

Immigration: challenges and opportunities



Credits

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Letter from the Chairman



Isidre Fainé

Chairman of "la Caixa" Banking Foundation

It is a pleasure for me to present once again a Dossier for the Social Observatory of "la Caixa", dedicated in this case to one of the most important issues for the evolution of Spanish society today: immigration.

By setting forth ideas and scientifically backed results, the Observatory has established itself as an instrument that contributes towards informed and rigorous decision making. This Dossier affords us the possibility to reflect on the changes wrought on our society by the arrival of millions of people since the turn of the 21st century.

It does so, as usual, through contributions from leading researchers in the field. If we assume that immigration is one of the great challenges facing Spanish society of the future, we must first of all recognise its contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of a population in need of human capital. In addition, the demographic changes caused by the new inhabitants of our country have brought a more diverse and cosmopolitan society.

But it is essential to ensure that today's diversity does not lead to an increase in inequality. We must bear in mind that many of our new neighbours have less economic and educational resources, and this shortcoming makes them vulnerable to the risk of social exclusion. For this reason, the challenge is also to integrate cultures, languages and religions; in other words, it is above all a civic and educational challenge.

In a society that has been hit by an unprecedented health crisis, citizens have grown aware that the future is built collectively. In this context, the Social Observatory in general and this Dossier in particular provide the opportunity to become acquainted, in an engaging and accessible way, with results and reflections that can serve as interpretative tools to contribute to the debate and to consistent and well-founded decision making in such a sensitive matter as immigration.

Summary

This Dossier begins with the general Barometer, which offers a series of indicators on social, demographic and economic issues to put Spain in an international context. After these, other indicators are shown that relate immigration to the main social dimensions and the challenges our country faces.

This is followed by the two central articles, which present two complementary dimensions of the topic. The first addresses, from a demographic perspective, the impact of immigration on the rural environment, and the second relates the phenomenon to the sustainability of the education system.

The article by Luis Camarero and Rosario Sampedro analyses the evolution of the rural population since the turn of the century, highlighting the role played by new inhabitants in generational renewal. Despite the slump caused by the crisis of 2008, the arrival of population from very diverse origins in the rural world is filling the gap left by demographic ageing.

In their article, Lúdia Farré and Francesc Ortega study the increase in the rate of foreign pupils in Spanish schools. Foreign children mostly attend public schools, and this has brought about a movement of native children towards private and charter schools. This does not help new arrivals to integrate, but if the educational preferences of native and immigrant families move closer in the future, the process may be reversed.

The interview with Giovanni Peri calls into question preconceived ideas on immigration processes and outcomes in the United States and Europe, at the same time putting forward proposals for improvements in the management of the arrival of people in countries like Spain.

The reviews section presents two books that approach immigration from the viewpoint of political management in Europe and the force of demographic growth in Africa. The contrast between the two perspectives affords a more nuanced vision of the issue.

The Dossier concludes with a section of best practices on both a national and an international level, including initiatives such as the Intercultural Community Intervention project run by the "la Caixa" Banking Foundation to facilitate maximum social cohesion in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

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Barometer

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General context indicators

Selection made by

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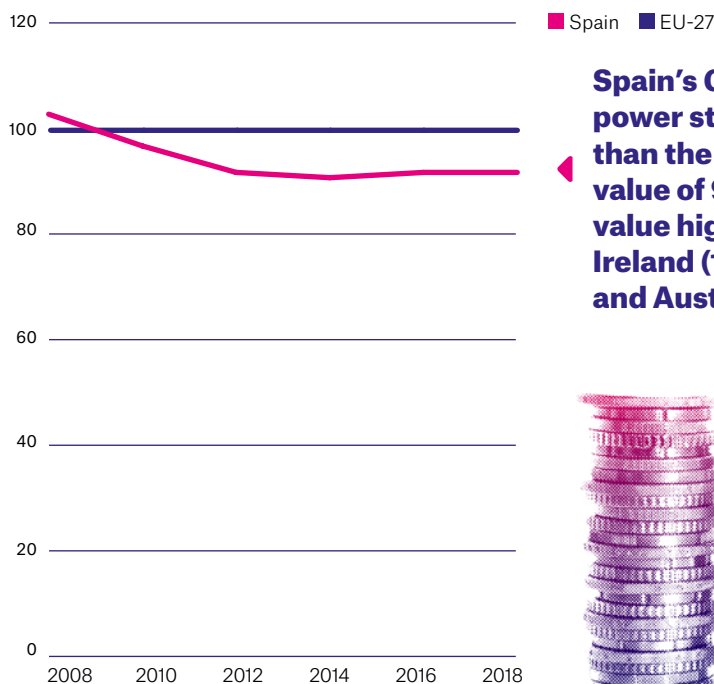
This section provides a general context for the rest of the data and indicators presented in the Barometer. Thus, from a series of basic indicators and synthetic indicators on social, demographic and economic issues, this section offers a global and temporal vision of the situation of Spain within the European and international context.

Global view



1. Level of economic development

Gross domestic product per capita in purchasing power standards
SPAIN AND EU-27 (AS OF 2020)



Spain's GDP per capita in purchasing power standards for 2018 was lower than the European average, with a value of 92. Among countries with a value higher than the average we find Ireland (188), the Netherlands (130) and Austria (128)



Source: Eurostat, 2020.

The figures are expressed in purchasing power standards; this enables us to eliminate differences in price levels between countries, and therefore allows a comparison of GDP that affords a more accurate reflection of the economic capacity of the citizens of each country. The volume of GDP per capita in

purchasing power standards is expressed in relation to the European Union average (EU-27), which takes the value 100. In this way, if the index of a country is higher than 100, the level of per capita GDP of that country is higher than the European Union average and vice versa.



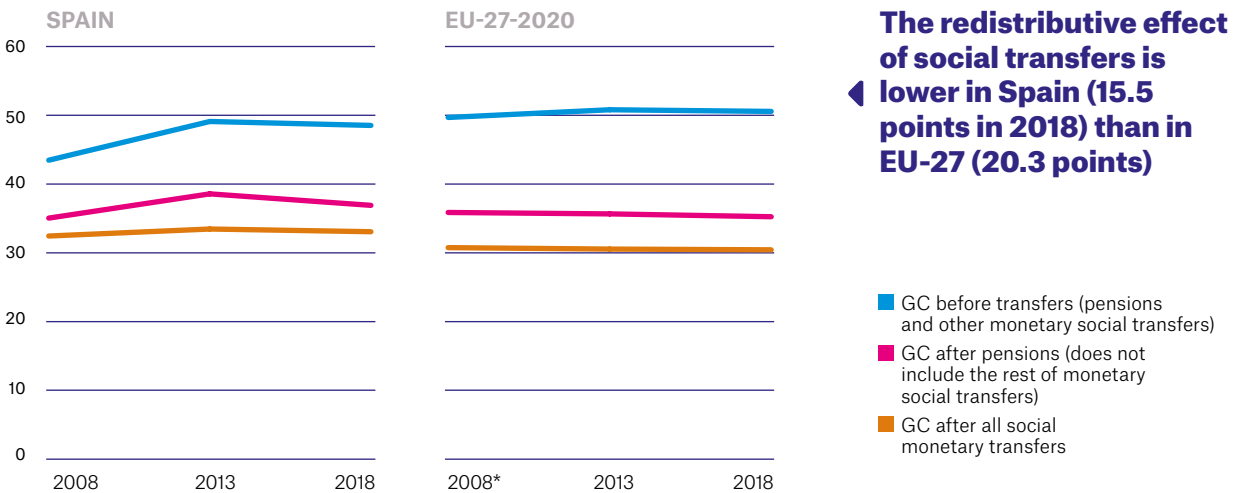
The **Gini coefficient** measures inequality in income distribution. To make it easier to interpret, its values (between 0 and 1) are multiplied by 100, thus ranging from 0 to 100. The closer it is to zero the more equal the distribution, whereas a coefficient close to 100 implies a high concentration of income within a small number of individuals and therefore greater inequality.

The **AROPE indicator** of risk of poverty and social exclusion affords a multidimensional view of poverty and social exclusion, taking into account the population that finds itself in at least one of the following three situations:

- 1) below the risk-of-poverty threshold;
- 2) with severe material deprivation;
- 3) living in a household whose members are underemployed or unemployed.

2. Income distribution inequality

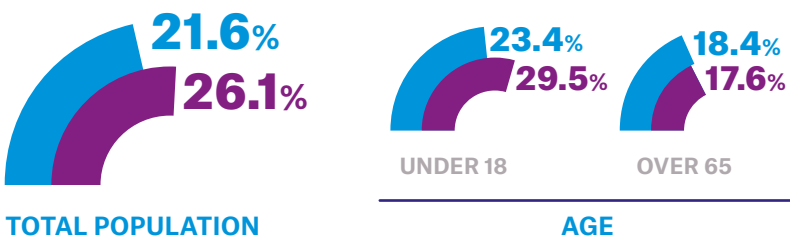
Gini coefficient (GC)



Source: Eurostat, 2020 / * Data refer to EU-27 (2007-2013).

3. People at risk of poverty and social exclusion

AROPE indicator of risk of poverty and social exclusion by age groups, 2018
SPAIN AND EU-27-2020



Under-18s are the age group with the highest percentage of population at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and in which the difference from the European average is largest

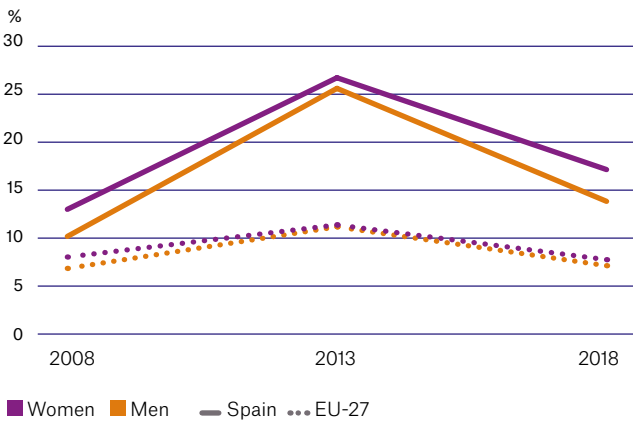
■ Spain ■ EU-27-2020

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Global view

4. Social exclusion from the labour market

Unemployment rates by sex
ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR THE TOTAL POPULATION,
SPAIN AND EU-27-2020



In Spain, 17.1% of women were unemployed in 2018, 9.4 points more than the European average (7.7%)

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

34.3%

In Spain, 3.4 out of every 10 young people (under-25s) were unemployed in 2018, a much higher figure than the European average (16.1%).

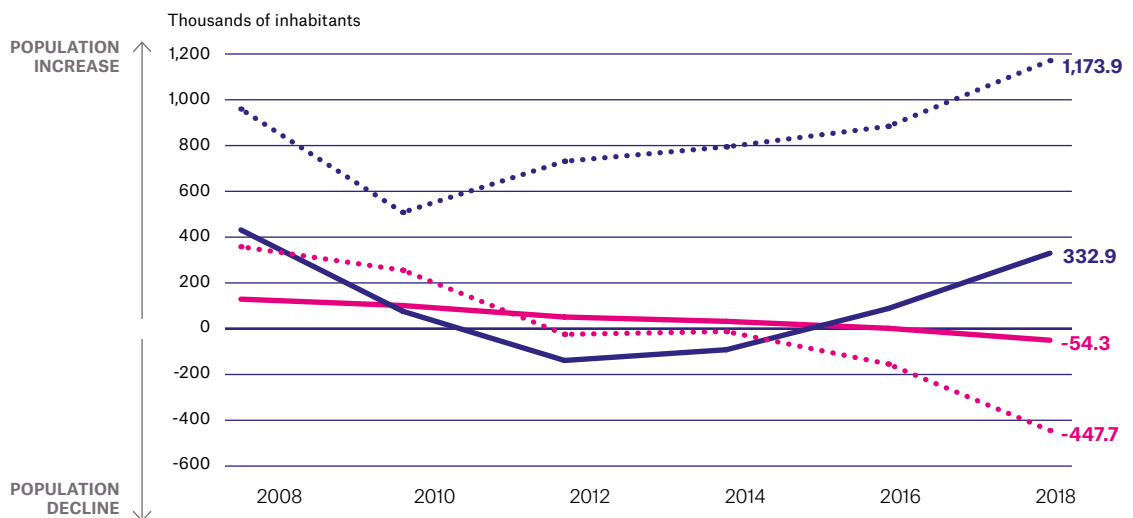
Long-term unemployment rate (in relation to the total workforce), 2018:



Source: Eurostat, 2020.

5. Population growth or decline

Population change due to natural causes (births and deaths) and migratory movements (arrivals and departures)
SPAIN AND EU-27-2020



In 2018, the Spanish population rose by 278,613 people. Without taking into account migratory flows, the population would have fallen by 54,326 people

■ Population change due to natural causes
■ Population change due to migratory movement
— Spain ... EU-27

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

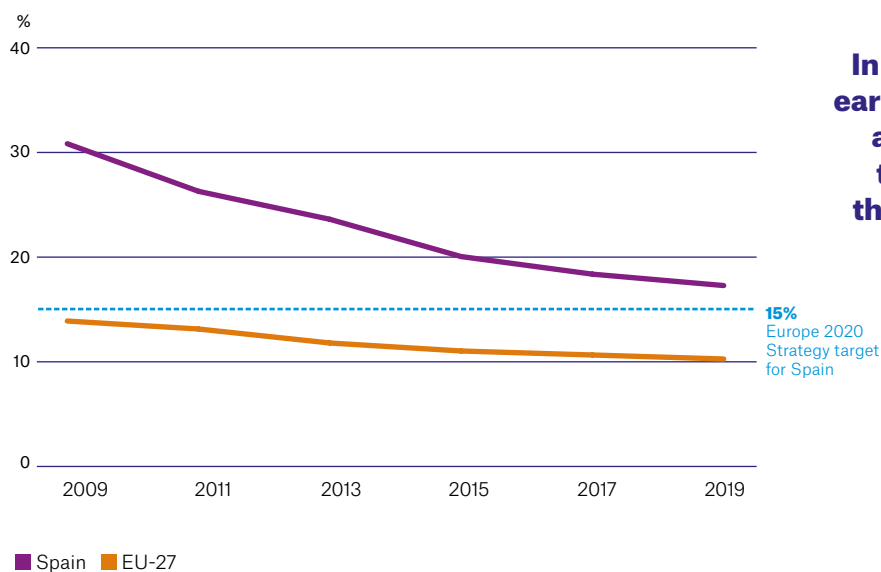


The **rate of early leavers from education and training** reflects the percentage of people aged 18 to 24 whose maximum

education level is the first phase of secondary education and who are not following any kind of education or training.

6. Limitations to human capital formation

Rate of early leavers from education and training
SPAIN AND EU-27-2020



In 2019, the percentage of early leavers from education and training was 17.2%, two points higher than the Europe 2020 Strategy target for Spain (15%)

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Early leavers from education by sex

13.0%

Percentage of women aged 18 to 24 who left education or training in 2019 (EU-27: 8.4%)

21.2%

Percentage of men aged 18 to 24 who left education or training in 2019 (EU-27: 11.9%)

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

