



SPAIN'S FOREIGN ACTION STRATEGY **2025-2028**

Foreign policy with
a distinct identity



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DE ESPAÑA

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DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA
Y COOPERACIÓN

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EUROPEAN UNION AND COOPERATION.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
PART I: SPAIN'S STRATEGIC OUTLOOK	11
A world in transition: three systemic shifts.....	14
A. A STRONGER EUROPE	16
Increasing Europe's autonomy.....	16
Improving our competitiveness.....	24
Safeguarding Europe's economic security.....	27
B. A COMMITTED SPAIN.....	30
Upholding, reforming and strengthening the multilateral system.....	30
Championing development cooperation and humanitarian action	36
Addressing the climate and biodiversity emergency.....	38
C. A SPAIN THAT STRENGTHENS PEACE AND SECURITY	41
Adapting to a world marked by rising conflict	41
Consistency and coherence in building peace.....	46
Bolstering our democratic resilience	47
PART II: SPAIN IN THE WORLD	51
Spain's strategic environment.....	52
More Europe beyond the EU	52
Latin America and the Caribbean: partners for a shared agenda	53
The Maghreb and the Middle East: committed to peace and stability in our neighbourhood.....	56
Strengthening enduring ties with North America.....	57
A leap forward in our relations with Africa	58
Building on our presence in the Caucasus and Central Asia	59
Deepening Spain's impact in Asia-Pacific	60
PART III: PILLARS AND TOOLS OF OUR FOREIGN ACTION	63
Our strengths and values.....	64
A broad-based policy.....	70
A foreign service ready for the future.....	72
APPENDIX: OVER 100 ACTIONS FOR 2025-2028	79

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EUROPEAN UNION AND COOPERATION

The world is undergoing far-reaching transformations that place us amid a strategic reconfiguration of the global order. This evolving landscape affects us all: citizens, authorities, businesses, and civil society. We are heading towards an era marked by greater uncertainty, competition, and fragmentation that question the achievements attained through decades of cooperation and integration. In the face of these challenges, we must uphold our own vision, with a long-term perspective, and respond united, as Spaniards and as Europeans. This is the conviction that beats at the heart of Spain's Foreign Action Strategy 2025–2028: a Strategy that assumes the necessity of change and action, but also of commitment to the values that characterises us as a society.

Change and action because it is imperative to prepare and adapt our foreign action to a more fragile and volatile global environment, where peace, security, and prosperity cannot be taken for granted and where we must be actors and not mere spectators. This Strategy assesses the risks and opportunities ahead for Spain, outlining a foreign policy with a distinct identity oriented towards the defence of our national interests and our values. Spain has repeatedly demonstrated a remarkable capacity for adaptation in the face of historical transformations. Not in vain, the period covered by this Strategy symbolically coincides with two fundamental milestones: the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the dictator Francisco Franco and the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Spanish Constitution—embodiment of our peaceful and democratic coexistence.

The magnitude of the changes we face today requires us to commit to a stronger and more united Europe. This is the time for Europe's strategic

awakening, for a Europe capable of influencing global trends that affect us all. That is why, for the very first time, the Spanish Foreign Action Strategy places Europe in the foreground, with concrete proposals to move forward, strengthen our common capabilities, and improve coordination across all domains, from foreign policy to the economic, industrial, and technological spheres, with the objective of shaping our destiny.

This Strategy reflects both continuity and commitment: Spain remains firmly anchored in the values that define our society, and projects them through a foreign policy aimed at building a more prosperous, free, secure, and stable world. Spain has thrived in an open, rules-based international order, and our citizens feel deeply European and firmly committed to multilateralism, development cooperation, gender equality, a just green transition, and the ethical governance of technology. Now more than ever, Spain's foreign action must embody these values at the core of our democratic, modern, and open society.

To chart this course, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation has developed this Strategy in coordination with the rest of government departments, leading a broad participatory process that has brought together Autonomous Communities and Cities, local authorities, political parties, the private sector, civil society, and around fifty experts in international relations. Spanish foreign action is a collective project and a shared vision for the future—by everyone and for everyone. This Strategy outlines the roadmap to attain the role we envision for Spain and Europe in the world.

José Manuel Albares Bueno

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new **Foreign Action Strategy 2025–2028** serves as Spain's roadmap for engaging with a global landscape undergoing profound changes. It is an **ambitious yet realistic** Strategy, tailored to the new international context through **a distinctive foreign policy** that staunchly defends our interests while remaining committed to the values that define us as a society. Its overarching goal is to ensure that Spain occupies a position in the world that enables its citizens to fulfil their life goals successfully, while acknowledging that many of the decisions shaping their lives are made beyond our borders.

To safeguard Spain's influence in this evolving landscape, we will leverage our national **strengths** to enhance our foreign action and thereby contribute to a more just, more secure, and more stable world. These strengths include an internationalised, growing economy; a leading position in renewable energy; an open, diverse, pro-European, and tolerant society; an increasing soft power rooted in our languages and cultural industries; and a strategic location, all of which will enable Spain to further solidify its global footprint and international standing.

We are living in **uncertain times, marked by the fragility of peace and the international order**. The year 2025 marks the third year of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, violence has escalated throughout our strategic environment, from the Sahel to the Middle East. Today's world faces serious challenges stemming from shifts in the distribution of power, with destabilising consequences.

In this context, three systemic shifts have reshaped the international landscape, making it necessary to adapt our foreign action to these new realities.

The first of these shifts is a transition from a rules-based order to one increasingly shaped by power dynamics. The erosion of international law, the proliferation of conflicts, and growing impunity pose serious threats to peace and stability. Spain must adopt a more **strategic approach to foreign action**, aimed at defending multilateralism and international law.

Second, we are facing economic fragmentation and heightened strategic competition. Economic policy has shifted away from prioritising

efficiency—once the hallmark of globalisation—towards resilience and risk mitigation, reshaping trade and investment frameworks. These transformations require Spain to balance economic openness with **a greater focus on economic security**.

Finally, democratic societies are confronting multiple challenges. In a polarised climate where the rise of disinformation is undermining democratic stability and eroding social consensus, Spain **must continue to promote open and inclusive societies**, safeguarding its internal cohesion as the underpinning force of our global engagement.

The Foreign Action Strategy 2025–2028 addresses these global shifts through three cross-cutting principles aimed at ensuring: **(A) a stronger Europe; (B) a committed Spain; and (C) a Spain that strengthens peace and security**.

A stronger Europe

To defend the interests of Spanish citizens today, our response must first and foremost be European. This reflects the firmly pro-European sentiment of Spanish society and the conviction that only at the European level can we assume a decisive role in reshaping the world order. We must therefore contribute to the stability, resilience, and effectiveness of the European Union. In the face of multiple and overlapping crises, **Europe must respond with ambition and determination**.

The European Union has weathered three severe shocks in recent years—the pandemic, Russia's aggression, and the energy crisis—and has responded effectively and in a coordinated manner. The challenge now is to consolidate this **strategic awakening** and ensure that the EU becomes a true **geopolitical actor**. To retain control over our own political, economic, and technological future, we must make difficult decisions together. We must think long-term, expanding, enhancing, and accelerating our action, and above all acting together as Europeans.

Spain supports **a qualitative leap in common policies and their funding**, coupled with institutional reform. To this end, we will work towards **a more ambitious European budget** that ensures the EU's capacity to act and respond. We will also advocate **reforming the decision-making process**

by extending qualified majority voting to additional areas, such as foreign policy, to prevent deadlocks. Spain will continue to support **EU enlargement**, which must go hand in hand with **realistic reforms** that allow the Union to keep advancing and to function effectively with a greater number of Member States.

We also champion **a Europe that assumes greater responsibility for its own security**. Europe's open strategic autonomy must be based on a **comprehensive approach to security** that encompasses domains beyond the traditional sphere of defence. Strengthening this autonomy requires greater **collective capabilities and resources**, including the further development of the technological and industrial fabric of European defence. In the face of a more conflict-ridden world, **greater coordination of European external action** is necessary to maximise the impact of our political and budgetary efforts. This includes **improving engagement with our global partners**, based on peer-to-peer cooperation and the EU's capacity to lead by example. Equally crucial is the need for **greater strategic convergence** among Member States regarding the perception of threats to European security—within a 360-degree logic.

Given today's challenges, **social cohesion** is not only an ethical and equity imperative—it is also a strategic asset. It serves as a safeguard for our security at a time when external actors seek to exploit divisions within democratic societies. That is why Spain will champion EU **cohesion policy** and initiatives that bring Europeans closer together, such as Erasmus+, while continuing to support the development of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**.

The European Union's external projection relies on solid power foundations, not least in the economic domain. The EU must close the innovation gap with its competitors in the sectors that will shape the future economy. Spain will work to **enhance competitiveness** by committing to the green, digital, and social transitions, as drivers of economic growth in Europe. This will include promoting **re-industrialisation, deepening the Single Market, completing the Banking Union, and bolstering the international role of the euro**.

Increasing economic fragmentation compels us to **integrate economic security into decision-making processes** to reduce risks. The weaponisation of interdependence and the rise of trade barriers require a reassessment of the balance between efficiency and security, with a greater emphasis on the latter. The EU is the most

open economic region in the world, making it particularly exposed to protectionist trends. In this context, Spain will seek to **reduce vulnerabilities and critical dependencies** by guaranteeing the **security of our supply chains** and safeguarding **access to key raw materials and technologies**; to **anticipate threats and equip ourselves with the tools** needed to counter economic coercion; and to **expand our network of trading partners**, because trading more—and with more reliable actors—enhances our autonomy.

A committed Spain

Multilateral institutions are facing a critical juncture. Global trends towards heightened geostrategic competition are hindering multilateral cooperation, precisely when it is most needed. Spain's first objective in this context is to **uphold, reform, and strengthen the multilateral system**, whose effectiveness—or failure—will determine our capacity to **respond to global challenges**, such as climate change or pandemic prevention, that have a tangible impact on people's lives. Spain is committed to safeguarding the achievements of multilateralism through active engagement in the system, and by advocating for reforms that enhance its inclusiveness and better reflect the structure of today's international community.

As part of a broader effort to step up our multilateral engagement, Spain will continue to **protect and promote human rights**, support **reforms in international economic and financial governance**, foster **ethical and responsible technological governance**, and strengthen our **feminist foreign policy**. Where multilateral solutions fall short, Spain will promote flexible cooperation mechanisms to advance shared interests effectively. Spain will also advocate for **safe, orderly, and regular migration**, without renouncing the principles of humanity and responsibility that define us and acting on the conviction that economic growth and the sustainability of our welfare model depend in part on migration.

Amid the current solidarity crisis, the world needs more development cooperation, not less. Spain will continue to champion **development cooperation and humanitarian action** as key tools for addressing shared challenges. We will also continue to **spearhead the green transition** through environmental diplomacy and by **combating the climate emergency** as a pillar of our foreign action. In doing so, Spain will pursue **competitively driven decarbonisation** as an industrial opportunity, ensuring that climate neutrality objectives

go hand in hand with a just transition and support for future-oriented sectors.

A Spain that strengthens peace and security

Spain's response must not disregard the **security** of its citizens. This entails **adapting to a more complex world** in which Europe no longer benefits from the peace dividend of past decades. The new context obliges Spain and Europe to **take greater responsibility** for their own defence and contribute more significantly to shared security as security providers within the framework of the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations. Spain seeks to strengthen the architecture for arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament, and will remain firmly engaged in the fight against terrorism.

At the same time, Spain aims to **build peace through consistency and coherence** in the defence of international law, including monitoring compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law in all conflicts and under all circumstances. In this regard, Spain will continue to support international courts in their **fight against impunity** and will enhance its capacity as a **mediator**.

We must also **bolster the resilience of our democracy**. In an era marked by unprecedented interconnections, we find ourselves paradoxically divided. Algorithmic biases, the rise of disinformation, and the spread of hate speech are not mere technical challenges—they are direct threats to social cohesion, making us more vulnerable to radicalisation and foreign interference. In view of the risks posed by deregulation, Spain advocates for **greater transparency, neutrality and accountability** from technological platforms. This must be approached with a **human-centred, rights-based approach, alongside stronger international coordination**. In addition, for our foreign action to be effective, we must also **safeguard internal cohesion** by addressing citizens' needs, combating inequality, and responding to demographic challenges.

Spain in the world

Spain's foreign action will continue to be deployed region by region, combining a dual Euro-Atlantic and Mediterranean focus with a global reach.

Now more than ever, the current context demands **investment in our strategic environment**,

which is experiencing mounting instability from the Sahel to the Middle East, including Ukraine. This requires special attention to our immediate neighbours and our neighbours' neighbours. That is, countries across Eastern Europe, West Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East, which together make up our wider neighbourhood and **where many of the challenges that directly affect Spain's security and prosperity originate**. To address the challenges and leverage the opportunities offered by this space, over the coming years Spain will **strengthen its diplomatic presence** on the ground until we achieve full coverage of our strategic environment, as well as boosting political dialogue and offering support to our neighbours in the areas of economic development, security, and governance.

Spain aims to strengthen bilateral ties with our **European partners beyond the EU**; maintain our **unwavering support for Ukraine** in the defence of its sovereignty; and support the accession processes of the **Western Balkans** and other candidates for EU membership.

Latin America and the Caribbean remain a cornerstone of Spain's identity and foreign policy. In recent years, Spain has brought Latin America back to the centre of the European Union's agenda, notably, hosting the first summit in eight years between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the EU (CELAC–EU Summit) during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023. Moreover, Spain has worked tirelessly to promote the agreements with MERCOSUR, Chile, and Mexico, alongside an active bilateral agenda. For the coming four years, the aim is to build on this work and **strengthen the Ibero-American Space**. Building on shared values and convergent interests, Spain will work with the region to expand our collective influence in multilateral forums and shape global debates. At the same time, we aim to **deepen fair and mutually beneficial economic relations** in a context of growing fragmentation.

We will strengthen relations with countries in the Mediterranean Basin in the **Maghreb and the Middle East**, with a firm commitment to peace and stability in our Southern Neighbourhood. Spain will continue to foster close, dialogue-based relationships with **North America**. We will also increase investment to achieve a qualitative leap in our relations with **Africa**, implementing the new Spain-Africa Strategy 2025–2028 and paying special attention to West Africa. At the same time, we will work to raise Spain's profile in **Asia-Pacific**, with a new strategy for the region, while

consolidating our engagement in the **South Caucasus and Central Asia**. Across all these regions, Spain will step up the efforts to **promote our culture and languages**, as core assets of our standing and influence abroad.

To realise the priorities and goals set in this Strategy, Spain must initiate a reflection process to **adapt its foreign action instruments** to address these new challenges. First, efforts will be made to equip our Foreign Service to better serve the interests of Spanish citizens in this new context, by adapting our diplomatic network to current needs, advancing the digitalisation of our working tools,

and training and investing in our human capital, which forms the backbone of our foreign action. To bolster Spain's global standing, it will be vital to make better use of the knowledge and experience of the three million Spaniards living abroad.

Lastly, we must remember that **foreign action is a collective endeavour**, including all branches of government, public institutions, civil society, and Spanish citizens overseas. We will therefore continue to improve coordination with all stakeholders, allowing them to contribute their expertise and insight towards building a **broad-based, inclusive foreign action**.

PART I: **SPAIN'S STRATEGIC OUTLOOK**



We live in uncertain times, in an era marked by the fragility of the global order, peace, and institutions—a reality that becomes increasingly evident as conflict escalates and multilateralism wanes. As we mark the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN), established in the wake of the Second World War, international law and shared principles are under growing strain.

The past few years have made it clear that the apparent calm following the end of the Cold War did not give rise to a lasting new normal. After a long period of prosperity and relatively low levels of conflict, we are now faced with a volatile geopolitical landscape characterised by increasingly frequent crises. In 2025, our societies are witnessing the erosion of the international order built in the aftermath of the Second World War and the growing contestation of the rules and principles that for decades ensured a reasonable degree of predictability and stability in international relations. Spain envisions a world that is peaceful and secure, cooperative in addressing global challenges—such as climate change, health, technology, migration, or terrorism—open to the free movement of ideas, people, goods, and services, and grounded in shared rules. Yet, in recent years, many of the defining features of that vision have been steadily eroding.

This Strategy has been adopted in a context of global strategic reconfiguration, driven by political realignments and shifts in the distribution of the determinants of power, with destabilising consequences. It coincides with the third anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, and an upsurge in violence across our strategic environment, from the Sahel to the Middle East. Meanwhile, the trends reshaping the global landscape are becoming increasingly pronounced: rules are being displaced by power, economic efficiency by the pursuit of resilience, and belief in progress is giving way to uncertainty. These dynamics are likely to intensify in the years ahead.

That is why we must be prepared and adapt our foreign action to meet the demands of the new international context. This document offers a comprehensive assessment of the risks and opportunities facing Spain. It sets out the main lines for a foreign action with a distinct identity, that staunchly defends our national interests and is faithful to our society's defining values, all with the aim of helping to build a more prosperous, more secure, and more stable world.

A critical juncture for Europe

Spain's membership of the EU, which brings together many of our closest partners as part of the most significant political and economic integration project in the world, is—together with our geographical location and our historic ties with Latin America—one of our key strategic assets, and also one of the main determinants of our strategy.

Since the Second World War in Western Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the East, Europeans have operated in an exceptionally benign international environment, grounded in a close transatlantic partnership with the United States, anchored in broadly shared values and priorities. That era—remarkable for its duration—is now rapidly coming to an end.

In 2025, Spain and Europe face mounting instability across their neighbourhood. In the face of this volatility, we Europeans are equipped with a unique tool for coordinated action: the European Union (EU). As Spaniards, we recognise that concerted action at the European level enhances our ability to respond effectively to the great global transformations underway. The time has come to fully leverage the potential of this collective endeavour.

That is why, for the first time, Spain's Foreign Action Strategy places Europe at the forefront, with specific proposals to advance and strengthen our common capabilities and improve coordination, not only in foreign action, but also in economic, industrial, and technological domains.

Making proposals a reality at the European level will require consensus within the Union, unlike other issues addressed in this Strategy, which primarily or solely concern Spain. This Strategy presents Spain's ideas and aspirations for how Europe can take a qualitative leap forward. Doing so is essential not only to address the growing threats and challenges the Union faces today, but also to unlock its full potential. We are guided by the conviction that strengthening Europe's collective action and the instruments through which it is channelled is the most effective way to meet the demands of this critical moment.

Our strategic environment

Spain's location in south-western Europe, along the EU's external border with Africa, gives it a

unique identity as both a Euro-Atlantic and Mediterranean power, with global reach. This geographic position is a key strategic asset: it provides us with an extensive maritime frontage connected to international trade routes—but it also exposes us to significant challenges. Less than 4,000 kilometres from the Iberian Peninsula, entrenched conflicts persist and tensions simmer, from Ukraine to the Middle East. The Sahel region continues to experience growing instability and now accounts for the world's highest concentration of terrorist attacks. This area also includes key energy suppliers for Spain, such as Nigeria and Algeria.

Developments across this strategic environment directly affect Spain's security, stability, and the wellbeing of our citizens. Instability in this region may worsen during the period covered by this Strategy, with direct implications for Spain and the rest of Europe. Since it lies at the external border of the EU, Spain is more exposed to these challenges than many of our partners.

Current trends require Spain to pursue a determined foreign action across the board, and in our strategic environment in particular, strengthening our tools for action, investing in bilateral relations, and promoting both stability and the defence of international law.

Spain's global profile

Spain enjoys global reach rooted in its history, diplomatic tradition, openness to the world, and firm commitment to multilateralism. Our geographic location and multifaceted geopolitical identity—European and Atlantic, Ibero-American, and Mediterranean—afford us a unique position to connect with a variety of perspectives on international affairs. For Spain, developing the ability to take into account diverse interests and to understand perceptions from other regions of the world is not only advantageous, but also a hallmark of our foreign action and a strategic necessity.

This global reach enables us to strengthen our network of bilateral relations, which constitute not only a source of political and economic opportunity, but also a key element of Spain's national security. A clear example of this are the fraternal bonds that unite us with Latin America—a major asset for our foreign action, both bilaterally and in strengthening closer ties between the European Union and the region. Additionally, Spain also plays an active role in dialogue and engagement across the Mediterranean, as demonstrated by our bilateral initiatives, European-level involvement, and participation in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). In parallel, we maintain strong ties with various African and Asian countries.

All of these factors make Spain naturally committed to multilateralism and international law, which are more essential than ever to successfully address collective challenges, such as the climate emergency or the risk of new pandemics.

Over recent years, Spain has cemented its position as one of the economic powerhouses of the Eurozone, growing significantly above the European average, enhancing its attractiveness as an investment destination, and leading in job creation. This economic momentum has raised our profile abroad.

Spain possesses a set of strengths that afford it considerable weight and influence on the global stage. Exercising that influence is not merely a matter of interest or prestige, but rather a national security imperative, as the security and prosperity of Spanish citizens depend on decisions taken beyond our borders. From European legislation regulating much of our daily lives to international rules governing the economy and the response to climate change, or the impact of international conflicts—all of these directly shape our future. **That is why Spain seeks to adapt to the new global landscape through three cross-cutting principles: a stronger Europe, a committed Spain, and a Spain that strengthens peace and security.**

A WORLD IN TRANSITION: THREE SYSTEMIC SHIFTS

Shift I: From a rules-based order to power-driven dynamics

The weakening of multilateralism is evident in the erosion of norms, the rise of transactional diplomacy, the more frequent use of force, and mounting impunity. Over the past decade, we have witnessed the steady degradation of the basic principles of international coexistence enshrined in the United Nations Charter. This process culminated in Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, which has served as a catalyst for broader international destabilisation.

This trend reveals a widening gap between the need to address growing global challenges and the diminishing capacity of the international community to address them, hampered by the paralysis of institutions such as the United Nations Security Council and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This crisis is unfolding amid intensifying strategic competition among major powers, extending across nearly all dimensions of international relations, from political, military, and security matters to commercial and technological concerns. This cross-cutting rivalry has created vacuums that regional actors are increasingly seeking to fill, adopting more assertive postures.

This transformation in international relations is fostering more flexible and pragmatic forms of engagement. Transactional diplomacy is gaining ground, with selective alignments displacing formal structures and partnerships anchored in shared values.

Shift II: From the economic efficiency of globalisation to the pursuit of resilience

The global economy is changing, prioritising resilience and risk mitigation over mere efficiency. This second shift is manifest in the transition from a logic of profit maximisation to strategies driven by economic security. Strategic competition now unfolds within a deeply interconnected global economy, multiplying the opportunities for weaponising interdependencies. The COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine—coupled with a rise in protectionism—have demonstrated how dependencies can be exploited to disrupt supply chains. Sanctions, trade barriers, economic coercion and anti-competitive practices are escalating. For instance, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), around 3,000 new trade restrictions were introduced in 2023, almost three times as many as in 2019.

Diversification strategies aim to reduce vulnerabilities in a fragmented environment. Faced with the need to mitigate risk, States and companies are seeking to reduce vulnerabilities and dependencies by pursuing diversification strategies based on supply chain relocation and restrictions on exports of critical materials and components—a trend now extending to investment flows. According to the IMF, the costs of this fragmentation could reach up to 7% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compounded by slower diffusion of technology and knowledge, and weakened income convergence previously driven by trade.

The green transition and the digital transformation are creating new arenas for geo-economic competition. Both transitions have opened competitive spaces in areas such as critical materials, semiconductors, and green technologies. Moreover, the climate crisis demands new growth models and enhanced funding for prevention and adaptation, particularly in developing countries, which are most severely affected by climate change. Meanwhile, the technology race has emerged as a principal vector of strategic competition, heightening the risk of diverging regulatory frameworks and the creation of new barriers to accessing certain technologies, with adverse effects on innovation and global interconnectivity.

Shift III: From confidence in progress to uncertainty

Developed societies have transitioned from broad optimism to growing unease about the future. The reasons are numerous, but they all stem from unfulfilled expectations: weaker-than-expected economic performance, rising inequality, a decline in global influence, or shifting values.

In recent decades, globalisation and the digital revolution have radically transformed our world. The expansion of trade and the internationalisation of value chains—driven by labour division and specialisation—combined with digital breakthroughs and greater geopolitical stability, fostered a period of accelerated global growth. Beyond the dramatic reduction of extreme poverty, there were significant improvements in child and maternal mortality, access to safe water and sanitation, and progress in combating malnutrition. Literacy rates doubled, electricity availability expanded, and digital connectivity became globalised. Furthermore, global life expectancy increased by more than 20 years worldwide. The political landscape also changed: the proportion of the world's population living in democracies rose from 25% in 1950 to around 60% by the early 21st century. At the same time, the incidence of violent crime and the virulence of armed conflicts fell sharply.

Yet, these achievements were accompanied by economic and social imbalances that revealed weaknesses in our model of growth. A combination of financial deregulation and misaligned incentives in the Eurozone culminated in the most severe financial crisis in almost a century, exposing the vulnerability of our economic systems. Simultaneously, two contrasting trends became apparent: while the middle classes of emerging economies expanded dramatically, middle- and working-class households in advanced economies failed to see any improvement in their circumstances, reflecting their governments' failure to compensate those who did not benefit from globalisation. This contrast is further intensified by the concentration of economic dynamism in major urban centres, leaving rural areas behind with increasingly ageing populations and diminishing opportunities. As a result, confidence that future generations will enjoy greater well-being than their predecessors has weakened, especially in advanced economies.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains unclear whether the trend of ever-faster worldwide progress will continue or be derailed. On one hand, there are encouraging signs, including longer life expectancy, the proliferation of innovative vaccines, the expansion of renewable energy, some progress on gender equality, and the prospect of productivity gains enabled by artificial intelligence (AI). On the other hand, there are reasons for concern, such as poverty resurgence in certain countries, the over-indebtedness of many economies, and rapidly ageing populations in some regions, alongside phenomena such as rising political and social polarisation, erosion of trust in democratic institutions, and accelerated environmental degradation caused by climate change. In this context, the need for coordinated and consensus-based international responses becomes increasingly evident to confront a complex future replete with uncertainties. Yet forging such international cooperation is increasingly difficult.

A more sombre view is emerging around the impact of technological development and the models of governance that shape it. New forms of communication and social interaction—particularly the rise of social media, which favour emotionally charged and simplified messages—have benefited political strategies that amplify polarisation and undermine public confidence in institutions.

This rising political and social polarisation threatens democratic stability, as consensus-building breaks down. The number of democracies is in decline, and the quality of democracy is deteriorating, a process spanning almost two decades. According to the V-Dem Institute, the level of democracy experienced by the average person in today's world has fallen back to levels last seen in 1985. One in three people on the planet live in countries where democratic freedoms are being curtailed, compared to fewer than one in ten at the turn of the century. Simultaneously, ultra-nationalist and identity-driven forces have gained traction, mobilising the public on climate and migration issues. In this domain, external and internal dynamics are intertwined. The stability of our democracies has become yet another terrain for geopolitical contest, exposed to destabilisation strategies and even foreign interference.

A. STRONGER EUROPE

Increasing Europe's autonomy

The European project is robust. The European Union has numerous sources of power: it is one of the world's leading issuers and recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI); it is the primary trading partner for nearly half of the countries on the planet; it has a highly developed welfare state and the most skilled population; it tops the environmental sustainability rankings; it hosts companies that are at the forefront of key sectors; and it is the issuer of the world's second most important currency. Yet this power is exercised in a fragmented manner. This situation—often underestimated—should be viewed as a starting point for building a more ambitious Union, one better equipped to face intensifying global competition and prepared to lead.

However, European integration—and all that it represents—faces challenges arising from accelerating shifts in the geopolitical landscape. The relative decline in the demographic and economic foundations of European countries' power, as reflected in their security and defence capabilities, means that only European-level cooperation can complement national resources and enable both the EU and its Member States to exert decisive influence over global issues that are central to their political and economic future.

Europeans cannot afford resignation. Europe is home to some of the most prosperous countries in the world, and it has the political, economic, and defence capabilities to respond effectively to emerging global trends, while continuing to uphold a model based on democratic pluralism, respect for human rights, and the social market economy. The Union's common institutions also offer multiple avenues for joint action.

The vast majority of Spanish citizens regard EU membership as an intrinsic part of their national identity. The EU is the natural framework for Spain to express many of its aspirations, set out

its positions, and achieve goals that would be unattainable from a purely national perspective.

Most EU citizens share this view. According to the Winter 2025 Eurobarometer, support for the European Union is at its highest level since 1983, with 74% of EU citizens believing that their country benefits from EU membership. The image of the EU has also improved, as 50% of EU citizens consider it positive, and 66% want the Union to play a more critical role in offering protection from crises. Unity is seen as essential to tackling global challenges, with 89% supporting it. Security is the leading priority (36%), followed by economic competitiveness (32%). Notably, the main reason for supporting EU membership has changed: the protection of peace and security now comes first (35%), ahead of improved cooperation between countries (34%). Peace remains a core value (45%), along with democracy (32%) and human rights (22%).

Strengthening the EU's stability, resilience, and effectiveness must therefore be one of the central priorities of Spain's foreign action in the years ahead. While individual Member States may have significant resources at their disposal, they are insufficient to exert decisive influence over the global trends affecting us. That is why Spain's first priority in responding to the three systemic shifts outlined earlier is to support a necessary reinforcement of the EU's capacity for action, along with a more coordinated and effective use of collective resources.

The challenge now lies in consolidating—both politically and institutionally—the transformation the EU has undergone over the past five years towards a stronger strategic approach. Spain has a vital interest in driving this process forward, as this is the space in which we defend and champion some of our most fundamental interests and boost our international presence.

A qualitative leap in common policies and their funding

A structural transformation of Europe's institutions and its policies is now essential. The European Union has demonstrated that it can react swiftly and effectively to crises, such as COVID-19 and the war against Ukraine. However, the fact that two crises of such magnitude have occurred within a relatively short timeframe illustrates how rapidly the international landscape is becoming increasingly unstable. We must move from reactive responses to structural ones. Our common institutions have not sufficiently adapted to the current geopolitical context. There is a clear disconnect between the potential speed at which the most senior political decision-making body, the European Council, can reach far-reaching decisions, and the limited resources available to institutions to address these challenges in their daily work. This new global environment demands structural change.

The budget is the fundamental element of any policy. The Multiannual Financial Framework has remained stagnant for many years at around 1% of the European Union's Gross National Income (GNI). The time has come to consider a substantial increase. Faced with a potential proliferation of risks, as suggested by the above-mentioned geopolitical trends, and the need to jointly finance European public goods—such as security, the green transition, technological transformation, critical infrastructure, and more—the EU must safeguard its capacity for action. The Union's budget is the appropriate tool to deliver European responses commensurate with the scale of today's challenges and to act together, urgently and effectively, in the face of future crises.

Spain advocates doubling Europe's resources in the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The readiness to significantly increase common capacities to 2% of GNI, and to reinforce the Union's ability to act through new own resources and joint debt issuance to finance European public goods will be one of the touchstones of the strategic adaptation. Only with budgetary ambition will it be possible to address new strategic challenges, especially in terms of competitiveness, including the green, digital, and social transitions, as well as in security and defence, without undermining the policies that have given the EU purpose, such as those on agriculture, fisheries, and cohesion. A robust budget is the guarantee that we can provide genuine European public goods.

Although the principle of unanimity has ensured unity and solidarity among the 27 Member States in many areas, it may also be misused or even abused, reducing the European Union's capacity to act through the decision-making process. We must not forget that unanimity allows third parties, by exerting pressure on a single Member State, to delay or even block the functioning of the Union's institutions. In other words, it constitutes a strategic risk for Europe.

We must continue to advance the use of qualified majority voting through passerelle clauses. Streamlining the decision-making process by extending qualified majority voting to areas such as taxation, foreign policy, and—critically—the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is essential to prevent one or several Member States from paralysing the Union's action.

The lack of progress on this long-overdue reform must not reduce Europe's ambition to the lowest common denominator. Spain supports the option, within the EU framework, of variable geometry policies as a resource to advance. Always open to all Member States but launched—through existing institutional mechanisms or ad hoc arrangements—by those Member States willing to move forward with enhanced cooperation, without requiring consensus among all 27. It was precisely through such mechanisms that some key milestones of European integration were achieved, such as the creation of the euro or the free movement of people within the Schengen Area.

Spain supports the enlargement of the Union to include new Member States, as demonstrated by the opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2023. This commitment to enlargement does not imply a relaxation of accession criteria, as these are the best guarantee of a successful enlargement that ultimately reinforces the EU.

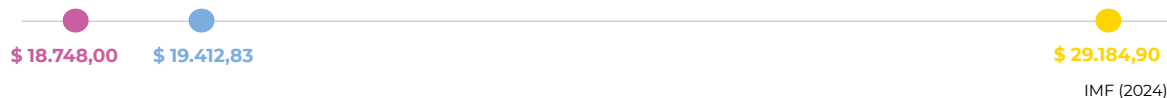
Enlargement must be matched by a parallel commitment: the EU's institutions and Member States must prepare to function with a larger membership, which requires reforms to European policies, the budget, and ultimately, to the institutions themselves. This is one of the core messages of the Granada Declaration, adopted during Spain's Presidency of the Council.

EU, US and China in data

STRENGTHS

● EU ● US ● China

Gross Domestic Product, current prices. Dollars (billions).



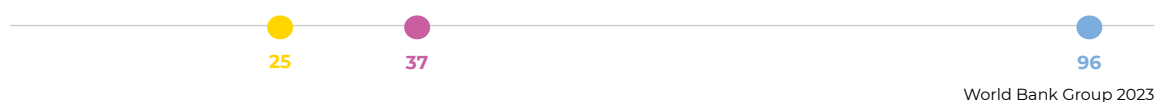
Share of the world economy. (GDP / Nominal global GDP)



Per capita-adjusted net national income, current. US\$.



Trade (% of GDP).



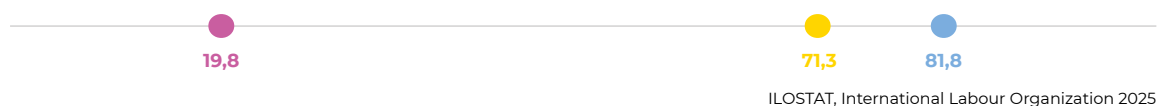
FDI inward (stock). % of the world total



FDI outward (stock). % of the world total



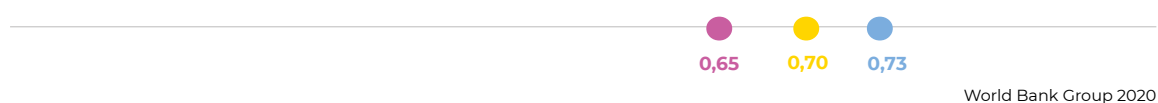
GDP per hour worked. Dollars (GDP, PPP constant 2021)



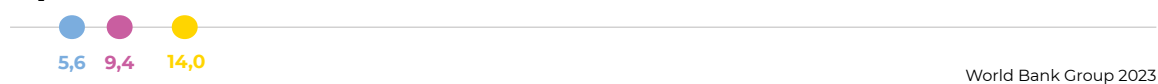
Gini Index. 0-100



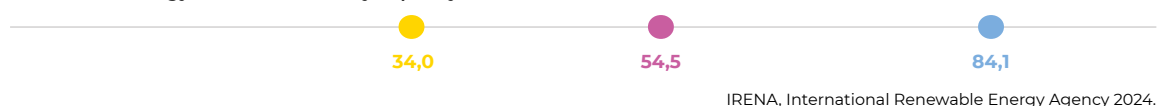
Human Capital Index. 0-1



CO₂ emissions (excluding land use, land-use change and forestry, LULUCF) per capita. t CO₂e/capita.

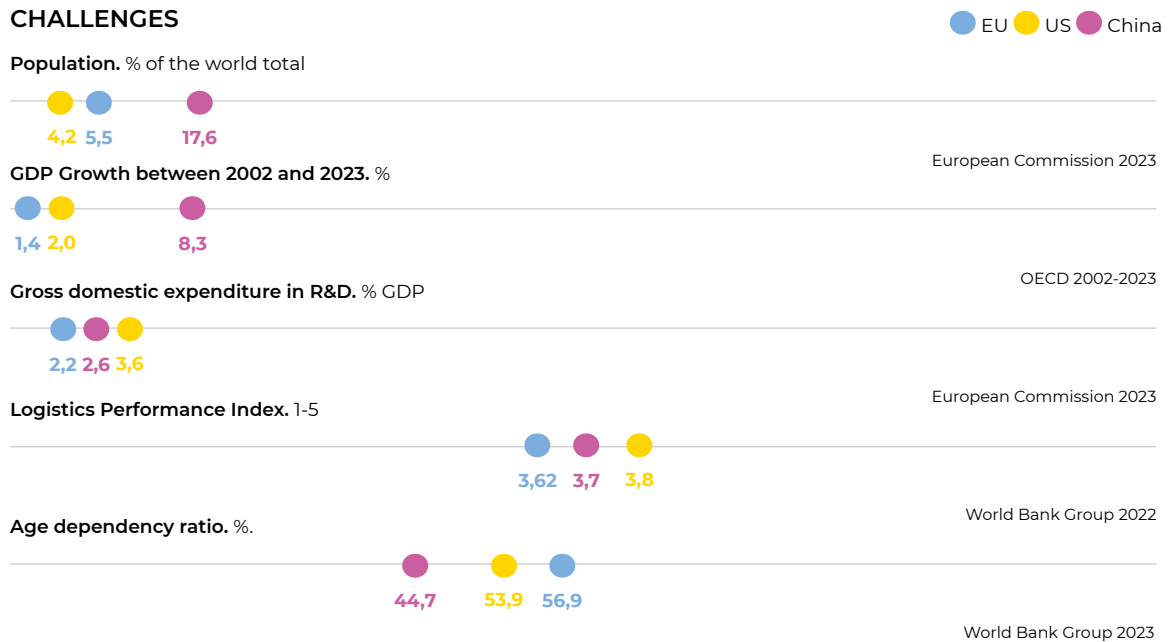


Renewable energy share of electricity capacity. %



EU, US and China in data

CHALLENGES



Protecting Europe and strengthening deterrence

The EU and its Member States must play a greater role in safeguarding their own security. The deterioration of security within Europe and its strategic environment, combined with a shift in the priorities of the United States, require the entry into a new phase of European security. The first and most urgent step is to strengthen our deterrence and defence capabilities, with an increasingly robust European pillar within NATO.

Strengthening our autonomy in the field of security and defence requires a qualitative leap in ambition, capabilities, and resources, underpinned by a truly European approach. Europe has deferred the objective of common defence too many times. As Spain has emphasised, now is the time for the Council to consider the decision to transition from the CSDP to genuine common defence gradually. Consensus-building will remain the guiding principle of our European policy. However, the current international context demands continued progress in this area, particularly when consensus among all 27 Member States is systematically blocked.

European autonomy must necessarily be based on a **comprehensive concept of security**. This must encompass traditional defence domains as well as threats ranging from terrorism to hybrid attacks and coercion, economic security, civil protection and the capacity to respond to and recover from disasters, which are increasingly frequent due to the climate emergency.

Spain remains committed to the full implementation of the EU Strategic Compass's four strands of action: act, secure, invest, and partner. Given its comprehensive scope and integrated approach to security, it is the necessary basis for the Defence Package to evolve into a true European Defence Union. Moreover, Europe cannot afford to neglect its role as a security provider—both across its neighbourhood and on the global stage—a role that demands greater ambition and enhanced capabilities.

Spain will continue to make a significant contribution to EU missions, particularly across our strategic environment, including the Mediterranean, the Sahel, and the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the Horn of Africa, and the Indian Ocean. Spain's extensive experience in cooperative security

activities and CSDP missions and operations, together with longstanding, respectful and mutually beneficial relations with partner countries in the region, provides us with considerable added value when engaging in security and defence cooperation with countries that seek our support.

This reinforcement of capabilities must also be reflected in the planning and development of European command and control structures, notably to strengthen the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity. This requires not only increasing the number of personnel assigned to this force, but also broadening the types of missions and operational scenarios it can undertake. It is imperative that the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) be fully ready, as soon as possible, to assume the tasks for which it was created. To this end, its functional separation from the EU Military Staff, as already agreed, must be completed as soon as possible. The EUMS must also be equipped with significantly increased staffing, appropriate infrastructure, and genuine command and control capabilities. Moreover, in the short to medium term, Europe must acquire the strategic enablers needed to fully deploy and sustain its missions, ideally based on European resources.

Developing a robust European technological and industrial defence base is essential. Reducing current fragmentation is crucial for generating economies of scale, enhancing resilience, and increasing scalability. On the demand side, the EU should establish a dedicated mechanism to generalise the use of joint procurement of defence equipment. On the supply side, a balanced distribution of the industrial workload across regions must be ensured. Regional fairness is indispensable to ensure that efforts made at the European and national levels can be sustained over time.

The model of multinational industrial consortia should be replicated in the development of common European platforms, not only in the field of defence but also in dual-use sectors relevant to defence, especially semiconductors, microelectronics, and quantum computing. These efforts should be supported through a mechanism based on criteria such as comparative advantage and relative effort. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are central to this endeavour; Spain will continue to strive to ensure they have access to suitable guidance and financing, including at the European level.

The European preference is a vital principle to guarantee the autonomy and credibility of Europe, as well as ensure that fiscal efforts are sustainable, since the benefits of production should largely

accrue to European citizens who bear the costs. However, this preference should be applied gradually and flexibly, without undermining the speed of capability development, interoperability, or rapid crisis response.

In addition to a balanced development of supply and demand, progress towards a genuine European Single Market for defence will require attention to governance and institutional aspects. These include enhancing intra-European coordination on export and investment controls as well as updating the public aid framework for the sector. Spain will also work to ensure that other autonomy-relevant aspects are considered, such as the resilience and integration of civilian energy networks, the development of land and rail logistics hubs, and the integration of civilian and military cybersecurity teams at the European level.

European security must be conceived as a European public good, to be addressed in conjunction with other European public goods. This requires financing through European resources alongside national contributions, via genuine mutualisation of effort. This approach has been a hallmark of many of Europe's most successful integration projects. At a time when the EU is facing one of the most complex international contexts in its history, increased national spending must be matched by additional European resources. This is essential not only to ensure the adequacy of our response but also to maintain its political and social sustainability.

Spain will also champion Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as a tool for jointly acquiring capabilities and developing larger-scale projects that can act as real drivers of European defence.

Spain has proposed a European security investment pledge to complement commitments undertaken in the NATO framework. Mobilising European resources and mutualising efforts is crucial, including in terms of the political and social sustainability of this collective endeavour. Throughout the current and next Multiannual Financial Framework, the EU must make a qualitative leap forward. Flexibility in both national and EU budgets, as well as through loans, must be accompanied by transfers, necessarily tied to a comprehensive and strategic approach to the coordinated development of European capabilities.

Spain will continue to back the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) regulation, as a central element in the EU's comprehensive capability development effort. It must be adopted swiftly, endowed with adequate resources, and implemented

with a long-term perspective, in harmony with other components of the EU Defence Package.

Preserving societal cohesion

The European social model is the cornerstone of EU cohesion. In the current international context, inclusive and socially responsive policies are a political and ethical imperative, as well as a guarantor of stability. These policies are a key factor in maintaining the cohesion of our societies at a time when extremist and external actors seek to exploit internal divisions.

The European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Social Agenda must be strengthened to improve the lives of citizens and address social transformations that particularly affect groups such as people at risk of exclusion, persons with disabilities, consumers and those experiencing homelessness. Achieving these goals will require adequate funding, particularly through the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The marked trend of rapid population ageing in Europe, along with growing intergenerational inequality, must be addressed using a range of tools, including support for caregiving and measures to combat child poverty. In this respect, it is essential to bolster tools such as the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, the European Disability Card and the European Care Strategy, as well as proposals to strengthen social dialogue. Spain has taken pioneering steps in this area, notably in public policy to support families, and the recognition of family diversity as a human right.

Spain will be a key proponent of consumer protection within the EU and other international bodies, such as the Global Forum on Consumer Policy of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), backed by Spain, Norway, Luxembourg, and Japan. In the area of disability rights, we will also work to promote implementation of the mandates of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly through the measures outlined in the Spanish Strategy on Disability 2022-2030.

In a context shaped by digitalisation and the rise of AI, Spain will support the adoption of regulations that safeguard the rights of workers with respect to algorithmic management and AI and foster a just digital transition. Priorities also include tackling fraud and undeclared work and strengthening health and safety at work, particularly in relation to mental health and precarious working conditions. In this regard, Spain will continue to support the European Labour Authority in helping

to prevent the erosion of labour standards.

Taken together, these efforts aim to consolidate a Union that is not only competitive but also inclusive—one that does not backtrack on its social achievements. In this regard, cohesion policy—alongside agricultural and fisheries policies—helps anchor rural and coastal communities most affected by demographic decline within the EU's socio-economic fabric, while also supporting environmental sustainability and ensuring the vitality of key sectors for food sovereignty and rural development.

Spain will champion recognition of our languages as official within the EU. In doing so, we will defend a core element of Spain's national identity—its multilingual character—as enshrined in the Spanish Constitution and the Statutes of Autonomy, and protected under the EU treaties, which recognise multilingualism as a value to be safeguarded.

Towards a more effective European external action

Spain will intensify its efforts to help deploy, energise and enhance the effectiveness of the European Union's external action. We will continue to contribute with substantive ideas and concrete proposals to adapt the EU's foreign policy to the evolving international context, particularly through political dialogue with our global partners. We will support the European External Action Service and the European Commission in this effort.

The operational coordination of Member States' bilateral external actions must be significantly improved, especially in our strategic environment. This is an urgent priority. The EU and its Member States are the leading donors of development assistance to numerous countries across the globe. Yet too often, our efforts and commitment do not yield tangible results in terms of having our interests recognised by partners and their societies. This stands in contrast to the outcomes achieved by other actors operating with more modest resources. The ability to generate real impact lies within our reach, and it is our responsibility to strengthen it.

What Europe offers must be tailored to the political and economic needs of our partners. This calls for better listening in bilateral dialogue and more flexible internal mechanisms to meet those needs. It also requires clearer prioritisation of our foreign policy objectives. In a context of proliferating crises and limited resources, the Union must focus on concrete, realistic goals. This need for realism also extends to the proposals put to our partners.

There is no room for ambitious investment pledges or contributions that go unfulfilled. We must make Europe's external action more credible by formulating specific proposals that are swiftly implemented and supported by bona fide political dialogue with our partners on an equal footing.

The CSDP is gradually being implemented more widely and more significantly. The Union must gradually consolidate its role as a security provider in priority regions, offering support across multiple areas. It must act as a reliable partner. Ensuring the viability of any operation requires advanced confirmation that Member States are ready and able to make the necessary contributions from the outset and for as long as required. Withdrawals from projects or missions must be gradual and accompanied by effective communication, both with the authorities of the partner country and with its population.

Above all, we must substantially improve coordination among EU Member States and with other countries that share our interests. While the Team Europe approach has yielded positive results, persistent administrative barriers and institutional inertia continue to hinder coordination, often resulting in counterproductive competition among European States. This opens gaps that other actors naturally try to fill. This is one of the main reasons why the abundant resources mobilised by the EU and its Member States over recent decades have not always produced the expected results, especially in our strategic environment.

At the European level, Spain will champion individual, systematic and regular assessment of those EU partnerships that are of significant strategic importance to the Union. This assessment will be carried out by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and in meetings of political directors concerning countries in the EU's strategic environment, fostering a comprehensive perspective and coordinated action by the Union in our neighbourhood.

Our engagement with partners must also evolve. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the most flagrant violation of the international system in

decades. Yet the European Union has struggled to convey this message to many of its global partners.

Europe's partners must not be treated as a public to be mobilised but rather as an intrinsic part of a new push for multilateralism, international law, and the universal principles of the United Nations Charter. We must first accept reality: the world has changed. Since the turn of the century, advanced economies' share of world GDP has declined from 57% to around 40%, and they now account for 16% of the world's population, down from 20%. We must acknowledge that many of our global partners have pressing needs and priorities that differ from ours. All countries are facing threats and have concerns, sometimes existential ones, and we must pay proper attention to them. We must address issues such as food security, the international financial architecture, global health, and cooperation on security, whilst demonstrating commitment in our political engagement.

The defence of multilateralism and international law is an area of shared interest, and one that calls for consistency and coherence from the EU, leading by example. An approach that incorporates some transactional elements is entirely compatible with advocating for the universality of international law and multilateralism, including the principles of the United Nations Charter and the common interest in preserving them. To be credible, the Union must lead by example: we will only be credible if we act consistently and coherently.

What is needed now is a shift from occasional outreach to systematic engagement. China and Russia maintain regular political dialogues with global partners at subregional and continental levels, including in Africa and Latin America, while the EU only does so sporadically. For instance, the EU took eight years to convene a CELAC-EU Summit, after Spain took the initiative during our Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023. Similarly, an EU-League of Arab States (LAS) summit has not been held since the inaugural meeting in 2019, and the frequency of meetings between the EU and Africa is also insufficient. Spain will work to ensure that EU high-level political dialogues are held with greater regularity, ambition and representation.

EUROPE'S STRATEGIC CONVERGENCE

Europe is surrounded by an arc of instability stretching from its eastern border to the Sahel, marked by a series of deeply interconnected challenges. The proliferation of conflicts, the spread of terrorism and organised crime, and the institutional fragility affecting much of our neighbourhood paint a troubling picture. In these circumstances, it is of vital interest to Europe that its neighbours enjoy stability. Of the 18 countries bordering the EU, 16 are home to active terrorist groups, 5 are engaged in armed conflict, 6 have suffered coups d'état or attempted coups, and 9 have shifted towards authoritarian forms of government. For other actors, these spaces are interconnected theatres in which to expand their influence or even to undermine Europe's unity and cohesion.

Different perceptions of risk and strategic priorities across European States remain a source of vulnerability, one that external actors actively seek to exploit. For this reason, achieving greater European convergence in threat perception is essential if we are to assume greater responsibility for our collective security.

Guided by this approach, Spain has responded with determination to the threats facing our Eastern European partners, demonstrating our firm commitment by deploying personnel and capabilities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, and Türkiye, as well as in the Baltic Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. We have also backed Sweden and Finland's NATO accession and extended comprehensive support to Ukraine.

Accordingly, Spain seeks greater engagement from our partners in the South. This commitment to European security, even in the most geographically distant areas, gives Spain the legitimacy to advocate for broadening the scope of European security to include our strategic environment, embedding Southern Flank security needs into Europe's internal discussions.

European strategic convergence is a long-term process. Our goal is to ensure the Union is prepared for crises that may arise on either front, directly or indirectly impacting all Member States. Similarly, Spain aims for NATO to pay greater attention to the Southern Flank, following a 360-degree approach, as outlined in the Strategic Concept adopted at the 2022 Madrid Summit.

Improving our competitiveness

European external action in support of international peace and stability demands solid foundations of power, including in the economic sphere. Only through a shared European approach, focusing on growth, can we successfully address the challenges of technological transformation, decarbonisation and the preservation of the European social model. In line with the conclusions of the Draghi report, the EU must take decisive action to become more competitive: closing the innovation gap with the United States and China by significantly increasing investment in future-oriented sectors; advancing a decarbonisation and competitiveness plan aligned with our climate ambition; and strengthening our economic security.

The EU faces a competitive gap in advanced technologies that will shape the future global economy. Over 80% of international funding for AI goes to American and Chinese companies, while European companies receive less than 10%. A similar gap applies to quantum computing: none of the top ten companies in the sector are based in the EU. One of the main obstacles is access to financing. Since 2013, US start-ups have raised five times more venture capital than their European counterparts. Out of 147 unicorns (rapid-growth companies valued at over \$1 billion) that emerged in the EU since 2008, around a third have relocated outside the EU, mostly to the United States, due to the lack of funding to scale up their operations. In the field of clean technologies, China dominates much of global production, controlling around 75% of lithium-ion batteries and approximately 80% of solar modules.

In recent years, pessimistic forecasts about Europe's economic future have multiplied, often underestimating its underlying strengths. Yet the European Union, including Spain, has the tools to reclaim a position of leadership: a large and integrated market, legal certainty, a high quality of life, a strong capacity to attract talent and productive foreign investment, and significant manufacturing capacity, with 30 million Europeans employed in the sector. We must not forget that economic and technological change is so rapid that several emerging economies have taken the lead in dynamic technological sectors in just a few years, a feat Europe is also capable of achieving.

The key areas requiring action are already well identified: incomplete European instruments, insufficient investment, fragmented financing, and a disconnect between domestic and EU-level industrial policies. This same lack of coordination has been identified in Europe's foreign and security policy and represents the main obstacle preventing the EU and its Member States from fully leveraging the Single Market's potential. The challenge now lies in mobilising the political will to align Europe's energy, industrial, trade and competition policies at the service of greater competitiveness.

The conclusion is clear: Europe's competitiveness and technological progress will depend primarily on the political, regulatory, and investment decisions taken by Europeans themselves.

Deepening the Single Market

The Single Market, a driver of growth and a key geostrategic asset for the EU, needs steadfast support. In today's international context, where global rules are less effective, the scale of economic actors is more critical than ever. In this regard, the Single Market is what grants the Union greater weight on the international stage. Nevertheless, ambitious reforms are required to underpin this role. According to the IMF, internal barriers within the EU represent an implicit tariff of 44% on goods and 110% on services between Member States. The first step is to reduce intra-Community trade barriers until they are eliminated.

The Single Market must be expanded to include energy, telecommunications, finance, and the defence industry, enabling European companies to scale up. We must also develop those aspects that are still pending, in particular the completion of the Capital Markets Union and the creation of a Savings and Investment Union. This would help a substantial share of European savings that currently leave the EU to be rerouted and remain in Europe, channelling them into productive investment in Europe.

Administrative burdens on companies must be reduced without undermining essential policy objectives. We must simplify the administrative procedures required of companies, especially SMEs,

whilst upholding essential political goals such as the green transition and the protection of social rights.

Reforms are necessary to foster growth and enhance resilience to future crises. Completing the banking union is crucial. This includes establishing the European Deposit Insurance Scheme, strengthening the Single Resolution Mechanism, harmonising national insolvency frameworks, and advancing fiscal convergence to fully realise the Economic and Monetary Union. The current context also offers a window of opportunity to enhance the euro's role as a reserve currency—an objective to be supported through initiatives such as the digital euro and greater international use of the euro across sectors.

Another hindrance to Europe's competitiveness is governance, which must be reformed to ensure swift decision-making at EU level. The Union cannot afford to take an average of nineteen months to adopt a single piece of legislation, particularly in the face of such urgent challenges. That is why Spain, with the support of other Member States and of the European institutions, has launched the European Competitiveness Laboratory, to test new integration initiatives in a controlled environment. The first projects proposed—a pan-European savings product and an SME credit rating mechanism—could lead to significant progress in the capital markets union, helping channel more European savings into European companies.

The EU's regulatory certainty—in terms of predictability and legal security—must be leveraged as a key comparative advantage. Now is the time to harness this strength by attracting talent and high-value foreign investment, through a firm commitment to science and the improvement of working conditions.

Energy and climate action

Europe must combine ambitious climate action with long-term goals for competitiveness, economic growth, and social fairness. The green transition and the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 are not only environmental commitments; they must also be viewed as a strategy for growth. Spain believes that over the next four years, the European Union should prioritise the expansion of renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen and energy storage; improve energy efficiency, promote clean transport and the circular economy; adopt a robust regulatory

framework with strong public backing; and invest in innovation, with particular attention to regions in transition.

To lead the global race towards decarbonisation, the EU must increase the capacity of its electricity and renewable hydrogen interconnections, while developing smart grids and storage systems that maximise the use of surplus zero-emission energy.

Energy efficiency and emissions reduction are not only essential for global sustainability in the medium term; they are also powerful drivers of innovation and competitiveness. Transforming Europe's energy model—in a fair and inclusive manner—will help fight climate change while reducing supply vulnerabilities, strengthening industrial competitiveness, and lowering dependence on external resources. In doing so, it will reinforce our economic security.

Innovation and digital sovereignty

Europe's digital sovereignty must combine technological autonomy with international openness. Spain advocates for ensuring our technological autonomy—understood as the ability to independently determine how we develop, provide, and use critical technologies in ways that safeguard national security, protect democracy, and uphold citizens' rights. This is not about pursuing technological autarky but about reducing vulnerabilities and dependencies on external actors while remaining open to the world to preserve our global competitiveness.

Spain and the EU must address their digital deficit to avoid falling behind in key sectors of the future. The technological race—in areas such as AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, clean technologies, and the space and defence sectors—brings together innovation, investment, competitiveness and geopolitics. With the aim of reducing strategic dependencies, Spain will promote a robust industrial and technological policy, both at national and European level, to strengthen the competitiveness of our digital ecosystems, prioritise sectors essential to our resilience, and ensure our participation in the technology race, in close coordination with the EU. This requires redoubling efforts in innovation, improving training and attracting talent for advanced technologies, and facilitate the integration of AI in companies and in the public sector in line with the goals of the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Spain's Quantum Technologies Strategy.

INVESTING IN PRODUCTIVITY AND LONG-TERM SECURITY

To guarantee that Spanish companies remain competitive and that their productivity increases, it is essential to foster the reindustrialisation of both Spain and the EU. This requires completing the Single Market and strengthening our industrial, manufacturing and technological base, while also boosting the production and export of high value-added services. This will reinforce our productive fabric and ensure that our companies can compete on equal terms beyond our borders. To this end, we must capitalise on our strengths to enhance production capacity in strategic sectors and focus our investment efforts by:

Boosting strategic sectors with existing advantages. The first step is to strengthen those sectors in which we already hold comparative advantages, such as electrolyser manufacturing or the domain of cybersecurity.

Investing in emerging technologies and untapped potential. At the same time, targeted investments will be made in areas with high growth potential or in nascent technologies, such as data centres and the generation of wind energy.

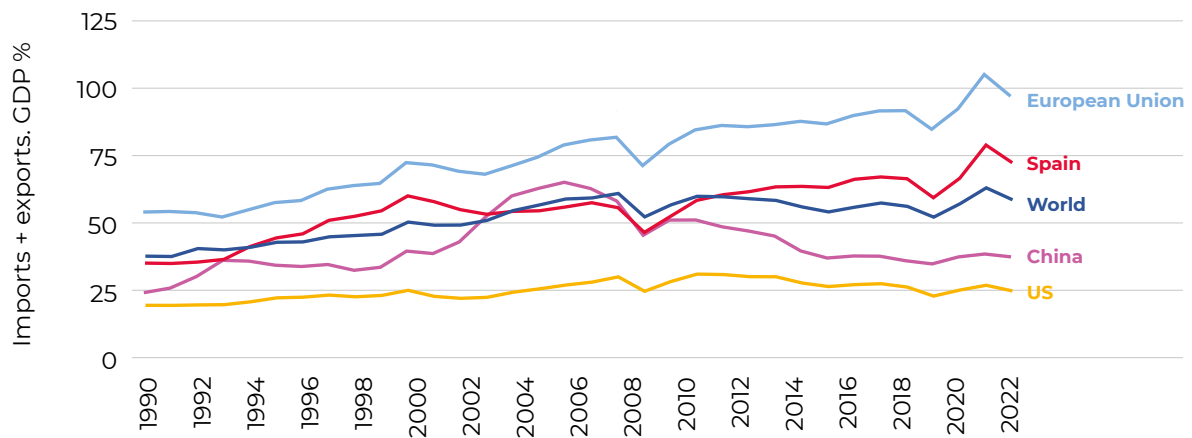
Developing critical capacities for our autonomy. Finally, it is essential to build baseline capacities in other areas that are vital to our security and autonomy, such as cloud infrastructure and the management of critical raw materials.

Safeguarding Europe's economic security

The EU is the most economically open region in the world, with over 50% of its GDP linked to international trade and investment, with a larger proportion of its economy reliant on exports of goods and services than the United States. Therefore, the impact of the global trend towards greater protectionism may be more harmful to the EU than to other economies.

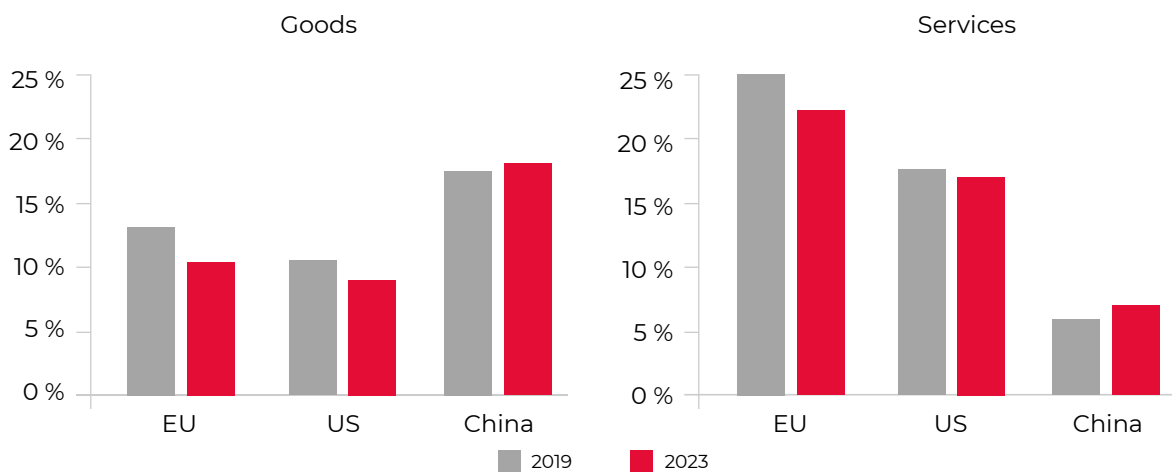
Spain advocates for strategic openness based on reciprocity and fair competition within the multilateral framework. A decline in global trade is undesirable, yet it is a worldwide trend that must be acknowledged. Political decision-making must adapt accordingly by securing and diversifying supply chains, strengthening existing partnerships, and building new trusted relationships that

Openness to Trade



Source: World Bank.

Share of world goods and services exports



Source: World Trade Organization.

reduce vulnerabilities and dependencies while enhancing our effectiveness.

The international order has changed, and Spain and the EU must change too. From a strategic perspective, the economic base is a key pillar of power, but also a source of vulnerabilities. In the face of growing political and economic fragmentation, it is essential to integrate an economic security perspective into decision-making to reduce risks. The weaponisation of interdependence, the proliferation of trade barriers, supply chain disruptions during the pandemic, and the energy crisis triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine all make it necessary to reassess the balance between efficiency and security, with a greater emphasis on the latter.

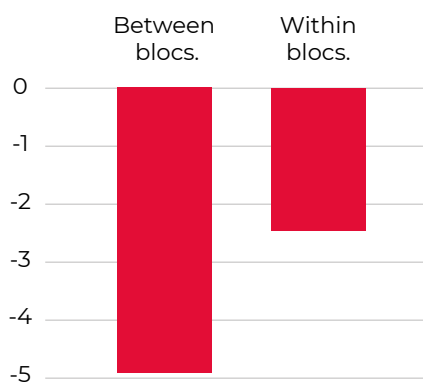
We must accurately identify and reduce the vulnerabilities and dependencies that affect sectors critical to our security, such as technology, defence, health, energy, critical raw materials,

and food, and shield them from harmful dependencies, potential disruptions, and economic coercion. While significant progress has been made in response to recent crises, this work remains incomplete and must not lead to complacency. Constant political attention to this strategic issue is indispensable. Energy security is of particular importance, as it is key to preventing external actors from exerting pressure. In this regard, diversification of suppliers, energy storage and interconnections, as well as increased investment in innovation and energy efficiency, are all essential.

While upholding our commitment to free trade, our policies must also reflect the current strategic reality, in which geopolitics is playing an ever-greater role. This will require more decisive action at both the national and EU levels to ensure a level playing field in response to policies adopted by third countries, including industrial strategies that place our companies at a competitive disadvantage.

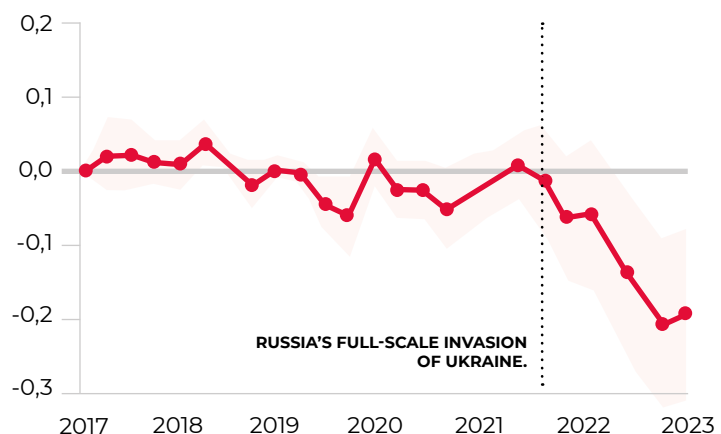
Geopolitical impact on trade flows

Trade evolution post Russia's invasion of Ukraine 2022



Change in trade growth among blocs, in percentage points.

Timing of trade fragmentation, between blocs



Semi-elasticity of flows between blocs.

Source: Gopinath, G., Gourinchas, P.-O., Presbitero, A. F., & Topalova, P. (2024). Changing global linkages: A new cold war? [IMF Working Paper No. WP/24/76]. International Monetary Fund.

Long-term resilience requires protecting our companies and critical supply chains, ensuring access to key raw materials and sensitive technologies. To this end, Spain will promote economic security standards for supply chains, contingency planning for potential shocks, and the establishment of common European reserves in critical sectors, fully aligned with the EU's Economic Security Strategy. We will also seek to respond to supply chain disruptions in a swift, coordinated manner, strengthening our institutional response capacity through civil-military coordination, drawing up a catalogue of crisis response plans and creating a task force on economic security in the framework of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Economic Affairs, with the participation of the Ministry of Defence. The aim is to align our actions in a field that inherently brings together economic, technological and security dimensions.

Leveraging Europe's economic power to compete more effectively and strengthen our economic security. The EU is an economic powerhouse, but for many years it lacked key geoeconomic tools. In recent years, we have adopted appropriate trade defence instruments, such as the Anti-Coercion Instrument. Nevertheless, we are still far from ensuring a level playing field for European companies in the face of market-distorting practices. It is critical that European companies reach the necessary scale to compete globally and consolidate the EU's indispensability in some critical sectors. To achieve this, the EU must better harness its economic, trade and regulatory power to influence supply chains in critical sectors, take a more assertive stance towards anti-competitive practices, conclude sectoral agreements with its partners, and exercise its financial power through initiatives such as Global Gateway.

Spain will continue to lead efforts to expand the EU's network of trade agreements with third countries and regions, not only as a cornerstone of Europe's open strategic autonomy, but also as a vehicle for the EU's geopolitical influence globally. Broadening this network of trading partners will encourage deeper cooperation beyond the purely economic sphere and reduce dependencies through the diversification of reliable suppliers. In short, trading more means greater autonomy. The agreement with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) is the best example of this strategic approach: if the EU aspires to be a credible global actor, it must take its commitments seriously and ratify the agreement without delay.

EU economic deterrence and defensive mechanisms must be reinforced. It will be essential to reinforce the EU's economic deterrence in order to prevent coercive tactics by third countries. This means strengthening its trade defence instruments, building greater technical capacity on sanctions and export controls, and establishing a more coordinated and structured framework among Member States for investment screening.

Collaboration with the private sector is essential to underpin Europe's economic security. Without collaboration, information gathering, risk management and the roll-out of protective measures will not be effective. Structured public-private co-operation mechanisms must therefore be further developed.

Protecting our economic security also means anticipating threats and enhancing our defensive and intelligence capabilities in the face of economic coercion. This includes building foresight, preparedness and impact assessment capacities, particularly concerning potential export controls and secondary sanctions affecting European companies.

B. COMMITTED SPAIN

Spain is a country firmly committed to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to multilateralism, and to international cooperation. This commitment is underpinned by a consistent and coherent defence of peace, of the universality of human rights, and international law.

Since its creation, the multilateral order has driven the most significant decades of progress in human history: unprecedented demographic growth,

a sharp reduction in extreme poverty, rising per capita income, and longer life expectancy. To address the crisis currently affecting the multilateral system, Spain will work to **uphold, reform, and strengthen** this order.

At the same time, meeting global challenges in an era of strategic competition will require the promotion of flexible mechanisms that allow for cooperation based on shared interests.

Upholding, reforming and strengthening the multilateral system

The multilateral system is in crisis at a time when the international society is facing challenges that can only be effectively addressed through collective action, such as climate change or the risk of future pandemics.

The multilateral system is at a critical juncture. Spain advocates for global governance based on rules and practices that facilitate decision-making and the management of transnational concerns. Until now, the multilateral system—built on formal institutions and normative frameworks open to all States—has provided the foundation for joint action and served as a guarantee for the security and well-being of Spanish citizens. However, this model of governance is under increasing strain, compromising its functioning and effectiveness. The erosion of consensus, both nationally and internationally, is placing growing pressure on multilateral institutions and compels us to rethink our approach.

In the face of inaction and paralysis, Spain calls for a comprehensive strategy based on three pillars: upholding the progress achieved, **reforming** existing structures, and **strengthening** global action mechanisms to address current and future challenges.

Upholding the foundations of the international order

Defending the multilateral order, international law, and human rights is a priority for Spain. This system represents the first universal order grounded in binding principles, universally accepted and enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations—sovereign equality of States, the right of peoples to self-determination, the prohibition of the use of force, and respect for human rights—and remains the most effective framework for delivering collective responses to global challenges.

Spain plays an active role in preserving the achievements of the multilateral system, with the United Nations as the cornerstone of the international architecture. In the face of narratives that question the value of the international system established after the Second World War, or that advocate a return to raw power dynamics, Spain reaffirms the continued validity of international law as a fundamental building block for a just and predictable international order. We will continue to promote cooperation and seek consensus through our engagement in key multilateral forums and our unequivocal support for a rules-based international

order. Our commitment to multilateralism will also be reflected in our contributions to the United Nations system—where Spain is the tenth largest donor globally—and in our strong support for specific agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to which we are among the leading contributors.

Protecting and promoting human rights

The protection and promotion of human rights has long been a defining feature of Spain's foreign action, inseparable from our identity, and a source of strength. Spain's election as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (2025-2027) and our active presence in the Council of Europe will boost our defence of a human-rights system based on the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity, and non-selectivity. This system is increasingly under threat.

Spain's external action on human rights focuses on five priority areas: the abolition of the death penalty; the achievement of real and effective equal opportunities between women and men; the fight against racism and discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation; the defence and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights; and the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. The International Commission against the Death Penalty, headquartered in Madrid and chaired by Spain within its Support Group, reflects Spain's leadership in the transformation of the Commission into a recognised international organisation, seeking to obtain permanent observer status at the United Nations. Regarding the protection of diversity and the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, Spain will campaign for the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relations—an issue to be raised in all bilateral meetings with countries where such practices remain criminalised—as well as for the legal recognition and protection of trans persons.

Reforming the multilateral system

Reforming the multilateral system is essential to ensuring its legitimacy and effectiveness. This means building on what works while driving the necessary reforms. In this regard, global governance structures must be updated to make them more effective and representative of today's international community. Effectiveness and representativeness are closely linked: the multilateral system will only function if the majority of States see it as

serving their interests, which depends directly on their sense of being adequately represented.

Demands for reform of decision-making processes represent an opportunity to build a more inclusive and effective system for the benefit of the entire international community. Advancing meaningful institutional reform could shift the multilateral debate towards constructive proposals.

Reforming the United Nations Security Council is necessary. As an active member of the Uniting for Consensus Group, Spain supports progress towards a Security Council that is more effective, transparent, and representative. This transformation should be based on two main pillars: an increase in the number of non-permanent members and limitations on the use of the veto. The aim is to establish a more representative body, capable of responding more rapidly and effectively to international crises. Spain's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Council for the 2031–2032 term reinforces this commitment.

Likewise, modernising the global financial architecture is crucial to achieving more equitable economic development. Spain will firmly and constructively support efforts to update and adapt Bretton Woods institutions to the needs and demands of our time. The international financial system must evolve into a more just, inclusive, and effective mechanism for mobilising greater resources for countries with the most acute financial needs.

We will pay particular attention to the reform of the WTO. In a context where global trade flows are under significant threat, a comprehensive and urgent reform of the WTO is imperative, with particular emphasis on revitalising its dispute settlement mechanism.

Spain will also seek flexible cooperation alternatives to respond to collective challenges. In cases where multilateral consensus cannot be reached, flexible cooperation frameworks can help advance the management of shared challenges, such as the governance of global public goods. Some recent initiatives include public-private partnerships (such as GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance), standard-setting partnerships, bilateral agreements, scientific diplomacy programmes, and the creation of ad hoc coalitions. These are good examples of the types of cooperation to be explored. The International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA), the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, and the Black Sea Grain Initiative illustrate how concrete diplomatic action can help manage global crises in the

common interest. These efforts are complementary to, rather than a substitute for, the role played by multilateral organisations.

Reinforcing mechanisms for action

Spain will continue working to strengthen the multilateral system in order to respond to emerging global challenges.

We will maintain our support for the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in promoting international peace and security—not only through its institutional architecture, but also through the political work of its Special Envoys, such as those for Syria, Yemen, Western Sahara, the Great Lakes region or Myanmar, and its special advisers and representatives, for example on Climate Action. Spain will also place priority on advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, on meeting climate commitments, and on protecting and safeguarding global public goods, including cyberspace, outer space, and the global health system. To this end, Spain will soon adopt a multilateral strategy for sustainable development.

Ensuring the central role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in global health governance is a priority for Spain. We will continue to support its work following Spain's entry into the WHO Executive Board and the adoption of the Pandemic Agreement at the seventy-eighth World Health Assembly. Spain will also promote progress towards universal health coverage, drawing on the experience of our national health system, and will adopt a Global Health Strategy aimed at strengthening Spain's role and that of our cooperation in this area.

As the country that has ratified the greatest number of conventions with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Spain will support inclusive economic growth through legislation that promotes decent work, fair income, equal opportunities, and combats all forms of workplace discrimination. Spain will advocate for a reform of ILO governance in line with democratic principles and developments in the global economy in recent decades. Furthermore, Spain will promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local cultures and products. Beyond improving our own destinations, Spain aims to lead the adoption of good global practices through its position within UN Tourism, headquartered in Madrid.

Spain will continue to support the Alliance of Civilisations, a Spanish-led initiative that fosters dialogue and mutual understanding at the international level, at a time when they are more needed than ever.

Feminist foreign policy: needed now more than ever

Reflecting the values of Spanish society, Spain aims to take a leading role in advancing gender equality, a core pillar of its foreign action. This objective becomes even more relevant in a context of regression marked by pushback against gender-related policies and norms adopted by multilateral institutions, growing challenges to women's rights, and the significant impact of disinformation. With an advanced legal framework and pioneering public policies for eradicating violence against women and ensuring equality in the workplace, Spain will continue to lead progress on the multilateral gender equality agenda through its feminist foreign policy.

This effort also stems from the conviction that achieving real and effective equality is essential to development and economic growth in any society. Spain will continue to mainstream gender as a cross-cutting element of its foreign policy, and will pursue the following concrete goals:

- **Defending the rights of women and girls**, with particular attention to their sexual and reproductive rights. Spain will activate accountability mechanisms already existing in international law and will continue to fight against the impunity of perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflicts. Women's rights are human rights.
- **Promoting economic justice and women's empowerment** through active participation in the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights and the Generation Equality Forum. Closing the gender pay and participation gap in the labour market is key, not only from a justice and rights perspective, but also economically, especially in rapidly ageing societies. Spain will support recognition of the role of care in development and promote equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.
- **Stepping up efforts to combat gender-based and sexual violence**, including technology-facilitated violence and human trafficking. Spain will strengthen consular protection and assistance for women abroad.

- **Increasing the participation of women in leadership positions and decision-making.** Spain will continue efforts to increase the role of women in the Spanish Foreign Service and multilateral institutions. In particular, Spain supports gender rotation in the Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly and the first-ever appointment of a woman as Secretary General.
- **Implementing the women, peace and security agenda,** which supports the participation of women in negotiation, conflict resolution, and reconstruction processes.

Technological governance and multilateralism

Technological development must go hand in hand with responsible innovation. Spain supports a free, open and secure internet under a multi-stakeholder governance model and plays a proactive role in shaping global ethical standards in the digital sphere. In the current context of increasing geopoliticisation of technology and faced with the risks of deregulation and regulatory fragmentation, Spain is committed to advancing global standards and regulations inspired by ethical and responsible principles, upholding the right to privacy and data protection, and encouraging algorithmic transparency to avoid amplifying bias and social divides. This commitment is reflected in Spain's support for the United Nations Global Service Centre, with offices in Quart de Poblet (Valencia). In this context, efforts will also focus on highlighting the value of the European Union's regulatory influence in the digital domain and extending its reach.

Spain considers that only a multilateral governance framework for AI can reduce the risks linked to its development. Under the commitments of the UN Global Digital Compact, Spain seeks open and accessible technical solutions for all, alongside the creation of shared international standards that prevent fragmentation. Spain is also taking on the role of co-facilitator of the UN Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

Our country is a trailblazer in the defence of digital rights as a pillar of the global technological transformation. In recent years, Spain has worked actively to share its vision for a human-centric and rights-oriented digital transformation. In the coming years, Spain will promote an international agenda on digital rights through multilateral action based on previous achievements such as the European Declaration of Digital Rights and Principles, the León

Declaration on European neurotechnology, and the Ibero-American Charter of Principles and Rights in Digital Environments. Further work will focus on recognising new rights in the field of neurotechnology, building on the Spanish Government's Charter of Digital Rights, and on addressing challenges such as mass surveillance, discrimination by certain AI systems—incorporating the gender perspective—and data collection without user consent.

Strengthening international economic and financial governance

Global economic governance must evolve in a fair, sustainable and effective way for all. Spain contributes to this goal through its active engagement in key international forums, such as the G20 and the OECD. The G20 is seen as a crucial platform for addressing collective challenges that affect both advanced and emerging economies. In parallel, efforts will focus on enhancing the international role of the OECD—its contribution to global governance, its capacity to shape evidence-based public policies, and its work on the social dimension of the economy and development. Special attention will be paid to OECD accession processes, internal consolidation, and its links to the UN system, particularly with regard to Latin America and Africa.

In the sphere of multilateral development banks, the Spanish strategy will be grounded in European coordination to maximise investment impact, while helping to build consensus around a far-reaching reform of the international financial system. The aim is to increase both its financial capacity and its development impact. Institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the African Development Bank offer opportunities to coordinate European positions and ensure a unified voice in negotiations. Priority will go to projects involving Spanish expertise and those that support the green and digital transitions.

A firm commitment to sustainable finance underpins Spain's approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, the adoption of innovative financial instruments—such as green and social bonds, shared guarantees for high-impact social and environmental projects, and broader use of special drawing rights to support emerging economies at critical junctures—will be actively pursued. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Seville in 2025, offers a valuable opportunity to push this agenda forward and create more

effective mechanisms for channelling resources to the countries most in need.

The debt burden continues to weigh heavily on the development prospects of many countries worldwide. Elevated levels of indebtedness among low and middle-income countries following the pandemic, combined with persistent repayment difficulties, hinder growth and fuel instability. In some cases, debt servicing absorbs more public resources than essential services such as education or healthcare. Yet this issue still receives insufficient attention on the global agenda.

Spain will attempt to optimise the application of debt swap schemes through a pragmatic approach focused on sustainable and innovative solutions. These initiatives aim to protect financial stability and mitigate social impacts, especially in countries where such mechanisms can deliver tangible benefits. In addition, Spain has recently approved the inclusion of debt service suspension clauses in its new sovereign loan agreements to low- and lower-middle income countries, allowing for a temporary suspension of debt service payments in the event of natural disasters, health emergencies or food crises. These clauses allow temporary suspension of payments in the event of natural disasters, health emergencies or food crises, offering immediate relief and freeing up public resources to address urgent needs. This approach reflects Spain's commitment to fairer, more responsive debt management and to enabling fast and effective responses in emergencies.

Spain's participation in the G20 will also focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of international debt management frameworks. Spain will promote faster action and better coordination among creditors to reduce delays in reaching debt relief agreements. This includes support for more flexible instruments and calls for the expansion of the Common Framework to include middle-income countries that also face debt sustainability challenges, ensuring that no vulnerable economy is left behind in multilateral debt relief and restructuring efforts.

Spain will assume a more active role in the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing by reinforcing international cooperation both in prevention and enforcement. A strong commitment to aligning domestic regulation with Financial Action Task Force standards will be maintained, ensuring consistency and effectiveness. Within the EU, cooperation will intensify with the new Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism.

Promoting safe, orderly and regular migration

Spain promotes a migration policy that combines humanity and responsibility as a strategic response to Europe's demographic winter. Our economic dynamism and the sustainability of our welfare model partly depend on migration. Together with the productivity gains offered by technology and enhanced support for work-life balance, migration constitutes a key pillar in addressing current demographic challenges. This comprehensive vision allows us to manage migration flows with future generations in mind, safeguarding both economic prosperity and social cohesion. In this context, Spain is developing a labour mobility strategy that represents a shift in how we engage with partner countries on migration. In parallel, we will continue working with our partners to implement circular and stable migration programmes aligned with the specific needs of the Spanish labour market, while making better and more effective use of the talent of those who settle in our country.

European solidarity and fair responsibility sharing are the basis of Spain's migration strategy within the EU. Spain will promote the application of the Pact on Migration and Asylum and will uphold the principle of solidarity as a core value of the European project. Ensuring a fair distribution of responsibilities among all Member States and applying a solidarity mechanism for those countries, such as Spain, that manage the EU's external border and experience particular migratory pressure, serve the interests of the Union as a whole.

Effective management of irregular migration requires close collaboration with countries of origin and transit, especially in our strategic environment. Spain applies a preventive and integrated approach that combines efforts to control irregular flows and combat human trafficking networks with initiatives aimed at fostering economic development and stability in countries of origin. The objective is to address both the immediate symptoms and the root causes of irregular migration. The Spanish model, acknowledged and emulated by the EU and other Member States, is built on the following principles:

- **Shared responsibility:** Spain works with its partners towards mutually beneficial objectives. Tackling irregular migration is of common interest, as origin and transit countries also seek to protect their citizens from human smuggling networks.

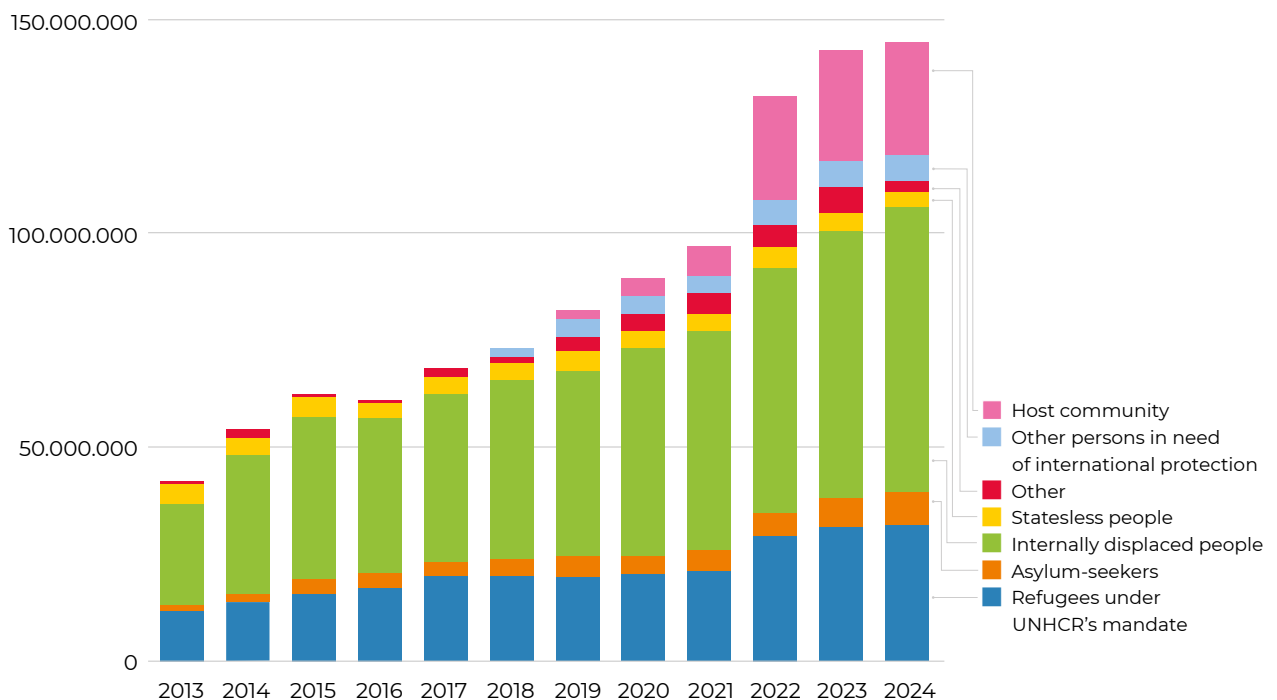
- **Mutual trust:** Built over time through active listening and sustained engagement at all levels.
- **Operational collaboration:** Encompasses joint patrols, shared operational centres, and intelligence exchange to dismantle trafficking and smuggling networks.
- **Sustained cooperation:** Must be long-term and predictable, including material assistance, financial and operational support, and training and capacity building.

Spain will maintain its firm commitment to the recognition and exercise of the right to international protection, paying particular attention to situations of vulnerability and ensuring a dignified and effective humanitarian response. In this regard, Spain will continue to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Forcibly displaced people around the world

Integration and social inclusion are fundamental pillars of Spain's migration policy. As an open and diverse society, Spain recognises those who settle in its territory as an asset that enriches the country. This commitment is strengthened through the Intercultural Integration and Coexistence Plan, along with other initiatives to prevent and combat racism and xenophobia. Spain supports the capacities of local authorities and educational institutions and is stepping up its efforts to tackle hate speech and hate crimes, particularly online. Spain will work to modernise and simplify administrative procedures related to international mobility. The use of digital tools will be expanded, and procedures will be streamlined for foreign workers who respond to the specific needs of the Spanish labour market. Complementary measures will include programmes for social

People forcibly displaced and stateless worldwide



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

and labour market orientation, lifelong learning, and language acquisition, to facilitate migrant integration and ensure that their qualifications are fully recognised and effectively used in the Spanish economy.

Spain will strengthen dialogue with diaspora communities and with Spanish nationals living abroad to foster their participation in economic, social and cultural initiatives. This synergy helps create opportunities for cooperation and business development, while contributing to a more

diverse and inclusive vision of our society. In this regard, Spain will promote the participation of second-generation citizens, who are particularly well-placed to deepen understanding and collaboration between societies of origin and of destination, building cultural bridges and contributing to a model for growth and well-being nourished by diversity as a source of wealth. In addition, the capacity of the Spanish Office of Returning Citizens will be enhanced to provide improved support and guidance to Spanish nationals residing abroad who wish to return.

Championing development cooperation and humanitarian action

In an era marked by a profound crisis of solidarity, the world needs more cooperation, not less. Spain remains firmly committed to international development cooperation as an indispensable tool to eradicate extreme poverty and promote human development. This must be complemented by coherent measures in other areas that encourage investment in the least developed countries. This means acting responsibly in the face of shared challenges and investing in building more stable, safer, more prosperous and more sustainable societies, with a clear impact not only on the societies of our partner countries but also on the well-being of Spanish citizens. When we invest in cooperation, we help prevent the spread of diseases, ensure that instability and emergencies do not escalate into conflict, and protect biodiversity and avoid deforestation. In short, we reduce negative externalities with clear cross-border impacts, to the direct benefit of our society.

Development cooperation, as a broad-based policy, is a central part of Spanish foreign action. It reflects an open and solidarity-based vision of citizenship and the international community in addressing global challenges. Public support is broad: three out of four Spaniards back this policy, as reflected in the broad parliamentary approval of the first development cooperation act in twenty years during the previous legislature. Moreover,

it is a distinctive contribution to European foreign action, with the EU and its Member States jointly providing around 40% of global Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Traditional development efforts increasingly intersect with other areas closely linked to sustainable development, such as trade, private investment, technology and migration governance, which demand a multidimensional approach and greater resource mobilisation and policy coherence. Spain is therefore promoting a renewed cooperation narrative that shifts from a logic of assistance to one of partnership, fostering horizontal relations with our partners based on dialogue, mutual listening and shared objectives. This will be one of the core themes of the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Seville in July 2025.

Spain must consolidate the progress made in recent years, not only by strengthening budgetary commitments to ODA, but also by modernising and reforming its development system. Spanish Cooperation is entering a new phase following a far-reaching reform process marked by the adoption of the Global Solidarity and Sustainable Cooperation Act and its implementing regulations. In the coming years, our action will be structured around the following priorities:

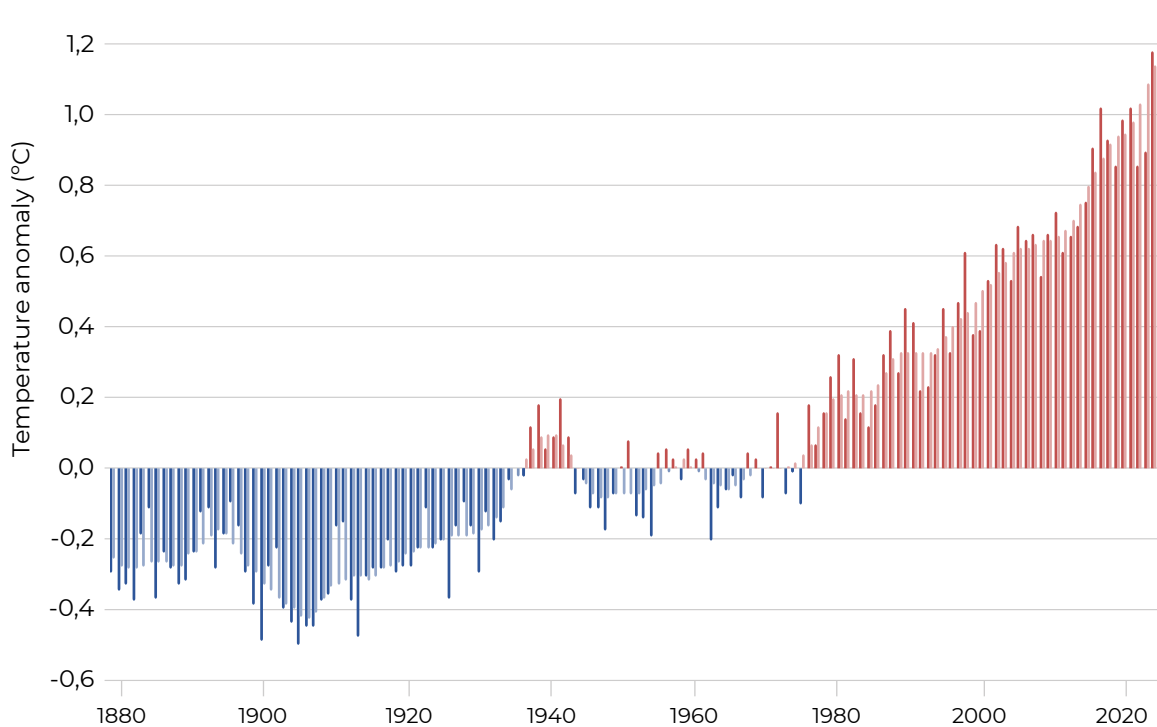
- **Strengthening the cooperation system.** The new act and the 2024–2027 Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation reinforce coherence, alignment and coordination among all development stakeholders, thus enhancing the effectiveness of this public policy. This includes decentralised cooperation (by Autonomous Communities and Local Authorities), universities, development NGOs, trade unions, the private sector and the social economy. The launch of the new Sectoral Conference will significantly enhance coordination and consultation mechanisms. The reform of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), with its new Statute, aims to create a more capable and effective development agency focused on building alliances both within and beyond Spain. The new Aid Worker Statute seeks to strengthen Spanish Cooperation's human capital, whilst the new regulatory framework for development grants seeks to streamline different instruments and calls for proposals. In addition, the new Spanish Sustainable Development Fund (FEDES) will broaden the tools available to leverage additional resources for sustainable development, particularly by fostering synergies with private investment.
- **Advancing towards a cooperation model with a distinct identity.** Spain will prioritise areas in which it brings clear added value and long-standing expertise, such as gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the right to water and sanitation, the strengthening of health systems, peacebuilding and democratic governance, culture, education, and the fight against hunger. Spain will continue to strengthen the contribution of its cooperation to a just ecological transition—with a focus on climate adaptation and mitigation—and to halting biodiversity loss. Capacities will also be enhanced in other priority areas such as digitalisation and migration. Geographically, Spain will maintain its traditional regional focus on Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab world and Africa, with particular emphasis on West Africa, while developing a regional approach to Asia.
- **Increasing funding.** Spain will seek to promote new models of cooperation and partnerships with other actors—civil society, the private sector, academia and multilateral partners—while stepping up participation in global initiatives and, of course, increasing budgetary allocations to meet the legal target of 0.7% of GNI for ODA by 2030. This will require innovative frameworks for mobilising new sources of finance and giving greater prominence to key modalities such as development finance, following the creation of FEDES.
- **Putting humanitarian action at the centre.** Spain is and must remain a recognised humanitarian partner, known for its principles and growing presence in the international humanitarian sphere. With over 300 million people in need of assistance, Spain will seek to meet its commitment to allocate 10% of its ODA to humanitarian action, with special attention to forgotten crises, the defence of international humanitarian law, a feminist approach, and education for emergency preparedness. Rising conflict levels call for increased protection of humanitarian and aid workers.
- **Enhancing Spain's leadership within the EU and as a global development actor:** The decision to hold the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville in July 2025 represents a key opportunity for Spain to consolidate its multilateral profile as a country capable of forging consensus and coalitions for action on development finance. This should be accompanied by concrete initiatives to reduce the estimated SDG \$4 trillion financing gap. Spain will also take an active role in shaping the post-2030 agenda. We will seek to maximise the visibility and impact of our financial contributions, reinforcing Spain's international reputation. Spain will promote the mobilisation of private capital for development through impact investment and encourage Spanish companies to participate in sustainable development projects. Public-private collaboration will be essential to closing the global financing gap.

Addressing the climate and biodiversity emergency

Each year sets a new record for global emissions. Global temperatures have already exceeded the critical threshold of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels on multiple occasions. In this context of climate extremes, increasing competition for natural resources, and accelerated loss of biodiversity, the international community must adopt immediate and coordinated action.

Spain confronts this challenge from a position of leadership, backed by its investment in renewable energies and a firm commitment to a more sustainable, habitable and green planet. It aims to lead in the energy transition, water security, preservation and restoration of biodiversity, environmental management and the fight against desertification.

Global surface temperature relative to the 1951-1980 mean



Source: NASA.

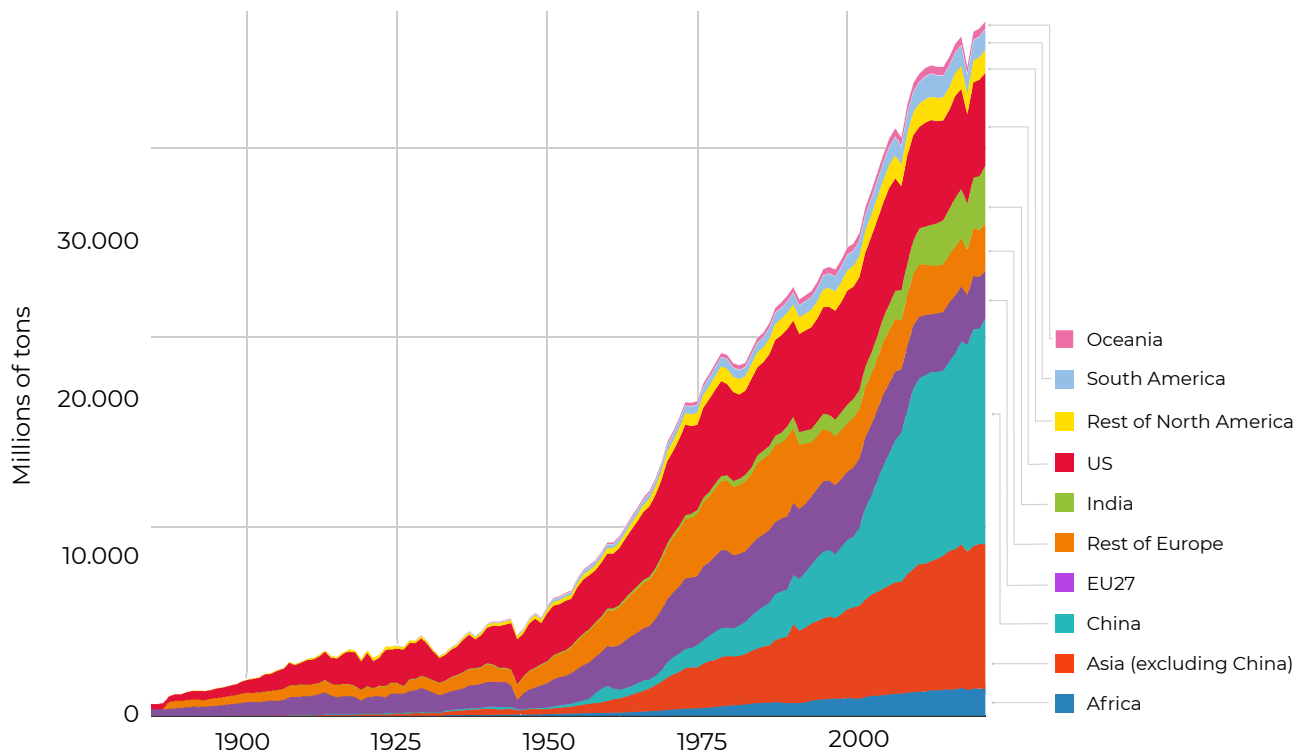
The European Union is one of the economic regions with the lowest emissions in relation to its industries, accounting for about 6% of the world total. European efforts must be continued—including the efforts to stand as an example for other stakeholders—but they are not in themselves sufficient to reverse the rising trend in temperatures. That is why diplomatic efforts to strengthen cooperation, and the commitment of global partners are especially significant. Their success depends on addressing the specific needs of partner countries, especially regarding financing.

Spanish green diplomacy prioritises accelerating the effective implementation of international climate and environmental agreements. Its strategy aims to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement as part of ongoing efforts to advance global decarbonisation. Spain's priority is to meet the goal established in the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to no more than 1.5 °C, focusing action during this critical decade

on the progressive phase-out of fossil fuels and their replacement with renewables, as well as boosting energy efficiency. To this end, Spain is committed to enhancing the climate change adaptation and mitigation capabilities of all countries by mobilising resources in line with the Spanish Strategy for International Climate Finance and by aligning financial flows with low-emission development.

In line with the EU Green Deal Industrial Plan, Spain aims to consolidate its leadership in clean technology, as stated in its Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2023–2030. The strong support for renewable energy has reduced Spain's energy dependency and has led to affordable energy prices for the first time in the country's history. Decarbonisation, supply security and affordability will continue to be Spain's main energy policy commitments. In the coming years, as the geography of industrial investment shifts, opportunities will emerge, driven by lower energy prices resulting from Spain's renewables-driven model.

Annual CO₂ emissions by world region



Source: Global Carbon Budget (2025).

The protection of biodiversity, inland waters and oceans constitutes another pillar of Spain's environmental policy. To that end, it will continue to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which establishes goals and targets for the decade up to 2030. Spain will also promote ocean protection to ensure the effective conservation and management of 30% of marine areas by 2030. To achieve this, it will continue to apply the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), protect the Arctic and the Antarctic, seek progress towards a global agreement on plastics, and support a precautionary pause on deep-sea mining until an appropriate regulatory framework is in place.

Spain is intensifying efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and land degradation. Spanish initiatives focus on combating the smuggling and poaching of wildlife to counter the significant effect these activities have on biodiversity, as well as the social consequences for local communities. In addition, Spain will strengthen its international commitment to combating deforestation and promote sustainable supply chains for agricultural and forestry commodities. In the Mediterranean, Spain will continue to foster collaboration and cooperation for the conservation and restoration of biodiversity, especially in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation

of Nature for the Mediterranean, based in Malaga. Spain will also reinforce efforts to combat desertification and improve drought resilience, recognising both their environmental impacts and their links to poverty, food insecurity and armed conflict.

The International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA), launched with Senegal, exemplifies this commitment to combating desertification. Spain will seek to strengthen its international cooperation on fighting forest fires, especially in Latin America, where solid partnerships and joint initiatives are already in place. Moreover, Spain will seek bilateral agreements regarding natural heritage and biodiversity with neighbouring countries (France, Portugal and Morocco) as well as with countries that are also home to migratory species present in Spain.

In a context marked by the increasing geostrategic interest of the polar regions, Spain's Polar Strategy for 2025-2035 will consolidate the country's commitment to the protection of these spaces. Spain will increase its presence in the polar regions based on its scientific track record, participation in the bodies of the Antarctic Treaty System and role as an Observer State of the Arctic Council. Spain believes that the poles should be areas of peace and security, of environmental protection and of rational management of natural resources, which must be governed at a multilateral level, in accordance with international law.

C. SPAIN THAT STRENGTHENS PEACE AND SECURITY

Adapting to a world marked by rising conflict

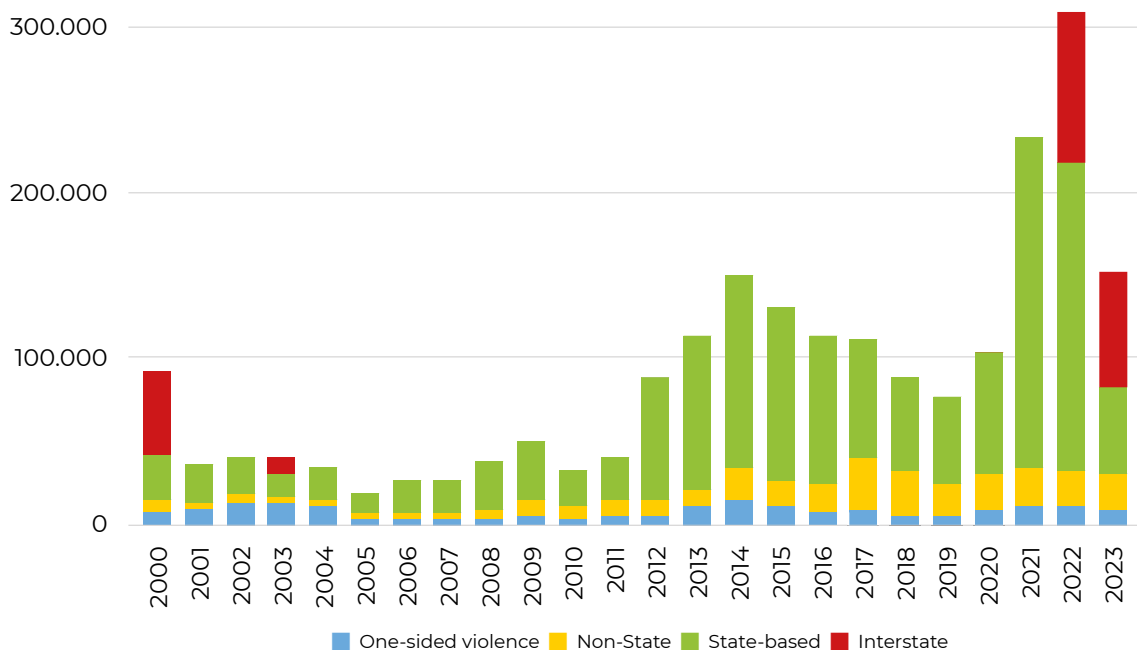
Spain remains firmly committed to a multilateral system that has proven effective and is now more necessary than ever. At the same time, it recognises the need to take steps to adapt to the new international landscape.

The deterioration of global security in recent years has brought an end to the peace dividend that Europe had enjoyed for decades. Not since 1945 has humanity faced such a high number of conflicts. Today, around 50 active conflicts are registered worldwide, with nearly half of all United Nations Member States directly or indirectly involved. The number of victims continues to rise to levels not seen in three decades, while the economic impact of violence is estimated at 13% of

global GDP. This reality is mirrored in record levels of global defence spending and a growing risk of nuclear proliferation. The potential escalation of transnational threats, such as terrorism and organised crime, for which failed States continue to provide fertile ground, will also be a significant concern over the next four years.

Spain's foreign action must be strengthened across all dimensions to better protect its citizens and their livelihoods in a context of growing instability and conflict. This applies not only to diplomacy, defence and public security in the traditional sense, but also to broader concepts, such as promoting economic security and addressing attempts at economic coercion or hybrid threats,

Deaths in armed conflicts



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program.

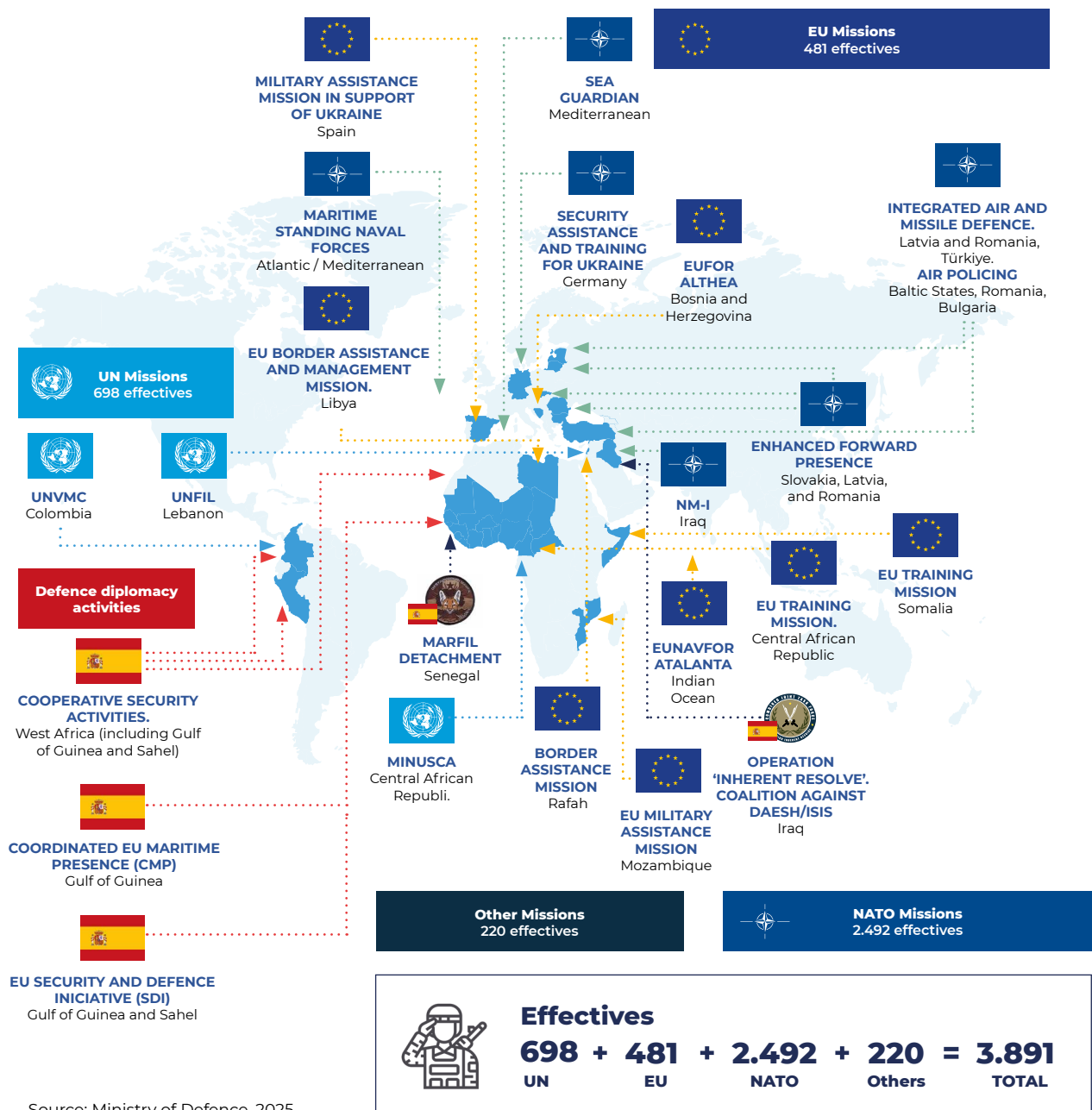
including cyberattacks and disinformation. This commitment entails contributing to joint deployments, advancing coordinated defence policies with our partners, developing diplomatic and security capabilities tailored to the new global context, and seeking effective responses to shared threats.

This reflects a comprehensive concept of security, as set out in Spain's National Security

Strategy. Security is a European and global public good. In light of the current context, both Spain and Europe must not only assume greater responsibility for their own defence but also project this commitment beyond their borders, contributing to collective security and positioning themselves as security providers.

Spain will continue to play an active role in the international, Euro-Atlantic and European

Ongoing international missions in which Spain participates (2025)



Source: Ministry of Defence, 2025.

security architecture, firmly committed to its core principles of solidarity and adherence to the rules-based international order. NATO will remain the primary framework for Spain's contribution to collective deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and the development of partnerships, particularly within the framework of the Alliance's Southern Neighbourhood Action Plan. As part of this effort, Spain must maintain a leading role, both by fostering high-level political dialogue and by supporting the work of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood. Spain will also continue its efforts in the field of practical cooperation, particularly through its contribution to defence capacity-building packages for partner countries, as carried out in 2024. Political dialogue will likewise be strengthened with the partners of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

During this period, Spain will continue to step up investment in security and defence in line with our NATO commitments, and to contribute actively to NATO deployments and EU missions and operations. More importantly, as a firmly committed ally, and due to its political, geographic and economic profile, Spain will continue to assume a substantial share of the collective security burden, reaffirming the indivisible nature of the security and defence of all allies, in line with the Strategic Concept adopted in Madrid.

Given its weight and track record, Spain must take on a central role in the incipient European Defence Union. It will also work to strengthen the strategic relationship between NATO and the EU, grounded in the principles of complementarity, coherence and mutual reinforcement. Spain's Foreign Service, armed forces, law enforcement agencies and other public administrations are actively engaged in defining, planning, and gradually implementing this essential dimension of European integration—long debated, and no longer deferrable.

Spain must also continue to increase its participation in EU security and defence programmes and instruments. The European Peace Facility will be a particular focus, as it offers an opportunity to enhance Spain's contribution to the stability of its strategic environment, while also benefiting from Spain's global vocation. Fully leveraging the opportunities offered by the Regulation establishing the European Defence Industry Programme is another key objective for this period, as is securing significant funding in the next Multiannual Financial Framework to support the security and defence sector. This policy will

generate positive spillover effects in innovation, European strategic autonomy, and the creation of skilled employment, bringing tangible benefits to Spanish society.

Spain has recently launched a National Plan to promote its participation in EU civilian missions. The plan provides for coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and other government departments, with the aim of significantly increasing the deployment of Spanish personnel in these missions over the coming years. These efforts will also strengthen the EU's role as a global security provider.

Spain will maintain its active commitment to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In the challenging context created by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, reaffirming the spirit and principles of the Helsinki Final Act—now marking its fiftieth anniversary—is more important than ever, as Spain did during its chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation in the first quarter of 2025. During the 2025–2028 period, under the leadership of a newly appointed Secretary General, the OSCE's primary objective must be to preserve Europe's arms control framework. Its transparency, information-sharing and confidence-building mechanisms remain essential tools for reinforcing the European security architecture.

The United Nations has a fundamental responsibility to safeguard international peace and security. Spain will maintain a significant participation in UN peacekeeping operations, which have played an essential role over the past 75 years. Spain ranks 25th out of 121 contributing countries in terms of deployed personnel—second among EU Member States—and 12th as a contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget. Increasing the presence of women in deployments remains a core priority. The country also maintains a strong and longstanding commitment to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where it has played a leading role since the outset. Spain will seek unified political support for the renewal of clear and well-defined mandates and will support the establishment of new missions in fragile contexts.

Spain will continue to cultivate bilateral security and defence relations with a growing number of countries and international organisations. These partnerships will focus on areas such as training and experience-sharing, joint exercises, and industrial and technical cooperation. Over the coming years, Spain will deepen collaboration

in specific domains, such as the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation, efforts to combat hybrid campaigns, irregular migration and people smuggling, and the fight against terrorism and organised crime. In this regard, the Defence Cooperation Agreement with the United States remains a cornerstone of Spain's international security engagement. Spain will also seek to promote dialogue and trust-building mechanisms, such as the 5+5 Defence Initiative in the Western Mediterranean, which fosters cooperation based on mutual trust and shared interests.

The next four years will be critical to preventing a new era of proliferation. A political response is required. Strengthening security necessarily involves international mechanisms such as the global architecture for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Spain will maintain its political, technical and financial support for key organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBT), which play a fundamental role in the international non-proliferation framework thanks to their verification and inspection capabilities.

Spain will continue its efforts to combat terrorism and organised crime, preventing the social and political destabilisation these threats generate. This requires addressing the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism, as well as providing support and recognition to victims. Cooperation and solidarity with the countries most affected by this scourge will remain guiding principles of Spain's foreign action. To that end, Spain will uphold its commitments under the UN, the EU and NATO, as well as through initiatives such as the Aqaba Process and participation in operations like the Global Coalition Against Daesh, which have already demonstrated the country's determination to combat these threats.

Continual improvement in threat awareness and early warning management is essential to addressing the wide range of security challenges. Strengthening the National Intelligence Centre and enhancing coordination between national and international intelligence bodies will be crucial to anticipating risks, protecting the population, and delivering effective responses in an evolving threat landscape.

Spain will work to modernise its security and defence capabilities in response to new digital threats linked to AI, such as voice cloning, image manipulation and the spread of increasingly sophisticated fake identities. Efforts will also focus on increasing resilience against the growing number of attacks on connected devices—from autonomous vehicles to critical infrastructure such as hydroelectric dams—as well as the rise in cyber-crime. The development of resilient, secure and interoperable digital public infrastructure (DPI) is the backbone of Spain's digital transformation. A monitoring and protection plan for maritime infrastructure, particularly subsea assets, will be adopted as part of this effort. AI will also play a growing role in emergency management in the event of natural disasters or terrorist attacks, supporting the design of response strategies.

Strengthening Spain's capacity to engage effectively in the field of international sanctions will be a priority. The scope and application of restrictive measures are increasing significantly. One of the main objectives will be the creation of a dedicated Sanctions Unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, with the rank of Deputy Directorate-General. This unit will be reinforced through appropriate mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination and information-sharing, enabling Spain to contribute more actively to the international processes of adopting and monitoring such measures. This step will be essential in advancing towards a dedicated regulatory framework. Spain will continue to support a reasonable and proportionate use of sanctions as a means of discouraging unlawful conduct, while safeguarding their selective and exceptional character.

Climate change stands out as a cross-cutting challenge with profound implications for security and defence. Spain will continue to implement the measures set out in the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the Ministry of Defence's strategy on this issue, while fostering cooperation between the armed forces and civilian assets to respond to emergencies both at home and abroad. As part of this commitment, Spain will continue to provide support in the event of disasters beyond its borders, including through the deployment of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) and the Spanish Technical Aid and Response Team (START), an emergency medical team that can be deployed within 72 hours to any part of the world affected by a humanitarian emergency.

UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF SPAIN'S DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL BASE

The defence sector is crucial to our economic security and must therefore be integrated more fully into our industrial policy. Spain is one of the world's highest-ranking countries for defence industry exports, but the profound shift in the sector at the European and international levels, and the need to overcome the atomisation of the industry in Spain, call for multiple adjustments over the coming years. The new panorama is defined by a rise in global defence spending, the emergence of new industry players, and technological advances that are changing the very nature of warfare. This situation calls for Spain to urgently adapt our defence industry and to strengthen our industrial and technological fabric, fostering interoperability and synergies with the technology and space sectors. We will also adopt measures to increase the size and competitiveness of our companies and their access to economies of scale, and to facilitate their participation in EU projects and international tenders. Spain will also seek medium and long-term spending commitments that facilitate investment and innovation, to foster the development of the sector, its technological transformation and the creation of high-quality jobs. All these efforts will be in line with the European Defence Industrial Strategy.

The Industrial and Technological Plan for Security and Defence will be implemented over the next few years. This plan will channel our investment efforts, as well as our public-private collaboration programmes, to ensure that Spain takes a leap forward in technology and industry. This is a commitment to innovation and to the development of dual-use technologies for the creation of new companies and the scaling-up of local SMEs and start-ups. These efforts will facilitate technological advances in other sectors, in line with the objective of improving our competitiveness, and increase supply chain resilience. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Enterprise and the Ministry of Industry and Tourism will participate in a committee created to explore the foreign policy dimension of the Spanish defence sector, meeting regularly to define and exercise bona fide Spanish diplomacy on behalf of the defence sector.

Spain will seek consolidated status as a key stakeholder in the European space sector, increasing our participation in the European Space Agency, the EU Space Programme and EU missions. We will also lend our support to joint space projects and to facilitate the entry of Spanish companies into foreign markets, strengthening the technological and industrial fabric of the Spanish space sector.

Consistency and coherence in building peace

Spain will continue to defend the universal and consistent application of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as shown by its positions on Ukraine, the Middle East and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The principle of prohibiting the use of force and respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States constitutes the cornerstone of the international order that has substantially reduced the number of inter-State wars over the past several decades, while the number of UN Member States has simultaneously increased.

The legitimacy of international law rests on its universal application. Inconsistencies and double standards in the defence of legality undermine the trust of our partners and cast doubt on our capacity and that of our allies to uphold existing legal frameworks, to prevent further infractions and to reach new agreements, ultimately weakening our international credibility and effectiveness.

Combating impunity for the most serious crimes constitutes the main deterrent against future offences. Drawing on our own experience and historical memory, Spain will continue to campaign against impunity and to promote reparation for victims in all circumstances and conflicts. This commitment to international justice is reflected in its support for international courts, in particular through participation in key cases brought before the International Court of Justice and sustained backing for the International Criminal Court in its essential role of upholding the universal application of international law as the foundation for a just and lasting peace. Spain will continue to work with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Council of Europe, where it will continue to lead initiatives to strengthen international justice and defend democratic values. In addition, it will contribute actively to the work of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, support the establishment of a Claims Commission and continue to promote the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

Spain's foreign action aims to build peace as a guarantee of security. Its geographic location, role as a European and Atlantic partner, international

standing and capacity for dialogue in diverse contexts place the country in a privileged position to fulfil this task. With this objective in mind, Spain seeks to consolidate a stronger structure for preventive diplomacy and peace promotion in especially complex crisis and tension scenarios, in line with its Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy. The growing proliferation of conflicts demands that we step up international and national efforts in mediation and Track Two diplomacy, both in conflict and post-conflict situations and in fragile settings. To this end, Spain will relaunch the activities of the Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax) and foster collaboration with partners involved in mediation efforts.

Peacebuilding involves many interlinked efforts across the short, medium and long term, on which Spain will continue to focus. Conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms will be reinforced, and support will be provided for political transitions, transitional justice, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes, and security sector reform. Development cooperation will serve as a key instrument for strengthening fragile States, stabilising post-conflict environments and supporting their economic reintegration.

Spain will continue to apply a human security approach that places people at the centre of its foreign action, attaching the utmost importance to the defence of international humanitarian law in all circumstances and conflicts. In line with this objective, the Spanish armed forces will prioritise the protection of civilian populations in overseas operations, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women and children. We will promote a model for our presence in other countries that is based on respect for local socio-cultural contexts and safeguards children's rights. We will also maintain our support for the World Food Programme and the Safe Schools Initiative and champion a key role for women in peacebuilding through the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Respect for international humanitarian law is a fundamental priority for Spain, especially regarding the prohibition of certain types of weapons,

and we will therefore maintain our commitment to and support for international agreements in this sphere. Spain will also play a key role in international efforts to ensure that military applications of new technologies are always in compliance with international humanitarian law. In this context, Spain will continue to support the work of the United Nations General Assembly on the regulation of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and to organise, together with the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) Summits.

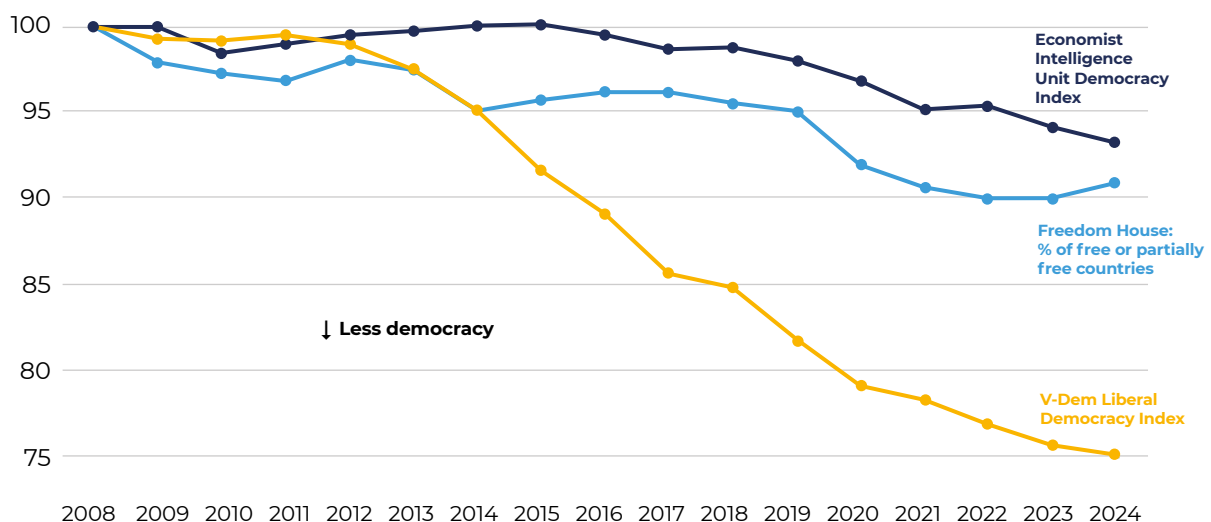
We need to equip ourselves with national instruments, such as an up-to-date and strengthened export control system, and to continue collaborating with other countries in existing export control regimes, primarily the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Spain will also actively participate in ongoing international processes aimed at regulating transfers of emerging and disruptive technologies, through tools such as strategic export controls and research security mechanisms.

Bolstering our democratic resilience

Growing social polarisation and the global decline of democracy stem from deep-rooted causes and are being amplified by multiple factors.

In an age of unprecedented connectivity, we find ourselves paradoxically divided. Digitalisation has expanded civic participation across all areas

Global democratic indexes



2008=100

Own elaboration after original sources. The V-Dem data is weighted by population.

of social and political life and helped democratise access to information, but it has also multiplied the risks of manipulation and social polarisation. Algorithmic bias, erosion of privacy, and the rise in hybrid strategies of disinformation, manipulation, Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), and cyberattacks are not merely technical challenges—they are threats to social cohesion and to the very integrity of democratic institutions and processes. On top of this, the emergence of generative AI, while holding enormous positive potential, can also distort reality and fuel polarisation through the creation of false content. All these factors put our social fabric at risk and make us more vulnerable to radicalisation, hate speech, and foreign interference.

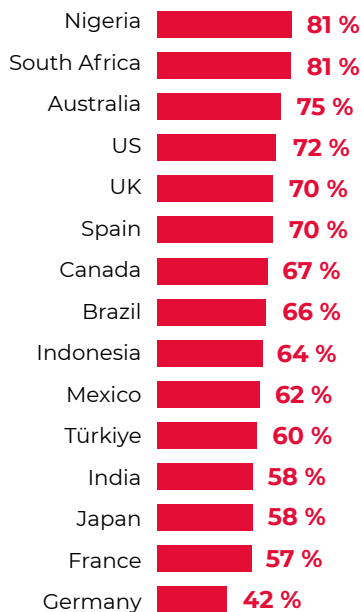
Open societies face vulnerability arising from a strategic asymmetry between open and closed regimes. The latter have succeeded in exerting tight control over their digital spaces, enabling new forms of influence through operations that

are often centralised, cost-effective, and highly effective. Some actors seek to exploit the diversity, openness and pluralism of democracies, perceiving these very strengths as a kind of geopolitical Achilles' heel. Through hybrid strategies involving media manipulation, the spread of narratives about Europe's decline, and disinformation on issues such as climate change and migration, they aim to erode public trust in institutions and fuel extremism, ultimately legitimising authoritarian models and reshaping the international order to their advantage.

We cannot remain passive while such actors attempt to hack into our open societies: we must learn to defend ourselves without compromising our values. In a context of growing technological geopoliticisation and faced with the risks posed by deregulation and regulatory fragmentation, Spain advocates for greater transparency, neutrality and accountability on the part of digital platforms. Anonymity cannot mean impunity for

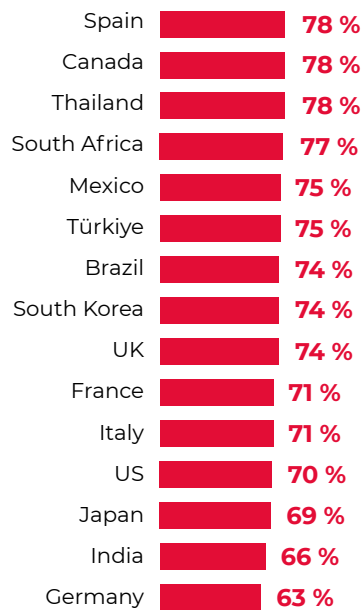
Disinformation: a global concern

Concerned about what is real and what is fake when it comes to news online. % concerned



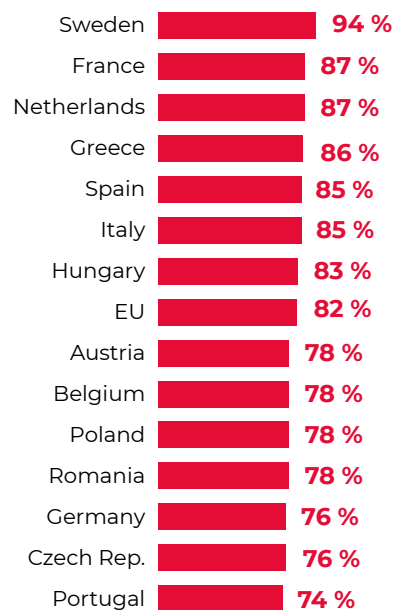
Source: Digital News Report 2024. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

AI is making it easier to generate very realistic fake news stories and images. % concerned



Source: Global views on AI and disinformation, 2023. IPSOS.

Disinformation is a problem to democracy. % concerned



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 102, 2024. European Commission.

those who commit crimes, nor should it facilitate identity theft and illicit or fraudulent practices. Progress is also needed in ensuring greater algorithmic transparency. Platforms and those who manage them must take responsibility for the adverse effects of their services and behaviour. Together with public stakeholders, digital platforms must collaborate to counter operations of foreign influence and disinformation, prioritising the protection of vulnerable groups against hate speech and harassment. These risks will be addressed at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

Strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat disinformation is a clear priority. In addition to the tools developed at the EU and national levels, Spain will continue to enhance the smooth exchange of information, operational cooperation for early warnings about incidents, and the development and deployment of response tools, including national rapid response teams specialised in hybrid threats. Spanish-speaking countries share a common responsibility to prevent and combat this threat, and Spain will therefore continue to promote new mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this area. Spain will promote the role of the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency, headquartered in Seville. We will also continue to promote the initiative titled *In Defence of Democracy. Fighting against Extremism*, launched jointly with the Presidents of Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay.

Bolstering internal cohesion

Social and territorial cohesion provides legitimacy and stability to countries and institutions alike, constituting the foundation of every prosperous and inclusive society. In an increasingly fragmented and conflict-driven international landscape, in which competitiveness and security concerns take centre stage, it is essential not to lose sight of the importance of social and territorial cohesion. A foreign policy that overlooks this dimension risks

weakening its own capacity for action. Spain believes that foreign policy begins at home. For this reason, we advocate for a renewed social commitment to support those who have lost the most and benefited the least from the major transformations of our society, through active redistribution policies and a more inclusive model of growth that reinforces support for territories affected by demographic decline.

Mutual understanding among Europeans is also essential to the internal cohesion of the European political project. Education must contribute to the consolidation of shared European values, including through the integration of the EU into school curricula. Spain will also support the development of the European Education Area, as well as efforts to strengthen skills within the education sector, notably through continued support for the Erasmus+ programme.

The demographic challenge is emerging as one of the most pressing issues of our time. The concentration of development in urban and financial centres, combined with birth rates far below replacement levels in Spain, Europe and other regions of the world, is leading to population ageing and rural depopulation, giving rise to so-called geographies of discontent. Public administrations cannot remain mere spectators to these trends. This is why the Government of Spain has prioritised public policies to address the demographic challenge in recent years. Strengthening territorial cohesion requires generating new sources of growth and opportunity through the decentralisation of public investment, the promotion of high value added local economic projects, and the guarantee of efficient connectivity. International action in multilateral forums must be aligned with the domestic social agenda, promoting a fairer and more sustainable model of globalisation. In addition, the transition towards a decarbonised economy can act as a key driver for diversifying the economic structure, boosting employment and revitalising local economies.

PART II:
SPAIN IN THE
WORLD



As a Euro-Atlantic and Mediterranean power, Spain holds a privileged geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Africa. This position calls for active engagement in our strategic environment, given the close ties that bind us to the countries in this space and our particular sensitivity to political and economic changes, as well as to potential crises that may arise within it.

At the same time, over the past decades, Spain has built a network of bilateral relations which, drawing on its values and national assets, goes beyond its broader neighbourhood and demonstrates a genuine capacity for dialogue with all regions of the world.

SPAIN'S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Spain's geographical situation is unique within the European context, as it lies at the southwestern edge of the continent, where the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Africa converge. At less than 4,000 kilometres from the Iberian Peninsula, entrenched conflicts and simmering tensions persist from Ukraine to the Middle East, with the Sahel facing growing sources of instability, the region with the highest concentration of terrorist attacks in the world. Moreover, this area includes Nigeria and Algeria, two of Spain's main energy suppliers. This geographical situation is of particular importance in today's world where strategic competition is intensifying. Ceuta, Melilla, the Canary Islands, and Andalusia are particularly exposed due to their location within Spain.

Crises arising in our strategic environment have a direct impact on Spain's stability and security, as well as on the well-being of our population. For instance, the crisis in Libya destabilised the Sahel. Beyond the evident humanitarian consequences of population displacement, it intensified migratory pressure along our coastline and created fertile ground for terrorism and illicit trafficking networks that exploit such instability. The crisis in Syria, which led large numbers of people to seek asylum in Europe, triggered a decisive political upheaval that was crucial to the rise of Eurosceptic and ultranationalist forces. At the other extreme, Russia's aggression against Ukraine forced over 200,000 Ukrainians to seek refuge in our country and sparked an energy crisis that fuelled inflation with a direct impact on our citizens, as well as a food crisis that particularly affected our neighbourhood.

Therefore, Spain will maintain a policy of active bilateral engagement in our strategic environment, leveraging our political, economic, and development instruments to promote stability, growth,

and progress. This approach will be complemented by constructive participation in the shaping of EU policies concerning the region and by support for those States requesting assistance on matters of security, governance and capacity-building. This priority will translate into a greater number of official trips and visits, stronger political dialogue, and deeper involvement in responding to the crises that may arise in our strategic environment, both from a political perspective and in terms of humanitarian response, reconstruction, and development. Spain will continue to champion development cooperation as a strategic tool, channelling more resources towards humanitarian action to address the consequences of conflicts. This commitment is reflected in our comprehensive support for Ukraine, our support for the two-State solution and recognition of the State of Palestine, the convening of high-level meetings with Mauritania, the Strategic Partnership with Egypt, support for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and deployments to Lebanon and Türkiye.

Our foreign policy must capture the diversity and complexity of the countries that surround us, including their strengths and the opportunities they offer. Accordingly, apart from the specific actions described elsewhere in this Strategy, Spain aims to achieve universal diplomatic deployment in its strategic environment.

Through this universal deployment we will adapt our diplomatic network to the current international landscape, taking on a more decisive role in our immediate neighbourhood. To this end, we will enhance our on-the-ground intelligence and resources to improve the management of shared challenges and make the most of the opportunities offered by the economic and social transformations of our neighbourhood.

We must also promote deeper Spanish expertise, especially in academia and private-sector circles, on the political, economic, and social realities of our strategic environment. We will continue to move forward with this effort, for example, through the calls for research proposals launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and through its collaboration and outreach with think tanks and newly created institutions, such as the Advisory Council for Africa.

MORE EUROPE BEYOND THE EU

In the European Union's immediate neighbourhood, particular attention should be paid to our relations with several countries of great strategic importance for Europe.

Spain remains committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. This commitment, backed by broad social and political consensus, has been deployed since 2022 on an unprecedented scale through diplomatic, military, humanitarian, economic, financial, cultural, and legal support actions. This ranges from the largest package in Spanish Cooperation's history to the reception of more than 200,000 displaced Ukrainians, as well as delivery of military materiel and training of approximately 7,000 Ukrainian military personnel within the framework of the EUMAM-UA mission. In 2025, Spain will adopt a new €1 billion military assistance package within the framework of the Bilateral Security and Defence Agreement, which is in addition to the more than €1 billion granted in 2024. Spain has already committed more than €400 million in financial assistance for reconstruction.

Spain's comprehensive support for Ukraine has materialised through its unwavering commitment to the country's accession to the European Union; a process initiated in 2023, under the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and seen as a key element in safeguarding Ukraine's status as a free sovereign State, firmly anchored within the European family. Spain will accompany Ukraine in the reform process it must undertake as part of the accession path.

Human, economic, and historical ties, along with significant strategic capabilities, make the United Kingdom a natural ally and partner for Europe, which maintains close human and economic relations with Spain. In fact, the United Kingdom is Spain's third global investor, the second largest destination for Spanish foreign investment, and the leading global source of tourists visiting Spain. The conclusion of a comprehensive, pragmatic, and balanced agreement on Gibraltar will allow us to unlock the full potential of this close relationship.

The stability and development of the Western Balkans is part of our vision for a united and prosperous Europe. Spain will support the region's reform processes by accompanying them on their path towards the European Union, while pursuing more robust bilateral relations in the political, economic, and social spheres. The goal is for the Balkan States to continue to view Spain as a reliable partner and a country of reference.

Türkiye is a candidate country for EU accession with which we maintain an intense relationship within the framework of NATO, and as a key

actor in the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Middle East. This relationship is structured around regular high-level meetings and initiatives such as the co-sponsorship of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations.

We will encourage cooperation with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), notably economic and scientific cooperation and exchanges between civil societies. Within this association, **Norway** stands out as a country with which we share values, firmly committed to ODA, and with which we have closely collaborated on the Middle East. Spain will continue to strengthen cooperation with **Iceland**. The upcoming opening of an Icelandic embassy in Spain marks a milestone in our bilateral relations.

Spain will continue to support Moldova, as a democratic country, in its accession to the EU and in the face of Russian coercion, reaffirming an unwavering commitment to the country's territorial integrity. At the same time, we will maintain a high level of scrutiny regarding the necessary reforms in **Georgia**, in accordance with its obligations as a candidate State.

Relations with Russia remain strongly conditioned by its aggression against Ukraine, its actions against its neighbours, and its broader impact on European security, which have led to the imposition of sanctions by the EU and the severing of all dialogue with Russian authorities. Regarding **Belarus**, Spain will continue to demand that the civil and political rights of the opposition and civil society be respected. We will also continue to back the restrictive measures adopted by the EU in response to the support shown by the Government of Belarus for the violations of international law committed by Russia.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PARTNERS FOR A SHARED AGENDA

Latin America is a constant presence in Spain's identity and foreign action. In recent years, Spain has placed Latin America at the centre of the European agenda. The first EU-CELAC Summit in eight years was held during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023, and Spain was steadfast in its efforts to secure the conclusion of the EU-MERCOSUR Agreement, while also maintaining an intense bilateral agenda.

Three million Latin Americans live in Spain. In turn, more than one and a half million Spaniards reside in Latin America. From a European

perspective, approximately 6 million Europeans live in Latin America, and approximately 7 million Latin Americans reside in Europe. The contribution of these migrant communities to cultural richness and shared prosperity is a valuable asset that we will continue to foster and build upon. The official visits of the President of the Government to Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, as well as the official visits to Spain by the Presidents of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Paraguay over the last two years, reflect the political importance we attach to these close relations.

Spain aims to strengthen the Ibero-American space further. The Thirtieth Summit of the Ibero-American Community of Nations, to be held in Spain in 2026, will provide an opportunity to reinforce its action. We will hold consultations with the countries of the region, Ibero-American bodies and civil society with the aim of consolidating Ibero-American structures and fostering a consistent, united voice within multilateral discussions and forums.

In the current international context, Latin America, Spain, and Europe share interests and values that constitute a solid foundation for closer political and economic cooperation. Spain, together with Latin America and the Caribbean, will continue to promote democracy, human rights, and gender equality, and to cooperate in defending the rights of indigenous peoples and people of African descent. In accordance with these values, Spain has received more than 150,000 Venezuelans and granted Spanish nationality to Nicaraguans deprived of their citizenship.

Spain will continue working to strengthen EU-Latin America relations, promoting EU-CELAC Summits and their follow-up mechanisms, such as the ministerial meeting held on the sidelines of the session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Cultural, scientific, educational, and business ties form the foundation of bi-regional cooperation. We will support the implementation of the EU's Global Gateway Investment Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, which foresees investments of €45 billion by 2027, including €9.4 billion committed by Spain, as well as the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, aimed at establishing a digital regulatory framework aligned with democratic values and respect for fundamental rights. Spain will continue efforts to secure the entry into force of the EU-MERCOSUR Agreement and the EU-Mexico Global Agreement. We will work to ensure the effective implementation of the agreements signed with Chile, and to fully capitalise on the free trade

agreements already in force with Central America, the countries of the Andean Community, and the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM), for the benefit of all parties.

Strengthening bilateral and subregional cooperation

All countries in Latin America are equally important to Spain, and we will intensify our political, economic, cultural dialogue, and cooperation ties with all of them, beginning with our strategic partners, such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

Over the next few years, we will strive to maximise the potential of our bilateral relations. In February 2025, Spain held the first meeting of the Bilateral Standing Commission with Brazil, raising the level of our relations to biennial summits. We will strengthen dialogue with Mexico at all levels, including through the Binational Commission to be held in 2025. We will also hold a meeting of the High-Level Commission with Colombia in 2025 and intensify efforts to fully develop our renewed strategic partnership with Chile. We will also seek to strengthen our ties with other key South American countries, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Central America—a diverse region whose countries face common challenges such as insecurity, large migration flows, and a lack of institutional capacity—is of particular interest to Spain. We will provide support to strengthen democratic institutions, uphold the rule of law and human rights, and promote sustainable economic growth and development in the region, notably in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama.

In the Caribbean, Spain will continue to deepen relations with the Dominican Republic and enhance its role in the region. We will also strive to ensure that the multidimensional crisis in Haiti does not destabilise the region. There are considerable opportunities to build closer ties with the English-speaking Caribbean—especially Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana.

Spain will pay close attention to the situation in Cuba, maintaining our commitment to the Cuban people, including with respect to human rights and the creation of spaces for dialogue, seeking to play a constructive and significant role. In the case of **Venezuela**, Spain will continue to spearhead discussion within the EU aimed at finding a

solution to the country's political crisis, encouraging dialogue among the Venezuelan people themselves. In **Nicaragua**, we will maintain our humanitarian commitment and support for democratic opposition and respect for institutional legitimacy.

We will continue working on the preservation and promotion of Ibero-American cultural heritage alongside the countries of the region, especially Mexico, our partner in the 2026 edition of the international tourism fair FITUR, as well as Colombia and Bolivia, in connection with their bicentennial commemorations of independence. We will also continue to cooperate in the protection of biodiversity and the environment (for example, with Brazil, which is hosting the 2025 UN Climate Change Conference [COP 30], and with Colombia and Chile), and in the fight against violent and organised crime, building on the modern comprehensive agreements already in force to combat this threat, and working to expand them to other countries. Spain maintains its commitment to and political support for the Colombian peace process.

Spain remains strongly committed to strengthening regional integration (the Central American Integration System-SICA, the Caribbean Community-CARICOM, and MERCOSUR). As the first State to have been granted observer status in the Organization of American States, Spain will strengthen its presence within the organisation and in its human rights bodies (the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights), in addition to increasing its contribution to electoral observation efforts.

We will continue our solidarity-based engagement in Latin America. We will further consolidate the role of Spanish Cooperation, whose more than 30 years of work in the region have enabled an additional 10% of the population of Haiti and 5% of the population of Bolivia to gain access to water and sanitation. To this end, Spain will conclude specific agreements with each country, such as those signed with Paraguay (Country Partnership Framework) and Uruguay (Advanced Cooperation Agreement, which facilitates joint triangular cooperation activities).

Spain will pursue greater consistency and co-ordination among Ibero-American countries in the international promotion of the Spanish language, aiming to foster talent and encourage its use in multilateral diplomacy, international justice, science and technology. In recent years, Spanish has been adopted as an official language

at the Hague Conference on Private International Law, an achievement reinforced by the signing of 11 agreements with Ibero-American countries to promote the use of Spanish in diplomacy and within international organisations. Together with our partners, we will adopt practical mechanisms to consolidate the presence of Spanish in AI and the media, intensifying cooperation to combat disinformation. Spain will continue to advance the promotion of the Spanish language in Brazil through its extensive Instituto Cervantes network, which, with its eight centres, has more than any other country in the world.

Opportunities for growth and mutual benefit

Latin America is a key region for Spain's prosperity. It was the first region targeted by Spanish companies in their internationalisation efforts, driven by deep-rooted human and cultural ties. Spain now plays a particularly prominent role: in 2023, Spain became Latin America's second largest single-country investor, representing 11% of total investment and contributing 52% of all European investment in the region. Our commitment is indisputable: a third of Spanish FDI flows to Latin America and the Caribbean. In the opposite direction, Latin American investment in Spain amounts to almost €70 billion, making the region the fourth-largest investor in Spain, and Mexico the leading middle-income country investor in our country.

The European Union, for its part, is the region's third largest trading partner, with total trade amounting to almost €300 billion, and is also its main provider of development cooperation. This commitment goes beyond trade: the EU remains Latin America's leading regional investor, with FDI stock of approximately €700 billion, generating almost 3 million local jobs and exceeding the combined investment from China, Japan, Russia, and India. This positioning is especially relevant given that the economies of Latin America and the EU are highly complementary. This positive interdependence can serve as a foundation for developing more secure, more diversified and more sustainable value chains in sectors such as energy, the digital sphere, critical raw materials, biotechnology, and food.

Latin America and the Caribbean and the EU also have an opportunity to combine their efforts in the multilateral sphere to defend their shared interests. With 14% of the world population, 22% of global GDP, and 60 votes in the United Nations, we have a significant capacity to

influence the search for solutions to global challenges. Greater collaboration will be sought in areas such as tax cooperation, financing for the development of middle-income countries, protection of biodiversity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as reform of the multilateral system to make it more inclusive. We will also continue working together to promote regular migration.

THE MAGHREB AND THE MIDDLE EAST: COMMITTED TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Maghreb, the Mediterranean and the Middle East form one of the regions where global transformations—including those outlined in the first part of this Strategy—are most visibly unfolding. Tensions and upheavals reached a tipping point in mid-2024, threatening to draw the Eastern Mediterranean into an unprecedented regional conflict with unpredictable consequences.

Spain must maintain the initiative and continue to pursue a clear and robust line of action in close coordination with our partners and allies. In the context of the EU, Spain will actively contribute to the design and implementation of the Pact for the Mediterranean, an instrument that must give renewed impetus to the EU's Mediterranean policy.

We will continue working in the Mediterranean to reinforce our regional partnership and the institutions that embody it: the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation. Coinciding with the thirtieth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the year 2025 offers a unique opportunity to place the Mediterranean and regional integration at the heart of the European and regional agendas. Spain will seek to ensure that the reform of the Union for the Mediterranean is successful, delivering a modernised Union with greater resources, capable of addressing current challenges through regional cooperation, and with the added value of being the only organisation whose member states include both Israel and the Arab countries of the Mediterranean.

Spain will endeavour to forge and expand partnerships with key countries and stakeholders in the region. In addition to our existing partnerships with the Maghreb and, more recently, the Strategic Dialogue with Qatar and the Strategic Partnership with Egypt, Spain is deepening relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, as well as with Jordan. On a regional scale, Spain remains committed

to strengthening the Mediterranean partnership and the institutions that represent it.

Looking to our closest neighbourhood, for Spain, with territory in North Africa and coasts that run parallel to the shores of the Maghreb, our foreign policy regarding the Maghreb is a key priority. Our neighbours' prosperity and stability are our own, and for Spain, the priority over the coming years must be to maintain the best possible relations with our closest neighbours. We will maximise the potential of our bilateral relations and stand firm in our support for dialogue and cooperation initiatives that promote their political and socio-economic integration and stability.

Bilateral relations with Morocco are closer than ever, with strengthened cooperation in all areas, fostered through high-level meetings. Spain will continue to pursue a mutually beneficial relationship with **Algeria** based on our close ties and on the long-standing friendship between our peoples. As regards **Mauritania**, the growing number of official visits and the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourhood, and Cooperation reflect the renewed vitality of our bilateral cooperation; the first high-level meeting in 2025 will demonstrate our shared willingness to build a close partnership founded on common interests and objectives. **Tunisia** and **Libya** will continue to be important partners, both bilaterally and from a broader European and regional perspective. Spain also remains committed to the 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean in all its different dimensions.

Our country will continue to champion peace, stability, dialogue and respect for the international order in the region. The wave of violence unleashed by the atrocious terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023 underscored the urgent need to radically rethink the current approach—centred on the mere management of a stalled peace process—and to act in support of peace and justice in the Middle East through the implementation of the Two-State Solution. It was this commitment that led to Spain's recognition of the State of Palestine in May 2024—together with other partners—and to the subsequent launch of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The international peace conference held on Spain's initiative must give rise to specific and irreversible actions to establish a Palestinian State that can live side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. A realistic, viable, and contiguous Palestinian State founded on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Such an outcome will only be achievable through an end to

the Israeli occupation and settlements, which are illegal under international law.

Spain must remain resolute in its commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East. We must mobilise all available instruments to deliver a firm collective response to the humanitarian catastrophe, ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, and support stabilisation and reconstruction efforts. Spain will participate actively in all global and regional forums, while also promoting Euro-Arab dialogue. Spain remains committed to the United Nations, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to UNIFIL (Lebanon), to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representatives, and to EU and NATO missions and operations.

Spain will continue to forge and expand partnerships with the key countries and actors in the region. In addition to existing partnerships with the **Maghreb**—and more recently the Strategic Dialogue with **Qatar** and Strategic Partnerships with **Egypt** and **Jordan**—Spain is also strengthening relations with **Saudi Arabia** and other **Gulf States**.

Similarly, Spain will support **Lebanon** in its stabilisation and recovery, encourage an inclusive transition in **Syria** that contributes to peace and reconstruction and maintain its commitment to the security and stabilisation of **Iraq**.

With the adoption of the Spain-Africa Strategy 2025–2028, Spain has broadened its vision of North Africa to encompass a pan-African perspective. The Mediterranean is our natural space for development, international outreach, and engagement with the world—a gateway to our sub-Saharan neighbourhood. It is a shared space, where socio-economic, human, political and security dynamics converge within a continental dimension that includes the whole of Africa and the Middle East. Spain is already exploring opportunities for cooperation and coordination with key partners in the region, such as Egypt.

At the regional level, Spain remains committed to deepening both its bilateral relations and those of the EU with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States. Spain's ambition is to promote a comprehensive and integrated vision, in which the challenges facing the EU's Southern Neighbourhood are addressed jointly and in connection with sub-Saharan Africa.

STRENGTHENING ENDURING TIES WITH NORTH AMERICA

The importance of transatlantic relations in our foreign action is due to not only to the political, economic, and demographic significance of the **United States and Canada**, but also to their status as **NATO allies and strategic partners of the EU**. Spain shares deep ties and democratic values with both countries.

The relationship with the United States has been a priority in Spanish foreign action in recent years and is founded on shared values. This is reflected in key developments such as the 2022 presidential visit and the adoption of the first Joint Declaration between the two countries in 20 years, cooperation on the evacuation from Afghanistan, the reception of Nicaraguan citizens expelled from their country in coordination with US authorities, and the expansion of joint-use military bases.

The United States of America, a natural ally of Europe since the second half of the twentieth century, has recently entered a new political era in which transatlantic relations are moving into a new phase. Spain is committed to maintaining the closest possible relations with the United States based on dialogue and mutual benefit.

Spain remains committed to a favourable framework for transatlantic trade and investments flowing in both directions, especially in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and technology. We will seek to capitalise on the fact that the United States is the leading foreign investor in Spain and the top destination for Spanish investment abroad, with nearly 800 Spanish companies generating tens of thousands of jobs across the US. Spain remains committed to open, rules-based economic relations between the EU and the United States.

In security and defence, strong cooperation based on the 1988 Agreement constitutes an essential element of the strategic dimension of Spain's foreign policy and contributes to the US commitment to Euro-Atlantic security.

Through instruments such as the annual meetings held by the Fundación Consejo España-EE.UU. and its counterpart, the US-Spain Council, the non-profit organisation Spanish Scientists in the United States, and think tanks on both sides of the Atlantic, Spain will continue to foster and expand the dense network of relations among civil societies, companies, and scientific

and academic institutions, especially within the Hispanic community in the US. The 250th anniversary of US independence, to be commemorated in 2026, offers a symbolic opportunity to highlight Spain's contribution to that historic process.

For its part, Canada is a committed NATO Ally and a strategic EU partner with which Spain shares fundamental values and interests. Building on the Joint Declaration signed in 2022, Spain-Canada relations have reached an unprecedented intensity.

We will continue to hold annual high-level political consultations to coordinate efforts and establish new shared objectives, while also deepening cooperation on security and defence. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU is supporting the growth of bilateral trade. Spanish companies are active in Canada's engineering, transport, and energy sectors and will continue to play a key role in our bilateral relations. The opportunities offered by the Youth Mobility Agreement and the presence of highly skilled Spanish researchers in the leading scientific and educational institutions in Canada will benefit cultural and civil society relations.

A LEAP FORWARD IN OUR RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

Spain has entered a new strategic phase in its relations with Africa, focusing on the next four years. The continent's geographical proximity—bordering Ceuta and Melilla and located close to the coasts of Andalusia and the Canary Islands—makes Africa's challenges inextricably linked to our own security and prosperity. For this reason, Spain has prioritised its efforts on strengthening its presence in Africa through increased engagement, enhanced investment, and tripling the official development assistance allocated to the region. We cannot afford to let another 15 years pass without a Spanish Foreign Minister visiting Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, a critical energy supplier, and ECOWAS headquarters.

With the work carried out to date as our springboard, it is time to leap forward in our relationship with Africa. The Spain-Africa Strategy 2025–2028 (*Working together through a strategic relationship*) identifies North Africa, West Africa, and the Sahel as priority regions, aiming to consolidate partnerships with African counterparts grounded in mutual respect and benefit while ensuring African interests receive consideration within EU frameworks.

The African continent is undergoing structural transformations that will alter global dynamics. Demographic projections are unequivocal: by 2050, Africa will represent one quarter of global population. As early as 2026, sub-Saharan Africa's working-age population will exceed that of all developed economies combined. Economically, projections indicate Africa's share of world GDP—currently 3%—could increase sixfold over the next 25 years.

Maintaining our focus on Africa

Spain will reinforce political dialogue with African nations and leading multilateral organisations in the region. Our action must continue enhancing bilateral and multilateral dialogue channels. To this end, Spain will maintain support for regional integration processes led by the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS, as well as the advances achieved by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In particular, we will pursue high-level political consultations with the AU, ECOWAS and SADC, to align our bilateral agenda with Africa's ambitions and achieve greater continental integration. The recently created Inter-ministerial Committee for Africa—convening at both ministerial and state secretary levels to coordinate governmental action across the continent—will strengthen the effectiveness of Spain's African foreign policy.

Fostering dialogue and mutual understanding constitutes a priority within Spain's renewed approach. Institutional instruments must be complemented by civil cooperation networks between civil societies. We will intensify public diplomacy efforts, through bodies such as Casa África and establish a dedicated foundation to cultivate political, economic, and social relationships, facilitating scholarship programmes and seminars to foster mutual understanding and promote greater cultural exchange between Spaniards and Africans. Simultaneously, we will establish permanent mechanisms for consultation with the African diaspora and Spanish communities of African descent. Furthermore, an advisory council will be constituted to ensure that African and Spanish voices from all sectors of society are heard.

Spain will actively contribute to African continental economic integration and connectivity. Economic fragmentation is one of the principal obstacles to African development. Consequently, we will champion initiatives enabling effective continental integration. Particularly, we will

continue supporting implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), representing the world's largest free trade area by number of participating countries and possessing a transformative potential for African economies. Complementarily, we will support key infrastructure projects such as the Lobito Corridor.

Africa presents vast economic opportunities that Spain can capitalise on more effectively. This potential is already a tangible reality for our country: Spanish exports to Africa already exceed in value those to Latin America (€21.14 billion compared with €20.33 billion in 2024). With initiatives such as Alianza África Avanza, launched with Senegal as a pilot country, Spain will pursue transformative investments that generate productive employment and regional growth capacity. The goal is to transition from a primarily trade-based model to one encompassing productive investment, knowledge transfer, and the creation of long-term opportunities.

Promoting the Spanish language in Africa remains a priority as an essential soft power element. The expansion of our language and culture constitutes a long-term influence vector. Building upon achievements including Spanish recognition as an AU working language and the establishment of the first Instituto Cervantes in sub-Saharan Africa in Dakar, we will continue promoting our language and culture. The Africa-MED and ASALE (Association of Spanish Language Academies) scholarship programmes will contribute to train a new generation of African Hispanists to act as bridges between the two regions.

West Africa and the Sahel: our renewed priority

Spain will seek closer dialogue with the countries of West Africa. To this end, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created a new Deputy Directorate-General dedicated exclusively to this region, adding to its commitment to achieve a comprehensive diplomatic deployment across West Africa within the coming years.

Action in West Africa will prioritise institutional stability and economic development. We will focus our action on strengthening institutional systems that generate economic opportunities, particularly for youth populations. Spain will support increased air connections with West Africa, a region that offers vast opportunities for our companies and investors. With countries such as Senegal and Mauritania, we will continue to build on our already excellent relations, and we

will identify new areas for cooperation, applying the 'country-team' approach that brings together all Spanish instruments under a unified strategy.

Spain will continue supporting security and governance in the Sahel and other regions crucial to African stability. For Spain, maintaining the stability of the corridor extending from the Gulf of Guinea to the Red Sea is a matter of paramount geostrategic interest.

Spain will maintain its presence in the following key areas of Africa: the Gulf of Guinea, the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and the Mozambique Channel. Spain remains committed to the continent's security, acting at both bilateral and multilateral levels and through our participation in military and civilian missions of the EU and the United Nations. Spain is present in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and, in the European sphere, in missions in the Central African Republic and Mozambique, in EUCAP Sahel Mali, the European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia), and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia).

Expanding our reach to the entire continent: Southern, Central and East Africa

The new strategy recognises the importance of extending our presence and influence to other regions of Africa. We will expand our diplomatic reach and resources to areas that are enduring conflicts with regional and global impact: the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, and Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique.

Support for African peacebuilding efforts and addressing the root causes of conflict will constitute one of our priorities. Spain enjoys excellent relations with many countries in this area, as demonstrated by the recent State visit to **Angola** and the visits of the President of the Government to **Kenya** and **South Africa**, as well as sharing human, cultural and historical ties with **Equatorial Guinea**.

BUILDING ON OUR PRESENCE IN THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

In the South Caucasus, Spain will support efforts to achieve lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, founded on the principles of

international law and the respect for the rights of minorities. We believe that the EU can play a constructive role in fostering peace, and we will continue to support its diplomatic efforts and confidence-building initiatives.

Spain supports closer relations between the EU and the countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). The significance of this region has been underscored by several factors: Russia's aggression against Ukraine, developments in Afghanistan, and the growing economic presence of China. The EU should continue to strengthen its engagement through summits and high-level meetings with Central Asia. This includes concluding enhanced partnership and cooperation agreements, similar to the one already in place with Kazakhstan. Such agreements should aim to establish inclusive, non-exclusive relations that promote mutual benefits. These relations should focus on strengthening both digital and physical connectivity, particularly through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. Additionally, they should address access to critical raw materials, foster economic and security cooperation, and support the energy transition in countries that remain heavily dependent on fossil fuels.

At the bilateral level, Spain will pursue closer engagement with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, key actors of the region, with more frequent visits, political dialogue through existing mechanisms, and a greater effort to improve the trade balance.

DEEPENING SPAIN'S IMPACT IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The Asia-Pacific region is increasingly at the centre of international relations, with a growing geopolitical and economic significance that will undoubtedly persist over the next four years. Home to 60% of the world's population and contributing 54% of global GDP, the region generates more than 60% of global economic growth, largely owing to its economic integration, second only to that of the European Union. However, substantial development disparities between countries and notable internal inequalities persist, despite extraordinary progress made in reducing poverty over recent decades.

Spain approaches its foreign action in Asia-Pacific over the next four years by building on strengthened bilateral relations, bolstered by high-level visits to key countries in the region. The President of the Government travelled to the Republic of Korea in 2022, the first bilateral visit

by a head of the Spanish executive, to China in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and to India in 2024. Spain has also hosted leaders from Japan and the Republic of Korea. These exchanges, coupled with signed agreements and declarations, evidence our ambition to establish a closer partnership with the leading powers of the Asia-Pacific region, understood as essential to Spain's global reach, economic security, and commitment to an open, rules-based international order. This prioritisation is institutionally reflected in the establishment of two specialized units within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: a specific Deputy Directorate-General for South Asia and one for East Asia. This represents enhanced resource allocation to the region and will be operationalised in detail through a renewed Asia-Pacific strategy.

The EU's external action constitutes an important element of Spain's foreign policy in Asia. Spain will continue fostering relations founded on respect for international law and recognition of the importance of preserving stability and security in this key region. At the European level, the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy will continue to be the framework of reference, complemented by effective deployment of the Global Gateway initiative to enhance physical and digital connectivity and accelerate the green transition. Moreover, Spain will support the expansion of the network of free trade agreements with the region to encompass the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Vietnam, while advancing sectoral dialogues in human rights, technology, and digital governance.

Spain acknowledges that an effective collective response to major global challenges requires the active engagement of Asia-Pacific countries. The fight against climate change, the preservation of biodiversity, the sustainable management of the oceans, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are challenges that cannot be solved without including these countries. Particularly in light of their demographic, economic, and technological significance, as well as their growing contribution to CO2 emissions, which now exceeds that of Europe and the United States combined. Consequently, we will strengthen dialogue and cooperation within multilateral organisations while supporting regional institutions and initiatives addressing these challenges.

Focusing priorities within the region

Japan and the Republic of Korea will remain strategic partners for Spain, bound by shared democratic values and common interests. Building upon excellent political relations and our

Strategic Partnership with Japan, we will continue creating mutual value through investments and collaboration in sectors such as renewable energy, automotive industry, and digitalisation. We must enhance security and defence cooperation, particularly addressing maritime security threats and proliferation risks from North Korea. Instituto Cervantes centres in Tokyo and Seoul—the latter opening in 2025—will respond to growing interest in Spanish language and culture, creating opportunities for our cultural and creative sectors.

We will implement an ambitious bilateral agenda with China, building on the comprehensive Strategic Partnership now entering its third decade and on the excellent bilateral relations demonstrated in the sustained flow of official visits. We will optimise existing mechanisms for political, economic, and technological dialogue, working to improve the terms of our economic relationship. We will advocate for EU-China relations where differences do not undermine the need for a positive cooperation agenda to tackle global challenges including climate change and health. Thanks to the Instituto Cervantes in Beijing and the newly opened centre in Shanghai, we will enhance Spanish language and cultural presence in Chinese society.

In South Asia, India will be a focal point of our foreign policy, reflecting its ascending influence in the international arena. Spain has made remarkable strides in its relationship with India, and aligned with the 2024 Joint Declaration, we will deepen collaboration across several areas. This will include strengthening industrial cooperation, particularly in the aerospace sector through the Airbus Spain-Tata partnership in Vadodara, as well as enhancing bilateral dialogue mechanisms, such as political consultations, joint economic, science, technology, and innovation commissions, the joint defence working group, and a panel of tourism experts. We will also work to reinforce the EU-India Strategic Partnership and support the successful completion of negotiations on free trade, investment protection, and geographical indications agreements. Furthermore, we aim to boost connectivity, enabling our societies to benefit from increased investment, tourism, educational cooperation, and greater mutual understanding. To achieve this, we will implement measures such as a streamlined investment channel and celebrate the India-Spain Dual Year of Culture, Tourism, and Artificial Intelligence.

We will maintain our excellent relations with **Pakistan** and support **Bangladesh** in its political reforms and growing socio-economic development. In **Afghanistan**, Spain will persist in advocating for the defence of women's and girls' rights.

Spain remains committed to deepening its relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN and its member states hold a central position in the geography of the Asia-Pacific region. Spain will be an active partner in EU-ASEAN relations, making a clear commitment to ASEAN's objectives by signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), thereby enabling medium-term achievement of cooperation partner status, similar to other European countries.

In Southeast Asia, **Indonesia**, a key regional power with global reach, will be a priority partner for Spain, reflected in enhanced political and economic dialogue, deeper cultural ties, and greater engagement between our societies. The historical and human depth of our relationship with the **Philippines** will support its continued status as a cooperation partner and provide a foundation for developing technical cooperation with the Southeast Asia region. With **Vietnam**, we will harness the potential of the 2009 Strategic Partnership with high-level visits, financial cooperation to promote investment, a new bilateral action plan, and cooperation in science, technology, innovation, security, and defence, thus contributing to raising the status of our relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

With **Australia** and **New Zealand**, the alignment of views, values, and approaches to global challenges continues to place us in an advantageous position from which we can deepen our cooperation in economic, scientific, and cultural matters, as well as in security and defence, and within multilateral organisations and forums. Despite the geographical distance, bilateral trade with Australia has grown significantly, approaching €3 billion annually, while tourism from Australia now totals 700,000 visitors each year.

Spain aims to further enhance its contribution to the **Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)**, as well as its contribution within the partnership with the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and the EU. This partnership was revitalised through the Samoa Agreement, concluded during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2023.

We will work to promote Spain as a leading tourist destination across Asia by enhancing key attractions, expanding air connectivity, and strengthening our consular network. In this effort, our goal is to accelerate the growing trend in visitors, from Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, and India, choosing Spain as their destination.

PART III:

**PILLARS AND TOOLS
OF OUR FOREIGN ACTION**



OUR STRENGTHS AND VALUES

Faced with a changing international order, Spain must pursue a foreign policy with a distinct identity, grounded in and built upon its national strengths. This response is structured around three essential pillars: the first highlights our values of openness and our geostrategic location, which place Spain in a privileged position to exert influence on the global stage; the second focuses on the dynamism and diversification of our internationalised economy, a driver of competitiveness and growth; and the third underscores our soft power, derived from Spain's heritage and cultural diversity, elements that enhance our international standing and influence. Together, these three pillars underpin Spain's efforts to defend its interests and secure its influence in an ever-changing global environment.

Our values and strategic location

The combination of our Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Ibero-American identities enhances Spain's capacity for trans-regional dialogue. This triple identity, together with our diverse and pluralistic character, positions Spain as a bridge-builder—able to foster relationships across different geographic and cultural spheres, thereby strengthening our soft power on the international stage.

The Spanish political system and the core values of our citizens represent a vital intangible asset in shaping our foreign action. Rooted in respect for human dignity, fundamental rights, and the rule of law, this system reflects the principles of a pluralistic society. These values inspire our foreign action, especially in promoting human rights, gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, the defence of diversity, and the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Spanish citizens are firmly committed to democracy, equal opportunities, gender equality, diversity, and the green transition. According to the Democracy Index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Spain is one of the 25 full democracies in the world, ranking sixth within the G20 and ninth within the EU. According to a survey by Spain's Centre for Sociological Research (2024), 80.7% of Spaniards consider democracy preferable to any other form of government. Furthermore, Round 11 of the European Social Survey (ESS) indicates that 88% of Spaniards believe in equal opportunities for all sectors

of the population—the highest percentage among all the countries surveyed—while 80% agree on the importance of being free to make decisions, in line with the group of countries that attach the greatest importance to this dimension. Furthermore, the European Institute for Gender Equality places Spain in fourth place in terms of gender equality within the EU. In this same vein, according to a recent Ipsos survey, Spaniards are the Europeans who most identify themselves as feminists (51%), while, according to the ESS, 90% strongly or somewhat agree that LGBTQI+ people should be able to live their lives as they wish; this percentage is among the highest recorded in this respect. Indeed, 77% of the population appreciate the value of social diversity, and 74% agree on the importance of caring for nature and the environment. Along these lines, according to the 2023 European Investment Bank Climate Survey, Spanish citizens show high concern about climate change, while 72% consider that the transition to a climate-neutral economy can only be achieved if social and economic inequalities are simultaneously addressed.

Spanish society is decidedly pro-European. According to the latest Eurobarometer, 84% of Spanish citizens feel European and eight out of ten believe the EU's decision-making scope should be increased. These values are considerably well above the European average, with a strong predisposition towards multilateralism. These characteristics have enabled Spain to play a central role in the European project and in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Moreover, Spanish society embraces the ideals of solidarity, as demonstrated by high organ donor rates and strong support for cooperation policy.

A dynamic, internationalised economy

Spain's economic transformation demonstrates its rapid evolution towards a fully internationalised market economy. In just five decades, the country has transitioned from a closed economy to establish itself as a competitive and open economy, positioning Spain as the thirteenth largest economy globally and fourth within the EU. Spain stands among the twenty most internationalised economies worldwide, with substantial growth driven by the external sector. Current

rankings place the country as the eleventh largest services exporter and eleventh largest global investor, while maintaining its position as the world's second-largest destination by tourism revenue, welcoming over 90 million visitors annually. Notably, approximately two-thirds of IBEX-35 companies' revenue originates from international markets. Moreover, the Spanish economy has sustained current account surpluses for thirteen consecutive years, a performance matched only by Germany among major European economies.

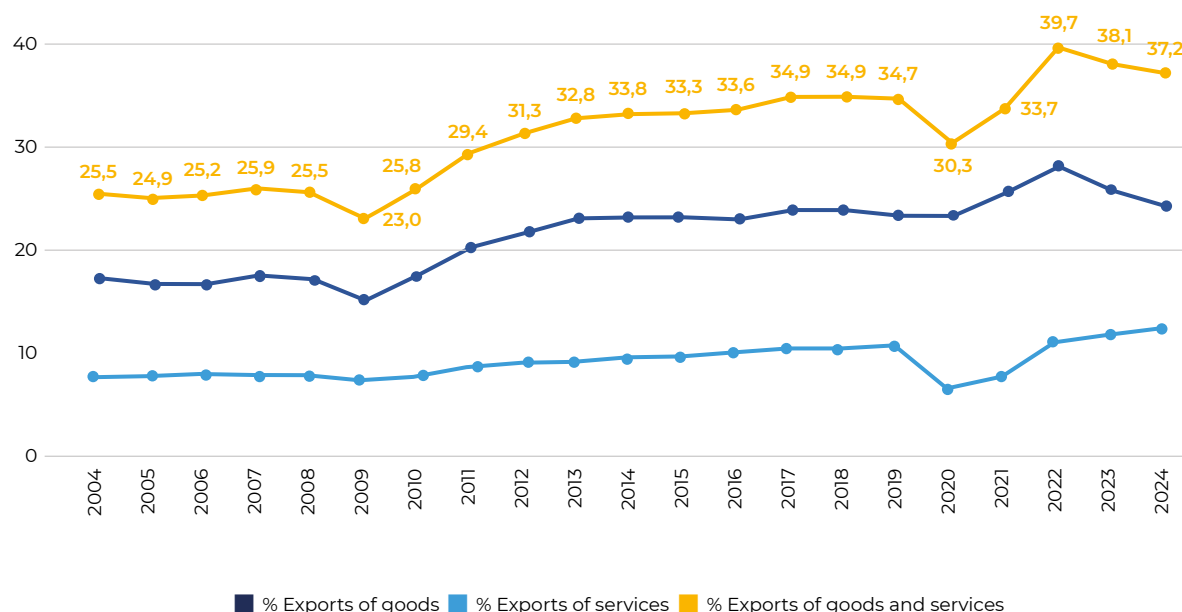
This robust economic performance has cemented the country's position as a driving force within the Eurozone. In recent years, Spain has emerged as a key economic engine of the Eurozone, consistently growing above the European average and repeatedly exceeding projections, particularly in job generation. Employment in high value-added and productivity sectors such as Research & Development & Innovation (R&D&I) and scientific activities has increased by nearly 50% since early 2018. This growth has been achieved while addressing historical imbalances, reducing household and non-financial entities' debt by half within a single decade and keeping the real estate sector contained. The agri-food sector holds particular strategic importance, with the country ranking as the EU's fourth-largest

food exporter and seventh globally. Additionally, Spanish leadership in the EU extends to both aquaculture production and fishing fleet catch volumes.

Exports constitute a fundamental pillar of Spain's economic growth and activity. Goods and services exports represent a higher percentage of GDP than in France or Italy, though remaining below other European economies such as Germany or the Netherlands. One quarter of national employment depends on external markets, with non-tourism services exports serving as a primary growth engine, approximately 9% of GDP. Spain's global market share in goods has maintained relative stability at around 1.8% over recent decades, while most Western economies have experienced significant decline due to the rise of China and other emerging economies.

We rank among the world's leading countries in foreign investment. Outward FDI stock has increased from 0.8% of GDP in 1980 to over 40% in 2022. The external sector's strong performance is reflected in an emerging role as an investment hub. According to fDi Markets indicators, between 2018 and 2024, Spain ranked as the fifth global destination for greenfield investments, fourth in R&D projects, and second in renewable energy initiatives.

Evolution of Spanish exports (share of GDP)



Source: Spanish National Statistics Institute.

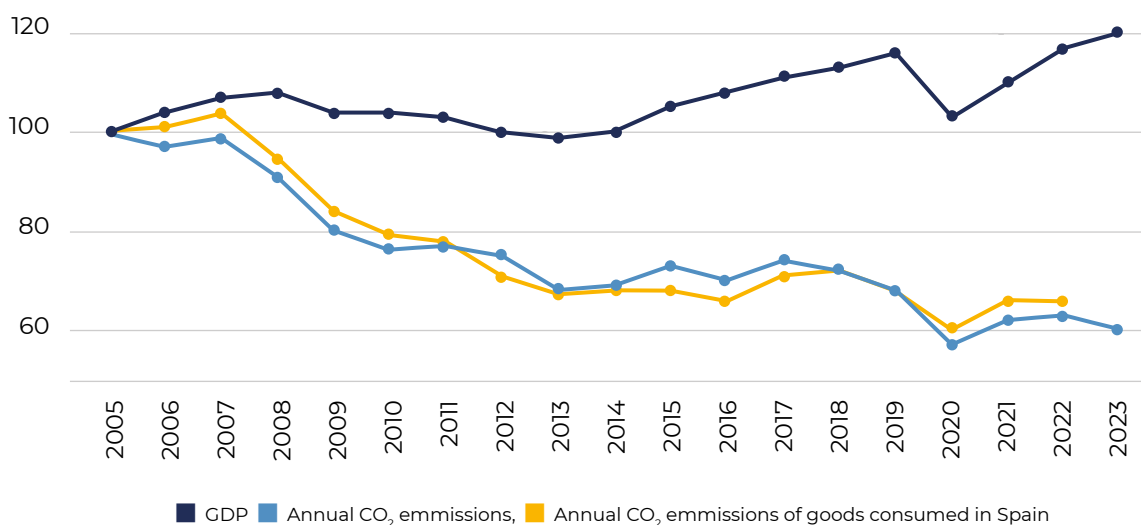
ADVANCED CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Spain enjoys a privileged geographic position and has consolidated itself as a strategic hub for global trade. Spanish ports serve as convergence points for the main East-West maritime routes linking Asia, Europe and the Americas, as well as the North-South corridors connecting Europe with Africa. Its airports also constitute a vital hub for connections to the Americas and Africa. Consequently, these ports and airports are well positioned as hubs for the transit of people and goods. Leadership in maritime connectivity in Europe is demonstrated through a sixth place globally according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Liner Shipping Connectivity Index. Spanish infrastructure includes the world's second-largest high-speed rail network with over 4,000 km and the EU's most extensive highway and motorway network spanning more than 17,000 km, fifty airports that recorded Europe's highest air traffic volume in 2024, and 46 strategic ports where Valencia ranked fourth and Algeciras fifth among EU ports by container volume in 2024. In forthcoming years, continued advancement of the Trans-European Transport Network will enhance connections with the broader EU while emphasizing fostering freight rail transport development. Regarding digital connectivity, the country ranks fifteenth in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index and leads Europe in ultra-fast broadband adoption at 87% in 2023 and very high-capacity network coverage at 93% in 2023. This environment has enabled an increase in the deployment of data centres and the development of the Barcelona Supercomputing Center.

Spain has emerged as a leader in the green transition without sacrificing competitiveness. Today, decarbonisation is increasingly becoming a driver—not a detractor—of competitiveness: the traditional trade-off between economic growth and emissions reduction is steadily fading, as demonstrated by the decoupling of GDP and emissions in Spain's case.

We are positioned to advance towards energy self-sufficiency through renewable sources, beginning to overcome historical energy resource constraints. This represents a fundamental shift in Spain's international position. Its comparative climate advantage has established the country among the world's largest wind and solar energy producers, achieving eighth place globally in

Changes in GDP and emissions in Spain



Source: Data extracted from multiple sources by the World Bank (2025) and the Global Carbon Budget (2024), compiled by Our World in Data.

installed renewable capacity and second in Europe. We rank as the fifth international producer of wind and solar energy and have consolidated our position as the tenth most attractive global market for green energy investments.

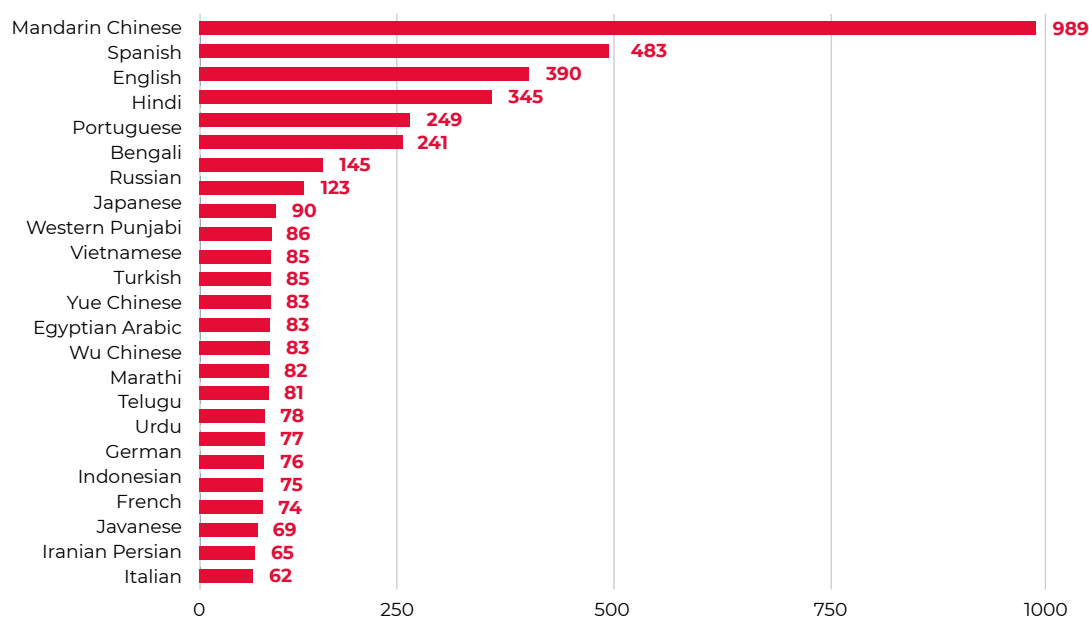
The promotion of green hydrogen and growing critical resources management are strengthening Spain's energy competitiveness. The capacity to generate low-cost renewable energy, combined with the development of supportive policies, has created a favourable environment for the expansion of green hydrogen. According to the Hydrogen Investability Index, Spain is the second most attractive country in the world after Germany for investment in this fuel, which is essential for the decarbonisation of sectors that are difficult to electrify and for the storage of renewable energy. The development of infrastructure such as the European H2Med Hydrogen corridor, which will transport hydrogen from the Iberian Peninsula to Central Europe, will further strengthen Spain's strategic position in the European energy landscape. Moreover, its location and substantial regasification capacity facilitate access to transitional energy sources such as liquefied natural gas.

Soft power and cultural capital

Spanish soft power is built upon its rich cultural heritage and its capacity to exert influence beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Various indicators show that Spanish identity—strengthened by tourism, cinema, music, gastronomy, and sports—generates a positive and attractive image abroad. This represents a clearly differentiated and easily distinguishable identity. Significant cultural capital and the diversity of our heritage strengthen this influence, with Spain ranking fifth globally in UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Sites. The combination of history, geography, culture, and linguistic ties boosts Spain's international engagement, particularly with Latin America. While these assets are not new, they gain importance in an increasingly fragmented global context marked by competition.

The global reach of the Spanish language strengthens our international influence. Nearly 500 million people consider Spanish their mother tongue, representing 6.2% of the world's population and giving it the second highest number of native speakers after Mandarin—and is the fourth most widely spoken language overall. Over 23 million students currently

Languages with the most native speakers



Source: Ethnologue Languages of the World, 2025. The figures are expressed in millions.

learn Spanish as a foreign language, making it a strategic asset that bolsters our international presence in media, science, digital culture, and technology, facilitating integration into the knowledge economy. Furthermore, multilingualism, an essential facet of our national identity, strengthens Spain's image as well as our capacity for dialogue in the international arena.

The richness of our culture—through our heritage and vibrant cultural and creative industries—provides natural channels for international outreach and distinctive hallmarks that shape a positive and recognisable image abroad. Furthermore, Spanish-language culture has successfully adapted to changes in the audiovisual sector. Spanish-language TV series achieve great success on streaming platforms, and digital platforms are registering a significant growth in Spanish-language music.

We will enhance our foreign action by capitalising on the talent and diversity of our human capital. Spain is among EU countries whose population has grown the most significantly in the twenty-first century. Today, Spain has nearly 50 million inhabitants, 19% of whom are of foreign origin. Generations of immigrants and their descendants enrich our collective identity and constitute an integral part of our social fabric. This affords us greater capacity for innovation, adaptation, and international outreach. Spain will seek to harness the knowledge

and experience of the diaspora and its succeeding generations to improve our foreign policy, capitalising on their potential on the international sphere.

In the field of tourism, Spain has cemented its status as a world-class destination, and the growing number of foreign residents only reinforces our diversity. Location, climate, language, connectivity, diversity, and cultural richness have all contributed to positioning our country as one of the most visited destinations in the world, with over 90 million international tourists visiting our country every year.

Maintaining openness to foreign talent remains essential. By attracting skills and excellence from beyond our borders, Spain has sparked a virtuous cycle: companies and professionals come to Spain to find a thriving environment, while their presence enriches our society, fosters growth, and boosts the Spanish economy.

Attracting international undergraduate and graduate students strengthens Spain's educational reach and boosts the recruitment of global talent. Spain remains the preferred destination both for Erasmus students and, increasingly, for non-European students. We will seek to maintain this appeal, paying special attention to sectors and areas of specialisation that drive innovation and respond to the needs of our labour market.

SPAIN'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

Spain has managed to build, over the years, a solid and recognisable country brand, based primarily on traditional strengths such as tourism, culture, openness and hospitality, sports, and lifestyle, while advancing in economic aspects. The Global Soft Power Index 2024, published by Brand Finance, analyses countries' non-military influence, placing Spain in eleventh place worldwide, up five places since 2020, making it the fourth most influential nation in the EU. The Rep-Core Nations 2024, which focuses on the opinion in the G7 countries, provides valuable insight into our reputation among the world's principal economies. In this index, which includes factors such as trust, respect, and admiration that nations generate, Spain ranks thirteenth out of sixty countries, ahead of Italy, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The Image Barometer published by the Elcano Royal Institute—another indicator of how Spain is viewed internationally—pays special attention to our perception in Europe, the region of greatest importance to our country. The latest data, obtained from image and opinion surveys conducted in ten major European countries, place Spain at the top of this ranking, with a score of 7 out of 10. This external assessment coincides almost exactly with Spaniards' own perception of their country (7.1). Similarly, the Henley Passport Index, which assesses the freedom of movement of a country's citizens based on the number of destinations to which they can travel without a visa. In this classification, ranks Spain in third place worldwide, sharing the position with France, Germany, Italy, Finland, and the Republic of Korea. Spanish citizens can travel without the need for prior visa to 192 destinations, which reinforces the perception of Spain as an attractive country in terms of untrammelled trans-border connections.

Spain's commercial outreach is reflected in the Nation Brands ranking, published by Brand Finance, which evaluates the position of national brands and the economic image they project. In 2024, Spain obtained a remarkable twelfth position, well above the eighteenth place held just a decade earlier. A similarly favourable view is provided by Bloom Consulting's Country Brand Ranking Trade Edition, which evaluates investment-related variables and the performance of the country brand in commercial terms. This ranking places Spain fifteenth worldwide, up two positions, and in seventh place in Europe, up one position, which reinforces the upward trend in terms of commercial strength.

Finally, regarding the specific field of tourism, an essential sector for the economy and international projection of Spain, the Country Brand Ranking Tourism Edition from Bloom Consulting reaffirms in its 2024–2025 edition Spain's solid positioning in this industry by situating our country in second place, only surpassed by Italy in the intense competition for global leadership in the sector.

A BROAD-BASED POLICY

Given its cross-cutting nature, foreign action engages all branches of the State, public administrations, and civil society—strengthening our voice, advancing our values, and projecting our national model on the global stage. The Executive directs foreign policy in accordance with the mandate of Article 97 of the Constitution. The Head of State and the Presidency of the Government play a key role in promoting Spain's foreign action in accordance with the principles and priorities of this Strategy.

Enhanced inter-ministerial coordination to address cross-cutting challenges. The transversal nature of the priorities set forth requires greater inter-ministerial coordination to effectively respond to common challenges, avoiding duplications and silos. To this end, we will strengthen existing mechanisms and collaboration instruments, notably those provided for in Act 2/2014 of 25 March, on State Foreign Action and the Foreign Service. A fundamental aspect is the coordination of missions, trips, and visits—an area that must be strengthened to align with the goals set out in this Strategy and to ensure Spain's effective presence and engagement across regions and international forums. To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created a new Deputy Directorate-General for Institutional Relations and Collaboration with the Autonomous Communities.

The Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union merits special attention as the body that speaks for the national administration before the European institutions, providing a mechanism for the coordination and implementation of foreign policy as well as of other Government policies. Europe is a priority of this Foreign Action Strategy, and therefore, the Permanent Representation will be equipped with additional resources.

In addition to the essential role assigned by the Constitution to the Parliament in overseeing government action, parliamentary diplomacy will continue to serve as a valuable tool for strengthening international dialogue and the exchange of knowledge. Support for Parliament's international activity will continue through the participation of its members in international parliamentary assemblies—NATO, the Council of Europe, OSCE, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union—as well as in bilateral forums. Notably, Spain will promote parliamentary diplomacy within the EU framework; in Ibero-America, through mechanisms such as the Spanish-Mexican Parliamentary Forum; and in the Mediterranean

Basin, where we will continue to foster dialogue within the Union for the Mediterranean. Moreover, we will expand our parliamentary reach to West Africa, in implementation of the Spain-Africa Strategy 2025–2028, as well as to the Asia-Pacific region.

We will enhance coordination between Parliament and other bodies involved in foreign action, such as the **General Council of the Judiciary**, sharing best practices in international forums, and the **Ombudsman**, in its role to promote and protect human rights.

Spain will continue to coordinate the foreign action of its Autonomous Communities and Cities, as well as of local authorities within the scope of their respective powers, ensuring their alignment with the Government's foreign policy and harnessing the resulting synergies. It will foster their participation in foreign policy through trade support instruments and the internationalisation of Spanish companies and talent. Moreover, it will emphasise their role in promoting tourism, cultural diversity, and as development cooperation actors. Appropriate instruments to achieve this intersectoral coordination include the Conference on Issues Related to the European Union (CARUE) and the Interterritorial Committee for Development Cooperation.

We will enhance the participation of regional and local authorities within the European Union by heightening Spain's presence in the European Committee of the Regions—underscored by the Andalusian presidency of this Committee for 2025–2027—and fostering the participation of the governments of the Autonomous Communities in working groups and other configurations of the Council of the European Union. Within this framework, we will continue working to secure recognition of Spain's co-official languages as official languages of the Union.

Cross-border cooperation will continue to be crucial to our efforts to address common challenges and promote regional development. We will strengthen the cross-border and Mediterranean dimensions of our regions and municipalities by developing interconnection and supply infrastructure for digital, energy, rail, and maritime services. Moreover, we will boost economic development projects that address demographic issues and the social needs of border areas, and we will seek to create a Mediterranean macro-region to combat climate change.

The international engagement of cities plays a key role in bringing global challenges closer to the local level. In this respect, Spain will support cooperation through global city networks such as United Cities and Local Governments, Metropolis, Medcities, and the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation and will seek to ensure that their actions contribute to the objectives of this Strategy; in particular, those of climate mitigation and adaptation and the protection of local democracy and digital rights in the face of accelerating urban innovation. To this end, Spain will support the creation of municipal coalitions, promoting the role of cities such as Bilbao, home to the Secretariat of the Local2030 coalition.

Finally, civil society organisations—such as NGOs, think tanks, trade unions, and business associations—will continue making our foreign action more inclusive and diverse. Accordingly, Spain will support their involvement in areas such as development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, the promotion of human rights, and the internationalisation of our economy and culture. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will promote the development of formats that enable direct interaction with think tanks and civil society, for instance, through their participation in Summits, with the aim of enriching the design of our foreign policy. Harnessing these instruments will be crucial to achieving a unified foreign policy, capable of maximising the impact of the efforts made by the various actors involved in the State's foreign action.

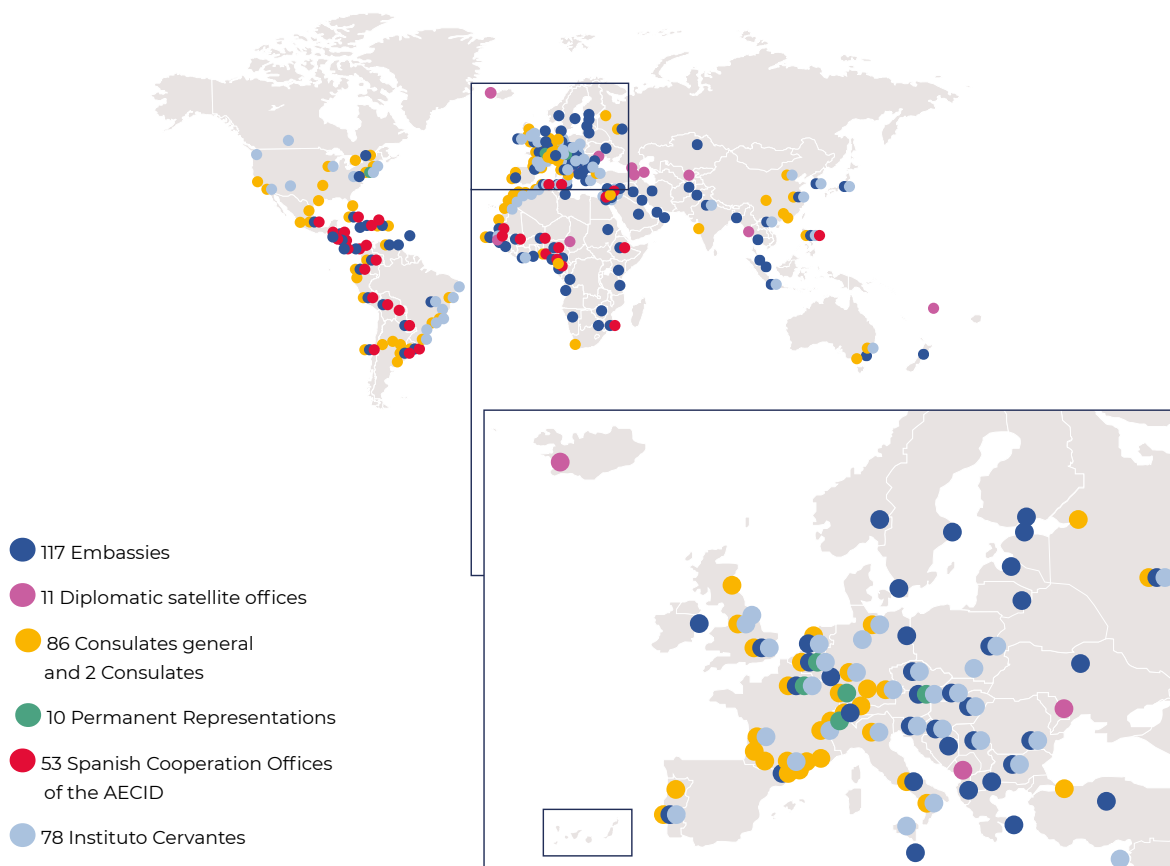
A FOREIGN SERVICE READY FOR THE FUTURE

A tightly woven diplomatic network to defend the interests of Spain and the Spanish people

Spain has one of the most extensive networks of **Embassies and Consulates in the world**, with a foreign presence that includes 117 Embassies, 11 Diplomatic Satellite Offices, 10 Permanent Representations, 86 Consulates General and 2 Consulates, 53 Spanish Cooperation offices, and 78 Instituto Cervantes locations.

Updating our foreign presence in our strategic environment. Spain's foreign presence was last substantially restructured over 15 years ago, marked by the establishment of new Embassies and a reorganisation of the consular network. Since then, the creation of several diplomatic satellite offices has further expanded our reach. However, the international landscape has evolved significantly, with new areas of focus and interest for our country and our citizens. Our diplomatic network must now adapt to provide us with the capabilities and

Deployment of Spanish Foreign Action (2025)



international presence commensurate with our ambition and objectives. In this regard, it is essential to consolidate and expand our presence in regions where Spain's core interests are more directly at stake. These include Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, as well as a broader deployment in West Africa—recognising that we are part of a common geographical context where emerging challenges and new opportunities can only be properly addressed by working together. Accordingly, during the 2025–2028 period, we will pursue the opening of new Embassies in these regions, particularly where the experience gained through diplomatic satellite offices has laid the foundation for a qualitative leap in bilateral relations.

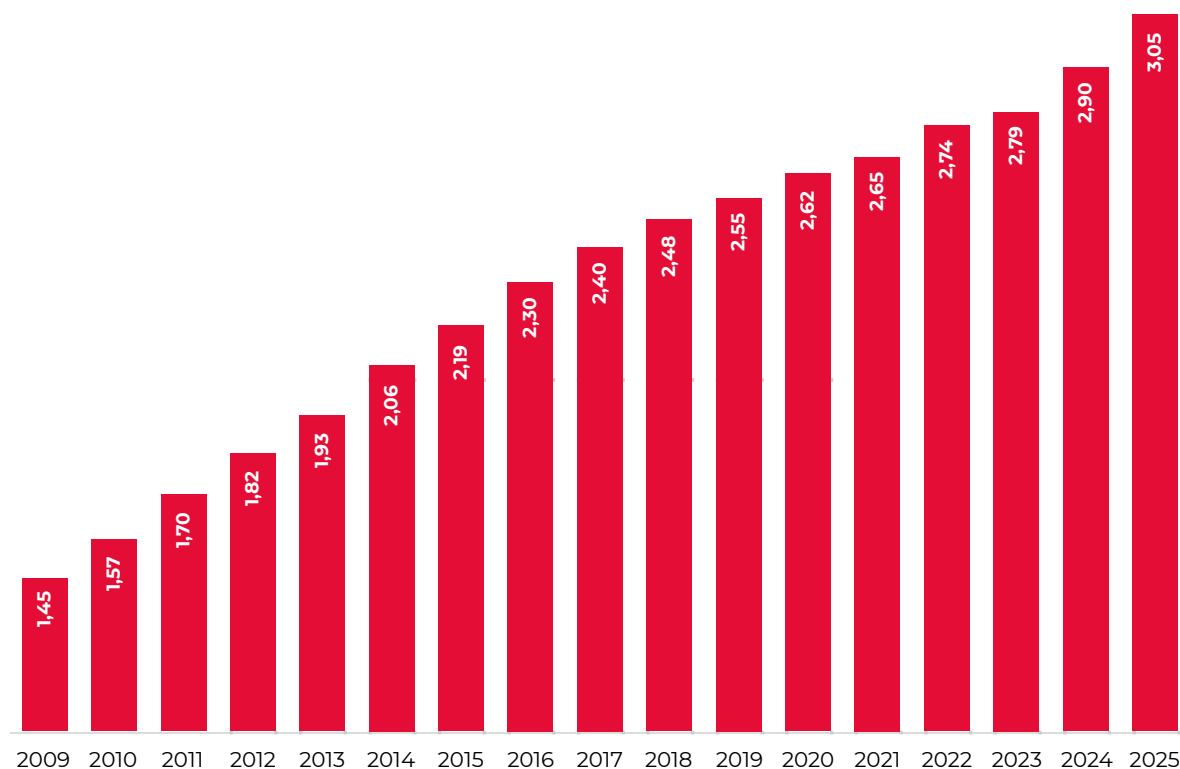
At the service of Spanish citizens abroad

Growing demand for the Foreign Service. The changing international context calls for a reform of the Foreign Service's structure and working culture, aligning it with current needs and realities.

The needs of Spanish citizens living abroad are growing steadily. The number of Spanish citizens residing outside our borders has tripled over the past twenty years—now exceeding three million—while nearly 20 million international movements are made by Spaniards each year. Furthermore, growing international tensions and the greater severity and frequency of armed conflicts and natural disasters have substantially increased demand for consular services and assistance, including evacuation measures. Our Foreign Service must evolve to ensure an effective response to this context and guarantee the delivery of proper public services abroad.

Strengthening the consular network to deliver a high-quality public service. The Directorate-General for Spaniards Abroad and Consular Affairs, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supervises and coordinates 178 Spanish Consular Offices—comprising 86 Consulates General, 2 Consulates, and 90 Consular Sections of Embassies—along with an extensive network of Honorary Consuls.

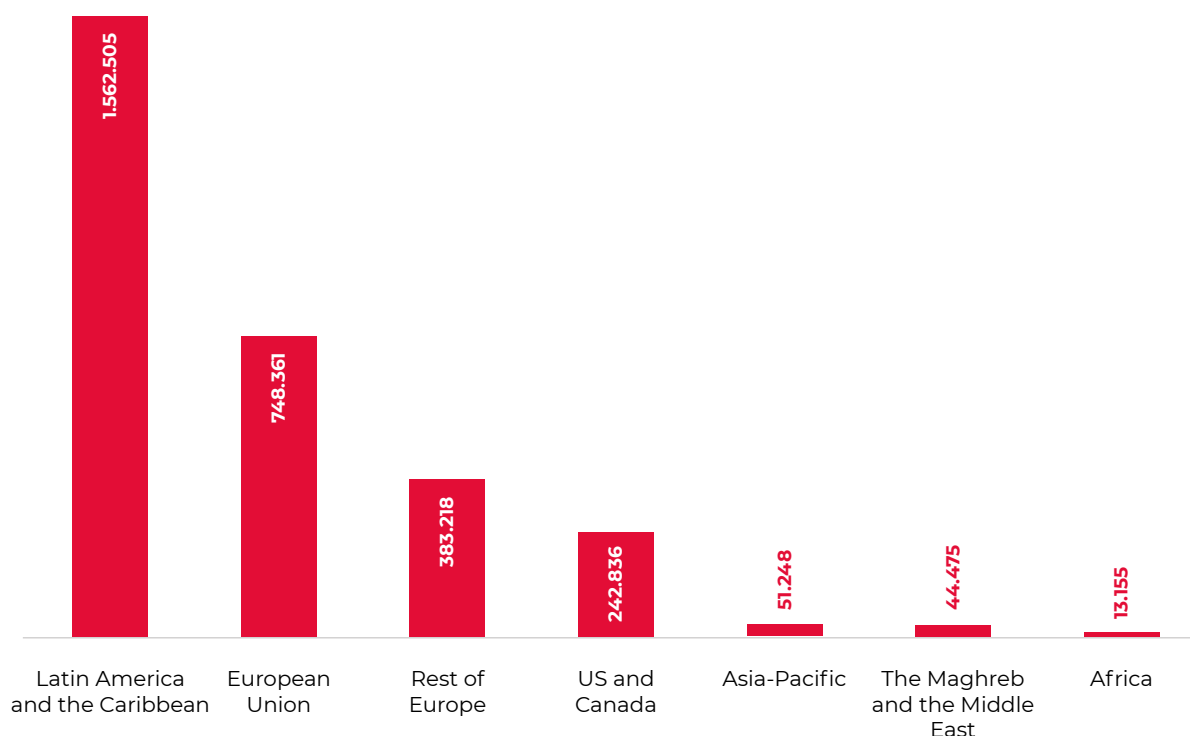
Spanish population living abroad



The figures are expressed in millions

Source: Spanish National Statistics Institute.

Spanish population living abroad by regions (2025)



Source: Spanish National Statistics Institute.

Despite the significant increase in the Spanish population abroad, available resources have changed little over the past two decades. Between 2025 and 2028, we will therefore seek to adapt human resources and open new Consulates General in locations of particular interest to Spain, taking into account annual budgetary availability.

The Consular Digitalisation Plan will provide new tools to facilitate the work of Consular Offices and enhance public access to consular procedures, through a new online portal and individual user accounts. A new regulatory framework for the Consular Registry will allow consular staff to issue digital certificates to Spanish nationals residing abroad. The Civil Registry software (DICIREG) will be implemented across all Consular Offices, enabling a unified civil registry system for Spain. Similarly, the new SINA-VI visa application system will also be rolled out. To enhance productivity, the gradual introduction of artificial intelligence tools will be promoted.

We will continue to closely monitor crises and emergencies. The consular network's vital role in recent crises highlights the importance of improving Spain's preventive instruments and emergency response mechanisms. To this end, a new call centre will be set up to provide a higher-quality service while optimising available resources.

Consular assistance for vulnerable persons will remain a priority, with special focus on women and girls affected by violence. We will continue to update our protocols for cases of violence against women and girls abroad—including new types of violence such as cyberbullying—tackling bureaucratic abuse and legal loopholes, and acknowledging that violence against young girls, be it direct or vicarious, requires specific attention. Moreover, we will extend and develop our guidelines to ensure a coordinated and effective response to sexual assault cases.

Consular Offices will continue mobilising all available resources to guarantee that Spaniards abroad can exercise their fundamental right to vote. They will implement the necessary procedures to process nationality applications under the Democratic Memory Act.

Spaniards abroad play an important role in projecting Spain's values and image. Only four Autonomous Communities have a larger population than the number of Spanish citizens residing abroad. Through our diplomatic and consular network, we will promote stronger ties between the Administration and these three million plus Spaniards residing outside our borders by:

- **Increasing structured collaboration** with individuals and groups in the private sector and in civil society;
- **Creating general and specialised support mechanisms for Spanish professionals abroad** such as the Spanish Scientists associations, which offer a valuable reference for developing similar initiatives in other countries and fields of activity.

Spain will promote the Councils of Spanish Residents Abroad as advisory bodies to Consulates General, strengthening their capacity to enable institutional participation by Spanish citizens abroad and providing a means for them to voice their concerns and demands. These Councils represent a population whose profile and needs have changed over time, and they must adapt accordingly; likewise, we will support and protect associations of Spaniards abroad and their efforts to defend their rights and interests.

People: the backbone of the Foreign Service

Foreign action is not possible without the people who make it happen. The men and women of the Foreign Service—civil servants and other staff deployed abroad who work every day to provide citizens with a high-quality and efficient public service—are its cornerstone. The Foreign Service's human capital—characterised by their commitment and vocation to serve both Spain and its citizens—represents our most valuable asset.

Foreign action requires a modern Foreign Service that can properly serve the public. To achieve this, we must optimise resources and invest in attracting talent, training staff, and improving knowledge management.

Recruiting qualified personnel remains essential to overcome existing challenges. The Diplomatic School plays a critical role in raising awareness of the Foreign Service among Spanish universities and in facilitating access to training for prospective candidates, in line with the basic principles of public employment recruitment: equality, merit, and capacity. Admissions to the diplomatic career must remain steady in the coming years to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of Spain's foreign action.

The training and specialisation of diplomatic civil servants and Foreign Service staff will constitute a key priority. The current pace and complexity of global change require adapted and continuous training and specialisation to meet current challenges. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Diplomatic School, will update existing training programmes, promote expertise in specific geographical and thematic areas, and enhance language training. This investment will ensure that our diplomatic staff continue to effectively defend and represent Spain's interests and those of Spanish citizens abroad.

Boosting the presence and promotion of Spanish nationals in international organisations constitutes a fundamental objective. A stronger Spanish presence in senior and leadership positions will allow for more effective advancement of Spain's interests in multilateral forums. To this end, we will strengthen the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Civil Servants Unit, contributing to both improving the training of our nationals and reinforcing our multilateral action.

Personnel data (2025)



1.110
in central
services



4.578
abroad



981
diplomats



553
abroad

Work-life balance, equality, and diversity are fundamental pillars of the Spanish Foreign Service. Efforts will be made to ensure balanced representation of women and men at all levels and categories, guaranteeing equal treatment and opportunities. Promoting a healthy balance between personal, family, and professional life, and shared responsibility for caregiving, will also remain a priority, reflecting our commitment to a fairer, more equitable society. We will implement policies tailored to the reality of Spanish society and the labour market, facilitating access to employment abroad for the spouses and civil partners of Foreign Service personnel. This will be pursued through the application of existing international agreements, or the negotiation of new ones. We will also promote the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Family Support Unit, which provides constant and active assistance to families, especially those who are most vulnerable, both during overseas assignments and upon their return to Spain.

Special emphasis will be placed on preventing workplace and sexual violence and harassment, and on protecting individuals who require special protection, including victims of gender-based violence. In addition, we will strengthen initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion throughout the Foreign Service, with a particular focus on the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, including the accreditation of civil partnerships and same-sex couples abroad.

Finally, Spain will continue to actively promote the rights of persons with disabilities. We will improve the accessibility of our offices abroad, enhance the usability of our online services and website, and ensure all services are accessible to everyone.

Economic and commercial diplomacy

The foreign sector has played a pivotal role in driving Spain's economic growth and job creation. Foreign investment and exports of goods and services serve as pillars of growth, productivity, and resilience for the Spanish economy. It is therefore essential to continue promoting the internationalisation of Spanish companies.

We will strengthen Spain's economic diplomacy by enhancing the economic and political instruments that support business internationalisation and enhance competitiveness, while also attracting investment. We will support Spanish companies by encouraging market diversification, reducing dependencies, and expanding into key markets, in line with the 2025–2027 Action Plan

for the Internationalisation of the Spanish Economy. In this context, special attention will be devoted to countries where political support is necessary to establish or initiate business activity.

The work of the extensive network of Economic and Commercial Offices in Spanish Diplomatic Missions abroad is particularly relevant. This network—comprising 98 offices in 77 countries—provides near-global coverage and plays a vital role in promoting Spanish companies abroad, supporting both their initial establishment and their subsequent operations. It is a key strategic instrument for business internationalisation, offering specialised advisory services and economic information, identifying commercial opportunities, and providing institutional support tailored to the needs of each market. This support is offered on an ongoing basis and can be elevated to the political level through direct contacts between foreign ministries and through high-level interministerial dialogues.

In addition to these efforts, the work of various public institutions further strengthens Spain's economic diplomacy. Noteworthy among them is ICEX Spain Trade and Investment, which plays a central role in promoting Spain abroad and in offering business training and internationalisation support. The Spanish Export Credit Agency (CESCE) provides essential insurance coverage against commercial and political risks, helping to secure international transactions. COFIDES, Spain's development finance institution, offers financial instruments tailored to support Spanish productive investment abroad, especially in emerging and developing markets. Finally, TURESPAÑA, Spain's national tourism agency, plays a leading role in promoting Spain as a premier international tourist destination, contributing to Spain's international visibility and reputation.

Cooperation in the fields of air, maritime, and land transport is a key driver of globalisation, strengthening links between countries, facilitating international trade, and delivering significant benefits for the global economy. However, this sector faces persistent challenges, including the need to ensure high safety standards, address environmental sustainability, and respond to ongoing technological changes. Spain will continue to support bilateral and multilateral air transport agreements that enhance connectivity, promote trade, and encourage tourism. In addition, Spain will contribute to the global harmonisation of rules and standards within the International Civil Aviation Organization. The maritime sector is of particular importance to international trade, as roughly 80% of global goods are transported by sea. Spain is a country with a rich maritime

tradition and enjoys a strategically advantageous position for global trade. Therefore, we will promote maritime cooperation agreements that reinforce the security of shipping routes, foster sustainable ocean development, and protect the marine environment, particularly through our engagement within the International Maritime Organization.

Public, cultural, educational, and linguistic diplomacy

Spain will seek to strengthen the impact of its public diplomacy and strategic communication by amplifying the voice and activities of its representations abroad and enhancing coordination within a broad network of institutions. This includes the *Red de Casas*, our network of public diplomacy centres (Africa, the Americas, the Arab world, Asia, the Mediterranean, and Sefarad-Israel), the *Red de Fundaciones Consejo*, the Carolina Foundation, and the Foundation for the Internationalisation of Public Administrations (FIAP), whose work is fundamental in projecting Spain's image and interests internationally. This effort is complemented by other key actors in cultural action abroad, such as *Acción Cultural Española* (Spanish Cultural Action).

The promotion of Spanish culture and languages represents a vital asset in conveying the values that define us as a society, as well as highlighting our strengths beyond the strict political and economic spheres. Spain will work to ensure that these instruments contribute to strengthening our international relations and our presence abroad.

We will continue to promote cultural rights and highlight the contribution of culture to the achievement of the SDGs. Spain will promote the commemoration of diplomatic anniversaries such as Spain–Republic of Korea in 2025 and the organisation of dual cultural years such as Spain–India in 2026; the promotion of bilateral agreements on sustainable heritage management, archaeology, archives, libraries, museums, audiovisual production, and the performing arts; the strengthening of cultural management capacities; the protection of labour rights, artistic freedom and academic freedom; and the safeguarding of heritage in contexts of international conflict, particularly in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Spain's cultural and creative industries will be further strengthened in international markets. In order to enhance the competitiveness and global reach of Spanish creators, their participation in programmes such as Creative Europe, the Culture Compass, and the *Iber* initiatives will be

promoted. Simultaneously, priority will be given to mobility, exchange, and professional development within the cultural and creative sectors, as well as to joint initiatives with the European digital library (Europeana). Spain will seek to expand its presence in international festivals and markets, for example by supporting *Mondiacult* in 2025 and *Europalia* 2025–2026.

Cultural diplomacy will remain a cornerstone of Spain's international engagement, alongside the role of culture as a catalyst for sustainable development, and the country's leadership within UNESCO and other relevant international forums. This commitment will also foster the promotion of Spanish culture and the arts abroad through the network of cultural counsellors and attachés, as well as through the work of the AECID Cultural Centres and Training Centres in Ibero-America and Africa.

AECID will continue to contribute to capacity-building and international mobility through its calls for applicants from partner countries and Spanish citizens, as well as through its language-assistant positions programmes.

Special attention will be devoted to the promotion of Spain's historical and cultural heritage through enhanced international cooperation. This effort will encourage the circulation of heritage objects, enhance visibility of Spain's legacy, and reinforce Spain's image as a global cultural powerhouse.

Spain will continue to support its external educational action, which currently reaches nearly 134,000 students in 47 countries. The objective is to bring the Spanish language and culture to an increasingly broad and diverse international audience. Through the deployment of technical advisors within education departments and attaché offices in embassies, and teachers in educational cooperation programmes and institutions, Spain will further deepen cultural ties and knowledge exchange, thereby strengthening its international projection.

The promotion of Spanish—and of Spain's co-official languages—assumes particular importance through the work of the Instituto Cervantes, which maintains a presence in over 90 cities in 45 countries through its centres, classrooms, and satellite branches. Spain's commitment to disseminating its linguistic heritage will be reflected in the opening of new Cervantes centres and the consolidation of the institution's academic, cultural, and training offerings, reinforcing Spain's global leadership in language education. The Instituto Cervantes Global Spanish Observatory will identify high-impact projects to secure the place of Spanish languages in digital transformation processes.

Sports diplomacy will continue to reinforce Spain's image and reputation abroad. Spain will capitalise on the achievements of its athletes and the strength of its federations and clubs to advance a sports diplomacy agenda that projects the values embodied by Spanish sport and its economic potential, thereby consolidating Spain's international profile. The joint organisation of the 2030 FIFA World Cup by Spain, Portugal, and Morocco, will contribute significantly to this endeavour.

Scientific and technological diplomacy

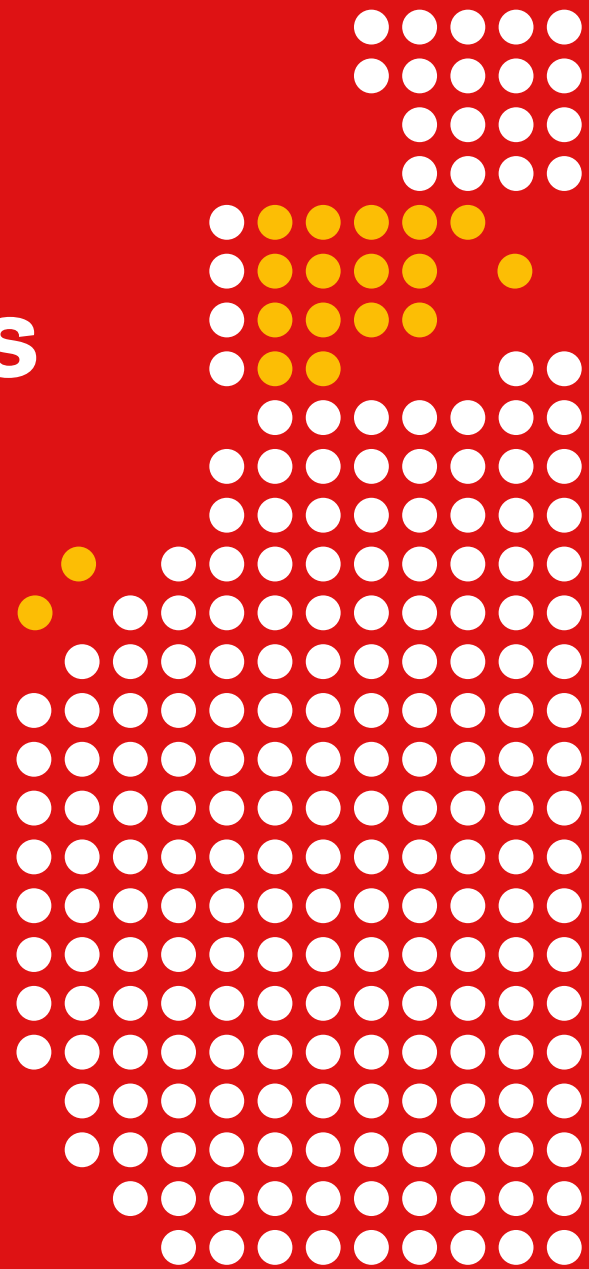
The promotion of an open innovation model and the generation of scientific and technological impact constitute a fundamental priority. Through the action of our scientific and cultural offices abroad, ICEX, and the international delegations of the Centre for Technological Development and Innovation (CDTI), efforts will be made to identify scientific and technological cooperation opportunities that enhance Spain's competitiveness. Public-private cooperation will be encouraged to strengthen Spain's participation in international programmes and tenders. Effective coordination among all actors in Spain's science ecosystem will be ensured, in line with the guidelines of the Spanish Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy. In addition, collaboration with the Network of Associations of Spanish Scientists and Researchers Abroad (RAICEX) will be strengthened, recognising its key role in linking Spain to international research networks.

Spain will seek to enhance scientific cooperation as a tool for equitable and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on Africa and Latin America. We will promote evidence-based policy, for example, through initiatives such as

Science4Policy, and support research that addresses global challenges. Intellectual property will be promoted as a tool for development. Priority areas will include food security, universal access to healthcare services, antimicrobial resistance, pandemic preparedness, the development and promotion of global standards and policies in digital health, and the fight against infectious, neglected tropical, and non-communicable diseases.

The internationalisation of Spain's Science, Technology, and Innovation System, as well as the country's higher education system demands sustained commitment. To build a robust innovation ecosystem, collaboration between universities, companies, and research centres will be promoted to develop and protect technologies through intellectual property, and to attract talent and investment in innovation. In this context, Spain will also foster cooperation between Spanish public universities and their counterparts abroad, with the aim of supporting education in scientific and technological disciplines, and the academic mobility of students, teachers, and researchers. Furthermore, we will reinforce the participation in and attraction of major scientific and technological infrastructures, strengthening Spain's leadership in initiatives such as Horizon Europe, the European Research Area (ERA), and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and mobility programmes such as Erasmus+. We will also promote Spanish participation in leadership roles in R&D&I institutions such as the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). Finally, our regional and multilateral approach will be enhanced by supporting the consolidation of the European Framework for Science Diplomacy, the Ibero-American Science Diplomacy Network, and EU-UfM collaboration for the development of a Euro-Mediterranean science diplomacy agenda.

APPENDIX:
OVER 100 ACTIONS
FOR 2025-2028



CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS

1. **Update our diplomatic and consular network** in accordance with the priorities set out in this Foreign Action Strategy, reorienting Spain's presence abroad and achieving universal diplomatic coverage of our strategic environment.
2. **Prioritise resources** to strengthen relationships within our strategic environment.
3. Strengthen **inter-ministerial coordination** on foreign action. Enhance coordination and external reach in the green transition and in digital transformation.
4. Hold quarterly **inter-ministerial meetings, convened by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation or by the State Secretary, to coordinate Spain's presence in meetings** in different countries and in international forums.
5. Adapt Spanish foreign action to respond to a more **fragmented economy**, identifying vulnerabilities, civilian and military dependencies and dependencies of third countries. **Create a working group on economic security** within the framework of the Government Inter-ministerial Committee on Economic Affairs (CDGAE).
6. Progressively incorporate **AI into the Foreign Service**, focusing on improving efficiency and providing better public service.
7. Enhance consular assistance and protection, **paying special attention to the most vulnerable individuals and groups**, with emphasis on women and girls who are victims of violence abroad.
8. Advance **work-life balance, equality and diversity in the Foreign Service**.
9. Strengthen the Foreign Service by **attracting talent and expanding training**.
10. Foster **public diplomacy** in Embassies and Consulates by creating and mobilising **interest groups** in countries with like-minded civil societies.
11. **Support the presence and promotion of Spanish personnel in international organisations**. Support Spanish applications for management and leadership positions.
12. **Facilitate interaction between Spanish people abroad and Spanish diplomatic and consular missions** and foster contact among Spaniards residing abroad.
13. Enhance the endowment of the **Consular Emergency Division**, creating a new emergency call centre and continuing the staff expansion and infrastructure improvement programme implemented in recent years.
14. Implement the **2025–2027 Action Plan for the Internationalisation of the Spanish Economy**. Among other areas, we will open up new agri-food markets, such as the Asian market, extend existing ones and develop the **Spanish Food Strategy** to reinforce our position as a food and gastronomic powerhouse.
15. **Attract more international talent**, increasing the number of international students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines, with a long-term target of around 15%.
16. Strengthen the **reach of Spanish languages**. Promote the **Global Observatory of Spanish** as a nexus for the network of Instituto Cervantes centres. Consolidate and strengthen **educational programmes abroad**. Enhance coherence and coordination amongst the various units of the national administration for the dissemination of Spanish language and culture, with special emphasis on the training of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language.
17. In the context of foreign action, **strengthen coordination with the Autonomous Communities, Autonomous Cities and local authorities**.
18. **Promote the main instruments of Spanish public diplomacy**: the Spanish network of public diplomacy centres (Red de Casas), the Network of Council Foundations, the Carolina Foundation and the Foundation for the Internationalisation of Public Administrations (FIAP).

19. **Advance parliamentary diplomacy**, supporting initiatives by the Spanish and European Parliaments.
20. **Support Spanish think tanks specialising in international relations**. Facilitate the activity in Spain of prestigious foreign think tanks and foster their relationship with Spanish think tanks.
21. Develop a **plan to enhance understanding of the societies in our strategic environment** (universities, think tanks, civil society).
22. **Increase foresight and anticipatory governance capabilities** in the foreign sector.

A STRONGER EUROPE

23. Work to **secure a larger, better multiannual financial framework in response to common challenges**, rising to 2% of European GNI, to ensure the provision of European public goods while protecting the EU's unique economic and social model.
24. **Make the EU more coherent and dynamic** by implementing streamlined consensus-building mechanisms and by **extending qualified majority voting**.
25. **Reform and extend the Internal Market**, progress towards a savings and investment union, and finalise the banking union and the capital markets union.
26. **Maximise the potential of trade policy as a geostrategic element**, fostering flexible trade agreements with third countries.
27. Promote the **Global Gateway strategy**, championing sustainable EU investments in third countries, especially in areas such as Latin America and the Caribbean, the Southern Neighbourhood and West Africa.
28. Continue working to **maintain effective application of the principle of freedom of movement**, offering our citizens a Schengen area without obstacles to free movement.
29. Support initiatives to **further democratise European institutions**, strengthening public participation in political and legislative processes and strengthening our legal instruments, including the conditionality of the forthcoming multiannual financial framework.
30. **Support the EU's multilingualism and advocate for recognition of co-official Spanish languages** in EU institutions.
31. **Strengthen EU policies for economic, social and territorial cohesion**, protect and preserve the special regime for the outermost regions (ORs) and support our Autonomous Community governments in their participation in the macro-regions.
32. **Strengthen the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Social Agenda** to improve the living conditions of European citizens and to address the new challenges posed by major transformations in our society.
33. Contribute to the development of the **European Education Area** and of skills in the education sector, supporting the Erasmus+ programme.
34. Strengthen the role of **education in consolidating common European values**, by including the EU in the educational curriculum.
35. Promote initiatives related to the **commemoration, in 2025 and 2026, of the fortieth anniversary of the accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Communities**.
36. **Support the European External Action Service and the European Commission** in EU external action, facilitating and coordinating the presence of Spanish personnel in EU institutions.
37. Ensure the appropriate follow-up and political approach by the EU with respect to the **partnerships that are key to our strategic environment**.

A COMMITTED SPAIN

UPHOLDING, REFORMING AND STRENGTHENING THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM

38. **Promote Spain's values and priorities in international organisations. Defend the rules-based multilateral system** and respect for international law, international humanitarian law and human rights.
39. Continue the campaign to achieve Spain's election as a **member of the Security Council** for 2031–2032.
40. Actively participate as an elected member of the **United Nations Human Rights Council** for the period 2025–2027, and in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an elected member until 2026.
41. Consolidate support in terms of financial and human resources and political backing for the work of international justice mechanisms, in particular the **International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice**.
42. Draft and implement the **2025–2028 Action Plan for a Feminist Foreign Policy** and the **Third National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security**.
43. Champion initiatives for a greater **presence of women in multilateral spheres**.
44. Advance transparency and efficiency within the framework of the **Paris Club and G20**.
45. Support the draft **United Nations framework convention on international tax cooperation**, as well as full implementation of Pillar 2 of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) (global minimum level of taxation).
46. Champion the **Global Charter of Labour Rights** to achieve universal recognition of a minimum level of labour rights.
47. **Advance gender equality in the workplace and combat discrimination against LGBTQI+ people** based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, via the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), promoted by the ILO and the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
48. **Actively advance the rights of persons with disabilities** in all areas of our external and European action.
49. Implement the **National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, the Digital Business Internationalisation Strategy, Spain's Quantum Technologies Strategy** and the new **National Cybersecurity Strategy**.
50. Create a national coordination mechanism for **digital and technological diplomacy** and develop a **"Digital Spain 2030" brand** to showcase our technological capabilities. Leverage our strength in High Performance Computing via technology such as Barcelona's MareNostrum supercomputer, to participate in a future global network.
51. **Promote leadership in cybersecurity** in international organisations, particularly the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and sign cooperation agreements with partners and allies, especially in South America.
52. **Advance commitments to digital rights** within the OECD Global Forum on Technology and the United Nations Human Rights Council.
53. Sign agreements to **secure value chains in the digital ecosystem and facilitate Spanish-language AI models** (such as ALIA), training them with data from the destination country, and sharing the supercomputing capabilities of the Barcelona Supercomputing Center with the scientists concerned.
54. Champion **public-private cooperation and open innovation as a means** to maximise synergies with third-country entities in **disruptive technologies**, to encourage innovative investment flows and to enhance the security of our supply chains.

PROMOTING SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION

55. **Promote the full implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum**, ensuring a fair sharing of responsibilities amongst all EU Member States.
56. **Strengthen cooperation and collaboration with countries of origin and transit of migrants**, especially those in our strategic environment.
57. Maintain our **commitment to the right to international protection**, especially for people in vulnerable situations.
58. Continue working closely with the UNHCR and the IOM.
59. Conclude **circular migration** agreements with countries of special relevance to Spain.

CHAMPIONING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

60. Launch the **Council and Inter-ministerial Committee on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity**, as well as the **Sectoral Conference on Sustainable Development**, to strengthen coordination and ensure the effective participation and alignment of all parties involved in Spanish Cooperation.
61. Progress towards meeting the binding commitment to dedicate **0.7% of GNI to Official Development Assistance (ODA)** by 2030, and 10% of this ODA to humanitarian action.
62. Commit to financial cooperation by inaugurating the **Spanish Sustainable Development Fund (FEDES)**.
63. Enhance **security for aid workers and humanitarian aid workers**.
64. **Improve the transparency, accountability, impact and evaluation of Spanish Cooperation** by initiating the work of the new Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Office.
65. Organise the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville**, to facilitate the international community's mobilisation of policies and resources for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
66. In Madrid, host the **General Assembly of the International Forum on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development**.
67. Increase **Spain's contribution to the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund to €120 million** and increase our contributions to place us amongst the top ten donors to the Special Purpose Trust Fund.
68. Implement the new **Multilateral Policy Strategy for Sustainable Development** and sign a new generation of **Strategic Partnership Frameworks between Spanish Cooperation** and various international organisations.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY

69. In view of the European Union's aim to **achieve climate neutrality by 2050**, work to meet the interim target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030.
70. Develop the **Spanish strategy for international climate financing**.
71. Support the creation of the **science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention** facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
72. Implement the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**.
73. Ensure effective **conservation and management of 30% of ocean surfaces by 2030**.
74. Approve and implement the **Spanish action plan against international poaching and the trafficking of wildlife**.

- 75. Promote the implementation of the **EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR)** within and outside the European Union.
- 76. Implement and advance the **international Landscape Fire Governance Framework**.
- 77. Promote the effective implementation of integrated water resource management and the development of national water roadmaps in the context of climate change, through the **Capacity Development Initiative of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework**, spearheaded by Spain.
- 78. Promote the **International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA)**, co-led by Spain and Senegal.
- 79. **Improve the electrical interconnection** with France from 2,800 MW to 5,000 MW by 2030 and to 8,000 MW later, and with Portugal to 4,200 MW in the near future.

A SPAIN THAT STRENGTHENS PEACE AND SECURITY

- 80. **Step up our security efforts:** progressively increase investment, strengthen the technological and industrial fabric of European defence and increase the participation of the Spanish defence industry in this area.
- 81. Be a **proactive, constructive partner regarding the common foreign and security policy**. Systematise the presentation of informal position and working documents (non-papers).
- 82. Champion the **Agenda for the South** within the NATO framework.
- 83. **Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation:** spearhead efforts to preserve the architecture of arms control and prevent the transfer of sensitive technologies and the illegal diversion of weapons.
- 84. Establish an **operational round table on the foreign policy dimension of the Spanish defence industry**, with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Enterprise, and the Ministry of Industry and Tourism, **to design and implement, through regular meetings, a defence industry diplomacy created by and for Spain**.
- 85. Coordinate the negotiation, management and analysis of **sanctions and restrictions**.
- 86. Invest in **international mediation resources**, and resume the work carried out by the Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax).

SPAIN IN THE WORLD

MORE EUROPE BEYOND THE EU

- 87. **Hold regular summits with France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Romania and Türkiye**, and implement follow-up mechanisms to reinforce their outcomes.
- 88. **Continue supporting Ukraine** in every respect, including its reconstruction.
- 89. **Support EU enlargement**, in accordance with the terms set out in the Granada Declaration and **actively participate in EU reform**. Continue **supporting and promoting the process of EU enlargement to include the Western Balkans and other candidate countries**.
- 90. **Consolidate the EU's relations with the United Kingdom**, in a new post-Brexit era, via greater co-operation in sectors of mutual interest, such as security and defence, trade, the energy and digital transitions, judicial matters and policing.
- 91. Seek to conclude an **agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom on Gibraltar**.

92. **Strengthen the coordination of the MED9 Member States** both on issues within the EU and to defend interests related to the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the Euro-Mediterranean area.
93. **Increase our presence and participation in regional consultation forums** with countries in Southern Europe, Scandinavia and the Baltic, through initiatives such as the Three Seas Initiative, the Slavkov Forum and (together with Poland and Romania) the Valencia Trio.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PARTNERS FOR A SHARED AGENDA

94. **Strengthen relations with all countries in the region**, especially with our strategic partners, as well as with regional and subregional organisations facilitating cooperation and integration.
95. **Expand relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries**, particularly into areas jointly identified as being of high priority, such as the digital, environmental, and social transition; human mobility; the fight against insecurity; strengthening democratic institutions; and consultation and cooperation in multilateral forums.
96. Contribute, through the **Spanish Pro Tempore Secretariat**, to **strengthening the Ibero-American Conference and the system of Summits**.
97. Champion **consolidation of the bi-regional partnership between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**.
98. Advocate for **ratification of the EU-MERCOSUR Agreement**.
99. Maintain political support for the peace process in **Colombia** and the stabilisation of **Haiti**.
100. Continue prioritising the search for a solution to the political crisis in **Venezuela**, encouraging dialogue between political actors in the country, and supporting measures that safeguard the public freedoms and fundamental rights of all Venezuelans.
101. **Work together with Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen the position of the Spanish language in multilateral diplomacy, science and technology**, promoting its use in international relations, including in international courts and tribunals (such as the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, The Hague Conference on Private International Law, the Academy of International Law and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law).

THE MAGHREB AND THE MIDDLE EAST: COMMITTED TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

102. Develop **strategic relations**, particularly with the Gulf countries, strengthening bilateral ties; in addition, explore the potential for joint and complementary action in other regions such as Africa and Latin America.
103. Facilitate **Euro-Arab encounters** through multilateral initiatives such as the EU-League of Arab States and EU-Gulf Cooperation Council dialogues.
104. In line with our **continent-wide**, comprehensive policy approach to Africa, foster dialogue with our Mediterranean partners on sub-Saharan Africa, and enhance relations between Spain, our Mediterranean partners and sub-Saharan Africa.
105. **Strengthen the European Union's relations with its Southern Neighbourhood** by adopting and implementing the new Pact for the Mediterranean and by holding the first European Union-Southern Neighbourhood summit.
106. Promote consultation and dialogue, also via cooperation with other donors, in **humanitarian and development activities**, paying special attention to the stabilisation of post-conflict areas (humanitarian-development-peace nexus).

STRENGTHENING ENDURING TIES WITH NORTH AMERICA

107. Extend our **collaboration with think tanks** through programmes that specifically address Spain's interests, and research secondments for Spanish officials and experts.
108. Renew **bilateral working groups** on areas or topics of common interest.
109. Publicise Spain's contribution to the **commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States in 2026**.
110. Support the **Fundación Consejo España-EE.UU.** in highlighting our mutual interests, using instruments such as **forums, visitor programmes and travelling exhibitions, and work further with Hispanic communities**.
111. Enhance collaboration between **Spanish civil society organisations and their partners in North America**, through bodies such as Spanish Scientists in the US (ECUSA) and the Canadian Spanish Scientists Association (CASSA).
112. Develop lines of collaboration with Canada on **issues regarding the polar region**.

A LEAP FORWARD IN OUR RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

113. Promote the role of the **Inter-ministerial Committee for Africa** to ensure the coordination and coherence of our external action concerning Africa.
114. Establish an **Africa foundation** to facilitate relations with Africa and create academic and employment opportunities for young people through study grant and visitor programmes.
115. Launch initiatives such as the **Alianza África Avanza** for the promotion of sustainable investment and the Ibero-African Association of Chambers of Commerce (AFRICO).
116. Set up a **Spain-Africa advisory committee** and **new Council Foundations**.

DEEPENING SPAIN'S IMPACT IN ASIA-PACIFIC

117. **Strengthen the system of structured dialogues** by expanding the twelve existing ones to countries with which we currently have no cooperation agreement, especially in Southeast Asia.
118. **Implement a regular schedule of trips and visits to the countries of the region**, via the inter-ministerial group created for the purpose by this Strategy.
119. **Strengthen security and defence cooperation with the region** (alongside the defence industry) and ensure Spain's presence in security-related forums such as the Shangri-La Dialogue.
120. **Raise the level of relations with the ASEAN** to the category of development partner.
121. **Strengthen the network of Instituto Cervantes centres** and teaching facilities in the Asia-Pacific region.
122. Through **Casa Asia and the Council Foundations**, continue the work of the six existing forums and extend them to other countries in the region, such as Australia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam.

BUILDING ON OUR PRESENCE IN THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

123. **Extend the Casa Asia network of forums to the Central Asian region** (Kazakhstan).
124. **Expand the system of structured dialogues** to countries with which we currently have no cooperation agreement, especially in Central Asia.
125. **Increase economic cooperation** to leverage trade and investment opportunities and **strengthen cooperation in security and defence**, alongside the defence industry.



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA
Y COOPERACIÓN