooling efforts, seeking synergies and avoiding duplication. The starting point is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the need to promote a modern and agile Foreign

Service. Improving coordination with other national government bodies with an impact and influence beyond our borders, as well as with the rest of the State's powers and administrations, will be essential to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of Spain's foreign policy. Over the coming years, we will also strengthen dialogue and collaboration with the broader ecosystem of actors involved in our foreign action—companies, civil society, the media, citizens—so that they can participate more actively in its formulation, have a better understanding of the priorities, and be the architects of its implementation.

## 5.1 Promoting a modern and flexible Foreign Service

### 5.1.1 Personnel and human resources

The central role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation in the coordination, initiative and leadership of Spain's foreign action entails an important responsibility: to ensure that Spain's **Foreign Service is**

**modern, dynamic and citizen-oriented**. This requires improving the management of the resources of the Ministry, AECID and Instituto Cervantes, both in central services and in the network of offices abroad.

#### MAUC personnel and budget data for 2021



## Table 5.1. MAUC's current situation and challenges

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation (MAUC) manages both the central services and the network of missions abroad, comprising 118 bilateral Embassies, 10 Permanent Missions to international organisations, 89 Consulates General and two Consulates. In addition, we must also include the staff of AECID (who manage 31 TCOs, 14 Cultural Centres and 4 Training Centres) and Instituto Cervantes (75 centres and classrooms), as well as other related organisations and entities. MAUC's budget accounts for 0.55% of the General State Budget and is subject to serious challenges, including the reduction in the number of diplomatic staff, as well as in the number of civil servants in other bodies that provide services in the Ministry.

Compared with other, similar countries, Spain is slightly behind in terms of human resources. Despite ranking ninth in the *Global Diplomacy Index 2019*, ahead of countries such as Italy and the United Kingdom, both of these have a higher per-capita staffing of their respective foreign ministries (7,116 in the case of Italy and 14,000 in the case of the United Kingdom). As regards its diplomatic personnel, Spain (940) also lags behind its European neighbours, such as France (2,134), Germany (1,703), United Kingdom (1,503) and Italy (977).

In the coming years, it will be necessary to maintain at least the same **rate of entry of new civil servants** into the diplomatic service, and as far as possible increase the number of posts allocated to this corps in the annual posting of public employment vacancies, given that the number of diplomatic officials has fallen by 6 percent over the past decade, to just over 900 people, of whom only a quarter are women due to their slow and late incorporation into this profession.

A particular effort will be made to **train diplomatic personnel** in order to align their knowledge with the priorities indicated in this Strategy. In this regard, it is particularly important to strengthen the Diplomatic School as a centre for **continuous and specialised training** of Foreign Service personnel.

Progress will continue to be made in **removing socio-economic barriers from the system for preparation for and access to the diplomatic service**. Work will also be carried out in

coordination with the relevant ministries to improve the remuneration and working conditions of personnel in order to retain and attract talent, including officials from other higher and expert bodies, both general and specific. All of this will be done in accordance with annual posting of public employment vacancies and the remuneration framework established each year in the corresponding General State Budget.

Likewise, the diplomatic service will be subject to **new regulations**, which will update the 1993 regulations currently in force.

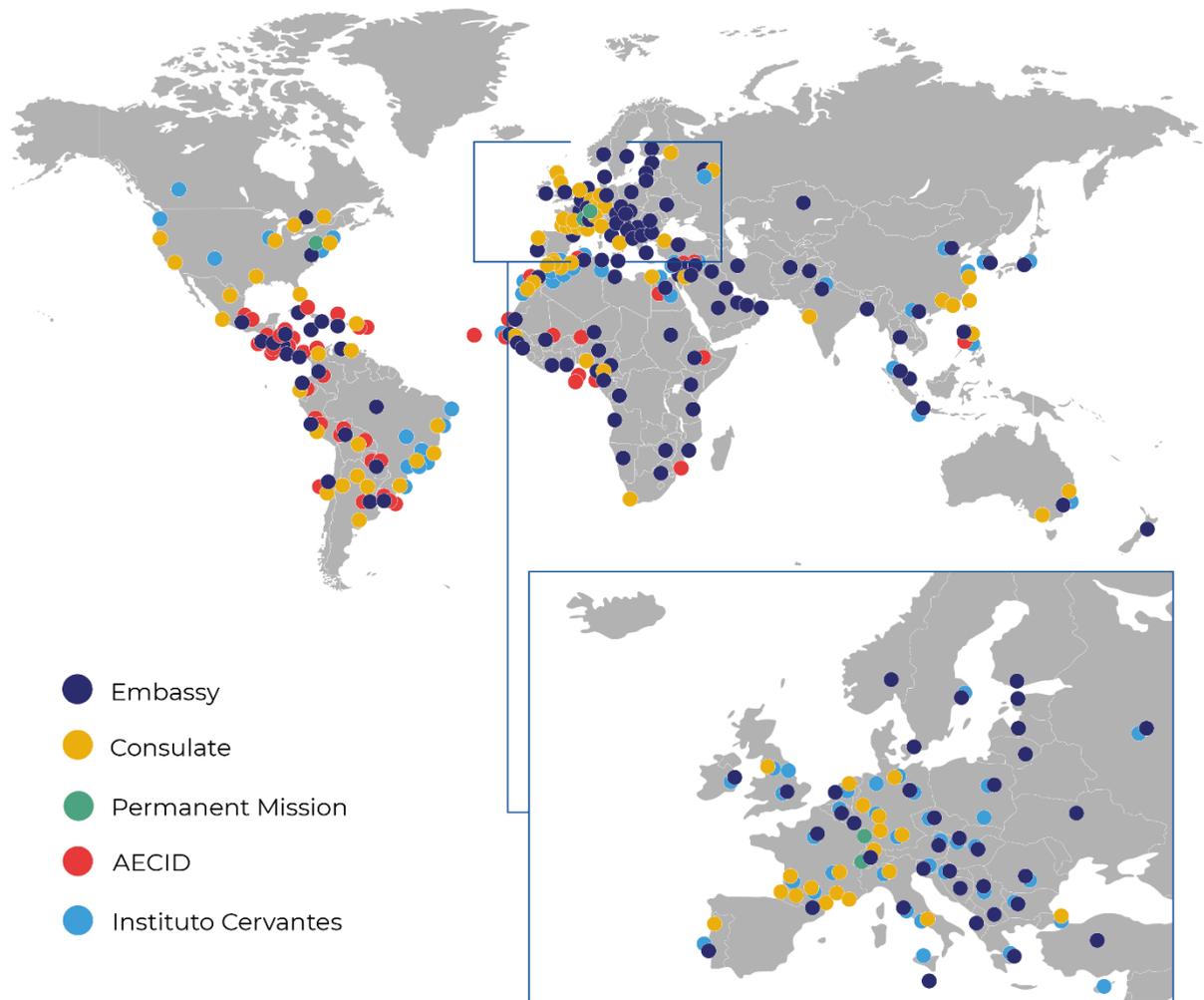
Coordination **mechanisms between embassies** will be strengthened, both at a regional level and through an annual conference of Spanish Ambassadors.

The transfer of diplomatic staff and staff from other Spanish administrative bodies to the **European External Action Service (EEAS)** and other relevant European institutions, including under

exchange programmes, as well as to international organisations, will be promoted. Only with a solid and

constant presence of our personnel will we be able to better defend our interests and those of the EU.

### Deployment of Spanish foreign action (2020)



### 5.1.2 Working methods and conditions

A modern Foreign Service cannot be built without **updating working methods, conditions and operations within the Ministry itself**. This implies, among other priorities, promoting the **ongoing improvement of evaluation** procedures for assessing results and improving processes. Management by objectives, and the consolidation of

methodologies and instruments for internal and performance evaluation will be fundamental in this regard. We will also accord due importance to working conditions and opportunities for staff. Work-life balance, teleworking, lifelong learning and co-responsibility are some of the areas in which further progress is needed.

Emphasis will also be placed on **assisting vulnerable families and individuals abroad**, offering special support for the accreditation of unmarried couples and same-sex couples.

We will continue to promote the Master Plan for Security of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation in order to address the challenges that arise in the area of security. Moreover, it is equally important to continue **strengthening coordination with law enforcement agencies**, in order to optimise, as far as possible, the security and protection services of our Missions abroad.

### 5.1.3 Feminist foreign policy and diversity

Spain will continue to foster measures to facilitate the **active promotion of equality between women and men, the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination** in the Foreign Service, as well as the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in our foreign policy.

To this end, measures will be adopted to promote the presence of women in positions of responsibility, starting with the current 26 female ambassadors, who represent 20% of the total number of heads of mission.

In this regard, campaigns to **combat workplace and sexual harassment** will be promoted, a culture of streamlined working hours will be fostered, and training plans will include courses that raise awareness about equal opportunities and the prevention of gender violence.

In order to evaluate the degree of equality achieved and the effectiveness of the measures adopted, the Ministry will collect data disaggregated by sex.

Diplomatic service promotion campaigns will be diversity-focused.

### 5.1.4 Digitalisation and new technologies

New technologies have a key role to play. We will use resources from the European Recovery Fund to **digitalise consular and diplomatic services**, as well as to foster further digitalisation of the Ministry as a whole, including AECID and Instituto Cervantes. This will facilitate citizens' interactions with the administration and simplify formalities and procedures. An electronic office will be created where citizens will be able to identify themselves digitally and carry out procedures without having to visit consulates.

The implementation of the Departmental Action Plan for the Digital Transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and

Cooperation will be a priority over the next few years. The Ministry will be equipped with a **new web portal**, which will offer a dynamic, more attractive and accessible site for citizens.

It will also be necessary for staff to develop genuine **cognitive autonomy**, i.e. the ability to clearly define values and interests, evaluate data and analyse trends, anticipate events, plan for possible scenarios and decide on courses of action. To this end, we will incorporate new knowledge and communication technologies, social media, big data and artificial intelligence, which are also key in the fight against disinformation.

## 5.1.5 Consular services and protection

With almost three million Spanish nationals living abroad and close to 19 million Spanish tourists travelling abroad each year, consular work is one of the fundamental pillars of Spain's foreign policy and foreign action. Our country must **guarantee quality consular protection and assistance** to its citizens when they are abroad, and it is the responsibility of Spain's network of diplomatic missions and consular posts to coordinate actions in this area.

As needs change over time, so too will resources be **redeployed abroad**, fully respecting the principles of necessity, effectiveness and efficiency, taking into consideration such factors as a sizeable Spanish community, a significant demand for visas, or the promotion of the opening of new tourist and business markets for Spain, especially important in areas of growing vitality, such as the Asia-Pacific region, or certain areas of Africa.

Managing the coronavirus crisis has entailed the coordination of the largest repatriation process in our democratic history. It has highlighted the **need for a fast and efficient consular emergency prevention and management system**, with sufficient capacity to anticipate and respond to situations of danger or emergency, whether individual or collective, affecting Spaniards abroad. It has also highlighted the growing **demand for personalised assistance to specific groups**, to which the MAUC has responded with services such as Conecta, aimed at facilitating the international mobility of business people, workers, technicians and other

professionals in the face of the restrictions arising from the pandemic.

Consular protection and assistance will be provided in compliance with the constitutional value regarding the effective equality of all persons, and special attention will therefore be paid to Spanish citizens abroad who are in a **situation of exceptional vulnerability** due to personal or circumstantial reasons, such as victims of gender violence.

In particular, foreign action will promote the necessary **reform of the electoral law** to simplify the requirements for participation in all electoral processes for Spaniards abroad.

The **Councils of Spanish Residents Abroad** (CREs) and their role as an advisory body to the Consuls General will also be promoted, seeking to increase their number and further their work, as well as to raise the profile of the General Council of Spanish Citizens Abroad (CGCEE) and respond to its demands. To this end, the networks of Casas Autonómicas deployed abroad by Spain's Autonomous Communities (self-governing regions), and with which the central government will collaborate, will play a crucial role in supporting and helping Spanish citizens abroad. Our foreign action will reinforce efforts to better connect with Spanish citizens abroad, meeting their needs while making the most of their enormous talent and human capital in terms of our priorities as a country. Spain will promote and protect associations of Spanish citizens abroad, acting in the defence of their interests.

## 5.1.6 Public diplomacy

The Ministry will also place greater emphasis on strengthening its public diplomacy, which must permeate all of its activity in an ongoing process of staff training, changes in organisational and

working methods, as well as the **renewal of instruments** that will gradually enable the construction of a competitive, twenty-first century Foreign Service. The public must be

aware and knowledgeable about Spain's role in the world, its participation in the main world forums and, especially, its role as a defender and driving force of the EU, as well as its actions to protect and assist the Spanish community abroad.

Active public diplomacy and the **strategic and effective use of social media** will be essential to create a shared civic culture regarding Spain's influence and action beyond its borders.

Buttressed by the pillars of democracy, modernity and citizenship, and by the strengths of our country more than 40 years after adopting its Constitution, **Spain must reinforce its reputation as a modern, advanced and mature country**; as a country that manages its diversity as a source of wealth; as a country with a productive, open and competitive economy and a rich

historical, cultural, artistic and gastronomic heritage; as a recognised sports power; as an equitable, plural and inclusive society with a strong European and cosmopolitan outlook. Through the State Secretariat for Global Spain, the Ministry will ensure that the public have access to our country's narrative, within a strategic framework for the creation and defence of our image, through the development of a Country Reputation Action Plan.

The Ministry will also rely more and in a **more coordinated manner on the broad network of organisations linked to its activity, favouring synergies**. Thus, greater coordination will be promoted with the work of the Casas Network (Africa, America, Arab, Asia, Mediterranean, Centro Sefarad-Israel), the Foundations-Council and the other institutions and institutes linked to the Ministry.

## 5.1.7 Cultural and educational diplomacy

Cultural and educational diplomacy deserves special attention due to the particular asset it represents for Spanish foreign action in terms of **impact, influence and outreach**. A fundamental pillar will be the **promotion of Spanish**, the world's second mother tongue—of the 585 million people who speak Spanish, 489 million are native speakers. The Spanish-speaking community already represents 7.5% of the world's population. The situation in the United States, where the aim is to strengthen and increase its use, and the potential for expansion in other regions of the world, such as Asia and Africa, are certainly exceptional.

To take advantage of this potential, **coordination and collaboration will be strengthened between the main actors in cultural action abroad**, including AECID's Directorate of Cultural and Scientific Relations and the network of Spanish Cultural Councils and Cultural Centres that operate under the aegis of the MAUC, the Ministry of

Culture itself, the state-owned company *Acción Cultural Española* (AC/E) and, of course, **Instituto Cervantes**.

Collaboration will also be furthered with the other administrations that carry out cultural work abroad, as well as with the private sector and civil society. Our initiative will also be strengthened in the **major global and regional platforms of cultural diplomacy**, such as the EUNIC network of national cultural centres in EU countries, and the CANOA network, set up by Instituto Cervantes together with Latin American partners. This will be consolidated by a clear commitment to the presence of Spanish creation and of our language in the digital sphere, supporting greater dissemination of Spanish artists and creators beyond our borders.

Collaboration with **Latin American institutions** will also be strengthened in the promotion and dissemination of our linguistic and cultural heritage, and integration between the Spanish-language cultural industries will be

encouraged in order to intensify their growing international influence. The promotion of the country's cultural diversity and of the co-official languages of the State will also be an important aspect of foreign cultural action.

In addition to cultural action and the promotion of Spanish language teaching, greater attention will be paid to meeting the educational needs and demands of Spanish citizens abroad, and a true educational diplomacy will be strengthened to capitalise on the presence of Spanish students and teachers in academic institutions in other countries. The **Education Offices and Education Attaché Offices abroad**, in addition to coordinating Spanish educational action programmes, will continue to foster bilateral relations in this field, with the aim of bringing Spanish language and culture closer to teachers and students in the formal education system, both in primary and secondary education and in higher education. Special emphasis will be placed on **projecting Spain's attractiveness as an educational destination**, and, in particular, the internationalisation of our universities on the basis of an attractive and competitive offer, for which scholarship programmes such as those offered by MAUC-AECID and the Carolina Foundation could be of great assistance.

We will take advantage of strengths such as our being the main Erasmus destination and the leadership of our business schools at an international level, as well as the increasing coordination of an Ibero-American space for higher university studies. Our country will develop an active policy of internationalisation of the Spanish university system.

Spanish cultural and educational diplomacy will be embedded in a **fully multilateral and global perspective** such as that provided by UNESCO, an organisation in which Spain's recognised leadership will serve to defend and promote principles such as diversity and cultural heritage, the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods and cultural and educational cooperation as an agent for peace between nations.

Spain is, moreover, a world sports power. Our achievements and successes in this sphere, and the talent of our athletes, are Spain's global calling card, in addition to transmitting our values as a society. We will work to develop a sports diplomacy that harnesses the great potential of Spanish sport to project our image and reputation, as well as exploiting its economic potential.

## **5.1.8 Scientific and technological diplomacy**

**Scientific diplomacy plays an important role in the deployment of our country's soft power**, and is fostered both by Spaniards living abroad and by citizens of third countries with emotional, professional or other ties to Spain. In this field, scientists play a fundamental role both because of their intellectual position and cultural standing in the societies they form part of, and because of the stability and depth of the social networks they establish in their collaborations.

Science, technology and innovation constitute one of the cross-cutting themes of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Spain's foreign action must take into account the interdisciplinarity and connectivity provided by scientific research, where science must be presented as one of Spain's strengths as a prosperous, developed and socially and culturally advanced country, and a fundamental tool for attracting human capital and talent. The scientific, technological and innovation dimension boosts Spain's presence, credibility and image abroad. The need

to disseminate, represent and support it appropriately abroad must therefore be a priority of our foreign action.

The international representation of Spanish science has traditionally been undertaken by various institutions and bodies in a fragmented manner. In recent years, the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation have worked together to **align the priorities of Spain's scientific policy with its foreign policy objectives**, with the ultimate goal of coordinating different actors to more effectively promote the internationalisation of the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System and the contribution of scientific knowledge to global challenges. This collaboration between the two Ministries should lead to a **joint roadmap** that actively contributes to the design of science diplomacy in Europe, in line with the Madrid Declaration on this subject. We will also ensure that the **profiles of external personnel** respond to the priorities described here.

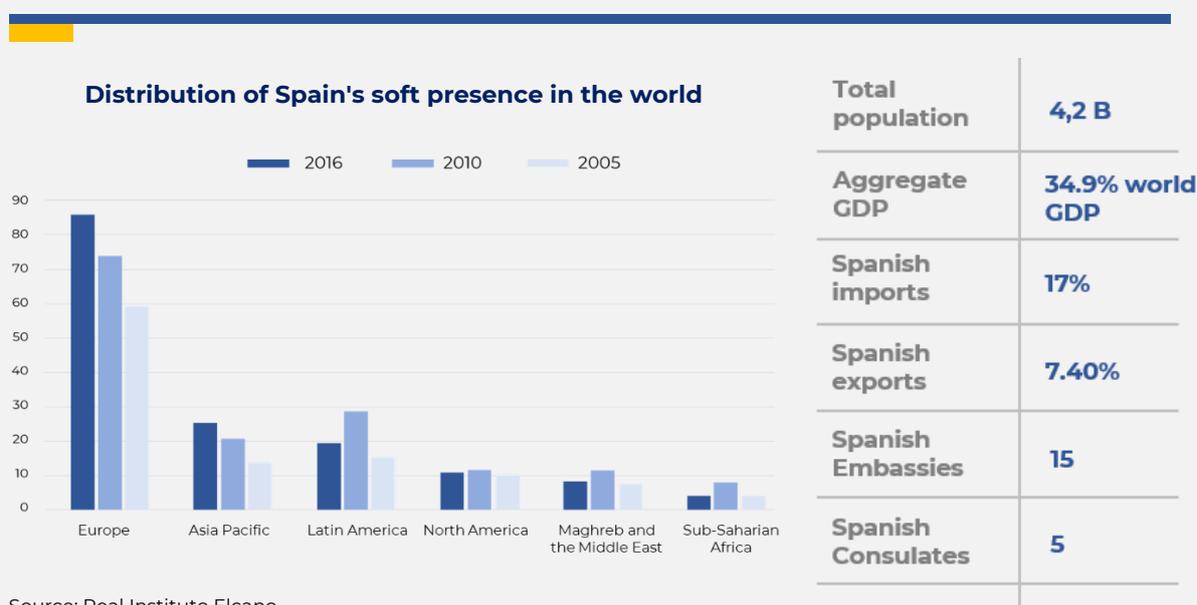
Within this collaboration mechanism, the **networks of Spanish scientists abroad** are also of particular note. Since 2011, the Ministry of Science and Innovation (through the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology [FECYT]) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through AECID) have been working to provide adequate support to the communities of Spanish scientists and researchers abroad, as well as to Spanish technology-based companies in their internationalisation process (with the support of the Secretary of State for Trade and the delegates of the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology [CDTI]).

The future **National Strategy on Technology and Global Order** will develop the capacities, tools and processes necessary to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the intersection of science, technology and society, and their impact on international relations. It will propose a roadmap for a genuine Spanish technology diplomacy.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES: ASIA-PACIFIC

*The Indo-Pacific region comprises 13 Asian and 25 South Asian and Pacific countries, and includes China and India—both nuclear powers and both amongst the world's largest economies—as well as Japan. Asia-Pacific accounts for 54% of the world's population and will account for half of the world's growth by 2050. It currently accounts for 42% of innovation spending and 40% of the world's scientific output.*

*Given its strategic significance, China is one of Spain's priority countries in the region, with significant repercussions at the multilateral level. So are Japan and Korea, like-minded countries with which the EU has major trade agreements, and India, a country with great potential for expanding our relations. Spain will also favour closer ties with other like-minded democracies in the region, such as Australia and New Zealand. In general terms, the emphasis will be on Asia-Pacific acquiring greater prominence in Spain's foreign policy, given its undeniable economic, demographic and geopolitical momentum, with ASEAN as one of our main interlocutors in the region.*



Source: Real Instituto Elcano

Despite the current crisis, the Asia-Pacific economies will rebound by 6.8% in 2021. Spain has a trade deficit with these countries, especially with China (3rd supplier and 10th customer, with €29.1 billion in imports and €6.8 billion in exports in 2019). Many countries in the region have modest trade figures. There are no significant migration flows, except for the Chinese community (around 215,000 people) and communities with a certain presence, such as the Filipino, Indian and Pakistani communities. Politically, China is the most relevant country with which more balanced relations should be sought, especially in the economic sphere, while at the same time trying to strengthen the EU's position. Japanese and Korean investment, Asian tourism and exports to the region, as well as investment in Australia will be crucial in the future. With some exceptions, Spain's relations with the region are below potential.

There are 15 Embassies (China, India, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand), 2 satellite offices (Myanmar and Fiji) and 9 Consulates General (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Manila, Sydney and Melbourne). The region has 16 Economic and Commercial Offices and 5 Tourism Offices (Beijing, Guangzhou, Mumbai, Singapore and Tokyo). There are also Offices of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in China, Singapore and India. Spanish Cooperation's Fifth Master Plan (for 2018-2021) only includes the Philippines among the priority countries in the region. From a cultural point of view, there

are Instituto Cervantes offices in China, Japan, India, the Philippines and Australia, and classrooms in South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. From an educational point of view, there are Education Offices in China and Australia that promote and maintain relations with the countries in the region. The educational programmes that have been developed with China are particularly relevant.

From a geopolitical standpoint, the region presents major global challenges, but it also offers great opportunities for Spanish foreign action. In this context, Spain must avoid confrontational dynamics while defending the EU's strategic autonomy in key areas where too much dependence has developed, especially in the area of supplies. For Spain, it is essential to defend more open and fairer trade and to achieve greater establishment of our companies, as well as to facilitate the participation of Asia-Pacific countries in the fight against climate change and the development and enforcement of ground rules that allow for better management of global public goods.

In relation to **China**, Spain will promote the development of a European position with three fundamental characteristics: (1) that the relationship with China is truly strategic, and as such establishes a long-term framework for relations with China; (2) that it addresses the systemic dimension of the Europe-China partnership, and therefore enables the major global challenges such as the fight against climate change, the regulation of financial markets, and global trade governance to be tackled jointly; and (3) that it does not ignore the clear elements of rivalry that exist in the areas of values and interests, with particular emphasis on issues relating to respect for human rights and the need to prevent unfair economic competition.

**Human rights, democracy, security and feminism:** The human rights situation in the region is subject to tensions, in particular with regard to ethnic and religious minorities. There are also border tensions between several countries and in the South China Sea. In these scenarios, Spain supports dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Working with civil society is key to making progress on these issues.

**A global, integrated, just and equitable economy and society:** The intensification of the presence of Spanish companies in China, India and other countries, and the promotion of free trade and investment security is a priority for Spain. Emphasis will therefore be placed on working towards a global, integrated, just and equitable society that respects the sovereignty and integrity of States. Spain favours a balance between, on the one hand, the defence of human rights and freedoms and, on the other, the development of constructive cooperation that strengthens the EU's role as a global actor (climate change, economic cooperation, regional stability). Cooperation in science, technology and innovation will also be increased especially given the potential of the main countries in the region and the existing avenues of collaboration.

**A more sustainable, habitable planet:** China and India are key to climate change policy having a global impact. Asia is a continent of large cities, where the need to promote a greener, more sustainable and cleaner mode of production is evident. Spain has scope to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in this field, building on the momentum initiated with the Paris Agreement. This will make it possible to strengthen multilateralism and add synergies, as has been the case with the "Together for Stronger Multilateralism" initiative launched by the President of the Government of Spain to reinforce multilateralism and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** The most prominent integration forum is ASEAN, which brings together 10 countries and generates a structure of concentric circles that extends across the region, promoting political dialogue, stability and prosperity. The ASEAN countries have played a leading role in the conclusion of the RCEP trade agreement, which also includes China, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand and which could give rise to one of the largest and fastest growing markets on the planet. ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting), for its part, has established itself as a forum for dialogue between Asia and Europe, in which Spain participates actively. Spain must also prioritise cooperation in multilateral forums with like-minded countries with a shared agenda.

### **Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:**

- **Boosting EU trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand.**
- **Promoting economic and climate diplomacy with the region.**
- **Redeploying consular and Instituto Cervantes resources, particularly in China and India..**

## 5.2 Centrality of sustainable development cooperation

Sustainable development cooperation will be an **integral, central, cross-cutting and defining element of our foreign action**, and will seek a transformative impact as it works towards attaining the main priorities set out in the 2030 Agenda. Development cooperation has a policy and objectives of its own—these are internationally agreed-upon global development objectives, which are not always in line with every aspect of foreign policy. Development cooperation also has its own methodological, planning, management and evaluation apparatus. From the perspective of this Foreign Action Strategy, Spanish Cooperation is also a fundamental instrument for fully deploying the four main substantive lines of action identified as Spain's responses to global challenges, and ensuring they have real impact in terms of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The **SDGs** and the contribution that our country can make through its foreign action to fulfil them at a global level represent a **roadmap for sustainable development cooperation** during the period covered by this Strategy. Especially during the Decade of Action, this roadmap will revitalise the global political commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Climate Agenda defined by the UN and in line with the future global framework for biodiversity post-2020. An example of the centrality of cooperation for Spanish foreign action is the reinstatement of the position of Secretary of State for International Cooperation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation. During 2021-2024, intense efforts will also be made to achieve the commitment set out in the Decision of the coalition Government to allocate 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA by the end of the current term of parliament.

Spain's sustainable development cooperation policy will make a fundamental contribution to the **fight against poverty in all its dimensions**, and will serve as a lever for all countries to achieve the SDGs. All these initiatives will be implemented within the framework of the commitment to the 2030 Agenda, keeping in mind the need to provide a quality response to humanitarian crises and to the crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, the actions will be aligned with **Spanish Cooperation's Joint Response Strategy for the Covid-19 Crisis**, a recent strategy which presents this crisis as an opportunity for a transformative recovery guided by the principles of inclusion of all relevant actors and the promotion of a spirit of consensus and flexibility regarding the timeframe for action, all in line with the response of EU cooperation through its "Team Europe" approach.

Spain's foreign action will maintain its commitment to cooperation as a policy at the service of the SDGs, strengthening resources, improving coherence and developing the necessary synergies with public and private actors operating in this sector. In this regard, a **new vision of Spanish cooperation** will be promoted through the adoption of the institutional and legal reforms necessary to adapt it to the new needs. A central element of this process will be the drafting and approval, through a participatory and inclusive process, of a new Act on International Sustainable Development Cooperation, which will update the current Act 23/1998 of 7 July on International Development Cooperation.

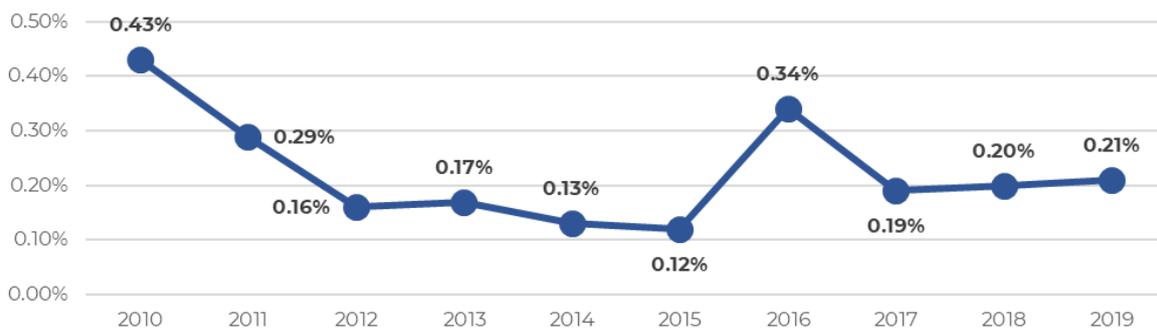
Likewise, an **in-depth change in the institutional architecture of Spanish Development Cooperation** will be promoted. In this context, special attention will be paid to reforming and

strengthening AECID, the main body responsible for implementing our development cooperation policy and our humanitarian action, and the main coordinator of Spain's cultural action abroad. The aim will be to provide it with an improved legal structure, streamline its procedures and ensure the effectiveness of its interventions and its role as a catalyst for the creation of partnerships between other development cooperation actors, promoting a fluid and structured dialogue with civil society and NGOs. The focus will be on strengthening and modernising financial cooperation, and on fostering the creation of public-private partnerships for the development of spaces for civil society participation in cooperation policy, in line with the challenges imposed on us by the 2030 Agenda and with a view to positioning Spain as a leading European actor in the field of cooperation. Considering the growing importance of private investment in development projects under modalities such as

“blending”, emphasis will be placed on ensuring that cooperation generates a more robust and sustainable network of local enterprises.

The result of this reform process must be a **strengthened AECID, equipped with the necessary human and financial resources**. It will be especially important to promote a greater transfer of knowledge and good practices between the headquarters and the Cooperation Units Abroad (Technical Cooperation Offices, Cultural Centres and Training Centres), which will make it possible to attract talent and experience at the service of the 2030 Agenda. It will also be better adapted to the system and better coordinated with other key institutions such as the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policy (FIIAPP) and the Carolina Foundation. An Annual Development Cooperation Forum will be launched to strengthen dialogue with all relevant actors.

### Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of Spain's Gross National Income (GNI)



Source: ODA Report. Monitoring of Official Development Assistance (MAUC)

## Table 5.2. A new vision of Spanish Cooperation

The new vision of Spanish Cooperation will be structured along the following vertical and horizontal lines of action::

### *Vertical lines of action*

- Cooperation focused on key public policy areas for the eradication of extreme poverty, such as food, water, sanitation and health.
- Cooperation for ecological transition and global climate justice, through the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems and biodiversity, promoting energy transition and the transformation of agri-food systems.
- Cooperation in education, training and human capacity building, generating skills and opportunities for entrepreneurship and decent work.
- Cooperation to foster the development of local enterprises, with a focus on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthening social dialogue, with a view to building inclusive and sustainable local economies.

### *Horizontal lines of action*

- Feminist cooperation, placing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the centre of transformations.
- Cooperation that defends human rights, protects those who defend them and generates favourable environments for the development of the rule of law, civil society and democratic institutions.
- Humanitarian cooperation.
- Cooperation based on innovative public-private partnerships.

## 5.3 Ensuring the comprehensive nature of Spain's foreign action

The leading role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation does not detract from the need for reflection, planning and implementation that goes beyond the Ministry's remit. Reinforcing internal coordination within the public

administration and with other state powers and government bodies will be key to the successful implementation of this strategy. Beyond mere coordination, we must aspire to ensure that **Spain's foreign action has a comprehensive and cohesive**

**character**, an essential element for its proper execution and also for its versatility, under the guidance of the principles stipulated in Act 2/2014 on State Foreign Action and the Foreign Service. Given that reality is not organised according to the

administrative divisions of states, powerful foreign action and its effective management require a **comprehensive and cross-cutting vision, based on joint reflection, planning and execution.**

### 5.3.1 Central government and the General State Administration

At the level of the central government and the General State Administration, it will be **necessary to reactivate and strengthen the policymaking and internal coordination instruments provided for in Act 2/2014**, of 25 March, on State Foreign Action and the Foreign Service, and in **particular the Foreign Policy Council and the Foreign Policy Executive Council**. Formal and informal mechanisms and instruments will be promoted to complement this work and strengthen coordination on a more specific and day-to-day basis.

Spain also has two great assets for promoting its foreign action, namely the **Head of State and the President of the Government**, who, due to their influence, are the best ambassadors of the principles and priorities outlined in this strategy.

Today, almost every public policy has an international dimension and reach; the priorities of this strategy call for **greater inter-ministerial collaboration, both through permanent coordination mechanisms** and through coordination organised for this purpose.

Spain's Permanent Representation to the EU (REPER) offers an example of **good practice in coordination and collaboration** between the different ministries, thus combining the principle of coordination and unity of foreign action to better defend Spain's interests. One aspect that will be emphasised will be the strengthening of the necessary collaboration between the Economic and Commercial Offices and the Technical Cooperation Offices.

### 5.3.2 Other branches of government

As regards the other branches of government, in the coming years progress must be made in **updating and strengthening the role of the legislature in foreign action**, and not reducing it to mere oversight of the executive branch and its policies. Parliament must play a more active role, as a true forum for discussion about our foreign action and as the citizens' representative in this debate. The Congress of Deputies and the Senate are, moreover, the main institutionalised channel of expression for the wealth of ideological and territorial sensitivities

regarding Spain's role in the world, and as such should play a greater role in generating consensus on our foreign policy and action.

**Parliamentary diplomacy** is also an increasingly important asset, through exchanges, trips and the participation of our parliamentarians in international forums and assemblies (Inter-Parliamentary Union, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO, OECD, Ibero-American system, etc.), where a more planned and structured presence and influence, in

coordination with the executive branch, could bring about enormous benefits.

Likewise, it would be advisable to take advantage of the **great potential of the judiciary in international forums**, sharing best practices and reinforcing its image as a high expression of our rule of law. Emphasis will be placed on the external dimension of constitutional justice.

The same applies to institutions such as the Ombudsman, with a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights and to assess the compliance of national policies and regulations with international standards. The Ombudsman's connection with international and regional networks led by our country, especially the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen (FIO) and the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen (AOM), will be strengthened.

### 5.3.3 Autonomous Communities and local entities

The success of our foreign action depends on fostering **greater dialogue and coordination with the Autonomous Communities and with local entities** (town councils, regional councils, island councils and other territorial entities such as metropolitan area councils), which are increasingly carrying out more extensive and intense work beyond our borders, as a result of a decentralisation of powers that gives them responsibility for public policies with an external reach.

It will be important to **develop platforms for sharing information** on respective activities and initiatives, as well as **mechanisms for coordinating actions**, as is already being carried out by the Conference for EU-related matters (CARUE), the Inter-territorial Commission for Development Cooperation and the Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO.

One mechanism is to accord greater importance to international issues and the external action dimension of the different **sectoral conferences**. The conferences, as well as the sectoral committees and their working groups, are the best channel for guaranteeing information to and from the Autonomous Communities on issues that are of interest to them and, on many occasions, fall within their scope of authority. This improvement in coordination and reinforcement of strategic dialogue will be completed with

the **establishment of regular consultation mechanisms that bring together the MAUC and those responsible for the foreign action of the Autonomous Communities**. Special attention will continue to be paid in this context to the coordination of the Autonomous Communities in cross-border cooperation mechanisms.

In addition to dialogue between administrations, it will be **important to strengthen dialogue between the respective agents and specialised actors**, in particular agencies for business internationalisation, trade and investment, and development cooperation, as was done in the latter case for the drafting and adoption by consensus of Spanish Cooperation's Joint Response Strategy for the Covid-19 Crisis. Mechanisms for the exchange of information and regular consultation among these actors will be promoted, favouring greater coordination among them, as well as with their peers in the Central Administration. In this regard, it is also advisable to give the Sectoral Conferences a role in bringing together all mechanisms for collaboration and cooperation with social agents, citizens and the third sector, especially in those specific areas where there are no bodies of this nature already in place.

The importance that cities are acquiring in certain issues of the agenda, such as the fight against climate change, requires a

**more direct dialogue with those of our cities that have an international profile** for economic, social and cultural reasons, within the framework of the Spanish Urban Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

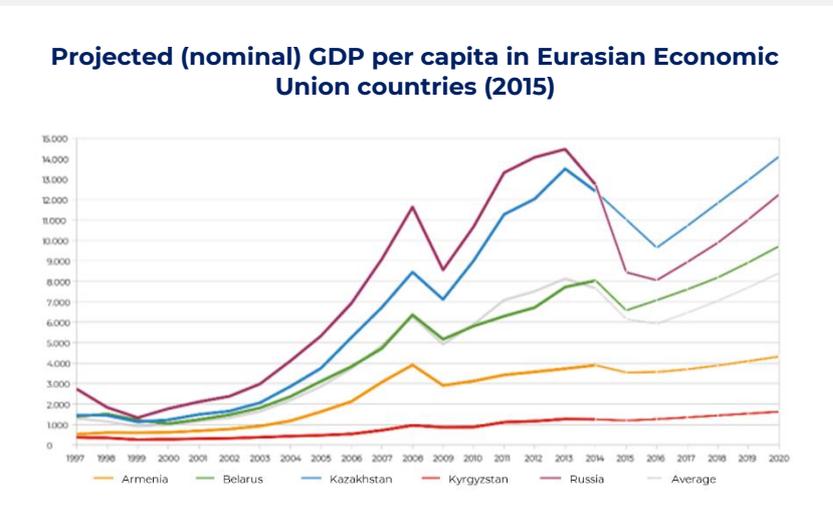
**The Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** has been proposed as a comprehensive project promoting and reflecting a shared effort on the part of all public administrations to achieve the SDGs. This cross-cutting and participatory

agenda is a guide for greater collaboration and offers an added value that can contribute to our leadership in foreign action. The general spirit that should guide this collaboration must avoid notions of hierarchy or competitive rivalry, and generate a sense of shared responsibility and common objectives. In this regard, the Sectoral Conference for the 2030 Agenda, with the participation of the Autonomous Communities, the Autonomous Cities and local entities, offers a framework for advancing in this coordination.

# REGIONAL PRIORITIES: RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

*Eastern Europe includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, while Central Asia includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Russia is the largest country, the second largest nuclear power and the world's 10th largest economy, with access to the Mediterranean Sea and the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. The region is sparsely populated despite its size, with just 290 million inhabitants. As a whole, Spain's presence is limited and the region is considered a minor destination as regards our investment and trade.*

*Given its strategic and territorial significance, Russia is Spain's main priority, together with Ukraine. Spain must aspire to playing a greater role in Central Asia's economic development.*



Total population	290.6 M
Aggregate GDP	€1.96 B
Spanish imports	1.90%
Spanish exports	1.09%
Spanish Consulates	2

Source: IMF / WEO

Although from an economic perspective Russia is the most important actor for Spain in this region, in global terms it offers limited figures in all areas: it barely accounts for 0.7% of our exports and occupies a modest 48th place among the recipients of our investments. The other countries show even more modest figures. This group of countries has not been a destination for Spanish emigration, there are few Spanish nationals living in the region and most of them are linked to the business world or are descendants of the Spanish refugee children evacuated to the Soviet Union during the Spanish civil war. There is fluid cooperation in the spheres of justice and home affairs, both with Russia and with the other countries of the region. Educational relations have been greatly strengthened in recent years, both through the programme of bilingual sections in Russian secondary schools (9 sections in 5 of the main cities), and thanks to Spanish language training and promotion programmes in various countries in the region. Likewise, cooperation between Spanish universities and universities in different countries in the region has increased significantly.

There are three Embassies (Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan), two satellite offices (Georgia and Azerbaijan) and two Consulates General (Moscow and St. Petersburg). There are three Economic and Commercial Offices (Moscow, Almaty and Kiev) and a Tourism Office (Moscow). Spain has an Office of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Moscow. As regards Spanish culture, there is only one Instituto Cervantes centre in Moscow.

Spain's main foreign policy priorities are to develop a constructive, more structured and predictable relationship with Russia, within the framework of agreed EU policy. Spain defends the stability of Ukraine and Belarus, in line with its defence of international law, and will strengthen its relations with the countries of the Caucasus, whose actors maintain an unequivocally pro-European stance. Spain will continue to work within the framework of NATO and EU commitments to strengthen security in Eastern Europe, participating to this end in military and police missions and deployments. It will also pursue these efforts within the framework of the Council of Europe in the sphere of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. The region offers opportunities for Spanish companies to expand in the fields of energy and infrastructure, with Russia and Kazakhstan currently being the most relevant hubs for this activity.

**Human rights, democracy, security and feminism:** The human rights situation is subject to tensions. Issues such as respect for ethnic and religious minorities, political dissidence, and LGBTI and feminist activism, give rise to numerous disagreements with the countries in the region, and working with civil society is a priority in order to make progress in these areas and in protection mechanisms.

**A global, integrated, just and equitable economy and society:** It will be a priority to intensify the presence of Spanish companies in Russia and other countries in the region, which is currently not commensurate with the importance of these markets. Spain must seek a balanced position that combines condemnation and resolve in the face of violations of international law with dialogue regarding items on the international agenda that are important to the EU (climate, terrorism, regional stability).

**A more sustainable, habitable and greener planet:** Russia has joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Spain has scope for developing mutually beneficial cooperation in this field.

**Strengthened regional integration and multilateralism:** The most prominent multilateral forum for cooperation is the OSCE, while in terms of sector it is the UN.

### Specific action proposals and initiatives for 2021-2024:

- **Strengthening ties with Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian civil society.**
- **Increasing diplomatic deployment, by opening diplomatic satellite offices in Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan..**

## 5.4 Leveraging the broad national ecosystem of foreign action

The last circle of actors, resources and instruments of our foreign action, which is broader and more diverse in nature and composition, but no less important, is the **broad ecosystem of institutions and individuals from the private sector and civil society with the capacity for international influence**. It functions as a true ecosystem, united by values, interests and priorities, it requires an additional and extraordinary effort that goes beyond mere coordination, and **entails a real change in culture**. This project must be a genuine state policy that involves the main actors involved in our foreign action and reputation as a country.

The first fundamental pillar comprises **Spanish companies**, which represent the values of our country in the markets in which they operate. Spain has top-level multinationals, which are well established and recognised throughout the world and true leaders in various sectors such as sustainability, inclusion, quality infrastructure, equal opportunities and corporate social responsibility. It also has thousands of smaller but highly internationalised companies, each of which is an ambassador for Spain wherever it operates. The work of these companies, and their immense human capital, are a great asset for our foreign action and contribute to the development of the countries where they operate. They are also often at the forefront of technological change and the transformations that are taking place in their respective sectors. We must therefore continue to encourage and enrich this collaboration, including with Spanish employers' associations (CEOE, CEPYME, etc.), by promoting their leading role in the major international business forums in which they

participate (International Organisation of Employers (IOE), George Brown College (GBC), the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC), BusinessEurope, the Ibero-American Business Council (CEIB), B20). The same applies to the close relationship with the Spanish Chamber of Commerce and strategic public-private collaboration institutions such as the Leading Brands of Spain Forum. This also extends to the multinationals operating in our country, whose staff, including management, are a source of reference and knowledge about Spain in their countries of origin.

Other key actors are **think tanks, universities, research centres and experts**: not only those that reflect on foreign policy and international relations, but all those that generate knowledge that transcends borders. Many of them are based in Spain, but others undertake their activities abroad, and lack the necessary recognition and visibility. One of our priorities must be to harness this enormous potential: identifying, activating and connecting it in a coherent and structured way, so that they become agents of our foreign action. In this regard, the networks of Spanish researchers and scientists abroad, which already have 18 associations in different countries and are connected through the RAICEX network, offer an excellent example of institutional collaboration between ministries (the Ministry of Science and Innovation through FECYT and the MAUC through AECID) and of the structuring and mobilisation of a specific group. This model could be applied to other professional groups, such as international civil servants, managers, entrepreneurs, development workers, teachers and students, artists, etc.

### **Table 5.3. Actors in the ecosystem of reflection on Spanish foreign action**

The ecosystem of knowledge, research and reflection on international policy and foreign action has evolved notably in Spain in recent years, making up for a structural deficit dating back to the time of the dictatorship, and which was due both to Spain being less open and less integrated into the international community and to restrictions on the plurality of analysis and thought.

At the apex of this development are the independent think tanks and research centres that have consolidated themselves in recent decades as essential actors in the field of public policy. These organisations are dedicated to producing original reflections, analyses and strategies in multiple fields—such as national and international politics, economics, military strategy, culture and technology. Their work complements that of universities and observatories linked to academia, whose work is generally more academic and conceptual in nature, but which have also developed a more applied and impact-oriented perspective on public policy over time. In addition, the activity of the analysis and research centres of private entities in Spain has shown notable development and an increasing focus on international issues.

The first wave of institutions reflecting on foreign policy emerged in light of the Spanish system's adaptation to the new political and economic paradigm of the European Union. Examples of such organisations are the Instituto de Estudios Económicos (1979), the analysis and research areas of the Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales (1977) and of the Círculo de Empresarios (1970) and, subsequently, the publishing group Estudios de Política Exterior SA, which produces the *Política Exterior* journal, now exclusively focused on international issues.

The new context stemming from the reconfiguration of the global order opened up by the collapse of the Soviet bloc, coinciding with the growing internationalisation of Spanish companies and the first major political transition in the national government, gave rise to the second wave of institutions reflecting on foreign policy during the 1990s and at the beginning of the new century. Many of them are now think tanks in the strict sense, as is the case of the Elcano Royal Institute, the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), and the Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue (FRIDE), and have arisen both through public initiative and private impetus. There are also think tanks with a broader focus on public policy, but which also include its foreign dimension, such as Fundación Alternativas and the Foundation for Social Studies and Analysis (FAES). Institutions specialising more in democracy (Club de Madrid), mediation (CITpax), or linked to international think tanks (ECFR) are now emerging in this new century.

More recently, and in conjunction with new technologies, initiatives have emerged in the form of blogs, websites and observatories that further fuel reflection on international policy and foreign action in our country. Many are

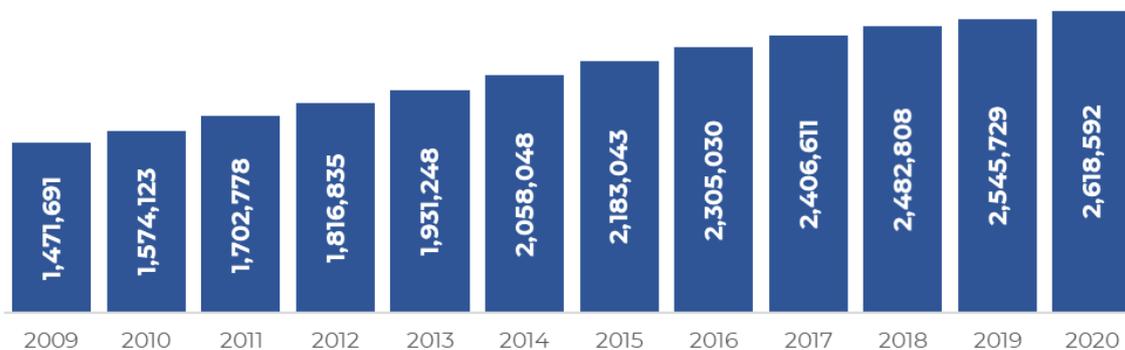
driven by the first generations of young graduates in international relations, educated at Spanish universities.

Spain currently ranks 20th on the list of countries with the highest number of domestic think tanks (66), according to the *2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index* compiled by Professor James McGann. There is still a long way to go to catch up with neighbouring powers such as the United Kingdom (321), Germany (218) and France (203), but it is clear that the Spanish ecosystem of knowledge is growing steadily both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Spain, for example, has an enormous **talent pool in international organisations and other governments**. These are Spanish nationals and friends of Spain (without nationality, but with personal and emotional ties to our country) who are fully independent and whose primary loyalty is to their institutions and/or countries, but who have an affinity for Spain due to their specialties. This makes them potential allies of our agenda, which is not guided by a limited national interest and responds to a global philosophy of solidarity. To strengthen Spain's interconnectedness we must develop more intense, frequent and varied contacts with these groups, with a view to reinforcing the network of formal and

informal partnerships and agreements, particularly in relation to our global priorities and with regions with which we are more in tune or closer, but also in areas where we have less presence, but where we have partners who know the terrain. Our country will manage its presence and influence in international organisations and European institutions more systematically and strategically, with specific action plans, greater mobilisation of permanent missions and regular meetings, including an annual conference. Emphasis will also be placed on professional opportunities and on agreements for the transfer of expert staff between these institutions and the different administrations.

### Spanish population living abroad (2009-2020)

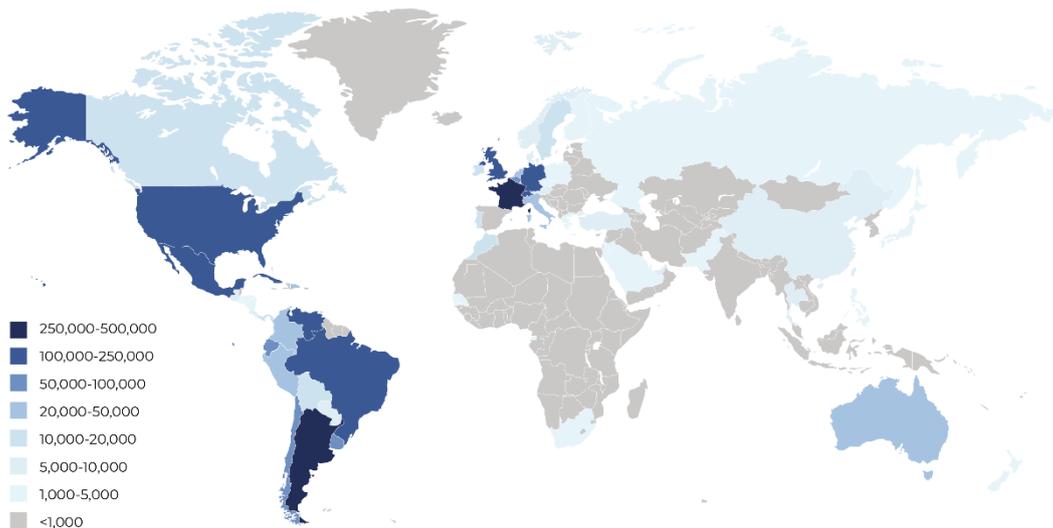


Source: National Statistics Institute

This broad ecosystem is completed by **social agents, NGOs, civil society and each individual** living abroad, through their personal activities. The influence of these actors is increasing, in conjunction with new platforms and tools that empower and multiply citizens' capacity for impact, as well as transnational coordination on different issues. Recognition of this reality means that both Spanish citizens living and working abroad and civil society organisations in other countries are becoming an increasingly important element of our foreign action. An improved and greater connection with them will be fostered

through specific networks and a more strategically structured dialogue. Instruments such as the Development Cooperation Council offer a model for consistently and effectively involving the different cooperation actors in a specific dimension of our external action. Our Spanish foreign action will also encourage the participation of Spanish trade unions in the major European (ETUC) and international (WFTU, ITUC) trade union organisations and in platforms such as the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) or L20.

### Spaniards living abroad (2020)



Source: National Statistics Institute

In short, **contacting and working closely with citizens, whether they live in Spain or abroad, has become a priority for our foreign action**, as we are aware of their importance and capacity to influence world public opinion as representatives of our image and reputation abroad. Through the Ambassador on a Special Mission for Global Spanish Citizenship, greater emphasis will be placed on this group, making them active participants in

Spanish foreign action: we will facilitate internationalisation and the exploitation of opportunities that open up abroad for our citizens living in Spain and we will further enhance our connection with our citizens abroad, supporting them in their pursuits and strengthening the connection between this talent and our country, facilitating the return of those who wish to come back to Spain, so that all the skills and aptitudes acquired abroad can be exploited and developed.



# **MAIN INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS**

# Substantive lines of action



## **HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, SECURITY, FEMINISM, AND DIVERSITY AS REFERENCE POINTS**

### **Full and guaranteed human rights**

- Developing the Humanitarian Action Strategy 2019-2026 and adopting a Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy.
- Presenting Spain's candidacy to the Human Rights Council for 2025-2027.

### **A more democratic world**

- Promoting multilateral proposals and forums to combat disinformation.
- Launching and developing the Diverse Spain initiative.
- Creating ad hoc initiatives with like-minded countries to promote a more ambitious agenda, and specific actions to advance rights, freedoms and democracy.

### **Human security at the heart of the agenda**

- Developing the National Security Strategy.
- Drafting a new National Strategy on Technology and Global Order.
- Participating in the implementation of NATO's strategic review, the formulation of the EU's CSDP, and the construction of a Europe of Defence.
- Organising the next ministerial meeting of the Stockholm Initiative on non-proliferation.

### **At the forefront of feminist foreign policy and diversity promotion**

- Drafting and adopting the Feminist Foreign Policy Strategy, with a view to mainstreaming gender in all areas of external action.
- Exercising co-leadership of the coalition on economic justice and rights of the Beijing+25 Generation Equality Forum.
- Leading multilateral initiatives for the defence and promotion of diversity, in particular LGBTI rights and the rights of all disadvantaged or discriminated groups, and actively promoting the rights of people with disabilities.



## **A GLOBAL, INTEGRATED, JUST, AND EQUITABLE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

### **Promoting a new global and intergenerational social contract**

- Taking the lead in reviewing the benchmarks for measuring progress, especially within the OECD and other multilateral organisations and think tanks.
- Promoting a more integrated, balanced and sustainable international trade and investment regime, with particular emphasis on WTO reform.

### **Economic diplomacy for growth and jobs**

- Drafting an Economic Diplomacy Action Plan.
- Implementing the Strategy for the Internationalisation of the Spanish Economy 2017-2027 through its corresponding two-year Action Plans (2021-2022 and subsequent years), and promoting the international presence and influence of Spanish companies.
- Drafting and implementing a Marketing Plan for 2021-2024 for the promotion of Spanish tourism abroad.
- Leading efforts in the EU, the OECD and other international bodies for the coordinated re-establishment of safe international mobility after Covid-19.

### **A leading role in demographic and migration debates**

- Promoting a comprehensive management system for the EU's external borders and reforming the European Migration and Asylum System.
- Drafting an Action Plan for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.



## **A MORE SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, HABITABLE, AND GREENER PLANET**

### **Leadership in climate diplomacy and decarbonisation**

- Exercising leadership through active climate diplomacy in international agreements and commitments that advance the fight against climate change and decarbonisation, the efficient use of resources, the prevention of pollution, and the protection of forests and Antarctica.
- Promoting an international coalition on renewable hydrogen.

## **Biodiversity, pollution control, and the reform of global health governance**

- Strengthening our commitment to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, contributing to the adoption and implementation of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- Leading international initiatives to prevent air pollution, as well as pollution from waste (in particular plastics) and hazardous chemicals.
- Promoting international reflection on the global health system and actions to strengthen and reform the WHO.



## **STRENGTHENED REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND MULTILATERALISM**

### **Higher profile in a stronger, more federal Europe**

- Promoting European strategic autonomy.
- Preparing for the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2023 and proactively leading the Conference on the Future of Europe.
- Pursuing initiatives to advance European integration in all its dimensions (political, economic, social, environmental, cultural and defence) and to provide the Union with greater resources of its own.

### **Boosting regional integration mechanisms**

- Leading and facilitating greater regional integration in Latin America, especially through the Ibero-American Conference, but also by promoting the European Union-CELAC relationship and the conclusion of the agreement with MERCOSUR.
- Fostering greater Mediterranean integration, through the UfM and the 5+5 Dialogue, as well as African integration, by promoting the continental free trade area.

### **Commitment to a reformed and strengthened multilateralism**

- Implementing the “Together for Stronger Multilateralism” statement and advancing specific actions to promote the commitments made on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations.
- Consolidating the United Nations Support Base in Quart de Poblet (Valencia) as a technology hub for the UN system.
- Promoting international agreements to regulate all new emerging areas in need of better governance, especially AI and biotechnology.

# Instrumental lines of action



## RESOURCES AND INSTRUMENTS

### Promoting a modern and flexible Foreign Service

- Approving new regulations for the diplomatic service.
- Implementing the Action Plan for the Digital Transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, paying particular attention to the modernisation of consular services.
- Reforming the electoral system for Spanish citizens living abroad.
- Designing a Country Reputation Action Plan.
- Developing specific initiatives to promote public diplomacy, cultural and educational diplomacy, and scientific and technological diplomacy, favouring more strategic and coordinated action by all relevant actors.

### Sustainable development cooperation

- Monitoring and developing the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Developing a new vision of Spanish Cooperation that includes the approval of a new Act on International Sustainable Development Cooperation, the reform and strengthening of AECID, the reinforcement and modernisation of financial cooperation and the development of Spanish Cooperation's Joint Response Strategy for the Covid-19 Crisis.
- Honouring the commitment to allocate 0.5% of GNI to ODA by the end of the current term of parliament.
- Drafting and monitoring Spanish Cooperation's Sixth Master Plan, for 2022-2025.
- Launching the Annual Development Cooperation Forum.

### Improving integration and coordinated action by all levels of government

- Reactivating and strengthening the policymaking and internal coordination instruments provided for in Act 2/2014, of 25 March, on State Foreign Action and the Foreign Service, most particularly the Foreign Policy Council and the Foreign Policy Executive Council.
- Promoting parliamentary diplomacy.
- Strengthening the foreign action dimension at sectoral conferences and establishing regular consultation mechanisms between the MAUC and those responsible for foreign action in the Autonomous Communities.

## **Leveraging the broad national ecosystem of foreign action**

- Promoting more comprehensive collaboration with Spanish companies, supporting them in their foreign action, while better leveraging the enormous asset represented by their presence and human capital in other countries.
- Strategically strengthening the role of the third sector, social agents and think tanks in Spanish foreign action.
- Connecting with global Spanish citizens to secure greater involvement of expatriate talent in foreign action priorities.

# Regional lines of action

## EUROPE

- Strengthening bilateral summits with Germany, France, Italy, Poland and Portugal by exploiting their potential and deepening regular cooperation and monitoring mechanisms.
- Developing a new partnership with the UK in the framework of the post-Brexit Agreement and concluding the EU-UK Agreement on Gibraltar.
- Promoting the strategic bilateral relationship with sub-regional groups (Benelux, Visegrad Group, Baltic States, EFTA countries).

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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Implementing a multidimensional strategy to strengthen the relationship between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, including continued efforts for the ratification of the EU-MERCOSUR Agreement and the modernisation of the agreements with Mexico and Chile.
- Strengthening the Ibero-American Conference and the Summit system.
- Continuing to lead efforts to find a way out of the crisis in Venezuela.
- Promoting and monitoring the initiatives underway to facilitate access to financing for middle-income countries in the region, and maintaining the solidarity effort in the EU to respond to the health and economic crisis posed by Covid-19.

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## MAGHREB AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Strengthening dialogue with all the countries of the region and holding political consultations and high-level meetings with the Maghreb countries, especially with Morocco and Algeria, through specific collaboration strategies with both.
- Exercising an active presidency in 2021 of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue, as well as organising the Fifth UfM Forum.
- Promoting the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the UfM.
- Supporting UN efforts to reach political solutions in Western Sahara, Libya and Palestine.

## **NORTH AMERICA**

- Boosting the transatlantic relationship at both the European and bilateral levels.
- Strengthening actions in the fields of parliamentary, scientific, climate and cultural diplomacy.
- Opening an Instituto Cervantes centre in Los Angeles.

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## **SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

- Strengthening cooperation with the Sahel countries and support for their economic and social development and institution-building processes.
- Implementing the Action Programme of the Third Plan Africa and applying its evaluation procedure.
- Holding the First Spain-Africa Forum on Sustainable Cities.

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## **ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

- Boosting EU trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand.
- Promoting economic and climate diplomacy with the region.
- Redeploying consular and Instituto Cervantes resources, particularly in China and India.

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## **RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**

- Strengthening ties with Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian civil society.
- Increasing diplomatic deployment, by opening diplomatic satellite offices in Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan.



