

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

# Spain

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## 1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Relying on a combination of rich cultural heritage, the global reach of the Spanish language, and a substantial diplomatic network, Spain has a privileged position to project its culture and values into the world. Its heavyweight status is reflected in many international rankings of diplomacy and soft power, where it regularly appears in the top twenty group (see Table 1).

Spain is a long-standing member of many organisations, including the European Union since 1986, the Council of Europe since 1977, UNESCO since 1953. Spain was once the metropole of a vast colonial empire and draws its strength from the *Hispanophonie* to this day. With Spanish being the second language of international communication and the official language in 21 countries (483 million native speakers worldwide), the country has well earned its place in the upper echelons of the greatest diplomatic forces: the Lowy Index places it as 9<sup>th</sup> out of 61 nations with the broadest geopolitical reach.

The country's intangible attraction (*el poder blando*) or soft power, transcends its economic performance. The list of iconic phenomena firmly embedded into the nation's image is lengthy and ranges from gastronomy (tapas, paella, sangria), famous figures (Rafael Nadal, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Conquistadores), recreation and leisure (la siesta, flamenco), to many recurrent tropes like football, bullfighting, etc. Spanish multinational companies (Santander, BBVA, Zara) are renowned worldwide. Although only a small part of Spain's cultural resources, all these phenomena along with a rich history and natural wonders have earned the affection around the world and strengthen Spain's tourist appeal. 2019 closed as the record year with the number of international tourists exceeding 83 million (MINCOTUR, 2020). Needless to say, Spain capitalizes on its cultural assets and tourism potential, also confirmed in the latest biannual Travel & Tourism Competitiveness index which placed it as the top scoring economy in the group of 132 (WEF, 2019).

Spain scores highly on the Culture subindex of the Portland's Soft Power 30 placing 5<sup>th</sup>. On the other hand, the country's rankings in the areas of Enterprise, Government, and Education are considerably lower (Portland, 2019). This is largely the result of past political uncertainties around the future of Catalonia and the 2008–2014 financial crisis. The greatest obstacle, however, is diminished business climate. The High Commissioner of the Spanish Government for *Marca España* (Brand Spain), explained the rationale for creating a national brand strategy in 2012: "What we sought to do [...] was to recover something that we had lost – namely confidence. It seemed that most people, both inside and outside Spain, had lost confidence in the country's future" (qtd. in FirstForum, n.d.). Other main focus was to draw international attention to Spain's positive features, the rich history and traditions, but also modernity, diversity, and solidarity.

**Table 1: Country's geopolitical and geoeconomic position**

	2019	% change since 2015	
Population (millions) / ranking	46.93 / 30 <sup>th</sup>	46.44 / 1%	
GDP ranking	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	
GDP per capita	€26,430	13.8	
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.40 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.10	
Education economy (%GDP)	4 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.10	
R&D economy (%GDP)	1.24 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.02	
Media economy (%GDP)	0.20 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0	
Sources: Eurostat, World Bank			
Geopolitical position			
Hard power rank	20 <sup>th</sup>	-	↑
World trade rank (\$ million)	15 <sup>th</sup> / 888,050	15 <sup>th</sup> / 767,577	-
Soft power rank	13 <sup>th</sup> / 71.05	14 <sup>th</sup> / 61.70	↑
Diplomacy rank	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> <sup>(2016)</sup>	↑

**Table 2: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays**

	2019	% change since 2015
Culture	1.10 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.10
Education	9.60 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.20
R & D	1.21	- 0.07
Media	0.50 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0

Source: Eurostat

## 2. External cultural policy: an overview

Although considered a cultural superpower, Spain surprisingly does not have a very long tradition in external cultural policy. Compared to other European powers like France (Alliance française existing since 1883) or the UK (British Council established in 1934), Spanish efforts in external cultural policy were scattered and at best consigned to the last few decades (Badillo, 2014). The now renowned Instituto Cervantes was founded in 1991.

The earliest attempts at cultural promotion abroad happened before the Spanish Civil War with the establishment of several institutions, like the Office of Spanish Cultural Relations (*Oficina de Relaciones Culturales Españolas*) (1921) and the Junta of Cultural Relations (*Junta de Relaciones Culturales*) (1926) (Herrera de la Muela, 2008). Spanish diplomatic envoys started coordinating the cultural activity with the creation of the General Directorate of Cultural Relations and the Institute of Culture Hispánica (1946). During the 1950s first cultural centers opened in London, Rome, London, Rome, Naples, Paris, Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut, and Munich. The first tangible commitment to ECP, however, happened after the recovery of democracy, when promotion of culture was recognized as a priority. This period is characterized by modernization efforts towards a ‘new and democratic Spain’ and away from isolationism under the Francoist dictatorship (Moreno, 2014). By the start of the 1990s, Spain was equipped with first ECP institutions: a directorate for cultural relations, an international co-operation agency which integrated culture (AECID, *Centros Culturales*), and a central promotional institution (Instituto Cervantes).

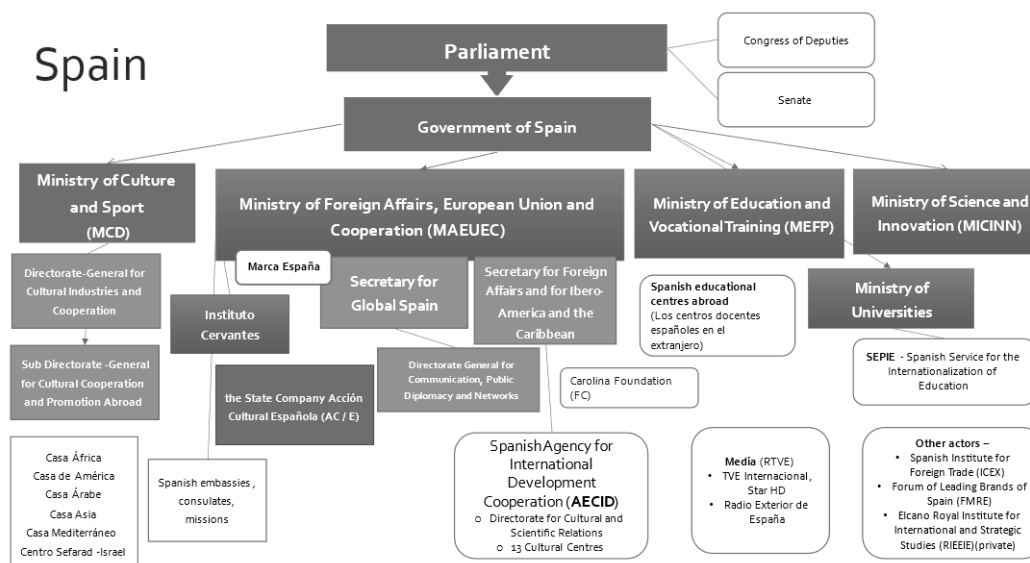
After 2000 the institutional map got a new addition in the form of “Marca España,” an embodiment of the marketing approach in external action, or nation branding. Nation branding is linked to the perception that foreign audiences have about a certain country and the manner in which it conditions their attitudes towards choosing country’s products or services (Badillo, 2014). It is a political, economic, and cultural strategy (Aronczyk, 2013). As authors Rius Ull-demolins and Zamorano (2015) notice, ECP is being increasingly used as “the medium in which nation states can instrumentalize their cultural production and accomplish soft power goals.” Spain is no exception. The previous culture Minister emphasized that, “culture must be consolidated in the coming years as an essential element of the external projection of the Spain brand” (MECD, 2012). Apart from culture, Marca España promotes Spanish companies internationally to achieve greater competitiveness, fashion conglomerates like Zara, football teams (Real Madrid), and financial institutions (Santander Bank, BBVA) for example are members of the Leading Brands or ‘Foro de Marcas Renombradas’ (FMRE) (Moreno, 2014).

The country looks likely to continue relying on this strategy. In 2018, the brand project was refined and renamed *España Global* (Global Spain). Under the helm of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Secretariat for Global Spain is coordinating all branding efforts. The latest Foreign Action Strategy (2021-2024) emphasises the importance of *poder blando español*, the cultural, educational, and scientific diplomacy, and hints at larger ambitions of Global Spain with increased international presence and influence (MAEUEC, 2021).

The financing of external cultural policy is complex and involves many actors. One particularly important initiative is Program 144A – Cooperation, Promotion, and Cultural Diffusion Abroad whose purpose is to “disseminate a positive and dynamic image of Spain abroad by promoting cultural and scientific relations with other countries and multilateral organisations” (qtd. in Badillo, 2014). The second budget line which corresponds to ECP is the Program 144B – Cooperation, Promotion, and Educational diffusion abroad. The Program 144A was financed to the tune of €137.6 million in 2019, and the promotion of education was supported with €13.4 million (CIVIO, 2019).

**Table 4: Key ECP Statistics for Country**

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	-
Total number of institutions abroad	~427
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	~1683
Government financial support (€ million)	the Spanish MFA has no specific budget for all ECP activities Program 144A "Cooperation, promotion and cultural diffusion abroad": 137.76 <sup>1</sup> Program 144B "Cooperation, promotion and educational diffusion abroad": 13.41
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€ million)	-
Comparative ECP ranking	major

**Figure 1: Institutional map of country's ECP**

The Spanish ECP model could be best described as a combination of the British and French ones since it allows for involvement of private actors and NGOs, but highlights the importance of cultural promotion through the state (Moreno, 2014). The external action is a joint effort of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (MAEUEC) and the Ministry of Culture and Sports (MCD). Within the Ministry of Culture and its directorate for cultural industries, important is the subdepartment for the promotion of Spanish cultural industries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs performs its mandate primarily through the

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of total budget: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation: 93.79%; Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports: 6.21%.

Secretariat for International Development and Cooperation and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean, and the Secretariat for Global Spain. In order to avoid disputes around different tasks, the Ministries for Culture and Foreign Affairs agreed on a National Plan for Cultural Action Abroad (PACE) in 2009. Regrettably, PACE was introduced during the economic recession. After being neglected by previous governments, the plan was reintroduced in 2019 with a commitment of €157 million, and identifying 11 priority countries<sup>2</sup> (MCD, 2019). In 2017, the Culture Ministry adopted the “Culture Plan 2020” document in which foreign cultural action is one of the main objectives. One of the goals is to reinforce the image of Spain as a cultural superpower through the internationalization of its cultural and touristic offerings (Villarroya & Ateca-Amestoy, 2019).

The Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry (MAEUEC) has no specific budget for all external cultural activities. The institutional landscape is quite crowded with many institutions sharing competences and resources (see Figure 1). Apart from the MAEUEC which oversees the external action, numerous other institutions are tasked with projecting Spain’s image internationally. The AECID (*Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo*) is engaged through its cooperation work, and through scientific exchanges (grants and scholarships). In the domain of culture, it is active through its *Centros Culturales* located in Hispanic countries. The bulk of cultural activities however is entrusted to *Institutos Cervantes*. A new agency combining the work of previous public bodies (SEACEX, SECC, SEEI)<sup>3</sup>, the *Acción Cultural Española* (AC/E), was created in 2011. The unifying factor of these institutions has been the national branding strategy initiated in 2003 and renewed in 2012, the *Marca España* (Carta & Badillo, 2020).

The autonomous regions of Spain carry out their own ECP activities. The national government, however, increasingly perceives such cultural paradiplomacies<sup>4</sup> as a “burden on the country’s international projection” and has favored a centralist model (Rius Ulldemolins & Zamorano, 2015). However, the regions have their own promotional mechanisms. For instance, in 2007 the Basque administration set up the Etxepare Basque Institute as a tool for the Basque cultural diplomacy and developing international cultural relations. Among else, the Institute fosters inter-regional cooperation with other provinces, such as Scotland and Quebec. Those parts of Spain bordering Europe have focused on European collaboration frameworks, and Andalusia for example supports cultural exchange with Morocco (Villarroya & Ateca-Amestoy, 2019).

As an autonomous community of Spain, Catalonia has also expanded its network of delegations abroad. However, after the 2017-2018 constitutional crisis,<sup>5</sup> its international presence shrank. Presently, the province has 15 delegations<sup>6</sup> abroad (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2021). The Catalan government exercises its own external cultural policy via the Subdirectorat for Cultural Promotion under the Department of Culture with a budget of €30 million annually

<sup>2</sup> United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Morocco, Portugal, France, Russia, Japan, China, Mexico, and Cuba.

<sup>3</sup> State Society for Cultural Commemorations (SECC), State Society for Foreign Cultural Action (Seacex), State Society for International Exhibitions (SEEI) were state companies dedicated to promoting Spanish culture and “Marca España”.

<sup>4</sup> Paradiplomacy refers to the international activities and foreign policy capacities of substate structures like cities and, more commonly, regional governments (Jackson, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Spanish 2017–2018 constitutional crisis was a political conflict between the Spanish and Catalan governments over the issue of Catalan independence.

<sup>6</sup> Catalan government delegations are located in these regions: the European Union, the UK and Ireland, Germany, USA, Italy, Switzerland, France, the Balkans, the Baltic States, Central Europe, Nordic countries, Portugal, Argentina, Mexico, Tunisia.

(€38,009,479 in 2019) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019). Besides the directorate, other organizations are active in projecting Catalan culture. In 2002, the authorities of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands joined efforts to create the Institut Ramon Llull (IRL), a public body tasked with internationalizing the study of Catalan language and culture. The cultural promotion is the primary task of the Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries (ICIC), in particular the export and increased visibility of Catalan creation abroad (Villarroya, 2012). In addition, the Public Diplomacy Council (*Consell de Diplomàcia Pública de Catalunya* – DIPLOCAT, est. in 2012<sup>7</sup>) is working towards increasing international awareness of Catalonia. Following the 2017 Catalan self-determination referendum, the Spanish Rajoy administration temporarily dissolved DIPLOCAT, perceiving its activities as “an over-extension of the political mandate” (Alexander & Royo i Marine, 2020). Even though the new Spanish leadership later acknowledged the legality of the organization, the dispute revealed a deeper rift between Madrid’s official external (cultural) policy and regional paradiplomacies.

Besides Europe, cooperation with Latin America has always been a top foreign policy priority. The Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry even has a dedicated department - the General Directorate for Ibero-America and the Caribbean (DGIC). The inspiration behind the Ibero-American space is the ‘special’ bond between Spaniards and Latin-Americans resting on shared language, history, and culture. The Latin familial ties gave way to *Hispanidad*, the idea of a Spanish-speaking space with Spain at the centre as the *Madre Patria* (homeland) (Grugel, 2002). At the same time, it is a love-hate relationship because Latinos might point out one important detail: their identity is inextricably linked to the Spanish Empire and other imperial powers’ violence over the indigenous peoples. The idea that Latin America and Iberia have a lot in common, Hispanismo or Hispanidad, and especially its “romantic and strategic versions” then becomes highly problematic (Valdes, 2005). More recently, the Spanish cultural projection in the Americas which traditionally relied on the common language, has become more arduous in an environment dominated by the Anglo culture. Even in Latin America, the increasing presence of China and Russia thwarts the visibility of Spanish institutions (Fundación Alternativas, 2020).

### 3. Fields of ECP

#### 3.1. Culture and the arts

**Table 4: Key statistics on culture and the arts**

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	Instituto Cervantes (IC): 45	IC: 43 <sup>(2016)</sup>
Number of institutes	IC: 77 (65 centers) AECID: 13 cultural centers	IC: 76 <sup>(2016)</sup> AECID: 13 cultural centers
Number of FTE staff	IC: 951 AC/E: 53	IC: 1,001 AC/E: 55

<sup>7</sup> Catalan diplomacy was already visible in the 1980s via the Pro-European Catalan Partnership (Patronat Català Pro Europa (PCPE)).

	2019	2015
Number of artists in exchange programs <small>PICE mobility programs (AC/E)</small>	1,066	931
Budget (€)	IC: 123,942,110 AC/E: 10,290,000	IC: 114,850,310 AC/E: 22,265,000
Government financial support (€)	IC: 66,309,028	IC: 54,209,346

The Spanish cultural model is comprised of multiple actors, some of which are presented below. Strictly speaking, the three main spheres of external action are the Cervantes institutes, the AECID network of cultural centers, and the culture departments in Spanish embassies (Eugenia Menéndez, 2018).

The Instituto Cervantes (IC) was founded in 1991 as a government agency with a mandate to promote Spanish language and culture. As a renowned brand of Spanish ECP, Instituto Cervantes has a fair deal of independence, though the “arm’s length” between state and institute is noticeably shorter than international equivalents like the British Council. At present, 86 cities in 45 countries host a branch (centers, classrooms, extensions) of the *Instituto Cervantes*, with new openings planned in in Sub-Saharan Africa and the US (MCD, 2019). The ICs are particularly visible in Europe and South America. If distribution of offices abroad reflects political or other priorities, Brazil stands out with 8 Spanish institutes (Demir & Im, 2020). There is far less expansion in North America, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, which together account for 21% of all existing centres (Instituto Cervantes, 2019b). Another form of presence is the Aulas Cervantes (10 classrooms), which are located within universities and dependent on an IC center. In 2019, the institute operated on a budget of €123.9 million, 53.5% of which was covered by public funding, and the rest comes from self-financing activities like language courses (Instituto Cervantes, 2019a).

The Spanish Public Agency for Cultural Action (*Acción Cultural Española*) (AC/E) is a state agency set up in 2010 that orchestrates public support for the promotion of Spanish culture and heritage, both domestically and abroad. The agency achieves this goal through a broad program of activities like international exhibitions and fairs, conferences, and programs that encourage cultural exchange and mobility of professionals. Since 2013, the AC/E’s runs a program for the internationalization of Spanish culture (PICE), which supports the foreign presence of the Spanish creative sector through mobility grants, residencies, and visitor programs. In 2018, €1.78 million were spent to support PICE mobility programs (A/CE, 2019).

AECID (the Spanish Agency for International Development) is the executing body for Spanish development cooperation. Its primary objectives are the reduction of poverty, promoting sustainable development, and humanitarian action, as well as promoting the role of culture. AECID oversees a network of 48 cooperation units abroad: 31 Technical Cooperation Offices, 13 Cultural Centers and 4 Training Centers (AECID, n.d.). The Spanish development cooperation has traditionally maintained a stronger presence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Apart from South America, AECID’s regional priorities include the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia (Moreno, 2014). The AECID has its own cultural network of 13 centers (and 7 associated branches) in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador,



Equatorial Guinea (2x), Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. In 2015, culture and development made 6.5% of the total distributed aid (AECID, 2015).

The Carolina Foundation (FC) is a public-private entity established in 2000 by an agreement between the Council of Ministers, with the objective to promote scientific and cultural cooperation between Spain and the countries from the Ibero-American Community of Nations. The framework of action also includes the priorities set by the Spanish MFA: project a positive image of Spain in Ibero-America, promote the Brand Spain and Spanish academic institutions, and otherwise strengthen the Ibero-American knowledge space (FC, 2016). To achieve these goals, the Foundation organises visitor programs and seminars, maintains professional networks, and distributes scholarships. In 2019, the value of scholarship programs was approximately €7 million and for the 2020 call, 822 scholarships and grants<sup>8</sup> will be offered (FC, 2020).

Cultural promotion abroad is the focus of many other institutions. A network of Council Foundations (*Consejos*) strengthens bilateral ties with important international actors. Examples of Consejo Foundations include Spain–United States, Spain–Japan, Spain–Russia, Spain–India, Spain–China, Spain–Mexico, and Spain–Australia. Next, the Casas Consortium, created in 1992, aims to strengthen relations with regions of special importance for Spanish foreign policy (Moreno, 2014). It comprises six ‘Casas’: Casa África in Canary Islands (est. 2006), Casa de América (1990) in Madrid, Casa Árabe and International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies (2006) with centers in Madrid and Córdoba, Casa Asia (2001) in Barcelona, Casa Mediterráneo (2009) in Alicante, Centro Sefarad-Israel (2006) in Madrid, as well as the Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies (1995) in Granada, and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (1989) in Barcelona.

Another notable initiative is the arts & culture SPAIN program which aims to promote the Spanish creation in the US and create spaces for dialogue between Hispanic and American decision-makers. Spain has also been a member of the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science, and Culture (OEI) since 1949 (Villarroya & Ateca-Amestoy, 2019). The OEI, with headquarters in Madrid, is considered the largest multilateral cooperation body between Spanish and Portuguese-speaking nations.

A particularly important instrument of Spanish ECP is the Ibero-American Summit (first held in 1991), which brings together the leaders from Latin-American and Spanish and Portuguese nations “linked through a common cultural heritage of more than five centuries” (MAEUEC, n.d.). In addition, the summit promotes other programs like student scholarships. On the one hand, the meetings strengthen the image of Spain and Portugal in their former colonies and improve relations with rising economies such as Brazil and Mexico. As a win-win situation, Spain also gets to assume a leadership role in the bilateral cooperation between Latin America and Europe (Moreno, 2014). Still, many would argue that the importance of the summit is exaggerated: with left-leaning governments losing interest and Spain’s economic downturn the event was eventually changed to take place every two years (Wang, 2016). It just went to show that Spain’s ambition to unify and lead the Ibero-American nations was never going to be realized.

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<sup>8</sup> 237 postgraduate scholarships, 96 doctoral scholarships and short postdoctoral stays, 61 teaching staff mobility scholarships and 302 institutional study scholarships (FC, 2019).

### 3.2. Language

**Table 5: Key figures on language promotion**

	2019	2015
Number of countries where courses are offered	110	-
Number of students enrolled		
In-class	IOE Spanish courses: 148,670 (thereof Teacher training: 13,971) worldwide: 21,882,448 learners	IC Spanish courses: 114,527 (Teacher training: 15,900)
Online reach	AVE Global: 8,648	AVE Global: 13,978 <sup>(2015/16)</sup> 9
Number of candidates for Spanish language qualifications / DELE	118,586	67,657
Number of language teachers	-	-
Budget (€ million)	<i>see above</i>	<i>see above</i>
Government financial support (€ million)	<i>see above</i>	<i>see above</i>

Spanish is the language with the second largest number of native speakers in the world, and the third language by number of all speakers after English and Chinese Mandarin. Today, over 580 million, or 7.6% of the world's population, use Spanish (Instituto Cervantes, 2019c). It is expected it will become the world's second most important language of economic exchange, mainly due to the growth of the Latin American and North American markets (there are 52 million Spanish speakers in the US) (MINCOTUR, 2015). The forecast is favorable, especially considering that Spanish is highly popular attracting almost 22 million learners in 110 countries in 2019, which makes it the fourth most studied foreign language globally (Instituto Cervantes, 2019c). In the digital space, Spanish is the third most common language. Although not consistent, there have been some strategies to try and strengthen the position of Spanish as the second most used language online. This includes for example the Plan for the promotion of language technologies by the Digital Agenda of the Spanish government (Villarroya & Ateca-Amestoy, 2019).

Instituto Cervantes (IC) is the main body responsible for the international dissemination of Spanish through teaching and official certification. Along with the Cervantes headquarters, this objective is carried out through the accredited institutions (Cervantes Accreditation System for Centers - SACIC). 205 such centers exist, 164 of which are located in Spain. 76% of remaining centers abroad are concentrated in South America (Instituto Cervantes, 2019b). Importantly, the dissemination of language has taken a “new pan-Hispanic” turn, through the

<sup>9</sup> Licences sold at El Aula Virtual del Español (AVE). A total of 69,868 students were registered on the platform in 2014/15.

action program of “Iberoamericanization” (Rizzo, 2020). Apart from the Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE) certification issued by the Instituto Cervantes, in 2016, a new examination system, the International Spanish Language Assessment Service (SIELE) has been introduced. SIELE is an online exam jointly promoted by the Cervantes institute, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Universidad de Salamanca and the Universidad de Buenos Aires. This initiative treats Spanish as a universal language and embraces different dialects from Hispanophone countries. The other important actor in language policy, the Spanish Royal Academy (Real Academia Española - RAE) which oversees the standardization of the Spanish language (dictionaries, grammars, etc.) has also moved from its traditional Euro-centric Hispanism towards modernity and commitment to pan-Hispanism. It has for example established cooperation with the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language which brings all Spanish-speaking countries together (del Valle & Villa, 2006).

The Cervantes institute alone offered 16,247 language and teacher courses in 2018/19, administered to 148,670 students, and DELE certifications were awarded to 118,586 candidates. The teaching activity continues online via the AVE Global platform designed by the IC. In 2019, there were 8,648 enrolments in distance learning Spanish courses with the highest number in Brazil. Overall, the Institute carries out the bulk of its teaching activity in Europe with almost half of all enrolments, followed by the centers in Asia Pacific (especially in New Delhi, Manila and Beijing) and Morocco-Maghreb area (6 ICs are located there) (Instituto Cervantes, 2019a, 2019b).

### 3.3. Primary and secondary education

**Table 6: Key figures on primary and secondary education**

	2019	2015
Number of countries	-	-
Number of schools	310 <sup>10</sup> (of which 18 state-owned schools)	-
Number of students	~ 8,000 (Spanish state-owned schools)	-
Number of staff / teachers	~ 650 (Spanish state-owned schools)	-
Government financial support (€ million)	n/a	-

Promoting Spanish education, language, and culture is the main objective of the Foreign Educational Action (*Acción Educativa Exterior* - AEE) at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. According to AEE’s own figures, the education programs in various forms reach two million people every year in more than 5,000 educational centers and with a participation of around 10,000 teachers and 5,000 conversation assistants (AEE, n.d.).

<sup>10</sup> Registered educational centers in the AEE database. According to AEE’s own figures, Spanish education programs in various forms reach 2 million people every year in more than 5,000 educational centers and with a participation of around 10,000 teachers and 5,000 conversation assistants (AEE, n.d.). Here highlighted are the Spanish schools owned by the government.

The AEE network is vast, spanning five continents and comprises different centers and programs as well as offices of the Ministry of Education (Education Attaché Offices, the Technical Advisory Offices, and the Program Directorates). Based on bilateral cooperation with foreign ministries, the Spanish Ministry of Education is present in 17 countries via education offices. Further, 11 education attachés offices exist in Brazil, the US (3x), and in Canada, Colombia, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, and Russia. The Ministry also assigns technical advisers to other Education ministries. All three types of cooperation exist in order to promote the teaching of the Spanish language and culture in respective countries, manage the AEE programs, and contribute to a continuous development of Spanish as a foreign language.

International cooperation extends with the network of educational centers abroad. The Ministry oversees many different types of centers. The centers which are owned by the Spanish government offer Spanish curriculum at non-university levels to both Spaniards and foreigners. At the moment, 18 *Centros Españoles* operate in Andorra, Colombia, France (2x), Italy, Morocco (11x), Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Annually, more than 8,000 students study there. Next, there are two mixed-ownership centers which can follow both the Spanish and the local educational systems. The 14 convention centers exist in different Latin-American countries and include in their curricula additional Spanish subjects. Spanish language and culture is also taught in 21 centers outside school hours. There are more than 300 classrooms in eleven countries, managed through fourteen Spanish language and culture groups (ALCE). In addition, there are 30 Spanish sections in foreign schools. The so-called bilingual sections (75 of them) are present in Central and Eastern Europe and China. Lastly, Spanish qualifications can be obtained in European Schools (13) in the EU, International Spanish Academies (ISA) (126) in North America, and various Spanish private teaching centers abroad (11). In total, that makes 310 (registered) educational centers abroad (*Los centros docentes españoles en el extranjero*) that offer Spanish education at primary and secondary levels (MEFP, n.d.-a). Other initiatives in favor of the dissemination of the Spanish language and culture include equipping libraries with teaching materials, training activities for foreign Spanish teachers, as well as secondment of conversation assistants and native language teachers to foreign schools and universities.

### 3.4. Tertiary education and science

**Table 7: Key figures on tertiary education**

	2019	2015
Number of countries	-	-
Number of universities / colleges	87	-
Number of universities abroad	IESE Business School: 2 campuses (Sao Paulo, Munich)	-

	2019	2015
Number of students		
Number of foreign students <sup>11</sup>	70,912 <sup>(2018)</sup>	49,837 <sup>(2016)</sup>
Number of students at trans-national higher education (TNE)	-	-
Number of government scholarships awarded	Carolina Foundation (FC): 706	
Number of staff / teachers	(FC): 26	-
Budget (€ million)	(FC): 5.24	(FC): 5.62
Government financial support (€ million) <small>Program 144B</small>	13.41	2.66

**Table 8: Key figures on science and research**

	2019	2015
Number of countries	-	-
Number of institutes	Royal Academy of Spain in Rome	-
Number of researchers	3,700 Spanish researchers abroad	-
Number of organisations	17 Associations of Spanish Scientists Abroad	-
Number of staff	3 scientific coordinators in Spanish embassies	-
Number of projects	8,356 <sup>Horizont2020</sup>	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

Spain is a very attractive location for international students. They can choose from 87 different universities, 45 of which are featured in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2020 (which consists of almost 1400 universities across 92 countries) (SEPIE, 2020). In 2018, 70,912 foreign students decided for the Spanish education market. Owing to former

<sup>11</sup> Data based on Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students | UNESCO UIS. (2020). Retrieved 2 September 2020, from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>.

colonial ties and linguistic proximity, Spain is the main destination for many students from Latin America (UIS, 2020). Apart from degree-seeking students, it is also a very popular choice among European exchange students: during the 2016/17 Spain hosted by far the highest number of Erasmus students (48,595), even more than Germany and the UK (Eurostat, 2019).

In order to further boost incoming academic mobility, Spain has made considerable efforts to promote and internationalize its higher education market. The first initiative to attract foreign talent was the creation of ‘Universidad.es’ in 2008, a public foundation tasked with promotion of Spain as an attractive destination for international students and scholars (European Parliament, 2015). The government agreed on an action plan, *Estrategia Universidad* (2015) in 2009 (Levatino et al., 2018). Unfortunately, the internationalisation activities soon had to be put on hold at the onset of the economic crisis. The ‘Campus de Excelencia Internacional’ scheme focusing on research and innovation had to be terminated and other programs failed due to severe budget cutbacks. After years of uncertainty, in 2015, SEPIE – the Spanish Service for Internationalization of Education, was created as an independent body with a task to contribute to a greater international projection of the Spanish university system. The first national Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities (2015 – 2020) followed with objectives to promote the global competitiveness of universities and attract foreign talent.

After Europe, Latin America occupies a very important position in the internationalization process. This is visible in initiatives like the development of an Ibero-American knowledge space (*Espacio Iberoamericano del Conocimiento* - EIC) or Foundation Carolina scholarships for Latin-American students. The Fundación Carolina (FC) is very active with 3,166 agreements with nearly 300 Spanish and Latin-American academic institutions. Since its establishment in 2000, FC awarded 17,256 scholarships and grants. Today, the foundation boasts a large network of previous alumni of around 18,000 individuals and 10 ‘Carolina Associations’ (FC, 2019). In addition to its involvement in Erasmus mobility schemes, Spain participates in the Academic Mobility and Exchange Program (PIMA), established in 1999 by the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Sciences and Culture (OEI). The program is organized into networks with at least 3 participating universities from different Latin-American countries. In science cooperation, notable is for example CYTED, the Ibero-American Program of Science and Technology for Development, created in 1984 to stimulate cooperation in applied sciences and encourage technological innovations through knowledge transfer and researcher mobility (Ferencz & Wächter, 2012). Further, the Spanish development agency AECID in cooperation with the foreign affairs ministry, offers grants through its Department of Scientific and University Cooperation.

The offer of English-taught programs stands out as an instrument to attract a greater and more diverse pool of foreign students. Spain too has slowly embraced this trend, but not nearly as well as other European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany). At the moment, (full) English-taught programs<sup>12</sup> are the Achilles heel of Spanish universities, which makes them dependent on Hispanic-speaking students. At the same time, language is an asset. Taking into consideration the international importance of Spanish, with no fewer than 580 million speakers, Spanish universities have a huge opportunity to attract a number of students in all fields (SEPIE, 2017). Moreover, universities provide a good range of international joint

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<sup>12</sup> The finding could also be explained with a lack of demand. The common reason for not introducing English-medium programs was an anticipated lack of student demand (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008).

degrees and especially in technology fields (European Parliament, 2015). On the other hand, the physical international presence is negligible with only 2 campuses abroad of the IESE Business School in Munich and Sao Paolo (C-BERT, 2020).

The Spanish university system is decentralized where the Autonomous Communities are responsible for the administration of educational institutions. They also carry out internationalization activities, with the most populous ones – Catalonia, Madrid, Andalusia – being the most active. Typically, this means presentation at important educational fora, maintaining online portals to promote their own universities (e.g. StudyinCatalonia.com), and financial support for (outbound) mobility (European Parliament, 2015). One example is the ‘Talentia’ fellowship coordinated by the *Agencia Andaluza del Conocimiento* (Andalusian Knowledge Agency). Talentia offers postgraduate scholarships to students from Andalusia allowing them to study abroad. Since the program’s creation in 2007, the government of Andalusia has committed over €22 million in fellowships (Junta de Andalucía, n.d.).

Looking at the visibility<sup>13</sup> of scientific output, Spain belongs to a group of top fifteen, or 12<sup>th</sup> behind the US, the UK, Germany, Canada, France, Japan, Italy etc (Instituto Cervantes, 2019c). Compared to its European neighbors, Spain is not a very attractive destination for international researchers. According to the 2011 Globsci survey on global brain circulation, Spain was at the tail end with the share of foreign researchers of only 7.3%, while Sweden for example stood at around 37%. The Spanish research diaspora was equally small (8.4%) but also most likely to return home (Franzoni, Scellato, & Stephan, 2012). Presently, the expatriate research network is well-established with more than 3,700 Spanish academics abroad and 17 associations of scientists and researchers (Euraxess, 2018).

The effects of the economic austerity were perhaps best visible in the research and science sector (Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Menéndez, 2016). The government expenditure decreased from 1.8 in 2008 to 1.2% in 2019 (Eurostat, 2021). However, all was not gloom and doom, the crisis was also an incentive for Spanish institutions to attract funding from abroad. Spain so managed to attain a privileged position in the European framework programs like Horizon2020 and Erasmus+. In the first four years of the H2020 the country consolidated as the fourth recipient of aid, with €3.6 billion to carry out its R&D activities (EC, 2020; The Diplomat, 2019).

Spain is not falling behind on scientific diplomacy, but the topic gained visibility relatively late in 2015 when the government launched the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (Gutierrez, 2019). Since then, various cooperation and promotional mechanisms have been set up. The scientific coordinators are delegated to the Spanish embassies in London, Washington, and Berlin. Further, science diplomacy is promoted through the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), located within the Ministry of Science and Innovation, and the Spanish Agency for International AECID attached to the foreign affairs ministry. The strategy involves cooperation with the academic diaspora, the promotion of Spanish scientific and technological advances abroad and courses in the diplomatic academy (Gobierno de España, n.d.; Soler, 2020).

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<sup>13</sup> The h-index of SCImago Journal & Country Rank (2019) for the period 1996–2017, which takes into account both the number of publications and the number of citations they receive (Instituto Cervantes, 2019c).

### 3.5. Foreign Media

The Spanish international media presence (Corporación Radiotelevisión Española - RTVE) is realized through the public service RTVE and its offerings: TVE Internacional, Star HD, Radio Exterior de España, and Rtv.es. The channels have a worldwide distribution, but with regards to the sphere of influence and international public opinion (which is usually the objective of most foreign broadcasters) the Spanish outlets have a rather limited reach and cannot compare with their English or French counterparts, for example.

Radio Exterior de España (REE) is the international service of the Spanish public broadcaster (RTVE) with a long tradition dating back to 1942. Although available worldwide, the service is primarily intended for Spaniards and Spanish-speaking listeners abroad. From its base in Madrid, REE airs programs in seven languages (Spanish, Arabic, English, French, Russian, Portuguese, and Sephardic). Between 1990 and 2004, the radio also included German broadcasts. The REE's coverage is extended through at least 250 stations in 40 countries which distribute some of its programs abroad.

TVE Internacional is the Spanish international television channel with the mandate to present Spain in the world, disseminate the Spanish language, and inform about current affairs in the country, as well as its historical, cultural, and linguistic heritage. TVE has on offer 4 channels: TVE America I and II for the American continents; TVE Internacional Europa with the widest coverage including Europe, Africa, and parts of Western Asia; and TVE Internacional Asia for East and Central Asia and Oceania. In 2019, the service had a reach of 200 countries, or 100 million households, and a potential audience of 450 million viewers on five continents (RTVE, 2019).

The projection of the country's image is one of the primary objectives of the public broadcaster RTVE. For instance, throughout 2019, in collaboration with España Global,<sup>14</sup> TVE transmitted programs 'Eres España Global' and 'Globales' to convey a message of democracy and solidarity, and present Spain as a modern country open to the world. The Americas are considered a priority in international broadcasting agenda: RTVE is present via its four international channels with a reach of 35 million viewers. Canal 24 (*El Canal 24 Horas*) channel alone gathers an audience of more than 2 million in Latin America, which is expected to increase now that the channel started its free-to-air and live broadcasting in Puerto Rico (RTVE, 2019). Although purely informative, the channel does include other programs like 'La hora de Cervantes' which showcases the activity of Instituto Cervantes aimed at teaching and dissemination of the Spanish language. In 2016, a commercial channel, Star HD, was introduced as RTVE's bid to bring its best series, films, and entertainment programs (highlighting Spain's cultural diversity, natural and cultural attractions) to a global audience. The newcomer managed to reach 1 million subscribers in the Americas, Africa, and Europe in 2019 (RTVE, 2019).

Lastly, the international broadcasting of RTVE's programming is available on Rtv.es through streaming or podcasts. Recently, there have been attempts to jumpstart Spanish digital diplomacy. For example, the MFA's directorate for Global Spain curates an information

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<sup>14</sup> The Secretariat for Global Spain within the Foreign Affairs Ministry, formed in 2018, is responsible for the Spain's image and reputation. Its primary objective is to improve the perception of the country abroad and among Spaniards themselves.



website, created in 2019 “to allow people to get to know the real Spain, [its] talent, diversity, business, science, sport and culture” (“This Is The Real Spain’, 2019).

**Table 9: Key figures on foreign broadcasting**

	2019	2015
<b>TV: TVE Internacional</b>		
Number of countries broadcasted to	200	-
Number of languages	-	-
Number of channels	4	-
Audience / reach (million)	100	-
Budget (€ million)	n/a	-
<b>Radio: Radio Exterior de España (REE)</b>		
Number of countries broadcasted to	available worldwide, 250 partner stations in 40 countries	-
Number of languages	7	-
Number of channels	-	-
Audience (million)	-	-
<b>New Media</b>		
Social networks following	AC/E <sup>(2018)</sup> 21,764 (Twitter) 14,672 (Facebook) 3,235 (Instagram) Instituto Cervantes: 1,300,000 users on social networks	
Audience / unique visitors	AC/E 176,514 <sup>(during 2018)</sup> www.cervantes.es 3 million <sup>(during 2018)</sup>	

## 4. Challenges and future outlook

Despite a strong cultural reputation, Spain was not a pioneer in external cultural policy. The successor to the mighty Spanish Empire took interest in strategic cultural activities abroad much later than its European counterparts. One significant advantage, however, was that Spain was able to learn from the French, British, and German models. Today, cultural promotion is recognized as one of the priorities, especially since it strengthens the country's international reputation and competitiveness (*Marca España*). With a strong footprint in Europe and the Hispanophone world, Spain is deservedly considered a cultural and soft power superpower (British Council, 2018), but there is plenty of room for improvement. Spanish ECP still has its flaws, notably the institutional dispersion and lack of coordination between a multitude of agencies, as well as vague prioritization of objectives (Eugenia Menéndez, 2018; *Fundación Alternativas*, 2020).

The Spanish higher education system has clearly taken a direction towards strengthening its international profile. The results are best visible in the increased student mobility and institutional cooperation with the EU and Latin America. At the other end of the table, Spanish education system stood out as the lowest provider of English-taught programs, along with countries like Italy and Portugal. Taking into consideration Spain's high popularity as a short-term mobility destination, there is enough potential to diversify the countries of origin in full degrees, not only focusing on those of historical relevance (like Latin-American countries). Lastly, a major issue is "a crucial disconnect between the size of the Spanish economy and the nation's distinguished cultural and political history" (Crespo MacLennan, 2011; European Parliament, 2015). While the Spanish education system boasts many strengths, it is also undermined by several factors: unstable and insufficient funding, short-term priorities, strong inward associations (hiring local staff, few English degrees), etc. (*ibid.*). There is also plenty of room for optimism. Spain remains very attractive study destination to international students. Considering the global dimension of Spanish, Spain could better leverage its already good starting position, particularly if it achieves the consolidation of the Ibero-American knowledge area.

Global Spain (previously '*Marca España*') is considered the most important objective of Spanish ECP and a long-term project which should improve the perception of Spain both abroad and at home (Moreno, 2014). The rich cultural tradition is a vital component of the brand and certainly gives Spain the upper hand over its competitors. As a downside, the formation of such a national brand calls for homogenization and choosing one cultural image over others. For a multicultural society like Spain that means potentially marginalizing Catalan, Basque, Galician, and other realities. Authors like Rius Ulldemolins and Zamorano (2015) perceive the double risk of such branding strategy: "a threat to plurality" and a production and dissemination of culture with "predesigned and stereotyped images." Spain should not fall into this trap. The seventeen autonomous communities offer a wealth of cultural assets and should be equally involved in external projection.

Although Spanish colonial expansion in the Americas is now considered 'ancient history' having ended more than two centuries ago, Spain's engagement in South America is sometimes perceived as problematic, especially in view of uncritical and overly optimistic *Hispanidad* and malpractices of the Spanish multinational companies. Unlike the British and French empires, Spain has largely eschewed (neo)colonial accusations, and for at least two reasons: Spain has

far less political significance than other Western powers and Latin American colonies gained their independence much earlier, in the 19th century (Wang, 2016). All that said, Spain does maintain strong presence via its foreign aid (AECID programs), large foreign direct investment outflow, and multinational companies (Santander, BBVA, Repsol, Telefónica etc.). Since one Spanish executive noted: 'For any Spaniard, Latin America is the prolongation of our land,' it is no wonder that some have raised concerns of neo-imperialist exploitation (Baklanoff, 1996; Valdes, 2005). Moreover, by assuming the role of the official communicator between the old and 'new' continent (e.g. EU-Mercosur cooperation) (Grugel, 2002), and clamoring for the common Ibero-American space, Spain has almost taken over Hispanismo as an asset solely its own. On a more positive note, the Ibero-American connection is strong (common market for cultural goods, Catholicism, student mobility, sizeable Latin American diaspora in Spain, etc). Perhaps, instead of trying to build a pompous Hispanic commonwealth, Spain should rather focus on strengthening bilateral relations and on programs that positively impact Latin American communities (Wang, 2016).

The favorable position between Europe and Africa and between the Mediterranean and Atlantic is unique and makes Spain an ideal mediator in both political and cultural arenas. Spain's own multicultural realities position it as an important bridge-builder between nations. More recently, the country is taking leadership towards gender parity with a feminist policy strategy in "all areas of foreign action" (González, 2021). All these factors contribute to the positive image of a modern and stable democracy. Still, there is a danger that domestic disturbances (Catalan self-determination referendum, past financial crisis) might spill over to disrupt hopes for a Global Spain. Finally, the question remains how such rhetoric will be welcomed in Ibero-America and elsewhere: (neo-colonial) cultural propaganda or benevolent Panhispanism?

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## Imprint

The External Cultural Policy Monitor

Developed by Helmut K. Anheier, Hertie School & UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, and ifa Competence Centre. Supervised by Helmut K. Anheier. Coordinated by Sarah Widmaier for ifa.

Preferred citation

Markovic, Darinka (11/2021). "Spain. Country Report," in: Helmut K. Anheier and ifa (eds.). The External Cultural Policy Monitor. Stuttgart: ifa.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ifa.

Publisher:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)  
Charlottenplatz 17,  
70173 Stuttgart,  
Postfach 10 24 63,  
D-70020 Stuttgart

[www.ifa.de](http://www.ifa.de)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17901/ecp.2021.095>