

General information



Information about the country

Basic data

Government

Link

Main cities

Barcelona Girona Lleida Tarragona

Languages and currency

Languages: Catalan, Spanish (official language throughout Spain) and Aranese (name of the Occitan language spoken in Vall d'Aran).

Currency: euro. The euro is regulated by the **European Central Bank (ECB)**.

Political structure

Catalonia is an autonomous community that forms part of Spain. The **Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya** (Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia) was passed on 19 July 2006. Article 2 of the Estatut sets out that the Catalan political system is structured as follows:

1. the Generalitat is the institutional system into which the self-governance of Catalonia is organised politically;
2. the Generalitat comprises Parlamen (Parliament), the Presidència (Office of the President) of the Generalitat, the Govern (Government) and the other institutions provided for in Chapter V of Title II;
3. the municipalities, provinces, counties and other local entities determined by law are also part of the institutional system of the Generalitat, as well as entities into which the Generalitat is organised territorially, without prejudice to their autonomy;
4. the powers of the Generalitat originate from the people of Catalonia and are exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Estatut and the Constitució (Constitution).

Territorial organisation

The territory of Catalonia is organised into 947 municipalities grouped into 41 counties. Via this [link](#), you will find information relating to:

- list of counties;
- municipalities, county capitals;
- province to which each county belongs;
- number of municipalities per county;
- population, by county.

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General information



Socio-economic indicators

Total population

The total population trend ([link to comparative data from the Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya \[Statistical Institute of Catalonia – IDESCAT\]](#)) is as follows:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016*
Number	7,553,650	7,518,903	7,508,106	7,516,254

*Provisional data

Net migration

Net migration (total number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants) is taken from the data, in absolute figures, on **immigration** and external **emigration** (links to IDESCAT data). The net migration trend is as follows:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
In absolute figures	17,557	-6,151	-20,749	-8,952
Percentage of the population*	0.23%	-0.08%	-0.27%	-0.12%

*This figure is derived by dividing the number of people who have migrated (immigrants minus emigrants) by the total population and multiplying the result by 100.

Per capita income

The per capita income trend in euros ([link to comparative data from IDESCAT](#)) is as follows:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Amount	€27,914.15	€27,246.37	€27,257.29	€27,832.49

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate trend ([link to comparative data from IDESCAT](#)) is as follows:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Percentage	23.2%	23.7%	20.6%	17.8%

Gross domestic product

The gross domestic product (GDP) trend in euros ([lateral links to comparative data from IDESCAT](#)), is as follows:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
In absolute figures*	€204,272	€203,240	€206,776	€214,927
Percentage growth	-2.9%	-1.1%	2.0%	3.4%

Units: **millions of euros**

*Link to comparative data from IDESCAT (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya [Statistical Institute of Catalonia]).

**These amounts are net (i.e. before tax).

General information



Representative and host institutions

Foreign diplomatic missions accredited in Spain and Catalonia:

- Embassies in Spain
- Consular corps established in Catalonia

Catalan agencies and institutions abroad

Catalan public agencies and institutions abroad:

- Government delegations;
- Business Promotion Centres of ACCIÓ (the Agency for Business Competitiveness);
- Agència Catalana de Turisme (Catalan Tourism Agency) offices;
- Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (Catalan Development Cooperation Agency – ACCD) representatives;
- Institut Ramon Llull (Ramon Llull Institute – IRL) offices;
- Institut Català de les Empreses Culturals (Catalan Institute for Cultural Businesses – ICEC) offices.

Information about procedures

Driving licence Features of the licence



Validity of documents and qualifications

A **driving licence** is an administrative document in the form of a card that authorises the holder to drive vehicles of the type specified on the card itself, and, if necessary, with the relevant limitations (e.g. whether the holder must wear glasses when driving). The Direcció General de Tràfic (Directorate General for Traffic – DGT) is responsible for issuing driving licences, which are valid throughout Spain.

- There are various categories of licence, but the most common is **category B**, which can be obtained from the age of 18 and authorises the holder to drive mopeds, motor tricycles, quadricycles ('quads'), motorcycles (up to 125 cc cylinder capacity, and only when the license is at least three years old) and motor vehicles with a maximum authorised mass (MAM) not exceeding 3500 kg and designed and constructed for the carriage of no more than eight passengers in addition to the driver (cars, vans, small lorries). MAM is the name given to the combined mass of the tow vehicle, the passengers and the cargo, plus the mass of the trailer and cargo in the trailer. This amount is fixed and determined by the vehicle manufacturer.
- A **category C** licence can be obtained from the age of 21, provided that the holder already has a category B licence. Category C licences authorise the holder to drive vehicles with an MAM of over 3500 kg designed and constructed for the carriage of no more than eight passengers in addition to the driver (basically goods vehicles). It also authorises the holder to tow a hitched trailer with an MAM that does not exceed 750 kg.
- A **category D** licence can be obtained from the age of 24 provided that the holder already has a category B licence. Category D licences authorise the holder to drive vehicles for the transport of persons designed and constructed for the carriage more than eight passengers in addition to the driver (basically coaches). It also authorises the holder to tow a hitched trailer with an MAM that does not exceed 750 kg.

Information from the Direcció General de Tràfic relating to issuing the different categories of driving licence can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain.

Temporary stays

We consider a **temporary stay** in Catalonia to be fewer than six months. In this case, if the driver already has a foreign driving licence, there are two different possibilities:

Drivers with EU/EEA licences

The driving licence remains valid in Spain under the conditions in **which** it was issued in the place of origin, without any kind of procedure being necessary.

The validity of these licences will be conditional on the fact that they are not expired and that the holder is of the age required in Spain to obtain the equivalent Spanish licence.

Drivers with non-Community licences

It is necessary to obtain an **International Driving Permit (IDP)**, which makes it possible to drive temporarily in Spain if the driver's licence was issued in a country that is not a member of the European Union or EEA. Drivers must apply for the IDP in the country that issued their licence.

The IDP is a trifold document comprising a grey cover and 16 pages on which the holder's information and the driving licences they hold are shown in different languages (Spanish, German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and Russian). It is valid for **one year**, although it is not valid for driving in the country that issued it.

Continuous residence

We define **continuous residence** in Catalonia as a period longer than six months. In this case, if the driver already has a foreign driving licence, there are two different possibilities:

Drivers with EU/EEA licences

The driving licence remains valid in Spain under the conditions in which it was issued in the place of origin. Once resident in Spain, the holder will be subject to Spanish regulations regarding the validity period for the licence, checks on their mental and physical abilities and the assignment of points. It is therefore recommended that foreign licence holders register their foreign driving licence with the Dirección General de Tráfico, although this is not compulsory.

- Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to the registration of driving licences from member states of the EU or EEA can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain.

However, driving licences issued by any of these states that are restricted, suspended or revoked in any country will not be valid for driving in Spain. When the licence in question is valid indefinitely or for more than 15 years (if it is a category B licence) or five years (if it is a category C or D licence), the holder must renew it once two years have passed from 19/01/2013 or from when they became legally resident in Spain, if this date is later.

- Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to the renewal of driving licences from member states of the EU or EEA can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain.

Drivers with non-Community licences

These are licences that have not been issued in a member state of the EU or EEA, but that meet any of the following conditions:

- licences from other countries that are issued in accordance with Annex 9 of the Geneva Convention, or Annex 6 of the Vienna Convention, or that differ from these models only in the adoption or removal of non-essential headings;
- licences from other countries written in Spanish or that are accompanied by an official translation;
- international licences issued abroad in accordance with Annex 10 of the Geneva Convention, or in accordance with the template in Annex I of the Paris Convention, if the country in question has acceded to this Convention but not signed or acceded to the Geneva Convention;
- licences recognised in individual international conventions to which Spain is a party and under the conditions set out therein.

Any of these licences is valid for driving in Spain provided that it is not expired, the holder is of the age required in Spain to obtain the equivalent Spanish licence and, in addition, a maximum period of **six months** has not elapsed **counted from when the holder obtained legal residence in Spain**, as the foreign licence is no longer valid after this period. If the holder wishes to continue driving after this period, they will have to obtain a Spanish licence, subject to fulfilling the requirements and passing the relevant tests, unless it is possible to exchange the licence for the Spanish equivalent based on the existence of an agreement with the country that issued the licence.

When is it possible to exchange a licence?

There are currently driving licence exchange agreements in place with the following countries:

- Andorra, South Korea, Japan, Switzerland and Monaco. Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to exchanging driving licences can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain.
- There are also agreements in place with Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Philippines, Guatemala, Macedonia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela. Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to exchanging driving licences can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain.

The driving licences of foreign persons in any of the following situations may also be exchanged:

- Diplomatic staff accredited in Spain. Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to exchanging driving licences can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain;
- holders of driving licences from non-Community countries without an agreement for professional drivers. Information from the Dirección General de Tráfico relating to exchanging driving licences can be found [here](#). This information is also available in English, French, German and the other official languages of Spain;

What if an exchange is not possible?

- Where there is no exchange agreement, the holder of the driving licence must obtain a Spanish driving licence, subject to fulfilling the requirements and passing the relevant tests, although they could initially use an **international driving permit**, which makes it possible to drive in Spain temporarily if the holder's licence was issued in a country that is not a member of the European Union or EEA.

The IDP is a trifold document comprising a grey cover and 16 pages on which the holder's information and the driving licences they hold are shown in different languages (Spanish, German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and Russian). It is valid for **one year**, although it is not valid for driving in the country that issued it.

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Legalisation of official documents



Validity of documents and qualifications

Accrediting qualifications and studies from foreign educational systems as equivalent Spanish non-university and university qualifications means recognising them as officially valid in Spain. Accreditation gives recognition to the academic degree, it authorises the continuation of studies from another Spanish educational level and means the degree can be used for the same professional purposes as the equivalent Spanish qualification.

When the sole aim is to continue studies at a Spanish educational centre, the foreign studies may simply be **validated**.

It should be taken into account that validation can only be used for academic purposes.

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For accreditation, recognition or validation of studies and qualifications, more information (requirements, procedure, addresses, etc.) is available via the following links:

- Validation of university studies > Procedures ([link](#)).
- Validation of non-university studies > Procedures ([link](#)).

Remember! Qualifications must always be accredited in the destination country.

Validation type	Concept	Application and processing	
Accreditation	Procedure through which qualifications obtained abroad can be used for the same purposes (academic and/or professional) as the equivalent Spanish academic qualifications or degrees.	Via public or administrative registry. Electronic submission is not provided for.	For non-university qualifications, click here . For university qualifications, click here .
Validation	Procedure to validate – with exclusively academic effects – higher studies undertaken abroad (whether completed or not) in relation to partial Spanish university studies, so that the student may continue or complete their studies if they so wish.	Via public or administrative registry. Electronic submission is not provided for in the case of non-university studies. As regards university studies, the procedure depends on the university where the student wishes to continue their studies.	For non-university qualifications, click here . For university qualifications, click here .
Recognition of qualifications	Procedures so that any higher education qualifications obtained in certain foreign countries can be used for exclusively professional (not academic) purposes within Spain.	Qualifications obtained in EU states, EEA states and in Switzerland: via public or administrative registry. Electronic submission is not provided for. Foreign qualifications as health sciences specialists obtained in states that are NOT EU or EEA members or Switzerland: by public or administrative registry, or electronically if a digital certificate is available.	For non-university qualifications, click here . A distinction must be made between university qualifications: • For those obtained in EU or EEA member states or in Switzerland: click here . • For those not obtained in EU or EEA member states or in Switzerland, and relating to health sciences: click here .
Recognition of studies	Procedure that supplements the accreditation and recognition of qualifications. Based on bilateral agreements with Germany, Italy, France and China, it is aimed at recognising studies for purely academic purposes.	According to the specific procedure established in each agreement.	For more information, click here .

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Legalisation of official documents

As a general rule, and so that they may be used in the destination country, all foreign public documents must be **legalised**. The aim of this procedure is to certify the authenticity of the signature and the capacity in which the signing authority is acting.

Foreign public documents, such as academic qualifications or certificates, those confirming family ties or those relating to criminal records, must be appropriately legalised when submitted in order to be used in procedures.

Information on the types of and procedures for legalisation can be found by clicking [here](#).

Sworn translation of documents

A sworn translation is one done by a sworn translator or interpreter appointed by a competent agency or authority.

Public documents must be validly translated into any of the official languages in order to be admissible. The following translations are valid:

- those that have been done from the foreign language into Spanish by a sworn translator authorised by the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation) or into Catalan by a sworn translator authorised in Catalonia;
- translations done or revised by: the diplomatic missions and consular offices of Spain abroad, or the diplomatic missions and consular offices of the document's country of origin in Spain. In this case, the translations must be subsequently legalised by the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación.

Click [here](#) to view the list of sworn translators and interpreters authorised in Spain to translate from a foreign language into Spanish and vice versa (link to section on sworn translations of the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación website).

Click [here](#) to view the list of sworn translators and interpreters authorised in Catalonia to translate from a foreign language into Catalan and vice versa (link to section on sworn translations on the website of the Departament de Cultura's Direcció General de Política Lingüística [Linguistic Policy Office of the Department of Culture]).

Information about procedures

Non-university educational system



Educational system

The non-university educational system in Catalonia is organised into the following educational stages:

- Childhood education from 0 to 3 years old
- Childhood education from 3 to 6 years old
- Primary education
- Compulsory secondary education
- Training and insertion programmes
- Baccalaureate
- Vocational training
- Sports education
- Language education
- Artistic education

Characteristics:

- **Compulsory education.** The compulsory stages are primary education and compulsory secondary education.
- **Charges.** In Catalonia, children are given free education within the public school network as of the age of 3-6 years.
- **Educational centre network.** The network comprises public, semi-private and private schools.
- **Access.** All children under the age of 18 have the right to education, regardless of their origin, whether they are nationals or foreigners, with or without a legal residence permit. Moreover, they may access the public system of grants on equal terms.
- **Use of Catalan.** The Llei d'Educació de Catalunya (Catalan Education Act) sets out that students who join the educational system without knowing the Catalan language will receive specific linguistic support. Schools will provide new students with a personalised welcome and, in particular, linguistic support through programmes for newly arrived immigrant children, which will allow them to start learning in Catalan.

Return throughout the academic year

Students up to 16 years of age. The following possibilities must be taken into account:

- if the municipality where the student is to undertake the studies has two or more public schools, the enrolment application may be submitted both to the school itself or to the town council's Oficina Municipal d'Escolarització (Municipal Schooling Office);

- if the municipality where the student is to undertake the studies only has one public school, the application must be submitted to the school itself.

Students over 16 years of age. They must provide an accredited qualification and seek information from the Departament d'Ensenyament (Ministry of Education), which will inform them about the educational options and the various schools where they can enrol.

You can get more information by clicking [here](#).

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Sworn translation of documents

In terms of higher education, there are 12 universities that make up the Catalan university system (seven public, four private and one virtual). You will find the list of all the universities and access to each university's website via this [link](#).

The official qualifications currently offered by Catalan universities are the following:

- [undergraduate degrees](#);
- [master's degrees](#);
- [doctoral degrees](#);
- [other training options](#).

Characteristics:

- **University fees.** Each year, the Generalitat de Catalunya's Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement (Ministry of Business and Knowledge) approves a decree that sets the prices of the academic services at the public universities of Catalonia and at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia).
- **Accessing universities.** This [link](#) will provide you with information on all the ways you can access undergraduate university studies.
- **Aid and grants.** The Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca (Agency for Management of University and Research Grants – AGAUR) is the entity that provides service and support to the people and institutions that make up the university and research system in Catalonia. This [link](#) will provide you with all the information regarding aid for university, pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students, administrative and service staff and support for research and training.

Other links of interest:

- [AQU](#) (Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency).
- [International information](#). Coming to study in Catalonia.

Information about procedures

Health coverage



Health system

In Spain, health protection and healthcare for all citizens are rights recognised by the Constitution (Article 43). To implement them, these rights are interpreted in accordance with a series of principles:

- public funding, universality and cost-free status of all health services;
- existence of rights and duties defined for citizens and for public authorities;
- political decentralisation of health in the autonomous communities;
- provision of comprehensive healthcare, aiming for high levels of quality that are duly assessed and controlled;
- integration of the various healthcare structures and public services in the **Sistema Nacional de Salud (National Health System – SNS)**, formed as the coordinated set of health services of the national and regional administrations. Specifically, the **State Administration** is in charge of establishing the basis on which the health system is operated, for coordinating external health issues and international relations and health agreements, and for legislating and authorising medicines and medical devices. Each of the different **autonomous governments** is responsible for health issues and managing healthcare in their respective regions through a health service, called the **Servei Català de la Salut** or **CatSalut** in Catalonia. This is the administrative structure that includes all of Catalonia's centres, services and establishments.

In Catalonia, people are able to access public health services by means of an **individual health card (TSI)** issued by CatSalut. This document identifies the holder as a user (insured person) throughout the Sistema Nacional de Salud, and therefore it is valid both in Catalonia and in the rest of Spain.

A summary of the social security system in Spain is available [here](#), as well as all the existing [legal regulations](#), [schemes](#) and [agreements](#). All the [forms](#) required for the various procedures are also available, many of which can be completed electronically on the social security [website](#).

The Sistema Nacional de Salud is divided into two levels of care depending on the complexity of the issue to be treated:

- **Primary care:** this type of care is free of charge and offers basic health services through health centres with multidisciplinary teams comprising general practitioners, paediatricians, nurses, administrative staff and, in some cases, social workers, midwives and physiotherapists as well. In addition, if necessary, it is possible for primary care to be provided at the home of the insured person.

- **Specialist care:** this can only be accessed through referral from a primary care doctor. It consists of specialist health services through specialist centres and hospitals, either as outpatient or inpatient care.

The range of services offered by the Sistema Nacional de Salud includes preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitative treatments, as well as activities to promote and maintain health. They can be broken down as follows (for informational purposes only):

- **Basic common portfolio of the SNS:** this includes all services related to prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation that are provided at health or social-health centres, as well as urgent health transport.
- **Supplementary common portfolio of the SNS:** this includes the provision of pharmaceuticals, ortho-prosthetics, dietary products and non-urgent health transport, subject to medical prescription for clinical reasons.
- **Common portfolio of ancillary services of the SNS:** this includes any activities and services or techniques that are not provided free of charge, and that are not considered essential or that contribute to or support the improvement of a chronic pathology.
- **Regional portfolio of complementary services:** the autonomous communities, within the sphere of their competences, may add a technique, technology or procedure that is not included in the basic, supplementary or ancillary services portfolios of the SNS, provided that they provide the additional funding required.

The provision of pharmaceuticals includes the medicinal and health products necessary for healing the patient, whether in hospital or not, in the precise doses according to his or her individual requirements and for the appropriate amount of time.

The contribution to the funding of pharmaceutical costs may involve co-payment, but only in the case of medicinal products dispensed outside the hospital via a pharmacy or pharmacy service. This co-payment must be made when the product is dispensed and the amount is established in accordance with three criteria: income (to be determined annually based on the personal income tax return), age (specified on the TSI) and degree of illness (to be determined by the doctor). Thus, the following situations may apply:

	WORKING POPULATION	PENSIONERS
Unemployed persons who have lost the right to receive the unemployment subsidy, recipients of basic guaranteed incomes or non-contributory pensions, and similar situations	0%	0%
Persons with incomes under €18,000/year	40%	10% (with a maximum limit of €8 per year)
Persons with incomes equal to or above €18,000/year and under €100,000 €/year	50%	10% (with a maximum limit of €18 per year)
Persons with incomes equal to or above €100,000/year	60%	60% (with a maximum limit of €60 per year)
Persons with serious or chronic illnesses	10% (maximum contribution limit resulting from updating the CPI to the current maximum contribution)	
Mutual insurance companies and state pensioners	30%	

More detailed information on the legal regulation of the different benefits offered by social security (primary care, specialist care, urgent care, pharmaceutical benefits, ortho-prosthetic benefit, dietary products and health transport) can be found [here](#) (access to the social security website).

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Joining the health system

To register as a person **covered by national insurance**, any of the following requirements must be met:

- being an employee or self-employed person, registered with the social security department as working or in an equivalent situation;
- being a pensioner within the social security system;
- receiving any other periodic benefit, including unemployment benefit or subsidy;
- having used up the unemployment benefit or subsidy and being registered as a job seeker, without being able to demonstrate status as an insured person in any other way, and residing in Spain.

If the person concerned is not in any of these situations and does not have an annual income above €100,000 or compulsory healthcare coverage in any other way, he or she may likewise acquire insured-person status provided that he or she is in one of the following situations:

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- has Spanish nationality and resides in Spain;
- is a national of any member state of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland and is registered in the Registre Central d'Estrangers (Central Register of Foreign Nationals);
- is a national of a country other than those mentioned above, or stateless, and holder of a Spanish residence permit, as long as it is valid. More detailed information on who can acquire insured-person status can be found [here](#) (access to the social security website).

The following persons can acquire the status of **beneficiary** of an insured person:

- the spouse of the insured person or someone with a similar relationship who is a civil partner;
- the ex-spouse, or legally separated spouse who is a dependant of the insured person due to having the right to receive a compensatory pension;
- the descendants, or similar, of the insured person or of his or her spouse, even if they are legally separated, of his or her ex-spouse who is a dependant or his or her civil partner, in both cases who are dependants of the insured person and under the age of 26 or, if they are older, if they have a recognised disability in a degree equal to or higher than 65%. Persons similar to descendants are considered to be: minors subject to legal guardianship or fostering by the insured person or his or her spouse, even if they are legally separated, by his or her civil partner or his or her dependant ex-spouse, where, in this latter case, the guardianship or fostering has taken place prior to the divorce or annulment of the marriage; the siblings of the insured person. More detailed information on who can acquire the status of beneficiary of an insured person can be found [here](#) (access to the social security website).

If none of these situations apply, there is always the possibility of obtaining access to healthcare by paying a fee after signing a special agreement.

Foreign persons who are not registered or authorised as residents in Spain may receive healthcare under the same conditions as Spaniards in these cases:

- urgency due to serious illness or accident, and until the person is discharged;
- pregnancy, birth and postnatal care (only in the case of women);
- when the patient is under the age of 18.

3.2.1. Registration procedure

Registration (as well as deregistration and changes to details) must be communicated to the *Sistema Nacional de Salud* to notify of the start of an employee's work activity. This must always be done by the **employer**, unless it is an employment relationship with a monthly period of activity fewer than 60 hours, in which case it may be done by the employee him or herself by mutual agreement with the employer.

- The registration is processed at the head office of the Dirección Provincial de la Tesorería de la Seguridad Social (Provincial Directorate of the Social Security General Fund) or at any of its branches (a list can be viewed [here](#)). Otherwise, it can also be done electronically via the [RED system](#). If the employee (either working for an employer or self-employed) does not have a social security number, the employer will request one at that time. The social security number will become the registration number when the employee begins his or her work activity. This number will be unique and exclusive, and will be the same throughout the registered person's entire working life.
- The period established for communicating the registration of a new employee is up to 60 days before the start of the employment relationship (in the case of deregistration or changing data, this period is six calendar days). Registration takes effect from the start date of the activity.

If the employer fails to meet their obligation to communicate the registration of a new employee, the employee may do this directly him or herself.

The registration procedure can be viewed in more detail [here](#) (access to the social security website).

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Coverage for returnee citizens

Persons of Spanish origin resident abroad who return to Catalonia have the right to be included within the Seguridad Social system due to being returnees, provided that they do not have the right to this care via other means, in accordance with the provisions of Spanish social security law, the provisions of the state of origin or the international rules or agreements on social security.

Specifically, in Spain, persons who belong to any of the following groups have the right to healthcare as insured persons (as do the spouse, children and other family members who meet certain conditions, as beneficiaries):

- those who work, as an employee or self-employed person, and who are registered with the social security department as working or in an equivalent situation;
- pensioners within the social security system;
- recipients of any other periodic social security benefit, such as unemployment benefit or subsidy or other similar benefits;
- those who have exhausted the unemployment benefits and who are unemployed;
- those who do not have an annual income above 100,000 euros.

The provision of healthcare will include the health and pharmaceutical services currently valid for cases of common illness, non-work-related accidents and maternity.

If a returnee is not in any of the above situations, he or she may still obtain the right to healthcare pursuant to Article 26 of [Real decreto \(Royal Decree\) 8/2008](#) of 11 January, which regulates provision on grounds of necessity in favour of Spaniards resident abroad and returnees.

To obtain this recognition, it is necessary to present the following documentation:

- official birth certificate confirming Spanish nationality of origin, in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Código Civil (Spanish Civil Code);
- consular certificate showing the registration and deregistration in the registry issued by the consulate of the country of origin;
- census registration certificate for the municipality in which the returnee has established their residence in Spain;
- certificate issued by the competent social security authorities in the country of origin, confirming the fact that the right to the provision of healthcare cannot be 'exported' to another country;
- report from the consulate of the country of origin concerning the legislation in force there regarding the 'exportation' of the right to the provision of healthcare and the impact it has on the specific situation of the person concerned;
- application for recognition of the right to healthcare as per the official template, which can be found [here](#) (see Annex I in particular).

This application for recognition and the other documentation required can be submitted at any time, without having to comply with a specific deadline. The application is processed at the head office of the *Dirección Provincial de la Tesorería de la Seguridad Social* or at any of its branches corresponding to the address where the returnee emigrant establishes residence (a list can be viewed [here](#)).

- More detailed information about the special agreement on Spanish returnees and their children can be found [here](#) (access to the social security website).

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Coverage for temporary stays

Persons of Spanish origin, pensioners or employees who reside abroad and return to Catalonia temporarily have the right to be included within the social security system.

- This situation includes their first-degree descendants who are dependants and who return with them.

The provision of healthcare will include anything necessary from the medical point of view and will be provided by means of a specially-issued TSI. The validity of this TSI will coincide with the anticipated duration of the stay in Catalonia stated by the person concerned. This validity may not exceed three months from the date of issue, with the possibility of a single renewal for an additional three months.

To obtain this recognition, it will be necessary to present the following documentation:

- certification of registration in the register of Spaniards resident abroad;
- official birth certificate confirming Spanish nationality of origin, in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Código Civil (Spanish Civil Code);
- if applicable, document issued by the authorities of the competent agency of the country of origin confirming status as a pensioner of a public social protection system;
- if applicable, document issued by the employment or social security authorities of the country of origin confirming the existence of a valid employment contract (or any other similar document), authenticated by the Spanish consulate in the country of origin;
- certificate issued by the competent social security authorities in the country of origin, confirming the fact that the right to provision of healthcare is not to be 'exported';
- report from the Spanish consulate in the country of origin concerning the legislation in force there regarding the 'exportation' of the right to the provision of healthcare and the impact it has on the specific situation of the person concerned;
- application for recognition of the right to healthcare as per the official template, which can be found [here](#) (see Annex III in particular).

This application for recognition and the other documentation required can be submitted at any time, without having to comply with a specific deadline. The application is processed at the head office of the Dirección Provincial de la Tesorería de la Seguridad Social or at any of its branches corresponding to the address where the returnee emigrant establishes temporary residence (a list can be viewed [here](#)).

- More detailed information about the special agreement on Spanish returnees and their children can be found [here](#) (access to the social security website).

[information](#)

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Coverage for foreigners with temporary authorisation

EU/EEA citizens

In the event of temporary travel to Catalonia by a citizen of an EU or EEA member state or of Switzerland, the document that is required to guarantee public healthcare is the [European Health Insurance Card](#) (EHIC). Its main characteristics are:

- persons who are insured or covered by a national social security system in any European Union Member State, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, have the right to apply for this card;
- each family member travelling must have their own card;
- the European Health Insurance Card guarantees that the holder will receive healthcare under the same conditions and at the same cost as persons insured in **Austria**.

It should be taken into account that the EHIC:

- is not an alternative to travel insurance. It does not cover private healthcare;
- does not cover expenses if the express purpose of the trip is to receive medical treatment;
- does not guarantee that the service will be free of charge. As the healthcare systems of each country are different, services that are free in one country may not be free in others.

It is worth bearing in mind that Article 7 of [Directive 2004/38/EC](#) (link to document) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 (OJEU L 158 of 30.04.2004) establishes that all European Union citizens have the right to reside in the territory of another Member State for a period longer than three months if they have, among other things, for themselves and for the members of their family, health insurance that covers all the risks in the host Member State.

To obtain an EHIC, the person concerned must contact the health authorities in his or her country of residence.

EHIC holders can directly attend a doctor's office, provided that it is affiliated with the public health system and the person concerned expressly states that they wish to receive 'public healthcare'. The care is free in this case.

More information about medical treatment in Catalonia can be accessed on the European Commission's [Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#) website.

In addition, the EU's [Your Europe](#) portal provides detailed information regarding:

- [unplanned healthcare](#) or the need for unforeseen treatment during a short stay;
- [planned healthcare](#). Rights and limits when receiving healthcare;
- [purchasing medicines](#) in Catalonia with prescriptions from another EU country.

Foreign non-Community citizens

- You will find accurate information about your rights regarding health coverage and the benefits offered by the **Spanish social security system** from the **National Contact Points** in your country of origin, provided that it is an EU country.

Information about the EHIC offered by the Spanish social security system can be viewed [here](#).

A citizen of a state that is not a member of the EU, EEA or Switzerland who travels to Catalonia temporarily is guaranteed the following healthcare:

- urgent healthcare due to serious illness or accident, regardless of the cause, until the person is discharged (which does not imply the right to official medical prescriptions);
- care for pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period (which implies the right to official medical prescriptions, provided that the patient covers 40% of the cost);
- care for children and young people under the age of 18 (which implies the right to official medical prescriptions, provided that the patient covers 40% of the cost).

It should be taken into account that the Catalan healthcare services themselves are responsible for recognising the right to healthcare.

[information](#)

Information about procedures

Types of bank account



Bank accounts

The most common types of bank account in Spain are the following:

- **Current account:** this is a type of account used for everyday banking and does not generally accrue interest. It allows the account holder to set up direct debits and usually has credit or debit cards associated with it.
- **Savings account:** this is a type of account used to save money and through which the bank pays interest. It is not possible to set up direct debits and it does not usually have credit or debit cards associated with it.

There are many other types of bank account, some of which, such as combined accounts, are a combination of current account and savings account. For any of these types of account, the bank may charge a maintenance fee.

Foreigners with temporary authorisation

Non-resident foreigners

Any foreign person who does not wish to remain in Spain more than a few months may open a bank account, whether they are from the EU or not. However, for non-residents, the account opening procedure has some specific characteristics.

Bank accounts for non-residents are governed by [Ley 19/2003 de 4 de julio, sobre régimen jurídico de los movimientos de capitales y de las transacciones económicas con el exterior](#) (Law 19/2003 of 4 July on the legal regime of capital movements and cross-border economic transactions), better known as the Exchange Control Act. This means that the bank account holder must firstly confirm their status as non-resident. This status applies in the following situations:

- natural persons who usually reside abroad, except for Spanish diplomats accredited abroad and Spanish staff who provide services in Spanish embassies and consulates or in international organisations abroad;
- foreign diplomats accredited before the Spanish government and foreign staff who provide services in foreign embassies and consulates or in international organisations in Spain;
- legal persons with their registered office abroad;
- branches and permanent establishments abroad of natural or legal persons resident in Spain;
- others specified by regulations who are in situations similar to those mentioned above.

The first thing these persons must do is obtain a **certificate of non-residence**, except in the case of Spanish nationals who reside abroad, in which case it will be enough to provide the certificate of registration in the residents' registry of the consular jurisdiction where they live.

If this is not the case, the certificate of non-residence may be obtained:

1. by going directly to the [Direcció General de la Policia](#) (Directorate General of the Police) (access to its website), to any [Oficina d'Estrangeria](#) (Foreign Nationals Office) or [police station](#) (access to the Oficina d'Estrangeria and police station finder) or to the consulate of the country of origin, with a passport. It usually takes around 10 days for the certificate to be issued. Once obtained, the holder can then go to the bank of their choice and open an account, which will be operational straight away. They will also need to present their passport (or the identity document that is valid in the country of origin, although some banks do not accept driving licences);
2. by going directly to the bank and requesting that the bank itself handles the non-residence certificate application, always with prior authorisation from the customer. In this case, the bank may charge an administrative fee and, although the bank account will be opened immediately, it will be blocked and the funds deposited in it may not be accessed until the bank receives the certificate of non-residence.

It must be taken into account that, although you only normally need this certificate and a passport to open a bank account, depending on the bank in question, the customer may be asked for other kinds of document, such as proof of income or even a letter from their local bank. Therefore, it is very important to ask the bank in question about this kind of information before going there in person.

Furthermore, and depending on the bank, the account may have a fixed duration, e.g. six months. In any case, all banks require that the account holder reconfirms their status as non-resident every two years, and will block all charges, payments and interest payments until a new certificate of non-residence is provided.

Finally, it should be noted that some banks do not allow credit cards to be associated with these accounts. It should also be noted that a minimum amount is not usually required for opening a bank account, provided that deposits are made in euros. If deposits are made in foreign currencies, it will depend on what this currency is. It is therefore advisable that the account holder request that the funds are immediately converted into euros, without the bank being able to charge more than the commission established for currency exchange. It is also common for the overdraft limit to be lower than it is for residents.

In any case, if the account holder becomes a resident, he or she must inform the bank, also presenting the relevant foreigner identity card (TIE), so it can change the account type to a resident account.

Resident foreigners

Any foreign person legally resident in Catalonia may open a bank account in Catalonia by simply going to a branch of the bank of their choosing, applying to open an account and providing various documents as per the procedure of the bank in question.

The Bank of Spain's register of institutions (access to its website) provides a list of all the banks authorised to operate in Spain. This register, which is constantly updated, may be viewed according to various parameters, including variations by month.

[information](#)

Information about procedures

Legal obligations



Registering a company

The [Canal Empresa website](#) can be used to find out the legal procedures that must be borne in mind by businesspeople before opening a business. This entrepreneur assistance service is run by the Generalitat de Catalunya's [Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement](#) (Ministry of Business and Knowledge). The service includes a useful guided procedure search tool that makes it possible to find out which procedures need to be started, regardless of the competent administration, according to the activity the businessperson wishes to start.

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This tool is based on the activity the businessperson wishes to engage in and their geographical location and, through a series of questions, it provides a personalised document in PDF form (which can be saved or printed) with a graphical representation and detailed information on the procedures that must be started and the relevant requirements, the necessary documents, the applicable fees and places for submission, as well as the order in which the procedures must be done.

Business taxes

Tax obligations are different in each country, and therefore it is necessary to be well informed of what these are before opening a business in Catalonia. As in the case of legal obligations, the [Canal Empresa website](#) can be used; this entrepreneur assistance service is run by the Generalitat de Catalunya's [Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement](#). This service includes a series of descriptive sections on corporation tax (IS), value added tax (IVA), trading tax (IAE), as well as taxation of business profits in individual income tax on natural persons (IRPF), the tax on income of non-residents and taxes on individual businesspersons.

Legal forms

Many different types of commercial company can be formed in Catalonia. The most common company types are **societat civil particular** (private general partnership – SCP), which is really the association of two or more individual businesspeople; **societat de responsabilitat limitada** (limited liability company – SRL) and **societat anònima** (joint stock company – SA). To learn more about these legal forms and others, as well as their main characteristics and which procedures must be followed to form them, [here](#) you can view the *Guia de Tràmits i Formes Jurídiques* (Procedure and Legal Form Guide) of the Generalitat de Catalunya's Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement.

- If the company in question is a commercial company that is already established in another country and is seeking to open a **branch** in Catalonia, the conditions for proceeding with this can be viewed [here](#) (access to the Invest in Spain website). The conditions can be viewed [here](#) (access to the Invest in Spain website) if the intention is just to open a **representative office**.

Legal forms

A detailed explanation of the full procedure for incorporating a company and for registering the most common types of commercial company in Catalonia can be found on the [Canal Empresa website](#), the businessperson assistance service of the Generalitat de Catalunya's [Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement](#). This service is not just limited to providing information; it also makes it possible to do some of the procedures managed by the Oficina de Gestió Empresarial (Business Management Office – OGE). Different types of possible business structures are, for example:

- [self-employed](#) (sole trader);
- [limited company](#);
- [cooperative company](#);
- [worker-owned limited company](#).

This website also offers guidance on other legal matters related to creating a company, such as hiring employees, opening an establishment, looking for funding and protecting brands and products, among other issues.

Information about procedures

Public employment system

For resident foreigners



Employment support resources

Via its [website](#), the Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya (Catalan Public Employment Service – SOC) offers information on its services and the following support tools:

- 1. for employees:** [professional guidance](#): advisory service for the job-seeking process. [Feina Activa](#): online employment mediation portal (more information at the end of this section). [Work in Europe](#): EURES network and summer jobs in Europe (more information at the end of this section). [Training courses](#). This link can be used to search for the course that best fits your profile, while this [link](#) provides access to the specialised training search engine. [Professional qualification certificates](#). [Work placements abroad](#): EURODYSEY and ERASMUS programmes. [Online processing](#). This link can be used to update job applications, view your CV, request reports and change your administrative status;
- 2. for companies:** [posting job offers](#). [Recruitment notifications](#). [Aid and subsidies](#). [Recruitment guidance](#). [Job offer management](#). [Business services](#).

For specific information on registration as a job seeker for foreign persons, click [here](#).

To formally register as a job seeker, the following documentation must be submitted:

- **EU citizens.** Initially, documented citizens can register using a valid passport or national identity document from the country of origin. However, once three months have passed since the date of registration, they will have to provide a foreigner's identification number (NIE) in order to continue to be registered.
- **Non-EU citizens.** Non-EU citizens must have a foreigner's identification number (NIE) and be documented with a valid passport or a foreigner's identification card. Anyone with the following administrative statuses may formally register: residence and work permit; residence permit; authorisation of stay for study purposes. NB: if the administrative authorisation has expired, this will have to be accompanied by an application for renewal submitted up to 60 days before or no more than 90 days after the expiry date.

Access for returnee emigrants.

The Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya registers returnee emigrants as job seekers when they have ceased their employment activity abroad, regardless of whether they have the right to receive a benefit or subsidy. For exhaustive information on all the options offered to persons with the status of returnee emigrant, please click [here](#).

This [link](#) to the Generalitat's employment office network will provide information on the office closest to your place of residence.

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Feina Activa is the intermediation portal the Generalitat de Catalunya offers for businesses so that they can post job offers. It is also used by job seekers to make searching for jobs as useful and practical as possible. Access to the portal is offered via MónCat, and it is important to note that it is possible to search for jobs while abroad.

The main official tool to get work in any European Union country is **EURES**, the European jobs network. This is a cooperative network formed by the public employment services of European countries. Trade unions and employers' organisations also participate as partners. Its aim is to facilitate employee mobility within the European Economic Area. It is formed by the 28 EU Member States, plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland. The EURES network service is accessible from MónCat.

information

Agreements on social benefits

Agreements with the EU

At present, there is no social security agreement in place between Spain and any other EU country.

European legislation does not replace national schemes with a single European scheme; instead, each country continues to be free to make decisions regarding benefits and the requirements to be met. The EU has established a series of **common rules on coordinating social security** that protect the basic social rights of its citizens when they move between the 28 Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. These rules basically refer to:

- sickness, maternity and paternity benefits and similar;
- old-age pensions and early retirement and disability benefits;
- survivors' benefits and death grants;
- unemployment benefits;
- family benefits;
- benefits for accidents at work and occupational diseases.

Each of these benefits and what they include can be viewed in more detail [here](#) (access to the social security website).

It is worth noting that the coordination rules are European regulations, which means that they apply directly in all Member States. Both national authorities and administrations as well as social security agencies and courts must apply them. In the event of incompatibility with national laws, European rules take precedence.

It is also useful to know that contributions accumulate for the purpose of pensions, since the pension is calculated according to the insurance record in each country: the amount received from each corresponds to the length of social security coverage in each case. To find information about how it is calculated and where the pension should be requested, as well as other matters, click on this [link](#).

If the person concerned is receiving unemployment benefit in their country of residence and they wish to travel to Spain and continue to receive this money, they should check with the public employment service in their country of residence whether it is possible to 'export' this benefit to Spain and under what conditions.

There are many international agreements in place between Spain and other countries in order to coordinate social security legislation on pensions and benefits. Specifically, such agreements exist with the following countries:

- Andorra
- Argentina
- Australia
- Brazil
- Cape Verde
- Canada
- Colombia
- Korea
- Ecuador
- USA
- Philippines
- Japan
- Morocco
- Mexico
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Dominican Republic
- Russia
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- Uruguay
- Venezuela
- Chile

These are all bilateral agreements. There is also a multilateral agreement with various Ibero-American countries (Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay), which can be viewed [here](#).

All the legal social security regulations related to international rules can be viewed [here](#).

Although each agreement is unique and should be looked at individually, most of them include the same provisions. By way of summary, it can be said that they all establish that their provisions apply to all Spaniards and nationals of the country in question that work in one or both countries, and to their families.

The agreements usually regulate different contributory social security benefits.

The most common are:

- disability benefits;
- old-age benefits;
- death and survivors' benefits;
- benefits for accidents at work and occupational diseases.

They also normally establish that the contribution periods required to acquire the right to any of these benefits can be added together regardless of the country or countries in which they have been calculated, provided that they do not overlap; it is also usually established that any economic benefits accrued may be received regardless of the place of residence of the person concerned.

In this case, each state will pay its own benefits directly to the person concerned. Recipients will be persons who meet the requirements set out by the laws of the various states that signed the agreement to have rights to a contributory benefit. This is the case, for example, for a retirement pension.

To request the benefit in question or to get information about the procedure, the person concerned must go to the relevant agency in their country of residence. In the case of Spain, this can be done through any of the support and information centres of the [Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social](#) (National Social Security Institute).

The date the request is submitted to the institute will also be considered the date of submission to the relevant agency in the other country or countries. If the country of residence is not any of the agreement signatories, the relevant agency will be the signatory state in which the person concerned was last insured.

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Regulated professions

Regulated professions are considered to be those in which a rule defines the features and/or skills that can only be carried out by a professional who has the required qualification or certification, who has passed the aptitude test or who can prove, according to the established procedure, that they meet the requirements for receiving the permit or administrative authorisation to exercise the profession.

The legislation regulating such professions are [Directive 2005/36/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, and Council Directive [2006/100/EC](#) of 20 November 2006 adapting certain Directives in the field of freedom of movement of persons, which were transposed into Spanish law by [Real Decreto \(Royal Decree\) 1837/2008](#) of 8 November.

To find out whether a certain profession is regulated in Spain, click on this [link](#) for the European Commission website on regulated professions. You can also view the [regulated professions database](#) provided by the European Commission. You can search by profession type, by country (EU, EEA member and Switzerland) or by qualification level.

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All EU countries, as well as EEA countries and Switzerland, have implemented a system of automatic recognition for certain professions in which the minimum academic conditions have been standardised. These professions, known as sectoral professions, are the following (each includes the link to the main characteristics of the procedure):

- [architecture](#);
- [dentistry](#);
- [nursing](#);
- [obstetrics and gynaecological nursing](#) (midwives);
- [medicine](#);
- [pharmacy](#);
- [veterinary medicine](#).

To accredit a qualification or certificate that has not been issued in Spain, it will be necessary to submit a legalised version (see the section '[Legalisation of official documents](#)') that has been translated (see the section '[Sworn translation of documents](#)') and, if necessary, to see the information on accreditation in the section '[Validation of studies and qualifications](#)'.

Information about procedures

Employment contracts



Basic employment information

Employment contracts are regulated by the Estatuto de los Trabajadores (Statute of Workers' Rights), which is the **basic standard** that regulates the rights of workers in Spain.

The employment relationship between an employer and employee must be formalised by means of an employment contract, which will generally be in **writing**. The employer will send a basic copy of all contracts to the employees' legal representatives. This basic copy is then forwarded to an employment office.

The following persons may **sign** an employment contract: adults (aged 18 and over), legally emancipated minors, and persons over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 if they have permission from their parents or guardians. In addition, minors who live independently, with the express or tacit consent of their parents or guardians, and foreigners in accordance with the legislation that applies to them.

The Spanish legal system provides for the following **types of contract**:

- permanent employment contract;
- fixed-term contract: temporary contract for work or service (maximum length of three years). Temporary contract due to market circumstances, backlog of work or high demand (maximum length of six months, extendible by collective

agreement up to a maximum of 12 months). Temporary interim contract (to replace workers who have the right to resume their post).

- Training and apprenticeship contract.
- Internship contact.

The above contracts, except for training contracts, may also be part-time.

Contract templates may be downloaded on this [web page](#).

Minimum age and wage

Minimum age for work

In accordance with the Estatuto de los Trabajadores, there are three different age ranges associated with three different scenarios:

1. Firstly, **it is prohibited to allow persons under the age of 16 to work**. This measure has been taken so that minors can fully develop and complete their training, as it must be remembered that schooling is compulsory up to the age of 16.
2. Secondly, there is the **situation of full ability**. The Estatuto de Trabajadores clarifies who is considered to be in this situation.
3. Finally, **persons over the age of 16 but under 18 who do not live independently** may be employed with permission from their legal guardians.

Remuneration must be generally established by collective bargaining, and it must be higher than or equal to the national minimum wage that is set annually. The parties may freely establish the wage in the contract, provided that the minimums set in the collective agreements are observed, as well as the national minimum wages set annually. Information about the national minimum wage is available by clicking [here](#).

Extra payments. Employees have the right to at least **two extra payments** per year, one for Christmas and the other in the month set by the bargaining agreement or agreement between the employer and the workers' representatives. The amount of the payments is also set by the relevant bargaining agreement. They may be paid on a pro-rata basis if so agreed, i.e. receiving the relevant proportion each month. Employees who have not worked for the entire year (or an entire six months, as the case may be) have the right to receive the proportional part. Some bargaining agreements establish more than two extra payments, such as the agreement for the business premises sector, which sets it at four and a half. The minimum of two extra payments must always be respected, however.

Payslips. Payslips are individual receipts providing evidence of payment of wages, which also show the remuneration as well as the extra hours that have been done

and the corresponding amount. They are proof of wages and of the existence of the employment relationship with the company.

The basic regulation is found in the Estatuto de los Trabajadores (Articles 26 to 33 of Real Decreto Legislativo 1/1995, de 24 de marzo, por el que se aprueba el texto refundido de la Ley del Estatuto de los Trabajadores (Royal Legislative Decree 1/1995 of 24 March approving the recast text of the Law on the Statute of Workers' Rights)), and more specifically in each collective bargaining agreement.

General information

Comisión Consultiva Nacional de Convenios Colectivos del Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social (Ministry of Employment and Social Security National Advisory Commission on Collective Agreements) ([link](#)).

Registro de Convenios Colectivos (Collective Bargaining Agreement Registry – REGCON; [link](#)).

Social Security – national minimum wage ([link](#)).

information

Hours, holidays and leave

In general, working hours are limited to **40 hours per week**. The number of ordinary working hours is that agreed in the collective bargaining agreements or employment contracts.

Working hours

The **irregular distribution** of working hours throughout the year may be established by collective bargaining agreement or, if there is not one, by agreement between the company and the workers' representatives. If there is no agreement stating otherwise, the company may irregularly distribute 10% of working hours throughout the year. This distribution will take place always observing the minimum daily and weekly break periods set by law, and the employee must know at least five days in advance what day and time the work resulting from the distribution will be done.

Daily:

- the number of regular hours of effective work may not be higher than **nine hours**.
- Workers under the age of 18 may not do more than eight hours of effective work per day, including, where applicable, time dedicated to training.
- Working time is calculated in such a way that the employee is at the workplace both at the start and at the end of the working day.

Hours worked to prevent or repair accidents and other extraordinary and urgent damage do not count as part of the maximum number of regular working hours or for the maximum number of extraordinary hours, although they shall be paid as extraordinary hours.

Exceptionally, the government, at the request of the Ministerio de Ocupación y Seguridad Social (Ministry of Employment and Social Security), and subject to consultation with the most representative business and trade union organisations, may establish **extensions or reductions** in the organisation and duration of working hours and breaks.

Breaks. A break period of at least **15 minutes** must be established within the working day, where the continuous working day is longer than six hours. This period will be considered effective working time when thus established by collective bargaining agreement or by employment contract. For workers under the age of 18, where the continuous working day is longer than 4.5 hours, the break must be at least 30 minutes.

Between working days. There must be at least **12 hours between the end of one working day and the beginning of the following working day**.

Weekly. The minimum weekly break period is **1.5 days**, and two days for persons under the age of 18. This break must be uninterrupted in all cases. Breaks that are 1.5 days may be accumulated into periods of up to 14 days.

Overtime

Overtime is the hours worked beyond the maximum duration of the legal or agreed regular working hours.

- The maximum amount of overtime is **80 hours per year**, or fewer in proportion to the hours worked, if this is lower than the general amount for the company.
- Doing these hours is voluntary, unless it has been agreed in a collective bargaining agreement or employment contract; persons under the age of 18 may not work overtime.
- Overtime may be paid financially or compensated with breaks, with the choice being made by means of bargaining agreement or, if there is none, by individual contract. In no case may the financial amount be lower than the value of regular hours.
- If there is no agreement, overtime may be compensated with break periods within the four months following the date on **which** it has been done.

For more information, click [here](#).

Leave and holidays

Employees have the right to paid annual leave, in no case fewer than **30 calendar days** (Article 39 of Real Decreto Legislativo 1/1995, de 24 de marzo, por el que se aprueba el texto refundido de la Ley del Estatuto de los Trabajadores, hereinafter ET). Longer periods of leave may be established by individual contract or by collective bargaining agreement.

Leave is arranged by **mutual** agreement between the employer and the worker, in accordance with the provisions, as applicable, of the collective bargaining

agreements; in the event of disagreement, the competent jurisdiction will set the leave.

The leave schedule will be arranged in every company at least two months in advance. If the leave coincides with temporary incapacity due to pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding, or with the suspension period of the employment contract envisaged in Articles 48(4) and 48a ET, the leave can be taken at a later date, even if the calendar year to which it corresponds has ended.

If the temporary incapacity is due to contingencies other than those mentioned above that make it impossible to take the leave in full or in part during the calendar year to which it corresponds, the employee may take it once the incapacity has ended, provided that no more than 18 months have elapsed from the end of the year in **which** the leave originated.

In terms of holidays, employees have the right to **14 paid bank holidays for which the hours do not have to be made up**, of which two are local holidays.

The official calendar of bank holidays and local holidays in Catalonia is available by clicking [here](#).

Other types of leave

Employment legislation provides for a series of situations that give workers the right to temporary leaves of absence from the workplace with the right to remuneration, subject to notice and justification (Articles 23 and 37(3) ET). For more information, click on this [link](#), or click [here](#) to access a summary of the different types of leave.

The main types of leave are listed below:

- marriage: 15 calendar days;
- birth of a child or death, serious accident or illness, hospitalisation or surgery without hospitalisation that requires rest at home for relatives, up to the second degree of kinship: two calendar days; four days if travel is necessary;
- moving house: one day;
- fulfilling an unavoidable duty of a **public** and personal nature, including exercising the right to vote: the minimum time required. When this features in a legal or agreed standard, the duration and financial reward will be as provided for in this standard. If the employee receives compensation, it will be deducted from the relevant wage;
- carrying out trade union or staff representation work: the time required to adequately carry out the work;
- prenatal examinations and birth preparation techniques: the time required to do the tests;

- breastfeeding a child under the age of nine months: one hour's absence from the workplace, which can be divided into two fractions. The duration of the leave is increased proportionally in cases of multiple birth. This leave may be accumulated into full days. This leave may be taken by both the father and the mother, but only one of the two can take it if they both work;
- birth of premature children or children who must be hospitalised after birth: the mother or father has the right to be absent from the workplace for one hour. Moreover, they may reduce the working day by up to two hours, with the proportional reduction of wages;
- maternity. 16 weeks' paid leave from the date of birth or from the date the rest period begins, if it is prior to birth. In the case of multiple birth, the leave is increased by two weeks for each additional child;
- paternity. 13 days' paid leave, which can be extended in the case of multiple birth by two additional days for each additional child from the second onwards.

General information

Article 9 of Ley Orgánica 11/1985, de 2 de agosto, de Libertad Sindical (Organic Law 11/1985 of 2 August on Trade Union Freedom) ([link to the law](#)).

Article 37(3) ET ([link to the law](#)).

About maternity, paternity **and** breastfeeding ([link to further information](#)).

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Registration for social security and dismissal

The Spanish Social Security system is a public protection system aimed at all persons, which guarantees care benefits, health benefits and economic benefits or benefits of any other kind established by law, in order to address any possible situations of social need.

Social Security

It is based on the principle of financial solidarity: financial contributions are made both by employers as well as employees.

Benefit types:

- **healthcare:** this consists in public healthcare for everyone in the country, regardless of nationality **and** administrative status; it is one of the most significant benefits provided by the **public** social security system;
- **economic benefits:** used to prevent, remedy or overcome any situations that result in a loss of income or excessive expenses. Three types of risk are covered: risks of illness, maternity, unemployment, old age, retirement, permanent disability and death (social insurance); family benefits (e.g. for dependent children); occupational accidents and illnesses. All workers of any nationality who contribute to the Spanish social security system have the right to receive benefits as long as they have contributed for the minimum period

required by law and meet the other requirements for accessing these benefits. These benefits are called “contributory benefits” because, to have the right to receive them, workers must have paid into the social security system by making obligatory contributions. The contributory system does not protect everyone, but it does protect a high percentage of the working population;

- there are also **non-contributory or welfare** benefits: these are granted based on the existence of a need, regardless of the contributions made, and in this case they are funded via public budgets. There are non-contributory benefits for retirement, incapacity, dependent children, basic guaranteed incomes and unemployment benefits, among others.

All the information on social benefits may be viewed by clicking [here](#).

The social security system and the benefits it offers are managed by various agencies in Catalonia: Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social (National Social Security Institute – INSS), Institut Català de la Salut (Catalan Health Institute – ICS), Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales (Institute for Older Persons and Social Services – Imsero), Institut Català de Serveis Socials (Catalan Social Services Institute – ICASS) and Tesorería General de la Seguridad Social (Social Security General Fund – TGSS; agency that acts as collector and single fund).

Municipal social services can also provide information on the welfare or economic benefits to which you may be entitled.

Public employment service/Dismissal

Pursuant to [Llei 13/2015](#), de 9 de juliol, d’ordenació del sistema de treball i de creació del Servei d’Ocupació de Catalunya (Law 13/2015 of 9 July organising the employment system and creating the Catalan Public Employment Services) (SOC [[link to the corporate website](#)]), the SOC is an autonomous administrative agency, attached to the Generalitat de Catalunya’s Departament de Treball (Ministry of Employment).

The SOC frames its activity within the European Employment Strategy and within Spain’s national employment schemes.

The main functions of the SOC are the following:

- to offer and provide a service to all job seekers, regardless of whether they are working or unemployed, as well as to companies;
- to offer a level playing field of opportunities for everyone;
- to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit and provide support for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- to get dialogue and commitment between public and private players to be the driver of employment policies;
- to achieve a high level of employment, by means of active action, together with the promotion and creation of jobs.

The SOC provides service to people, companies and regions in matters that affect employment and local development. Its aim is to promote high-quality employment, on equal terms, to contribute to social cohesion and to the competitive development of Catalan enterprise.

The SOC offers advisory services to all members of the public who are seeking a new job, both through the network of employment offices and through its website.

For more information, click [here](#).

To obtain both the unemployment benefit as well as the subsidy, it is necessary to go to the relevant [employment office](#), where information will be provided in person on the procedures that must be carried out and the documentation that must be provided ([link](#) to more information).

Employment agencies are defined as the public or private entities (for profit or not for profit) which, in coordination and, if necessary, collaboration with the relevant public employment service, carry out employment mediation activities aimed at providing workers with employment suited to their characteristics, and to provide employers with the most appropriate employees according to their needs and requirements.

More information is available by clicking on this [link](#).

There are currently 217 employment agencies active within Catalonia ([link](#) to the full list).

General information

Web [page](#) on various industrial relations matters.

For matters regarding the labour inspectorate, you can click [here](#), or look up the locations of the provincial inspectorates of the social security specialist units via this [link](#).

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Trade union rights

Both the Spanish Constitution as well as the Estatuto de los Trabajadores set out the right of workers to form and become a member of trade unions.

The Ley Orgánica de Libertad Sindical (Organic Law on Trade Union Freedom) develops this right by establishing in Article 1(1) that all workers have the right to freely form trade unions to promote and defend their economic and social interests. Article 2 of this law lays down the right of workers to join the trade union of their choice, as well as the right of union members to freely choose their representatives within each union and also the right to trade union activity.

European Union citizens can join Spanish trade unions. As members, they have the same rights and obligations as the other members of Spanish trade unions. By virtue of EU legislation (Article 8(1) of Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community), EU citizens must receive the same treatment in other Member States, in relation to membership of trade union organisations and the exercise of trade union rights, as nationals.

For more information, see the following websites:

- business, trade union and self-employment organisations ([link](#));
- workers' representatives and trade union elections ([link](#));
- work and employment ([link](#)).

Information about procedures

Bilateral agreements



System of authorisations

There is no dual nationality agreement between European Union countries and Spain. In any case, it should be taken into account that citizens of the countries that form the EU and [the Schengen Area](#) have the right to settle and engage in labour and/or professional activities without the need for prior authorisation.

Citizens from Ibero-American countries, Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal do not need to give up their nationality if they become Spanish citizens.

You can get more information on agreements affecting dual nationality on the [Ministerio de Justicia \(Ministry of Justice\) website](#).

There are agreements affecting the system of residence and work permits. These include the following:

- [agreement between Spain, France and Andorra](#) affecting the entry, movement, settlement and residency of their nationals;
- [dual nationality agreement between Spain and Chile](#), establishing that the citizens of these countries who are not eligible for dual nationality will continue to enjoy the rights and advantages granted by Chilean and Spanish legislation respectively (travel, residence, settlement, etc.), under the same conditions as nationals;
- [dual nationality agreement between Spain and Peru](#), establishing that the citizens of these countries who are not eligible for dual nationality will continue to enjoy the rights and advantages granted by Peruvian and Spanish legislation respectively (travel, residence, settlement, etc.), under the same conditions as nationals;

- [Agreement on the Accession of the Kingdom of Spain to the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement](#). Instrument of ratification of 23 July 1993 (Official State Gazette no 81 of 5 April 1994).

You can access the basic regulations and other agreements affecting the system of residence and work permits by clicking on this [link](#).

Entry visa for tourism

Citizens of EU Member States, of the other states party to the European Economic Area Agreement (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and of Switzerland, who wish to enter Catalonia from outside of Spain do not require a visa; a valid passport or identity document on which their nationality appears is sufficient.

These citizens may stay in Catalonia without having to carry out any kind of procedure for up to a maximum of three months. For longer periods, they must apply to register with the Registre Central d'Estrangers (Central Register of Foreign Nationals).

For nationals of other countries, the maximum length of stay is 90 days, and it is advisable to have travel insurance.

Moreover, citizens of these countries wishing to enter Catalonia from outside of Spain must meet some basic requirements for entering the country:

- having a passport or travel document that is valid for at least three months after the planned date of departure from the Schengen Area, that has been issued within the two years prior to the date of entry;
- documents proving the length of stay and confirming sufficient economic means for this intended stay;
- document proving the place of accommodation, booking for an organised trip or letter of invitation;
- visa, except in cases of exemption. To find out which countries need a visa for tourism or are exempt, click on this [link](#);
- in all cases, return ticket or tourist route ticket.

Since the requirements may vary, it is advisable to contact the Spanish consulate or embassy in the country of origin.

You can get more information by visiting the website of the [Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación](#) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation).

Authorisation to study

Citizens of the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland do not need prior permission or authorisation to study in Catalonia.

All they need to bring is a valid identity document from that country or the passport used to enter Spain.

European Union citizens

- If the length of study is shorter than three months, these citizens do not need to carry out any kind of procedure, but it must be taken into account that for certain formalities, such as opening bank accounts or accessing healthcare, it is necessary to have a **foreigner's identification number (NIE)**.

- If the length of study is longer than three months, in addition to a valid identity document from their own country or the passport they have used to enter Spain, students must apply in person, by going to the Oficina d'Estrangeria (Foreign Nationals Office) in the province where they intend to reside or to the **relevant police station**, to be registered in the Registre Central d'Estrangers, and to obtain an EU citizen registration certificate.

- The deadline for submitting an application is three months counted from the date of entry into Spain.

- The EU citizen registration certificate requires a fee to be paid in advance.

- EU citizens and their family members – so long as the latter are travelling with or joining the former – are subject to a specific legal regime arising from the rights recognised by the treaties.

- The entry, free movement and residence in Spain of citizens of European Union Member States and of other states party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, is regulated by **Real Decreto (Royal Decree) 240/2007** of 16 February.

- Students from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have the same employment conditions as Spanish nationals, and may work while they study without prior authorisation.

- To access healthcare benefits, it is necessary to obtain a **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** before coming to Catalonia. Once you have a place of residence, you must go to the public health centre nearest your home, or any of the social security **Support and Information Centres (CAISS)**, at which you will need to request an **appointment**. You can also call the information line 012.

You can get more information about requirements, documentation, places for submission and fees via this [link](#).

Foreign citizens to whom the Community regime does not apply

Foreign citizens who come to Catalonia to study for fewer than three months do not need a visa, except where the country of origin does not have an agreement with Spain.

Foreign citizens who wish to enter Spain with the intention of studying, carrying out research activities, doing unpaid work experience or participating in student exchanges, for a period longer than three months, must obtain the appropriate visa, which will include the initial authorisation to stay for the relevant duration. Students must pre-enrol beforehand at a public or private educational institution that is officially recognised by the Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education). Visas are processed at the Spanish embassy in the country of origin. It is advisable to submit the application in good time (two to three months before the planned start date of the studies).

The general requirements for obtaining the visa are as follows:

- application form;
- proof of having been accepted by an officially recognised public or private educational institution to undertake or extend studies or to carry out unpaid work experience, research or training;
- proof of sufficient economic means to maintain themselves during their stay and to return to their country of origin;
- medical insurance that covers, for the duration of the stay, medical expenses and repatriation in the event of accident or sudden illness;
- if the student is a minor, permission from their parents or guardians;
- payment of a processing fee;
- medical certificate confirming that the student does not have any kind of illness that could have an impact on public health as per the International Health Regulations;
- if the student is of legal age, a criminal record certificate issued by the authorities in the country of origin or in the country where they have resided for the past five years.

Since the requirements may vary in each case, it is advisable to contact the Spanish consulate or embassy in the country of origin to check the requirements and to obtain information on all the steps that must be followed to enter the country. You can get more information by visiting the website of the [Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores](#).

General characteristics:

- If the length of study is longer than three months but shorter than six, the visa itself will include the authorisation to stay, specifying 'STUDIES, TOTAL 180 DAYS' and will not entail the issuing of a student card.

- If the length of study is longer than six months, the student must apply in person for a foreigner identity card, within one month of entering Spain, at the Oficina d'Estrangeria (Foreign Nationals Office) or at a police station in the province where the consular office has processed the authorisation.
- NB: it is not possible to enter Spain on a tourist visa and then apply for a student visa. In this case, it is necessary to return to the country of residence and obtain the visa.
- The authorisation to stay for study purposes permits part-time work, so long as the working hours are compatible with the studies or research being undertaken. Companies wishing to hire foreign students must apply for a work permit for foreigners from the **Subdirecció General d'Autoritzacions Inicials de Treball** (Sub-directorate General of Initial Work Permits) of the Generalitat de Catalunya's Departament de Treball (Ministry of Employment).
- Before coming, students should check whether there is any agreement between their country of origin and Spain concerning social security and medical care. In this case, it is necessary to verify whether any document needs to be processed in order to have access to healthcare. If this is not the case, students must remember to take out private medical insurance, which will need to be presented when applying for a student visa.
- The spouse, civil partner and children under 18 or who have a disability and are not objectively able to cover their own needs due to their state of health, may obtain authorisation to enter and legally remain in Spain with the student during their period of study, applying for the appropriate visa.
- Authorisations to stay for study purposes may be extended as long as the studies last and provided that certain requirements are met, including progressing with or passing examinations and continuing the studies. Students may [apply for extensions](#) from the **Oficina d'Estrangeria** in the relevant province.
- Foreign students may change their situation to resident with permission to work, provided that they meet certain conditions, including having progressed with the studies for which they received the authorisation to stay, and having had authorisation to stay for study purposes for at least three consecutive years. Students wishing to change their status must apply to the **Subdirecció General d'Autoritzacions Inicials de Treball** (Sub-directorate General of Initial Work Permits) of the Generalitat de Catalunya's Departament de Treball (Ministry of Employment).

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Community regime for citizens of EU Member States, the EEA and Switzerland

The Community regime applies to the following people:

The application of the Community regime to Spain is regulated by Real Decreto 240/2007, de 16 febrero, sobre entrada, libre circulación y residencia en España de ciudadanos de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea y de otros Estados parte en el Acuerdo sobre el Espacio Económico Europeo (Royal Decree 240/2007 of 16 February on the entry, free movement and residence in Spain of citizens of European Union Member States and other states party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area).

- nationals from [European Union Member States, from other states in the European Economic Area \(EEA\) and also Swiss nationals](#).
- In addition, regardless of their nationality, it applies to the family members who accompany or who join the citizen in question and who may be: the spouse, provided that there has not been any divorce or annulment; the civil partner, registered in a public registry in a member state of the EU, EEA or in Switzerland, provided that the registration has not been cancelled; the direct descendants and the descendants of the spouse or registered partner who are under the age of 21 or older than this age who are dependant; the direct descendants and the ascendants of the spouse or registered partner who are dependant;

Rights granted:

the persons mentioned in the section above have the right to enter, leave, move around and reside freely in Spanish territory subject to complying with the formalities envisaged in Real Decreto 240/2007 mentioned above and without prejudice to the limitations established therein.

They also have the right to carry out any activity both as an employee as well as on a self-employed basis, except descendants older than 21 who are dependants and ascendant dependants.

If the persons stated above wish to remain or establish their legal residence in Spain for a period longer than three months, they will have to apply for the following:

- a certificate of registration as a Community resident: nationals of a member state of the EU, EEA or Switzerland. [Access to the fact sheet](#). [Access to the list of applications](#). [Centres that issue the certificate of registration as a Community resident](#);
- Union citizen relative card: family members who accompany or join the EU citizen. [Access to the fact sheet](#). [Access to the list of applications](#). [Information required for submitting the application](#) (the jurisdiction corresponding to the place of residence must be selected).

Authorisation to work as self-employed

1. Regime in Ley Orgánica 4/2000 (Organic Law 4/2000; the so-called Foreign Nationals Law), developed by Real Decreto 557/2011

2. Regime in Ley 14/2013 de apoyo a los emprendedores y su internacionalización (Law 14/2013 in support of entrepreneurs and their internationalisation; the so-called Entrepreneurs Law) (hereinafter Ley 14/2013)

Foreign persons to whom the Community regime does not apply and who wish to reside and work on a self-employed basis in Catalonia may obtain a permit from the two systems of authorisations currently in force:

1.1 Temporary residence and self-employed work permit ([link](#))

Residence and work permit for foreigners who are proposing to engage in gainful employment on a self-employed basis in Catalonia.

Ley 14/2013 (the Entrepreneurs Law) introduced an alternative legal regime, for which the Central State Administration is exclusively responsible, which makes it possible to obtain, inter alia, a residence permit with permission to work, aimed at foreigners who wish to start up entrepreneurial and business activities in Spain, provided that these are of an innovative nature or have special economic interest for Spain (characteristics that will have to be demonstrated by means of a favourable report from the competent administrative body).

In relation to this section, the procedures available to foreign persons are the following:

2.1 Residence visa to carry out procedures prior to the entrepreneurial activity ([link](#))

Visa that must be obtained from the Spanish consular office of the country of residence of the foreign entrepreneur, in order to enter and remain in Spain for a period of one year in order to carry out the procedures prior to the start of the entrepreneurial activity.

2.2 Initial residence permit to carry out business activity ([link](#))

Residence permit (includes permission to work) pursuant to Ley 14/2013 (the Entrepreneurs Law) for foreign persons who are seeking to start up, carry out or manage an economic activity.

Authorisation to work as an employee

1. The regime in Ley Orgánica 4/2000 (the so-called Foreign Nationals Law), developed by Real Decreto 557/2011, which regulates part of the above-mentioned permits. Specifically:

Foreign persons to whom the Community regime does not apply and who wish to reside and work on an employed basis in Catalonia may be covered by various types of permit, according to the nature of the activity they will be carrying out. In principle, there are two different legal regimes:

1.1. Temporary residence and work permit to work as an employee ('general regime') ([link](#))

Initial residence and work permit for foreigners who are not resident in Spain and who are proposing to engage in gainful employment as an employee in Catalonia.

1.2. Temporary residence and work permit to work as an employee for researchers ([link](#))

Initial residence and work permit to work as a researcher requested by agencies or entities authorised within the framework of a hosting agreement for the sole or main purpose of undertaking research projects.

1.3. Temporary residence and work permit to work as an employee for highly qualified staff (EU Blue Card) ([link](#))

Initial residence and work permit for highly qualified professionals (EU Blue Card), to carry out activities that require higher education qualifications or for cases in which, exceptionally, a minimum of five years' professional experience is evidenced which can be considered comparable to the qualification mentioned above and is related to the activity for which the permit is requested.

1.4. Fixed-period temporary residence and permit to work as an employee:

1.4.1. For senior managers, professional sportspeople and artists ([link](#))

Fixed-period initial residence and work permit for senior management staff, professional sportspeople and artists. The above-mentioned permit is not aimed at people who wish to settle in Spain, rather it is strictly for performance of the employment contract. Once the contract has ended (if it has not been extended), the worker must return to his or her previous country of residence and confirm the return with the Spanish consular office.

1.4.2. For seasonal activities ([link](#))

Fixed-period initial residence and work permit for seasonal activities (e.g. pear harvesting, strawberry harvesting, etc.). The above-mentioned permit is not aimed at people who wish to settle in Spain, rather it is strictly for performance of the employment contract(s). Once the contract has ended (if it has not been extended), the worker must return to his or her previous country of residence and confirm the return with the Spanish consular office.

1.4.3. For works or services activities ([link](#))

Fixed-period initial residence and work permit for works and services activities to:

- set up industrial or power plants;
- build infrastructures, buildings or electricity, telephone or gas supply networks or railways;
- install and maintain production equipment, as well as putting this equipment into operation and repairing it.

1.4.4. For training activities or internships ([link](#))

Fixed-period initial residence and work permit for training activities or internships.

1.5. Temporary residence and work permit to work as an employee in the framework of the transnational provision of services ([link](#))

Initial residence and work permit in the framework of the transnational provision of services by foreign workers who are transferred to a workplace in Spain and who are attached, by means of an express employment relationship, to a company established in a state that does not belong to the European Union or the European Economic Area, in the following cases:

- where there is a temporary transfer on behalf and under the management of the foreign company to perform a contract concluded between said company and the recipient of the services provided, who is established or engages in their activity in Spain (if there is an international agreement applicable to this effect);
- where the above-mentioned temporary transfer is an inter-company or inter-group transfer to a workplace in Spain;
- • where the transfer affects highly qualified workers and is aimed at the supervision and assessment of works and services that companies based in Spain carry out abroad. Transfers for the purpose of training activities are expressly excluded from this kind of permit, except in the case set out in section two.

1.6. Temporary residence and work permit to work as an employee (procedure from Title IX of the Foreign Nationals Regulation ([link](#)))

In reality, Title IX allows various types of permit application to be submitted:

- residence and work permit to work as an employee;
- residence and work permit to work in the framework of the transnational provision of services;
- residence and work permit for highly qualified professionals (EU Blue Card);
- residence and work permit for researchers;
- fixed-period residence and work permit to work as an employee in the case of artists.

All these possible permits may be requested by companies established in Spain for workers who can prove that they are in one of the following situations:

- managerial or highly qualified staff:

- companies with a staff of more than 500 persons; companies that have a net annual turnover in Spain of above 200 million euros or that have shareholders' equity in Spain above 100 million euros; companies that evidence an annual average gross investment from abroad of at least 1 million euros in the past three years; small or medium-sized enterprises whose activity falls within one of the following strategic sectors: information and communications technology, renewables, the environment, water and water treatment, health sciences, biopharma and biotechnology, and aeronautics and aerospace;
- highly qualified technical or scientific staff, contracted by a public administration or by an agency whose majority shareholder is the latter, for research work;
- teaching staff contracted by a Spanish **university**;
- highly qualified technical or scientific staff contracted by a university or R&D centres and business entities, for research or development work;
- artists or groups of artists of renowned international prestige or who are taking part in an international artistic project (including the staff required for the relevant performance);
- managerial or highly qualified staff, contracted to form part of a business project considered to be of public **interest**.

2. Regime in Ley 14/2013 de apoyo a los emprendedores y su internacionalización (the so-called Entrepreneurs Law) (hereinafter Ley 14/2013), which regulates the other types of permit:

2.1. Temporary residence permit (which authorises work) for highly qualified staff from large enterprises or SMEs from strategic sectors ([link](#))

Ley 14/2013 (the Entrepreneurs Law) introduced an alternative legal regime, for which the Central State Administration is exclusively responsible, which makes it possible to obtain, inter alia, a residence permit with permission to work for foreigners who are contracted as highly qualified staff by large enterprises or SMEs from strategic sectors.

Initial residence permit (which authorises work) regulated by Ley 14/2013 (Entrepreneurs Law) aimed at:

- managerial or highly qualified staff of large enterprises or groups of companies or SMEs from strategic sectors;
- managerial or highly qualified staff for business projects of general interest;
- graduates and post-graduates from universities and business schools of renowned prestige, contracted by companies that are in one of the following situations:
- companies with a staff of fewer than 250 employees (at least three months before the application is submitted);

- net annual turnover in Spain of above 50 million euros or shareholders' equity of above 43 million euros;
- annual average gross investment from abroad of at least 1 million euros, in the three years preceding the submission of the application;
- value of the investor's stock or position above 3 million euros;
- SMEs from sectors considered strategic.

2.2. Temporary residence permit (which authorises work) for intra-company transfers [\(link\)](#)

Initial residence permit (which authorises work) regulated by Ley 14/2013 (Entrepreneurs Law) aimed at facilitating the movement of foreign persons to Spain within the framework of an employment, professional or vocational training relationship with a company or group of companies established in Spain or in another country.

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Authorisation to reside as an investor

1. Information on the procedure and the authorisation

Foreign persons to whom the Community regime does not apply and who wish to reside in Catalonia as investors may be covered by the regime set out in Ley 14/2013 de apoyo a los emprendedores y su internacionalización (the so-called Entrepreneurs Law) (hereinafter Ley 14/2013).

Description

Residence visa that allows holders to reside in the country for at least one year and subsequent residence permit (which authorises work) regulated by Ley 14/2013 (Entrepreneurs Law) for persons who make significant investments in Spain or who start up a business project there considered of general interest.

Applicant

Both in the case of the visa as well as in the residence permit, this may be the foreign investor or their representative.

Place of submission

- The visa application is submitted at the Spanish diplomatic mission or consular office in the investor's country of residence.
- The residence permit application is submitted: at any public registry, pursuant to Article 38 of Law 30/1992, addressed to the Unidad de Grandes Empresas y Colectivos Estratégicos (Large Business and Strategic Groups Unit) (Central State Administration). It may be submitted directly to this unit without an appointment, or with an appointment.

Competent bodies

- To decide on visa applications: the Spanish diplomatic mission or consular office in the investor's country of residence;
- to decide on residence permit applications: the Dirección General de Migraciones (Directorate General for Migration);
- to process it: Unidad de Grandes Empresas y Colectivos Estratégicos (Large Business and Strategic Groups Unit) (Central State Administration).

Specific features of the procedure:

To be granted a visa or residence permit as an investor, it is necessary:

- to be the owner of a business project that is going to be started up in Spain and that is considered to be of general interest; or
- to make a significant investment in Spain with these characteristics: in real estate assets (500,000 euros); in shares or bank deposits (1 million euros); in public debt (2 million euros);
- firstly, it is necessary to apply for a residence visa for investors from the Spanish diplomatic mission or consular office in the foreign investor's country of residence;
- the visa will allow the holder to reside in Spain for at least one year, but it is not necessary to meet the entry requirements and remain in Spain during the validity period to retain this right.

To apply for a residence permit as an investor, it is necessary to hold an investor visa.

Business projects:

- In the case of business project owners, and prior to applying for the visa or residence permit, it will be necessary to request a favourable report on the entrepreneurial and business activity that will be undertaken in Spain: if the application is for a visa, the general interest report will be prepared by the Oficina Económica y Comercial de España (Spanish Economic and Trade Office); if the application is for a residence permit, the general interest report will be prepared by the Dirección General de Comercio e Inversiones (Directorate General for Commerce and Investment).
- Projects of general interest are considered to entail the following: creation of jobs; an investment with socio-economic impact on the geographical area where they are carried out; a significant contribution to scientific and/or technological innovation.

Resolution

- The visa or residence permit allows the holder to reside and work in Spain and is valid throughout the country.
- Actual residence in Spain (defined as more than 183 days) is not required to obtain the visa or residence permit. The only requirement is to visit Spain once during the period of residence.

Restrictions on the permit

The permit is valid throughout Spain.

Procedure deadlines

- Residence permit: 20 days for a decision to be taken from receipt by the processing body.
- Visa: 10 working days for a decision to be taken and notified.

Family members

The residence permit and/or visa for spouses and children may be processed in parallel with the investor's application.

2. Links

Information on the requirements and procedure

Access to [general and specific](#) information sheets.
[Instructions for requesting an appointment](#) .
[Access to the list of application forms](#).

Visa application

This page will take you to an interactive map where you can find the consular office you require.

Foreigner identity card

[Access to the list of application forms](#).

[information](#)

Authorisation to reside without working

Foreign persons to whom the Community regime does not apply and who wish to reside in Catalonia as rentiers may be covered by the regime set out in Ley Orgánica 4/2000 (the so-called Foreign Nationals Law), developed by Real Decreto 557/2011, which regulates the relevant residence permit.

1. Information on the procedure and the authorisation

Description

Initial non-working residence permit.

Applicant

The foreign person wishing to reside in Spain without performing work or professional activities.

Place of submission, visa application and residence permit

The visa application (which also entails a residence permit) is submitted to the Spanish diplomatic mission or consular office corresponding to the jurisdiction where the person concerned resides.

Competent bodies

- For the visa application: the Spanish diplomatic mission or consular office where the application is submitted.
- For the residence permit application: Government Delegation or Sub-delegation of the province where the foreign person will settle.

Specific features of the procedure:

The foreign person will firstly submit a visa application, which will entail, in this case, the application for the non-working residence permit.

The requirements to obtain the permit are as follows:

- not to be staying in Spain illegally;
- if the person has reached the age of criminal responsibility, not having a criminal record in Spain or in the countries where he or she has resided in the past five years;
- not appearing as 'refusable' within the territory of countries with which Spain has signed an agreement in this regard;
- having sufficient economic means to cover living and accommodation expenses, including, if necessary, those of their family, during the period of residence in Spain, without the need to engage in any work or professional activity. (Sufficient means for covering expenses in Spain will be considered an amount totalling, in euros, 400% of the public income index (IPREM) per month. If a residence visa is requested for family members, it will be necessary to add an amount in euros for the expenses of these persons, totalling 100% of the IPREM per month for each family member accompanying the main applicant.);

- having public or private health insurance with an insurer authorised to operate in Spain;
- not being within the period of commitment not to return to Spain, in the event the foreign person has assumed this commitment in returning voluntarily to the country of origin;
- not suffering from any illness that may have serious impacts on public health, pursuant to the provisions of the International Health Regulations 2005;
- having paid the fees for processing the applications.

Resolution

By the Government Delegation or Sub-delegation in the province where the foreign person will settle, within one month from the date the application is received.

Visa

In the event permission is granted, the diplomatic mission or consular office will decide on the visa application. Once notified, if the decision is favourable, the applicant will have to collect the visa within one month from the notification date. Otherwise, it will be considered that the visa granted has not been accepted and the application will be filed.

If the visa is collected, the foreign person will have to enter Spain during the visa's validity period.

Start of validity

The authorisation will be valid from the date of entry into Spain (if this falls within the visa's validity period).

Length of the authorisation

One year from the start of validity.

Restrictions on the authorisation

The authorisation is valid throughout Spain.

Family members

The applications for the foreign person's family members may be submitted at the same time as that person's application. Permission will be granted if they meet the general requirements for obtaining a non-working residence permit and the specific economic requirements set for family members of the applicant.

Information on the requirements and procedure

[Access to the information sheet.](#)

[Visa application form.](#)

[Access to the list of application forms.](#)

Visa application

This page will take you to an interactive map where you can find the consular office you require.

Identification card

[Application form.](#)

[information](#)

Identification as a foreign national

The **foreigner's identification number (NIE)** is a personal, unique and exclusive number, issued sequentially, granted by the Oficina d'Estrangeria (Foreign Nationals Office) once the details of the foreign national have been reported to the Registre Central d'Estrangers (Central Register of Foreign Nationals).

This will be the foreign person's personal ID number and must appear on all documents issued to or processed for him or her.

Foreign nationals who have dealings in Spain due to their professional, social or economic interests, may personally and directly apply for an NIE from the Direcció General de la Policia (Directorate General of the Police) or via the Spanish consular offices abroad.

The NIE is essential for performing any economic transaction, such as opening an account, setting up a business, buying a home or a car, filing a tax return or performing any administrative procedure.

To obtain more information and the application form, visit the website of the [Ministerio del Interior](#) (Ministry for Home Affairs).

Citizens of EU Member States, of the other states party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and of Switzerland wishing to remain in Spain for a period longer than three months, must apply to register with the Registre Central d'Estrangers (Central Register of Foreign Nationals). This certificate will be issued to them, which, together with the passport or identity document from their country, will be the document that identifies them as foreigners.

Applications should be made to the Oficina d'Estrangeria of the province in which they are seeking to reside or to the relevant police station.

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The following requirements must be met:

- be working for an employer;
- be working as self-employed;
- be a student enrolled in an officially recognised public or private educational institution;
- having sufficient economic resources for maintenance during the period of residence, so as not to pose a burden on the country's social welfare system.

To obtain more information and the application form, visit the website of the [Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración](#) (General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration).

EU citizen family member residence card

The family members of a Spanish citizen or citizen of another member state of the EU, EEA or of Switzerland who do not have the nationality of these countries, must apply for and obtain an EU citizen family member card if they wish to join this citizen or accompany him or her, provided that this citizen has the right to live in Spain for longer than three months, to work as an employee or on a self-employed basis or to be a student, and has health insurance and sufficient economic means to maintain the family unit.

Among others, documentation must be provided that proves the existence of the family tie with the EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, and they have the obligation to notify potential changes in circumstances regarding their civil status.

Applications should be made to the Oficina d'Estrangeria of the province in which they are seeking to reside or to the relevant police station.

To obtain more information and the application form, visit the website of the [Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración](#) (General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration).

Foreigner's identification card (TIE)

This is the physical document that contains the foreigner's identifying details, photo and NIE number, and that confirms the type of residence permit or authorisation to stay held by the foreigner, as well as the validity. In general, it is issued to people who have a permit to stay in Spain for a period of more than six months. The foreigner's identification card will only be issued to foreign nationals who are in Spain legally.

Applications should be made to the Oficina d'Estrangeria of the province in which they are seeking to reside or to the relevant police station, provided that one of these requirements is met:

- being the holder of a visa or authorisation to remain in Spain for a period longer than six months;

General characteristics of the TIE:

- when the card holder has modified or changed their legal or employment status, including renewing the authorisation;
- when the identity card held by the foreigner has been stolen, lost, destroyed or unused.
- A prior government decision to grant the relevant authorisation is necessary in order to issue the card.
- Foreigners who hold a visa must personally apply for the TIE within one month of entering the country.
- TIE holders must carry this document with them.
- The TIE will have the same period of validity as the authorisation or recognition of the right justifying the issuing of the card.
- Applicants must pay a fee before the TIE is issued.
- Foreigners who hold a TIE are obliged to notify the relevant Oficina d'Estrangeria, within one month, of any change in nationality, residence or details, as well as any change in family circumstances.

To obtain more information and the application form, visit the website of the [Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración](#) (General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration).

[information](#)