# Spain

# España

## Ισπανία


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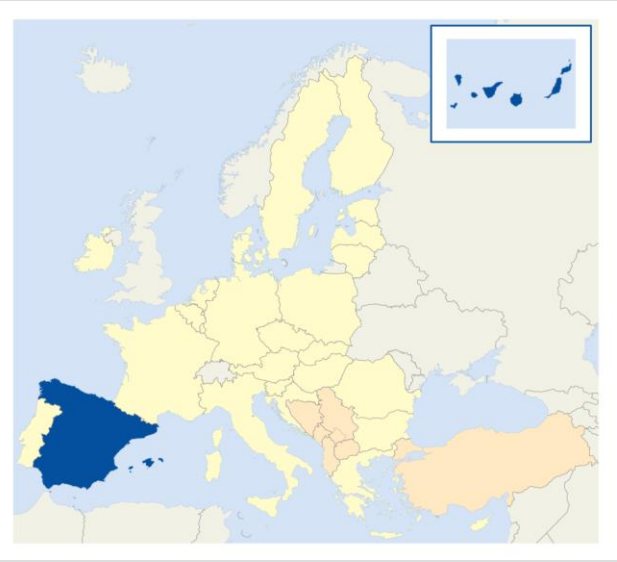
# WHY I CHOSE SPAIN?

- Independence movements and their relationship to Europe.
- Spain's history and entrance to Europe


# SPAIN!!



Population : 48.8 million (2024)
Spain's population makes up 11% of the EU making it the 4th most populous country in the EU.
So quite a big player in Europe in relation to sheer population.
Nato 1982
Schengen 1991
Eurozone 1999

- Spain is part of west Europe and the Mediterranean. Sharing borders with France, Andorra as well as share the peninsula with Portugal.
- It is far removed from Eastern Europe. At its closes point it is 14km from Morocco and the African continent.

- Spain makes up 506.030km² mainly on the Iberian peninsula as well as a number of islands including the Canary Islands which are 2000km away from Spain and the rest of Europe.

- Spain's' landmass is approximately 10.4 % of EU which makes it the second largest country in the EU after France However, is 14th for population density. So, although it's a populous country for the EU, its fairly empty for its size.

# HISTORY

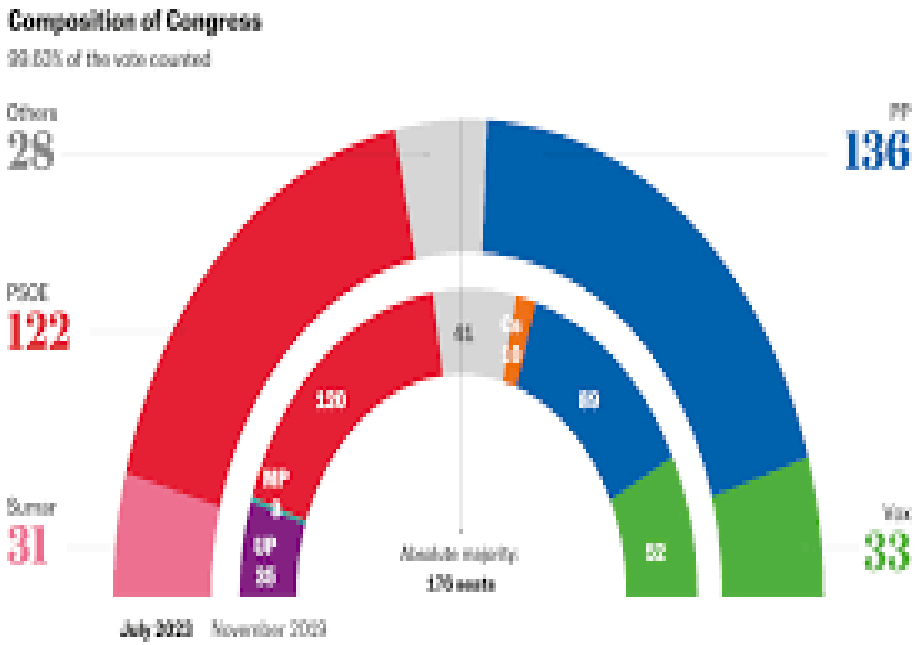
- The Spanish empire began in 1492 with Columbus and lasted in some capacity till 1975. At its height it covered 13.7 million square kilometers. Today nearly 600 Million people speak the language.

- Spain did not take part in either world wars, the first due to internal instability. The second due to the Spanish civil war between the nationalists and the Republicans, of which General Francisco Franco's nationalists won, with the aid of fascist Italy and Hitler. Nevertheless, chose to remain out of the remainder of the war which helped keep him in power and out of sights of allied forces.
- Franco remained the dictator of Spain until his death in 1975. After which King Juan Carlos I is considered to have 'initiated reforms to dismantle the Francoist regime and lead Spain to democracy'. Juan Carlos played a further role in consolidating democracy as he publicly denounced an attempted coup in 1981

- Franco's reign and the democratization process is key to Spain's relationship and admittance into the EU

# SPANISH INTERNAL POLITICS

- Since Franco, Spain has been a democratic constitutional Monarchy. Since 1982 all governments have been led by either the PP (Partido popular) or PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party). From 2019 to today, Pedro Sanchez the current leader of PSOE has led the country in a coalition of the Left. (Coalicion Progresista)
- The current minority government led by PSOE in coalition with Sumar. It is further supported with parliamentary votes by regional parties.
  - Sumar (A new left-wing alliance with independent regional candidates (mas-madrid ect)
  - Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) The left wing pro independent party led by Rufian
  - Together for Catalonia (Junts) The Right-wing Catalan independence party.
  - Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) the Centre left Basque nationalist Party, pro-autonomy and pro-devolution.
  - EH Bildu (Basque left-nationalist) Left wing Basque pro-independence party.
  - Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG) left-wing, Galician nationalist political part which is pro Galician autonomy.
  - Canarian Coalition (CCa) Centrist, Economically driven party. Autonomist on Canarian recourses.
- Notice the abundance of regional and pro-independence parties supporting the government. This is concern for those who believe is Spanish hegemony and how this will affect Spain's strength in the EU.
- Today, PSOE and PP remain the two largest parties, with Vox as the main additional national force, Before 2015, Spain had a stable two-party system however 2008–2014 crisis triggered party system fragmentation, producing four major parties (PSOE, PP, Podemos, Ciudadanos, later Vox)



# EU POLITICS

**Spain has 61 seats in the European parliament.**

- PP, has 22 seats since 2024 which has increased since 2019, they are aligned with the European people's party, they have become more cautious around European integration but fundamentally operate as a pro EU group within parliament with focus on typical center right policy of fiscal development and rule of law.

- PSOE

Although in domestic government, it has less seats than the PP in the EU parliament with 20 seat which is less than 2019, where they operate in the progressive alliance of socialist and democrats, with center left pro EU policy like climate cooperation, work welfare and rights

- Vox

Spain's far-right populist party, emphasising national sovereignty, strict immigration control, Madrid-centric state structure and Euroscepticism. They have 6 seats and are aligned with the patriot for Europe bloc, with the EU's shift to the right their influence domestic and in the EU has increased.

- Sumar

Left wing coalition has three seats however they are split into different camps in the European Parliament
2 in the greens
1 in the left
They are not Eurosceptic although outspoken against the austerity policy's and the 'fortress Europe'
Podemos has 2 seats and EH Bildu has 1who are both aligned with the left party in the parliament and are critical of current EU policy

# SPAIN'S ENTRY INTO THE EU

- Under Franco, Spain attempted to develop relations with the EEC, but failed on numerous occasions .
- Towards the end of the 1950s Franco began to liberalize the Spanish economy moving away from its autarkic economic policy.
- First Application (1962): Spain, under Franco's rule, submitted an application for an association agreement with the EEC However, by 1964 this request was rejected by all member countries.
- The European Parliament explicitly stated that an undemocratic Spain could not have a relationship "closer than a commercial treaty".
- Spain's economic growth in the late 1960s led to the EEC seeing advantages to integrating the Spanish market, thus in 29 June1970 Spain and the EEC signed a preferential Trade agreement. Bringing Spain a step closes to European integration.
- Spain officially applied for EEC membership in 1977. Spain finally signed the Treaty of Accession in 1985 and became a full member of the EEC on January 1, 1986 in the 3rd wave of enlargement along with Portugal

# WHY SPAIN JOINED THE EEC

- Economic modernization. Once escaped from economic isolation under Franco, Spain was eager to develop its economy with the advantages of larger markets, foreign investment and EC funds
- Political consolidation of democracy
- Strategic and security. Making a move to officially side with the west for the remainder of the Cold War and strengthen ties with democratic states including Spain's NATO membership in 1982

- Overall the same reasons Spain joined the EEC are relevant in Spain's relationship to the EU today, with European integration being a way forward to consolidate Spain's domestic and economic security. Spain's history of political instability brings them to peruse a Politically secure and stable Europe today.

# TRADE AND EUROPE

Eu share of total export and import:

- Spain share of exports to the EU of their total exports is 62.4 % which is greater than the EU average of 61.3%
- For Imports 56.1% of Spain total imports come from EU states, however, this is below the EU average of 61.7%


Brexit had an effect of Spain's imports and exports with the Uk:

- Imports went from 7% in 2019 to 3.8% in 2023
- Exports went from 5.9% in 2019 to 2.5% in 2023

So both imports and exports more or less halfed post Brexit.

Like most EU countries they export to the US and import from the US and China. However, they also gain a consistent single digit percentage of exports and imposts with Latin America which is surprisingly only marginally more than the European average.

Spain's GDP is the 4$^{th}$ highest in the EU however 16$^{th}$ in GDP per capita and thus below the EU average.

# ECONOMIC CRISIS

- The 2008 financial crisis is a big deal in Spain and its EU relationship as they were badly damaged by the crash.
- Unemployment peaked in 2013 at 26%
- 2012, Spain received a 100 billion aid package as bank bailout, of which they spent 41 Billion.
- The PP and PSOE were seen in capitulating Germany and the EU harsh austerity.
- Leading to the15 M movement which in turn led to the rise of Podemos the left-wing party, critical of the EU neoliberal orthodoxy.
- Democratic deficit: Many felt decisions were being made in Brussels and Frankfurt without adequate Spanish input.


# RUSSIA, UKRAINE AND NATO

- Although, Spain geographically is far removed from Eastern Europe and relatively unthreatened

by Russia they still have been strongly in support of Ukraine politically and fiscally. With sanctions against Russia, military aid and assistance and has taken in over 200 thousand refugees.

Spain from the beginning of the war has supported Ukraine integration into the 'Euro Atlantic Family'.

- Spain backed the creation of a *NATO–Ukraine Council in July 2023*
- Bilateral security cooperation agreement signed in May 2024, Spain pledged to help Ukraine in its Euro-Atlantic integration

- Spain has had a hardline response against Trumps policy of increased NATO spending to 5% of GDP. Trump has been publicly critical of Sanchez. Although Spain has increased spending to the NATO required 2%


# EUROSCEPTICISM

In 2005 Spain voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Draft Treaty on a European Constitution in a referendum even when countries like France and the Netherlands opposed, shows that Spanish sentiment before the crisis was that of greater European integration.

A minority of Spaniards would prefer a future out of the EU, with a 2024 poll showing 24% despite overall pro-EU sentiment, there is some skepticism. A 2025 poll found that 53% of Spaniards felt the EU was going in the wrong direction.

Vox argues that Spain should make no sovereignty concessions to the EU. Europe made up of strong, sovereign states. They specifically criticize EU bureaucracy, the power of the European Commission, and call for a new EU treaty that would return decision-making powers to the member states. Vox has 6 seats in the European parliament and around 10% of the seats in national parliament.

Podemos is euro-critical birthed from anti-austerity policy but would not currently support Spain leaving the EU. In recently years they have seen a downfall losing 4 of their 6 seats in the EU parliament and going form being in a coalition government to having a significantly smaller political influence domestically.

# INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

It's important to consider how much of Spanish policy within the EU is dictated by stifling the numerous independence movements within Spain.
During the 2014 Scotland independence referendum Spain expressed opposition to the move due to fears of spurring on Catalonian and other separatist groups.

Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, then Spanish Foreign Minister, said Spain would examine Scotland's accession carefully, implying they could withhold approval if it encouraged separatism.
Mariano Rajoy, then Prime Minister, also suggested that Spain's vote would be influenced by domestic considerations regarding Catalonia and Basque independence movements.
Likewise Spain has consistently opposed Kosovo's integration into the EU and is 1 of 5 EU states that does not recognise Kosovo as an independent state

Furthermore, VOX grew in popularity in reaction to Catalan independence, which is important to consider with VOX now holding 6 seats in European parliament.

When Spain created its constitution during democratization, they allowed regions to form autonomous communities similar to devolved states in the UK. This allowed them to have local parliaments, budgets and control over education, health, policing, language, and culture.

# INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS : CATALONIA

- Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) – Left-wing, pro-independence, historically moderate.
- Junts per Catalunya (Junts) – Centre-right/centrist, pro-independence, founded by Carles Puigdemont.
- CUP (Candidatura d'Unitat Popular) – Far-left, strongly pro-independence, anti-capitalist.


- In October 2017, Catalonia held an independence referendum deemed illegal by Spain's Constitutional Court.

Catalan leaders appealed to the EU for support, presenting the vote as a matter of democracy and self-determination, but the EU backed Spain.

- A number of the politicians that helped organise the election were imprisoned.

It's important to note that unlike most independence movements against ex-colonial powers, which are typically led Wholly by left wing groups. Due to Catalonia's economic success as a state, independence is favoured by many of the political right and centre voters, With the majority of those politicians jailed for the illegal election coming from Junts.



# INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS : THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) – Centre-right, moderate Basque nationalist, traditionally dominant in Basque politics, pro-autonomy but more cautious about full independence.

EH Bildu is a left coalition of pro-independence parties with the biggest party called Sortu with the leader Arnaldo Otegi who is often citied to have been a member of eta. Sortu is the most EU sceptic wing of the Basque independence movement.

Although Basque independence feels less imminent than the Catalan movement, historically ETA and Basque armed resistance had played a large role in Spanish politics, especially in the 1980s when Spain had recently joined the EU.

# CONCLUSION

Spain and its relationship to the EU is characterized by a few main points.

- It's pursuit of democracy and political stability. As years of internal conflict and Franco's dictatorship, the Spanish sates sees European integration as a path to a stable political system.
- Independence movements. As the Spanish state has a number of internal autonomous regions any one of these successions could lead to a chain effect and the breakup of the Spanish state. Thus, Spain's pursues a policy within the EU to prevent this.

Many Thanks.
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