FORUM FOR THE **SOCIAL INTEGRATION** OF **IMMIGRANTS**

SITUATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN SPAIN

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The situation of the immigrant population in 2024

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Presentation

The Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants presents this annual report as part of a consolidated work of evaluation and proposal that, year after year, seeks to document the evolution of the migratory context in order to inform public policies from a rights-based approach and with the participation of the actors involved. Having completed this collective, intersectoral and committed work, we reiterate our commitment to a country that is diverse and supportive, where all people can live free from discrimination and contribute to the common good.

2024 was marked by important legal developments, transformations in migration patterns and new challenges in reception, inclusion and coexistence systems. Adopting and implementing the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, have raised deep concerns regarding the predominance of security and control approaches over a human rights-based perspective. In this regard, the displacement of integration policies to a second place, when in fact they should be at the heart of ensuring sustainable, inclusive and dignified reception processes, is particularly worrying.

At the national level, the chapter prepared by the Forum's Legal and International Affairs Commission analyses in depth the implications of the new Regulation on Immigration, which has introduced measures that represent partial advances towards greater regulatory clarity and an extension of rights in some cases. However, there are concerns about the persistence of structural barriers, such as the exclusion of persons seeking international protection from regularisation channels and the legal insecurity affecting persons in an irregular administrative situation, and about the disparities in the practical implementation of these reforms between territories. The implications of these modifications require continuous monitoring to ensure that they do not contribute to perpetuating situations of exclusion.

Within this framework, the Forum's Employment and Equal Opportunities Commission analyses, in this report, the socio-labour conditions of the migrant population , highlighting, among other aspects, the increase in Social Security affiliation by non-nationals. However, high temporary employment, precarious working conditions and a higher workplace accident rate than the Spanish population persist, as well as a gender gap: migrant women are over-represented in jobs with lower social recognition, high turnover and low wages, and have less access to unemployment protection. Inequalities in access to vocational training, difficulties to have their qualifications recognized, the impact of the digital divide and the effects of ageism on employment are also factors limiting the integration of the migrant population.

For this reason, the chapter dedicated to integration, interculturality, coexistence and social cohesion, coordinated by the Commission for Participation and Social Inclusion, acquires special relevance. It examines structural obstacles that limit the full participation of migrants in social life, such as lack of access to housing, under-representation in decision-making spaces, and the persistence of prejudice and cultural barriers; and it also documents

community strategies that promote coexistence enriched by diversity, with an emphasis on intercultural mediation. The role of migrant associations as promoters of community projects, social intervention and the defence of rights is highlighted, as well as the need to strengthen their institutional capacities and to set effective participation mechanisms, especially at the local level.

In close connection with these action lines, the chapter prepared by the Forum's Education Commission provides a hopeful vision of the role of the education system as an engine for social inclusion, highlighting initiatives that promote a more equitable, diverse and intercultural school and the role of migrant associations as mediators in school environments, facilitating communication between actors, preventing school absenteeism and improving coexistence. It also highlights the structural barriers that many migrant organisations face in accessing public funding, which limits their capacity for sustained action over time, and calls for strengthening the link between community, school and institutions through transformative education based on respect for diversity as a shared value.

Aware of the challenges posed by the current context, the Forum calls on administrations, institutions and social organisations to take on the recommendations made in this report with responsibility and a vision for the future. It is necessary to move towards a migration management model that prioritises equity, guarantees real access to rights and strengthens social links from a participatory approach. The active inclusion of migrants in the design and implementation of policies that affect impact them is not only a matter of justice, but also an indispensable condition for building a more cohesive, inclusive and democratic society.

Ángeles Solanes Corella
Chairwoman of the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants

Madrid, 2025

Key messages

1
The simultaneous introduction of the incompatibility of processing and the non-computability of time spent as an applicant for international protection for the purposes of *arraigo* (literally, "being rooted", an application to remain in the country on the basis of social and labour integration) will have a significant impact on the number of persons in an irregular administrative situation, as well as on the length of time they stay in Spain in this situation. In turn, access to international protection, a right protected by Article 13.4 of the Spanish Constitution, may be *de facto* harmed due to the fear and uncertainty that many people may experience when faced with the decision to apply for it, given that there is no guarantee that their needs will be recognised administratively, and they may additionally be denied their request for *arraigo*.

2
Arraigo for training, which has been renamed socio-training *arraigo*, is largely a response to the problems identified since 2022. However, some aspects may limit the choice of this route, such as the requirement of 50% attendance at the courses and the social integration report, which is accredited by the competent bodies of the Autonomous Region of residence and must be issued within one month.

3
In the area of family law, two relevant regulatory changes have been identified: the regulatory reform of reunification and the temporary residence permit for family members of persons with Spanish nationality. These have served to clarify undefined concepts and to specify the necessary requirements and the ways to prove them, thus facilitating understanding and increasing legal certainty.

4
In the labour market, the increase in the number of foreign workers (by 8%, accounting for 68.9% of the total increase), in dual nationals and in the number of non-national women (43.4%) affiliated to the Social Security stand out. On the other hand, the 35-54 age group accounts for 54.01% of the market, while people of Moroccan origin continue to be the largest group of foreign workers, followed by Colombians and Venezuelans. The hospitality and catering industry is the sector of activity with the highest presence of foreign workers, above retail and vehicle repair, in a context in which 83% of foreign workers are affiliated to the General Regime and 16.2% to the Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers (RETA).

5
45% of foreign workers have a temporary contract, with more women than men in this situation. Female workers are also a majority of unemployed foreign workers, representing 62% of the total. In the field of unemployment protection, 69% of the person receiving benefits are under contributory schemes and the rest under "active insertion income" schemes, which is the protection model in which women are the most represented. It is noted that the group of foreign workers has a higher rate of workplace accidents and of fatal accidents.

6
The wage gap experienced by migrant women is visible - average gross monthly wages, part-time work and the lowest zero earnings are the factors assessed- as well as the digital divide affecting foreign workers. In the former, foreign women have worse data than Spanish women, while in the latter, the lack of digital training and equipment is a disadvantage for foreign workers in the employment and training/qualification processes.

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7 The effects of various regulations that have a direct impact on the employability of non-nationals, such as the new Vocational Training Act, need to be further explored, as well as recognising some measures that facilitate labour integration, such as the DGAHSAPI's agreements with multinational companies that facilitate training and employment.

8 Interculturality is present and alive thanks to the work carried out by association of migrants, the social networks they generate, the institutional ties they are linked to and the social relations they build with other urban or rural entities. To this end, one of the most important activities in recent times has been mediation, as a tool that facilitates integration of migrants. Specifically, intercultural mediation can be defined as the instrument that promotes coexistence, encourages mutual cultural knowledge and exchange and resolves social conflicts, almost always successfully, peacefully and constructively. All of this is based on open dialogue and effective communication to strengthen social cohesion and the construction of supportive, generous and safe communities.

9 The role of associations of migrants in intercultural mediation is fundamental, through actions that enable them to be the link between immigrant communities and institutions; educational programmes and projects; or spaces for psychological and emotional support that lead to more cohesive, supportive and inclusive societies that increase social welfare.

10 Through practical and strategic interventions such as the *Reinforcement, Guidance and Support Programme (PROA+)* or the *A308 lever activity "In my school there is place for everyone"* , the school community is given a response, reinforcing the value of dignity and human rights. In addition, the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) has established a strategy for intercultural integration at national level, proposing a series of measures to ensure equality, value diversity, promote meaningful interaction and achieve active and participatory citizenship.

11 The participation of associations of migrants in the processes of intercultural co-existence and education is essential. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) stresses the importance of creating community-based programmes that promote intercultural dialogue, exchange of experiences and participation of migrants and receiving communities through activities that foster joy, mutual appreciation, shared ownership, guided reflection, trust and sustained intervention over time. This requires a management focused on reception, inclusion and the creation of national and transnational cultural networks that, in addition, always takes into account the role played by local Spanish communities.

1

Implementation of legislation related to migrant and refugee populations

Prepared by:

Legal and International Affairs Committee

The year 2024 was marked by the adoption of the 10 legal instruments shaping the European Pact on Migration and Asylum and by the adoption of the new Regulation on Immigration. In this context, Spain has seen a record number of applications for international protection filed, although difficulties in accessing the system continue, as is addressed in this annual report.

Similarly, it analyses the main new aspects introduced by the new Regulation on Immigration in relation to family reunification, social and training *arraigo*, the exclusion of applicants for international protection from arraigo applications, the new status of family members of Spanish citizens and undocumented persons. Also the obstacles faced by foreigners in an irregular administrative situation in accessing the administration and exercising their recognised rights, administrative procedures and the application procedure for stateless status.

As is customary, the analysis is carried out in a constructive manner and is accompanied by proposals for improvement in each of the sections of this chapter.

1.1. International and temporary protection

1.1.1. EU context

According to data from the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA), between January and November 2024, EU+ countries[1] received **943,669 applications**, a **decrease of 10.7%** compared to the same period in 2023. As in 2023, **Germany, Spain and France**, in that order, are the **top three countries receiving applications.**

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1 EU+ refers to the 27 Member States of the European Union, plus Norway and Switzerland.

Germany therefore remains the leader in terms of applications, although it shows a very significant decrease of 33% compared to the previous year. This is due to the adoption of a series of anti-immigration legislative measures that reflect a political and social climate of growing hostility against people of foreign origin, accompanied by the growth of far-right political forces; most notably, the introduction of border controls along its land borders with neighbouring countries (almost 3,700 km). In terms of the number of **applications per capita, Greece ranks first** among EU+ countries, followed by Cyprus, Luxembourg and Spain, with a ratio of 817 applications per million.

In terms of the main **nationalities of applicants**, **Syria and Afghanistan** are in the lead, as in the previous year, with 156,262 and 87,912 applications respectively. Venezuela, which recorded an increase of 7.9%, displaces Turkey as the third nationality of origin in number of applications, with 72,226 applications. They are followed by Turkey (61,011 applications) and Colombia (52,621 applications). All of them, with the exception of Venezuela, have fallen sharply, with Turkey falling the most (38.9%), followed by Afghanistan (26%), Colombia (15%) and Syria (13%). The number of applications increased for the following five nationalities: Bangladesh, Peru and Ukraine, the latter more markedly (25,900 applications compared to 14,435 in 2023). In contrast, the number of applications from Morocco fell significantly (25,530 in 2024 compared to 31,597 in 2023) and those from Egypt saw a slight decrease (25,001 in 2024 compared to 26,546 in 2023).

As in 2023, there is a trend of nationalities concentrating their applications in certain EU+ countries. For example, 89 per cent of Venezuelans who applied for protection did so in Spain, as did 69 per cent of applications from Mali. France accounted for all the requests from Haiti and Italy for 74% of the requests from Bangladesh[2]. Between January and September 2024, 26,690 **children without family references** sought protection in the EU. By country, Germany hosted 56 per cent of children, followed by the Netherlands (24.1%), Greece (14.3%), Bulgaria (13%), Belgium (9.6%) and Spain (12%)[3].

In November 2024, the **recognition rate** for all EU member states as a whole stood at 38%, significantly lower than the rate recorded during the same period in 2023 (46%). The nationalities with the highest recognition rate were Syria (90%), Afghanistan (60%) and Turkey (20%). In most cases, recognition rates for the different nationalities remained stable.

At the end of November 2024, 979,090 applications were pending at first instance, 13% more than in 2023. In terms of nationalities, Syria (106,000), Colombia (96,000) and Venezuela (88,000) accumulated the highest number of pending applications. It should be noted that **106,000 applications submitted by Syrian nationals have been suspended following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime** and the takeover of the country by former

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2 EUAA. Applications for Asylum in the EU+ in March 2025. https://euaa.europa.eu/latest-asylum-trends-asylum

3 Eurostat. Asylum applications - monthly statistics. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_applications_-_monthly_statistics#Where_do_unaccompanied_minors_come_from.3F

members of the Hayat Tahrih al-Shams (HTS) organisation, and these applications are not currently being processed.

1.1.2. European Pact on Migration and Asylum

The European Pact on Migration and Asylum was approved on 14 May 2024 and enacted the following 11 June, with a two-year transitional period for its implementation. The national implementation plans were submitted on 12 December 2024 and the lack of effective participation of consultative bodies and civil society organizations specialized immigration and integration has been a concern.

Relevant issues such as the reduction of inadmissibility periods, the reinforcement of the *safe country* concept, the examination of vulnerability without the presence of civil society, the exclusion of specialised organisations in the provision of legal advice and legal assistance services and the failure to guarantee the right to a translator, among others, are of concern to immigration and integration experts.

1.1.3. Context in Spain

In 2024, 167,366 applications for international protection were registered, a higher number than in 2023 and **the highest number of formalisations ever**. This continues a **growing trend** of people seeking protection in our country, which was only interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and which has placed Spain as the second country in the EU+ in terms of the number of applications. During 2024, 96,101 applications **have been resolved** , mainly from Venezuela (33,458), Colombia (20,585), Mali (9,406), Peru (7,487) and Morocco (3,789) nationals.

The **top nationalities of asylum seekers in Spain** are **Venezuela** (66,134), **Colombia** (40,140), **Mali** (10,673) and **Peru** (10,673); the list of the top ten nationalities is completed by Senegal, Morocco, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mauritania and Ecuador. The **age group** with the highest number of applications was 18-34, who accounted for 51.10% of the total, while 57.6% were men (96,582) and 42.4% women (70,784). With regard to the **granting of international protection**, the trend of progressive growth in the recognition rate has returned in 2024, reaching 18.5%.

On the other hand, there has been a decrease in the number of people granted **refugee status**, which have been given mainly to nationals from Nicaragua, Syria, Afghanistan and Colombia. Likewise, a record number of decisions granting **subsidiary protection** has been reached, with 11,453, 200% more than in 2023. A total of 33,535 residence authorisations for **humanitarian reasons** have been granted, most of them to Venezuelans (97.8%); 38,686 applications **have been refused** , mainly from Colombian nationals (17,294), Peru (6,611), Morocco (3,070), Senegal (2,018) and Honduras (1,792).294., Peru (6,611), Morocco (3,070), Senegal (2,018) and Honduras (1,792); and 6,072 applications **were archived**, mainly from Colombia (2,277), Nicaragua (639), Peru (623), Cuba (588) and Morocco (536).

1.1.4. Incidents in the procedure

In 2024, **it has become increasingly difficult to obtain an appointment** to apply for international protection in Spain both online and by telephone. There is a significant delay in appointments for the manifestation of will, which is particularly serious in Cartagena and Murcia, where it exceeds one year. In provinces such as A Coruña, Álava, Alicante, Almería, Burgos, Castellón, Cáceres, Gijón, Huelva, Jerez de la Frontera, León, Málaga, Sevilla, Toledo, Valencia and Zaragoza the estimated time to obtain an appointment is between six months and one year.

In addition, there are still requirements for the expression of will that hinder access to the procedure, such as different documents requirements depending on the area (census registration form, passport, account, birth and marriage certificate). Indirectly denying access to the procedure, as set out in this point, is a violation of Article 16 of Law 12/2009.

In relation to **asylum applications for family extension of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection who are in Spain**, it should be noted that the same system of appointments is followed as for the formalisation of initial applications, and the same delays happen. This situation is especially problematic in the case of children born in Spain of persons granted international protection, who are not allowed access to the procedure in provinces such as Valencia and Guadalajara; and, in the provinces where it is allowed, minors reimain undocumented during the time the appointment is being processed, with the social problems that this entails, for example in access to healthcare.

The text of the Final Report proposes measures for improvement related to international and temporary protection in the following areas: access to and processing of the procedure (18 measures); detection and treatment of vulnerable persons (5 measures); guaranteeing the right of family reunification (6 measures); pathways to protection (2 measures); and reception and stateless status (6 measures).

1.2. Status of Stateless Persons

In 2024, 2,084 applications for recognition of stateless status were submitted (86.4% more than in 2023), of which 911 have been resolved and 1,897 of which are pending. The incidents detected in the procedure are due to the lack of a comprehensive regulation that **equates statelessness status with international protection status**, as stated by the UNHCR in paragraph 125 of its Handbook on the Protection of Stateless Persons[4]. In this framework, the proposals for improvement include the following: legislative amendments to the statelessness regulation and the Civil Code with regard to nationality; the

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4 UNHCR: *Handbook on the Protection of Stateless Persons Under the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.* Geneva, 2014. Available at https://www.acnur.org/publications/pub_prot/5d4b1df74/manual-sobre-la-proteccion-de-las-personas-apatridas-en-virtud-de-la-convencion.html

inclusion of stateless status in the legal framework for international protection; and the effective implementation of the *ex officio* initiation of the procedure.

1.3. New Inmigration Regulation

1.3.1. *Arraigo* based on training

This model for *arraigo* (literally, "being rooted", an application to remain in the country on the basis of social and labour integration) is intended for people who can prove they have been in Spain for two years and undertake to take a course that will enable them to subsequently enter the workforce. The procedure consists of two phases: a residence permit for one year, extendable for up to two years to complete the course, and the submission of an application for a residence and work permit by means of an employment contract in the training area of the course taken. Problems have been detected in this modality due to the few available places in the training courses, disparity of response in the foreigners' offices and difficulties to link the work contract to the training action carried out.

The aim of **Royal Decree 1155/2024 of 19 November, approving Organic Law 4/2000 of 11 January on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain, which comes into force on 20 May 2025**, is to resolve the difficulties detected in these two years of validity of the *arraigo* based on training, introducing relevant modifications as reflected in the new name: "social and training *arraigo*". These include the possibility of working 30 hours a week, which will have an impact on job security.

1.3.2. Family reunification

The new Regulation on Immigration presents some new features associated with family reunification, such as the extension of the number of family members who can be grouped together and the delimitation of the concepts of *being a dependent person* and *humanitarian reasons*, which increases legal certainty.

1.3.3. Exclusion of international protection seekers from claiming *arraigo*

One of the most significant new features of the new Regulation on Immigration is **the absolute incompatibility between the asylum seekers regime and residence authorisations based on *arraigo***, which is configured through two sub-headings: a) simultaneous processing of an application for international protection and an application for a residence permit for exceptional circumstances due to *arraigo* (on the basis of social and labour integration) shall not be compatible; and b) for the purposes of accrediting the minimum period of prior residence in Spain to be eligible for *arraigo*, the time that the non-national in question the status of applicant for international protection shall not be computed.

Given that the current consideration for social and training *arraigo* is based on a diagnosis of problems encountered in the regulation and application of the training *arraigo*, it seems unfair that the improvements introduced do not have a retroactive effect for holders of the current authorisation who hold it after 20/05/2025. For this reason, it is proposed in the text of the annual report that a possible remedy be found in the form of a specific instruction that would make the new regulation on *arraigo* applicable. However, it is worth noting that the new Regulation includes, through it is transitional provisions[5], a residence authorisation on the grounds of *arraigo* precisely for those non-nationals whose application for international protection has been rejected.

1.3.4. New status for family members of Spanish citizens

As a novelty, Title VII of the new Regulation on Immigration introduces a temporary residence permit for family members of persons with Spanish nationality, regulating the conditions under which a non-EU nationality national who has a family bound to a Spanish citizen can access a residence permit. Until now, people in these conditions have benefited from the *arraigo* due to family reason, which had significant limitations due to its exceptional nature.

1.3.5. Undocumented persons

As for undocumented persons who cannot be documented by any country, it establishes the possibility of carrying out administrative procedures with expired identity or travel documents "*if it is proven that it is generally impossible for their holders to renew them before the authorities of the issuing country*"; these circumstances have to be authorised by ministerial order (article 210.12). Despite this, there remains ample room for improvement in the regulation of this case, for which measures are proposed in the text of the annual report.

It also addresses the relationship promoted by the new Regulation on Immigration between foreigners and public administrations, and analyses the **access to rights** in the framework of healthcare; safe reporting in cases of racism and/or discrimination; financial inclusion; registration; the digital divide; the recognition of qualifications; and the exchange of driving licences. For all these aspects, improvements are proposed.

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5 Fifth Transitional Provision: Residence authorisations for exceptional circumstances on the grounds of *arraigo*.

2

Situation of the immigrant population in 2024 and proposals for promoting social integration

Prepared by:

Commission on Integration, Interculturality, Coexistence and Social Cohesion Policies

2024 has been a key year in the development of migration and asylum policies in Europe, marked by the European Parliament elections and the approval of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, as well as the process of submitting state implementation plans. Current conflicts and migration crises pose a challenge to the management of diversity and integration policies, displaced by border control and security policies that negatively affect human rights commitments and the reception of vulnerable people. Spain's commitment has focused on the implementation of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, the increased arrivals in the Canary Islands and the approval of the Regulation of Organic Law 4/2000, of 11 January, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration.

2.1. Analysis of the evolution of commitments and pacts in migration policy

2.1.1. The European Pact on Migration and Asylum: the process of drawing up the implementation plan and level of participation of civil society and the Autonomous Regions

The approval of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum (EU Pact) on 14 May 2024 raises concerns regarding the protection of migrants' fundamental rights, including the possible obstruction in accessing the right to asylum through Regulation (EU) 2024/1359 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which deals with situations of crisis and force majeure; the implementation of accelerated procedures that could contradict the principle of individualised analysis of each case; and the enabling of "solidarity à la

carte procedures", outsourcing the management of migration processes to third countries.

The Pact's approach tends towards the securitisation and criminalisation of migration, reinforcing borders and tightening migration controls, while integration policies lose centrality. On 12 June 2024 the European Commission presented its EU Pact Implementation Guide, which instructs Member States to create their National Plans within six months.

2.1.2. Degree of compliance of the commitments acquired in the development of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular immigration

Six years after the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) and a first global review at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), civil society has played a key role in monitoring migration policies on human rights and its capacity to generate effective proposals.

In Spain, more than forty social and diaspora organisations have drafted the report "*Evaluation and perspectives before the European regional review of the 2024 Global Compact for Migration*", which includes a diagnosis of the degree of compliance of Spain and defines proposals to align legislation and public policies with human rights. The report assesses three essential topics: 1) measures to protect migrants at borders, addressing outsourcing, repatriations, detention in Centres for the Internment of Non-Nationals (CIE) and human trafficking; 2) legal and safe migration channels; and 3) active integration and intercultural policies.

2.1.3. Degree of implementation of the Strategic Framework on Citizenship and Inclusion against Racism and Xenophobia

The Strategic Framework is based on multi-level and participatory governance in its design, elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This structure seeks to coordinate efforts to develop policies for the integration and inclusion of people of foreign origin and to prevent racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The Strategic Framework Monitoring and Evaluation Committee is committed to "*analysing or assessing the annual monitoring reports, as well as making recommendations or proposals for improvement, identifying strengths and weaknesses*". 2025 will be a particularly relevant year, as a review of the Framework, in which this Committee will play a central role, will take place.

2.2. Situation of migrants in inclusion processes: the state of inclusion, citizenship, coexistence and social cohesion policies on the political agenda at regional level

2.2.1. Updating of the management centres in charge of planning, implementing and assessing citizenship and integration policies in the Autonomous Regions

Only four Autonomous Regions (Andalusia, the Canary Islands, the Autonomous Region of Valencia and Navarre) have a coexistence and interculturality plan in force aimed at the integration of immigrants, which shows the loss of focus on integration policies in the social and political agenda. The National Plan for Integration and Intercultural Coexistence will certainly reactivate the need to update the different regional plans.

2.2.2. State of Integration Policies in the International Protection Reception System

Spain faces new challenges due to the increase of people leaving their country of origin in search of protection. These challenges include the growth of xenophobia and difficulties in accessing decent housing. The International Protection Reception System (SAPI), under the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations (MISSM) in collaboration with social entities, guarantees the rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and facilitates the coverage of basic and intervention needs.

The guarantee of rights and accompaniment in the reception and socio-occupational inclusion of people are the fundamental goals of a people-centered process, through which the aim is to progressively strengthen skills, knowledge and experiences, with the ultimate aim of achieving personal and family autonomy. The SAPI has a reception phase, which takes place in centers or deployed resources throughout the territory, and in a final phase of intervention aimed at those who have been granted international protection and have the basic skills to start an independent life. This last phase is carried out in housing owned and managed by them, receiving social accompaniment and conditional financial support.

The ultimate goal is to achieve personal and family autonomy, guaranteeing progressive access to rights and public services, in collaboration with local and regional administrations.

2.3. State of intercultural coexistence in Spain: challenges and opportunities for the 21st century

2.3.1. Challenges to improve the processes of social inclusion by addressing the variables of mental health and loneliness

Social inclusion processes are directly related to alleviating poor mental health and loneliness, as they affect people's ability to fully integrate into society. In this context, the Red Cross study entitled "*Perception and experience of loneliness and responses in the community*" points out that life events such as migration can trigger feelings of isolation; that migration is a social determinant that triggers the risk of loneliness in vulnerable groups; that migrants report more loneliness than Spain-born Spaniards; and that language and ethnicity are elements that can aggravate the feeling of loneliness, given that they may be a barrier to connect to other people, especially for non-Spanish speakers.

- **Prevention at Community level**. Prevention of loneliness involves developing awareness-raising actions aimed at the recognition of difference and diversity, social cohesion and an understanding of the situation of migrants that is free from stigma.

- **Accompaniment in the vital transition that is a migration process.** Through awareness-raising and training programmes for primary care agents (social and health services) to encourage the detection of cases and determine the necessary accompaniment measures.

- **Public policies that understand loneliness as a consequence of other problems**. Understanding loneliness should identify preventive measures in the development of cross-sectoral public policies that address irregular administrative situations and lack of access to housing, employment and services, among other aspects.

- **Preventive actions against the triggers of social disconnection of vulnerable groups, including the migrant population.** Stigma concerning mental health, homelessness, cultural background, poverty or age needs to be tackled. Multiple discrimination has a profound impact on access to rights and opportunities, as well as on the potential for establishing citizenship ties and quality social relations. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness among professionals and volunteers from different sectors about unwanted loneliness, and to offer a more close and human service.

- **Alleviating situations of social hardship**. It is key to identify loneliness in migration processes in order to activate adequate resources at the local level and expand social support networks.

- **Attention to cultural aspects.** We need to understand the culture of origin of migrants in order to identify possible resources and

opportunities to address the loneliness they experience when they are forcibly separated from their tight-knit communities of origin.

2.3.2. The importance of housing and social and familial networks in the host country

In Spain, access to housing has become a structural problem that particularly affects migrants and refugees. At a general level, measures such as increasing public housing and implementing rent regulation policies and specific support programmes, as well as raising awareness and training landlords and real estate agents, are needed for the whole population

As specific measures for the migrant community, it should be noted that registration on the *padrón* or municipal registry (a key obligation and right for accessing other basic rights) presents legal and administrative obstacles that further complicate the process of inclusion. In addition, people from outside the EU are obliged to renew their registration every two years in order to avoid automatic deregistration, which would seriously affect their access to health care, compulsory education and social services. Although social organisations provide support in carrying out these procedures, it is vital that public policies are in place to ensure personal autonomy in accessing housing and registration.

2.4. Intercultural mediation as a tool for coexistence and prevention of racism and xenophobia

2.4.1. Intercultural mediation and community intervention strategies

- **"Training provided to public professionals by the Provincial Directorate of the National Social Security Institute of Madrid."** Practice presented in the framework of a European project for intercultural integration in Cyprus called "*Attention and information to the culturally diverse public: a training action for equality and non-discrimination*", which responds to the growing presence of the foreign population in Spain and the need to improve public attention through training in intercultural mediation. The aim is to give public employees the tools to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, promoting equality and non-discrimination. It is proposed to include this course as part of the mandatory cross-cutting training for public staff.

- **"Community spaces".** Community spaces are meeting places that promote citizen participation and coexistence, regardless of people's origins. They also promote more inclusive and democratic community management, strengthen citizens' rights through equitable access to resources and services, and build support networks

and strengthen the social fabric. As democratic spaces, they also foster freedom of expression, participation and cultural diversity, promoting innovative solutions to improve collective well-being.

→ **"Specialised training in intercultural mediation".** Specialised training in intercultural mediation seeks to prepare professionals capable of acting as social mediators in community spaces to promote harmonious coexistence in globalised societies. Intercultural mediators facilitate communication between cultures, resolving conflicts arising from misunderstandings or stereotypes and promoting empathy, respect and social integration. Their role is both proactive and preventive, as they help to create inclusive and cohesive environments that value cultural diversity.

2.4.2. Good practices for moving from coexistence to intercultural coexistence

→ **UMMI Project (Mobile Mediation Unit for the Inclusion of the Migrant Population in Andalusian Society).** Promoted by *CODE-NAF, Cooperation and Development with North Africa, is* a professional service of proximity in intercultural mediation aimed at both the migrant population and public and private professionals, with the goal of facilitating their inclusion in Andalusian society. It promotes citizen participation and access to essential resources and services, while resolving intercultural conflicts through translation and counselling. The mobile unit travels to areas with difficult access to these services, offering conflict prevention and resolution services, relationship building and empowerment initiatives in order to increase decision-making capacity.

→ **Mediating Cities Programme.** Led by CONVIVE-Fundación Cepaim, this programme promotes a social model focused on intercultural coexistence through public policies that guarantee access to rights and foster social cohesion, both in urban and rural environments. Citizen participation is conceived as an essential axis of the project, as it strengthens the social fabric and generates meeting places where all people, regardless of their origin, can meet and express themselves.

2.4.3. Increasing racism and misinformation in the face of the 2024 DANA floods

Following the severe flooding caused by the DANA in late October and the magnitude of the emergency, an environment prone to misinformation and racism was created that particularly affected people of North African and Romanian Roma people, who were the target of hoaxes, fake news and hate speech on social networks and in the media. As a result, they were excluded from food banks and other aids, their visibility as volunteers was invisibilized, and racial profiling and racist police patrols were carried out in neighbourhoods with a high migrant presence.

The disaster also aggravated the situation of people in irregular administrative situations with dismissals, loss of precarious housing in shantytowns or

loss of documentation and difficulty in accessing services. For this reason, the application of exceptional measures for foreigners is proposed as a priority in order to temporarily regularise the people affected and guarantee their access to basic rights and aid. In order to mitigate this situation, it would be essential to establish a procedure for applying for authorisation due to exceptional circumstances.

2.5. Response of the Spanish State to the increase in the number of arrivals of boats of migrants to the Canary Islands

2.5.1. Humanitarian Shelter Programme's emergency response capacity

Between 2023 and 2024, Spain experienced a significant increase in arrivals of migrants, which totalled at 61,323 persons, representing a 10 per cent increase with respect to the previous year. Most of these migrants were from sub-Saharan Africa and arrived in the Canary Islands. This situation overwhelmed the reception and humanitarian care systems, which led to the adoption in October 2023 of the "*Resolution declaring an emergency for the provision of services, works and essential supplies to meet the basic needs of migrants arriving on the coasts*", extended for 2024 in order to optimise response capacity.

The Network of reception places was also expanded and the use of CREADE centres (Reception, Attention and Referral Centres for displaced Ukrainians) was reinforced to facilitate access to the asylum procedure by the persons received, in response to the need to cover the quotas of formalisations for the Peninsula and the Canary Islands. The entry into force of Royal Decree 1155/2024 in May 2025 will introduce significant changes in access to the procedure, including that the time elapsed during the processing of an application for international protection will no longer count for the purposes of residence in Spain. It will also have implications for those whose application has been rejected and who are in the process of appealing, who could see their chances of regularisation impacted.

2.5.2. Situation of children on the move in the Canary Islands

The massive arrival of unaccompanied children and migrant families in the Canary Islands in 2023 led to an overload of the public guardianship system at the regional level, as well as concerns about their protection and welfare. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, regional administrations are obliged to care for unaccompanied migrant minors until they reach age 18, at which point they lose the aids they were entitled as minors and many of them are in a vulnerable situation. For this reason, the creation of centres for pre-independent life and an extension of the network of shelters for children in vulnerable situations is called for.

In compliance with the protocol for unaccompanied minors, numerous DNA tests have been carried out to verify whether the accompanying adults, when present, were actually their parents, as many of the people who accompany minors do not carry documents to prove their relationship. It is crucial that each case is assessed in a culturally sensitive manner and that, when the family relationship is confirmed, the competent public administration facilitates reunification and the necessary supporting documentation.

2.6. Recommendations and conclusions

The European Pact on Migration and Asylum tends towards securitisation and criminalisation, while integration policies lose focus. For this reason, the Spanish State must maintain a model of governance that is committed to social cohesion in its public policies, complying with the European Pillar of Social Rights, the 2030 Agenda and the National Strategy for the prevention of poverty and social exclusion. We are committed to a model of society that promotes diversity, equal opportunities and access to citizenship rights, combating the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees, such as access to housing, the protection of minors and the fight against discrimination. To this end, it is proposed:

- Ensure the participation of the social partners, support organisations, associations of migrants and consultative bodies on integration and immigration in both the design and monitoring of the EU Pact Implementation Plan in Spain.

- Strengthen the monitoring and enforcement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

- Design a Plan for Integration and intercultural coexistence that stimulates the Autonomous Communities to reactivate the autonomous plans for citizenship, inclusion and intercultural coexistence.

- Promote the development of the Strategic Framework for Citizenship, Inclusion, against Racism and Xenophobia.

- Implement a comprehensive strategy to mitigate unwanted loneliness among migrants.

- Improve coordination between the central administration and the Autonomous Regions for the protection of children.

- Adopt extraordinary measures at Autonomous Regions level for the reception of unaccompanied minors.

- Improve coordination between administrations, civil society and the media to avoid hostile contexts towards the immigrant and refugee population.

→ Promote training in intercultural mediation for public and private sector employees, as well as spaces for citizens to meet and generate intercultural relations of proximity.

→ Increasing information for migrants and refugees to access basic resources in an autonomous way.

3

Social and professional circumstances of spanish nationals and population of foreign origin

Prepared by:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The population of foreign origin in Spain continues to face multiple challenges in the labour market that reveal the persistence of structural inequalities. Despite sustained growth in Social Security enrolment by migrants, the labour market is still marked by high temporary employment, precarious conditions, high accident rates and a significant gender gap. Moreover, factors such as the difficulties for having qualifications recognized, the digital divide, ageism and limitations in access to vocational training make it even more difficult for this group to fully integrate into the labour market. This chapter analyses these aspects in depth, with the aim of making existing barriers visible and proposing lines of action to promote an inclusive employment model that respects the dignity of all people, regardless of their origin.

3.1. Labour market and population of migrant origin

3.1.1. Social Security affiliation

In 2024, the affiliation of non-nationals to Social Security in Spain experienced significant growth, according to data from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, with 2,880,818 people at year-end, which represents an 8 percent increase with respect to the previous year. Out of this, 68.9% (1,986,146) were third-country (non-UE) nationals.

The nationality composition shows a remarkable diversity. Among the workers EU countries, there is a special presence of nationals from Romania, Italy, Portugal, France and Bulgaria. Among third countries, Morocco is the main place of origin of affiliates (also among the foreign persons affiliated to the Social Security, in general), followed by Colombia, Venezuela and China. The Moroccan community is highly represented in essential sectors such as agriculture, construction and the hotel and catering industry, while

migrants from Latin America, especially Colombia and Venezuela, have grown notably in recent years due to the socio-political situation in their countries of origin.

It should be noted that, according to the latest INE data for 2023, the number of foreign residents that obtained Spanish nationality increased by 32.3%, corresponding to 240,208 persons (131,720 women and 108,448 men). The most frequent nationalities of origin were Morocco (54,027 people), Venezuela (30,154 people) and Colombia (18,738 people).

As for the distribution by gender and age group, the statistics of the General Treasury of the Social Security as of December 2024[6] show that 43.4% of foreign affiliates are women, although with differences between European Union countries (41.9% of female affiliates) and third-country nationals (46.7% of female affiliates). The age group with the highest representation was 35-54 years old (54.01%), followed by those under 35 years old (34.1%) and those over 54 years old (11.7%), which picture a migrant population in the midst of their working lives.

Still based on data from the General Treasury of the Social Security, the areas of activity in the Social Security records with the highest number of affiliated third-country nationals are Hospitality (347,281 affiliates, representing 17.3% of affiliated third-country nationals); Vehicle trade and repairs (298.552 affiliates representing 15%); Construction (198,604 affiliates representing 9.99%); Administrative activities and auxiliary services (192,984 affiliates representing 9.7%); Agriculture (135,204 affiliates representing 6.8%); and Special Regime for Domestic Employees (124,423 affiliates, mainly women, representing 6.2%).

Most of the foreign population is in the General Regime of the Social Security, accounting for 83.3% of the total number of foreign affiliates, while the Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers accounts for 16.2% (467,616 people, of whom 183,002 are EU nationals and 284,614 are third-country nationals). The nationalities with the largest presence in this regime are China (66,207 people), Romania (49,952 people), Italy (40,897 people), Morocco (29,857 people) and Argentina (26,205 people).

3.1.2. Contracting

In 2024, according to SEPE data, 3,730,096 contracts were registered for foreigners, of which 55% were permanent/indefinite contracts. Temporary employment is higher among foreign women than among foreign men. In 2022 the Services sector accounted for 58% of foreign recruitment, while in 2024 this rises to 62%.

Out of all the contracts registered for foreign women in 2023, 49% were in unskilled occupations (*unskilled service workers and labourers in agriculture, fishing, construction, manufacturing and transport*), a figure that raises to 54% among foreign men. According to data from the "*Registered Labour*

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6 TGSS Statistics database. *Employed affiliates. Average foreign affiliates.* Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration PX-Web - Select table

Movement of the Advance Statistics 2023", 36% of contracts for male foreign workers and 32% of contracts for female foreign workers were in unskilled occupations. Likewise, according to the "*Main Job Wage Decile of the Workforce Survey*", these occupations had the lowest average wage of all occupations that year (1,358 euros gross per month, 40% lower than the total gross average wage).

3.1.3. Registered unemployment and unemployment protection

In December 2024 there were 352,360 registered unemployed foreigners, 135,201 of which were men and 217,159 were women (62% of the total)[7], a decrease in 3,550 persons with respect to the previous year (841 men and 2,709 women). The foreign unemployed population represents 14% of the total registered unemployment (13% of the total number of men and 14% of women). The Services sector accounts for the largest share of the foreign unemployed population (61% of men and 71% of women in the total unemployed population).

Although the unemployment rate has fallen over the last year, the trend of a higher unemployment rate for women than for men is still true across all nationalities. In the case of foreign women this rate is higher (19.71%) than that of Spanish women (10.71%), which also happens for men who are third-country nationals (15.30%) compared to Spanish men (8.64%).

On the other hand, in December 2024 there were 229,508 foreign nationals on unemployment benefits[8], of whom 159,295 (69%) were entitled to contributory benefits. In the case of foreign men, 77% (115,305 persons) were entitled to contributory benefits and only 1.6% received the Active Insertion Income; the equivalent figures for women were 61.6% (114,203 persons) and 6.6% respectively.

There is also a notable difference with Spaniards on unemployment benefits, given that for non-nationals, male beneficiaries outnumber female beneficiaries, the opposite is true for Spanish nationals: 876.259 Spanish women compared to 682,418 Spanish men. Spanish women also outnumber men in the case of contributory benefits. However, Spanish and foreign women agree that the Active Insertion Income is the second of the benefits; in fact, this benefit is overwhelmingly received by women: of the total of 73,861 recipients, 52,689 (71.3%) are women, of which 45,129 are Spanish and 7,560 (14.3%) are foreign women.

3.1.4. Workplace accident rate among migrant workers

In 2023, the foreign national population involved in workplace accidents leading to death accounted for 18% of the total, higher than its share in workplace accidents that lead to medical leave (15%). The annual incidence

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7 "*Jobseekers, unemployment, contracts and unemployment benefits. December 2024*". Spanish Public Employment Service (SEPE). Ministry for Labour and Social Economy https://prensa.mites.gob.es/webPrensa/listado-noticia/noticia/4407
8 "*Unemployment benefits. December/2024 data summary*". Spanish Public Employment Service (SEPE). Ministry for Labour and Social Economy-

rate[9] (work accidents for 100,000 workers) for non-national employees working in Spain was 3,296.2, 20,3%[10] higher than that for Spanish employees (2,740.6). The highest number of workplace accidents leading to death was concentrated among people from the European Union, with a total of 54 people (10 of them Bulgarian nationals), followed by 23 people from Africa (13 of them Moroccan nationals) and 23 people from the Americas (6 of them Ecuadorian nationals and 5 of them Colombian nationals).

3.2. Migrant working women

3.2.1. Increase of dual nationality women in the labour market

In percentage terms, women with dual nationality are the population group that has increased the most. In the period 2022-2024 the total employed population increased by 5.89%, while women with dual citizenship increased by 40.6%. Since 2011, about 70% of women with dual citizenship are included in group 9 occupations (*elementary occupations*) and group 5 occupations (*hospitality, personal services, protection and retail workers*). However, in the fourth quarter of 2024 the figure for group 9 occupations decreased to 28.1% and the figure for group 5 increased to 37.7% .

The increase in the number of women with dual nationality is explained by the access to Spanish nationality by residence. In 2023, according to data from the Permanent Immigration Observatory, 243,481 people, including 137,211 women (56% of the total), became citizens by residence. Among women, 80,563 of them were entitled to Spanish citizenship after completing the two-year period of residence required for nationals of Ibero-American countries, Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal and people of Sephardic descent, and 92,413 (67.3%) were between 18 and 49 years old.

3.2.2. Wage gaps among migrant women

The text of the Annual Report analyses the pay gap through three aspects: the average gross monthly wage of foreign nationals, part-time work rates and the lowest annual earnings. In all of them, the work of foreign and dual nationality women is paid less than the work of Spanish women.

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9 The annual incidence rates are defined as the quotient of the total number of workplace accidents occurring during the year, multiplied by 100,000 and divided by the annual average number of workers affiliated at the end of the month to Social Security with coverage for occupational contingencies.
10 In 2023, the annual incidence rate of the population of foreign nationality increases from 3,289.5 to 3,296.2, while that of the working population of Spanish nationality decreases from 3,296.2 to 2,740.6.

3.3. Persons seeking and benefiting from international protection and temporary protection in the labour market

Reviewing the milestones that took place during 2024, we note that it is important to delve deeper into the repercussions of the new Vocational Training Law; the groundbreaking ruling of January 2024 on contribution and employment roots, which has direct consequences for this group; and the specific employment actions that the Directorate General for Humanitarian Attention and the International Protection Reception System has carried out to reduce the barriers that persist for this group, such as the digital divide, the non-recognition of academic qualifications from their countries of origin and ageism.

3.3.1. Beneficiaries of international protection and vocational training

The Organic Law 3/2022, of 31 March, on the organisation and integration of Vocational Training, has introduced substantial changes that benefit beneficiaries of international protection, establishing a curricular approach oriented towards specific labour competences that respond to the demands of the current labour market and creating more flexible training itineraries, with emphasis on rapid accreditation and the recognition of previously acquired competences. It also promotes emerging areas such as the digital economy and renewable energies, presenting opportunities for specific training programmes for people benefiting from protection.

However, the law has some limiting effects for this group of people. On the one hand, no specific provisions have been set forth for people with limited knowledge of Spanish, causing them to face a high language requirement that delays the start of their Vocational Training studies; and, on the other hand, that the promoted digitisation can become an obstacle for those who lack devices, connection at home, or basic digital skills.

3.3.2. Working and staying on national territory

Supreme Court Ruling STS 414/2024 of 24 January 2024,[11] marked a milestone for applicants for international protection. The Court concludes that while this person only retains the right to remain in Spain due to the suspension of the refusal of asylum, i.e. while their appeal is pending resolution, they cannot avail himself of the figure of *arraigo* for labour reasons in order to regularise their status under the Law on Immigration. It is also understood that the applicant must be or have been in a situation that is at least assimilated to irregularity, or of permanence outside the legal channels for foreigners.

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11 *Ruling STS 414/2024* ECLI:ES:TS:2024:414: https://www.parainmigrantes.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/sts-414-2024.pdf

3.3.3. Training and employment measures in the Reception System

During 2023 and 2024, the Ministry's Directorate General for Humanitarian Assistance and the International Protection Reception System has signed public-private partnership agreements with multinationals such as IKEA, Amazon, Cisco Systems, COBRA Group and INECO to facilitate the integration of refugees into the labour market. The main objective has been to promote training and access to jobs in accordance with the profile of each individual, encouraging the stay in the Reception System to be a process of training and empowerment and not just a stage of assistance.

3.3.4. Bridging the digital divide

Beyond access to devices and a stable connection, the real challenge lies in the lack of technological skills necessary for people to manage recruitment, training and career development through virtual environments. This restriction affects both job hunting and the possibility of training through online platforms in most employment sectors. It is worth noting that the different entities participating in the International Protection Reception System have implemented training initiatives to reduce this gap, including digital literacy courses and workshops for the elaboration of electronic resumés and preparation of virtual interviews[12]; they also provide computers and partially or totally assume the costs of people's connectivity.

3.4. Obstacles to employability and entrepreneurship

3.4.1. Public Employment and Social Security Services

- → **Public Employment Services** The registration of foreign nationals with the Public Employment Services is regulated by *Order TAS/3698/2006*. This rule does not contemplate the situations in which a foreign person authorised to stay, remain or reside (even provisionally) in the country may register with the Services, nor does it allow the registration of third-country nationals without authorisation to reside or stay in Spain.

- → **Social Security Services.** The social security number (NUSS as per its Spanish acronym) becomes the affiliation number for anyone who starts working, being the identification number, for social security purposes, of both employed and self-employed persons. It must be applied for and obtained prior to affiliation and registration with the Social Security and the start of any work activity.

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12 Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, 2024, Employment Bulletin.

On the one hand, those who choose the second option must submit the relevant documents through register and their assignment of the NUSS can be delayed for weeks with the consequent damage and delay in the start of the work or professional activity that can entail the loss of the job offer; on the other hand, in relation to electronic submission, in many cases people lack the digital certificate or the means to obtain it, or using it is not a viable option. "Self-management points" are not sufficient as they require a level of knowledge and requirements that not all third-country nationals can fulfil.

3.4.2. Recruitment and entrepreneurship

In many cases, employers' lack of knowledge of immigration and labour laws discourages recruitment (mostly SMEs, family businesses and micro-enterprises), as well as the lack of recognition of professional skills or academic qualifications acquired by people in the country of origin. Likewise, migrant women entrepreneurs who want to set their professional service or business, encounter obstacles related to the procedure and specifically to some requirements, particularly financial requirements and guarantees or support networks.

3.5. Conclusions and recommendations

Although the migrant population is remarkably well integrated in the Spanish labour market, it still faces structural and economic challenges that limit its economic and social development. Over-representation in sectors with more precarious working conditions, characterised by high seasonality and low wages, hinders their financial stability and access to a better quality of life. Moreover, occupational segregation remains a persistent phenomenon, limiting their employment opportunities in sectors with higher skills and better working conditions.

Language and cultural barriers continue to restrict the labour mobility of many migrants, preventing them from accessing jobs appropriate to their training and professional experience. The lack of recognition of foreign academic qualifications aggravates this situation, forcing many professionals into jobs for which they are overqualified, this is particularly true for migrant women, which means a loss of talent for the Spanish labour market. On the other hand, in unpopulated rural areas with little or no availability of public transport and where a significant number of migrants reside, having a driving licence is an essential tool for daily life and access to employment.

Discrimination continues to negatively affect the experience of the migrant population in the labour market. Many workers of foreign or migrant origin face biases in recruitment, in promotions within companies and in daily treatment in work environments, particularly women. Xenophobia and social exclusion are also factors that hinder their full integration in the labour and social sphere. On the other hand, the annual incidence

rate of accidents at work among migrant workers is higher than among the Spanish population.

The text of the final report therefore proposes a number of recommendations.

4

Situation of the immigrant population in the field of education and actions in this area for their integration

Prepared by:

Commission on Education and Social Awareness

Daily observation of city life reveals a constant transformation in the social configuration of urban environments. This dynamism is manifested in a growing cultural diversity, the result of migratory flows, which enriches community spaces with new languages, customs and forms of coexistence. In this context, new forms of social organisation are emerging, led by migrants, whose active participation in associative life is an example of the transformative power of interculturality. These entities generate networks, establish institutional links and strengthen the sense of community in their environments.

In this framework of transformation, **intercultural mediation** is presented as a key tool to facilitate coexistence in markedly plural societies. It is consolidated as more than a technique, a **social principle** that seeks to balance needs, cultures and rights, promoting a consensus based on respect and dialogue. Mediation acts as a bridge between diverse groups, fostering horizontal, inclusive and peaceful relationships. Its practice makes it possible to overcome institutional rigidities and to be able to adapt quickly to the real challenges of the community.

Although it is still too early to speak of societies with full mediation capacities, there is undeniable progress in various spheres - social, educational, family and work - towards a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding. Mediation promotes the **principles of equality, social justice and cooperation**, which are essential for building cohesive and caring communities. In the field of education, for example, it contributes to consolidating inclusive, respectful and empathetic schools, favouring the development of conscious, responsible and tolerant attitudes among students.

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4.1. The role of migrant associations in intercultural mediation and diversity in schools

Associations of migrants have emerged as relevant actors in the field of intercultural mediation, notably transforming the associative panorama in the territories where they live. These entities, led by migrants, play a crucial role in **promoting coexistence and social integration**, establishing links between cultures and facilitating mutual understanding in diverse contexts.

4.1.1. Contributions of migrant associations in intercultural mediation

Migrant associations integrate **intercultural mediation** as an essential part of their work. This practice allows them to connect different realities, put conflicts in context and channel social demands from a position of closeness and deep understanding. As community structures created from the migrant experience, these organisations are uniquely qualified to **detect, translate and mediate** processes that affect both their members and the wider social environment. Their main functions include:

- **Acting as a cultural and institutional bridge**, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers between the migrant population and the administrations.

- **Advising on legal, labour and educational aspects**, facilitating inclusion and the full exercise of rights.

- **Promoting awareness-raising and intercultural dialogue projects** that foster mutual understanding and combat social prejudices.

- **Providing safe spaces and psychological and emotional support**, vital for facing the challenges of the migration process and rebuilding social ties.

These organisations also play a pedagogical role by **training and raising awareness among other social agents**, contributing to the construction of a fairer, more inclusive and cohesive society.

4.1.2. Intercultural mediation in educational contexts

In the field of education, the mediating work of associations of migrants becomes particularly significant. Current legislation - such as Organic Law 4/2000 and the amended Education Law (LOMLOE) - recognises the value of an education that is open to the environment and committed to diversity. In this sense, associations of migrants can play a fundamental role in **connecting the school with their social and cultural context**, fostering more inclusive, understanding and empathetic educational environments.

Its mediation is not limited to linguistic translation, but also addresses cultural and emotional aspects that have a direct impact on how students and

their families experience school. However, there is still some **resistance from teachers** to the active incorporation of these mediators, which limits the transformative potential of mediation and hinders the adequate management of diversity.

Overcoming this barrier requires a change of institutional approach: **understanding mediation not as external interference**, but as a collaborative tool that improves coexistence, facilitates inclusion and enriches the educational community. Partnerships provide an in-depth knowledge of the migrant context that can be decisive in developing truly inclusive and socially committed pedagogical strategies.

4.1.3. Migrant associations: key actors, but with little access to resources

Despite their fundamental role as **agents of social cohesion**, associations of migrants face a **serious structural constraint**: difficult access to public subsidies. Too many formal and technical requirements and financial justification procedures are almost insurmountable barriers for entities which, although very active and close to their communities, lack complex administrative structures.

Faced with this situation, there is an urgent need to rethink public funding policies: **simplify procedures, promote equity in access to resources** and formally recognise the value of these organisations as strategic agents in the management of diversity. This is the only way to ensure an effective, deep-rooted and transformative intervention in favour of social inclusion.

4.2. Specific experiences: intervention and strategic programmes

4.2.1. Reinforcement, orientation and support programme (PROA+): Levering Activity A308 "In my school there is place for everyone"

The PROA+ Programme, promoted by the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport and the Autonomous Regions, aims to reduce educational inequalities and promote equity, especially in schools with high social vulnerability. Within this framework, the A308 lever activity "**In my school there is place for everyone"** focuses on promoting inclusion, positive coexistence and respect for cultural diversity, in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities established in Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December, which modifies Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education[13].

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13 Organic Law 2/2006 on Education, modified by Organic Law 3/2020 of 29 December, (LOMLOE, acronym of "Organic Law Amending Organic Law").

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The activity seeks to generate a school environment favourable to learning and socio-emotional development that values interculturality and human rights. In addition, it is integrated into the school's general plans (such as the PGA) and aims to transform the school culture, reducing conflict, absenteeism and favouring academic success and the cohesion of the educational community.

4.2.2. Proposals for inclusive and intercultural education and inclusive and safe identities based on diversity

Inclusive education, endorsed by bodies such as UNESCO, requires transforming school structures and methodologies to remove barriers and ensure equity and participation for all learners, especially those in vulnerable situations[14].

This section highlights the importance of teachers becoming agents of change, after receiving specific training and appropriate tools to meet the challenges of inclusive and intercultural education. Spanish educational regulations (know by the Spanish acronyms LOE and LOMLOE for the amended version) establish equity measures and specific programmes for late entrants. However, the concentration of immigrant students in public schools continues to generate school segregation. It is therefore proposed to promote inclusive policies, innovative methodologies (such as service-learning and learning communities) and programmes such as PROA+ and Erasmus+.

It also highlights the role of the liaison classrooms for the instrumental teaching of Spanish to non-Spanish-speaking students, thus facilitating their integration, and proposes a comprehensive approach to educational inclusion based on five lines of work: 1) specific teacher training and individualised reception protocols; 2) adapted curriculum that respects cultural diversity and human rights; 3) safe school environments and anti-bullying mechanisms; 4) active participation of families and communities in inclusive policies; 5) critical and safe use of technology and social media.

4.2.3. Proposals for intercultural integration policies in education in the model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level

The Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) has published a model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at national level. This is in order to create a more equitable and inclusive society in which diversity appears as a driver of development and the successful integration of migrants can be achieved through social policies that promote diversity and commitment to achieving it. From the intercultural perspective, the following measures are envisaged, which

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14 UNESCO. (2020). Global education monitoring report, 2020: Inclusion and education: all means all. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374817

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require the creation of new educational spaces that are the protagonists of inclusive education[15]:

→ **Ensuring equality**. Through specific proposals such as providing training for public administration and public service professionals to recognise discrimination and hate crimes; ensuring access to quality education, especially in culturally diverse and disadvantaged contexts; training teachers in intercultural, anti-discrimination and anti-hate speech education; and providing migrant and refugee women with support and protection when needed.

→ **Valuing diversity.** Establishing diversity as a principle or value implies:

— Having the authorities create observatories or other independent bodies to monitor progress towards full coexistence, with appropriate training in basic intercultural competences for all staff to enrich their views and different experiences.

— Establishing the concept of diversity as a core and common value, so that it is integrated into the fundamental principles of education systems and their subjects, as well as into specific curricula that develop intercultural education through a cross-cutting approach.

— Promote inclusive education and the fight against educational segregation through the diversity of students and teachers by cultural and social background.

— Ensure equal opportunities in life and inclusion through early enrolment of children with a migrant background in pre-school education; early language assessment; and targeted support for language and other skills acquisition.

— Promoting, by education systems, democratic culture and education for active citizenship, applying participatory strategies that motivate the development of effective participation skills.

— Promoting intercultural education and training in competencies for coexistence, as well as the development of the potential of migrants and refugees, through entrepreneurship and access to higher education.

→ **Encourage meaningful interaction.** Through policies evaluated for their impact on segregation, gentrification and social exclusion. In this framework, it is necessary to ensure that public policies do not lead to segregation or social exclusion; promote research on possible barriers to intercultural interaction and support inclusive

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15 Council of Europe. (2021). *Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level. Intercultural integration strategies: Managing diversity as an opportunity.* Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). Retrieved from https://www.coe.int

citizenship strategies in schools; review educational materials to eliminate biases and encourage diverse representation of minority groups; raise public awareness of the history and impact of migration through non-formal educational actions.

→ **Active citizenship and participation.** To achieve this goal, it is proposed to offer citizenship test preparation courses and language classes for adult migrants; to create training modules for civil servants on social innovation and participation as public management tools; and to foster collaboration between the education and social services sectors, parents and the local community to address challenges and promote educational success.

4.2.4. The State Observatory for Coexistence in Schools

The State Observatory for School Coexistence is a collegiate inter-ministerial body chaired by the Minister of Education, Vocational Training and Sport. Its main function is to advise on issues related to school coexistence, prevention and eradication of bullying and any form of violence in schools, working in collaboration with different institutions, promoting territorial cooperation. Its 2024-2027 work plan focuses on eradicating bullying and promoting accessible, welcoming and safe school environments that recognise diversity as an opportunity for personal and social growth. It highlights initiatives to raise awareness of prejudice towards students with disabilities, migrants and students in situations of inequality.

The Observatory has published resources such as the "Guide for School Welfare and Protection Coordinators"[16] which defines their role and the "Recommendations for working on Cybercoexistence in schools"[17] which address the regulatory framework, training and intervention in conflicts in the digital sphere. Also noteworthy is the State Study on school coexistence in Primary Education Centres[18], which evaluates coexistence from the perspective of pupils, teachers and families, and had positive results in general, but recognising obstacles that require attention in the prevention and detection of conflicts. Another interesting publication is "Indicators to assess and improve coexistence in school" because it is proposed as

16 Espinosa Bayal, Mª.Ángeles, (2022) *Welfare and protection coordinators in school communities.* General Subdirectorate for Territorial Cooperation and Innovative Education. https://www.libreria.educacion.gob.es/libro/coordinador-o-coordinadora-de-bienestar-y-proteccion-en-la-comunidad-escolar_182250/

17 National Institute of Cybersecurity; Observatory for Coexistence in School and Ministry for Education, Vocational Training and Sports. (2022). *Recommendations for working on cyber coexistence in schools.* State Observatory for Coexistence in School of the Ministry for Education, Vocational Training and Sports. https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/educacion/Documents/2022/081122_Recomendaciones_Ciberconvivencia.pdf

18 State Observatory for Coexistence in School of the Ministry for Education and Vocational Training, University of Alcalá and IMECA-UAH Team. (2022). *State study on school coexistence in primary schools ,* General Subdirectorate for Territorial Cooperation and Innovative Education.. https://www.libreria.educacion.gob.es/libro/estudio-estatal-sobre-la-convivencia-escolar-en-centros-de-educacion-primaria-desde-las-perspectivas-de-alumnado-profesorado-estructuras-de-orientacion-equipos-directivos-y-familias_180720/

a tool to measure and improve school coexistence and analyses aspects such as relations between pupils, teachers and families, and the resources available in the centres.

4.3. The participation of association of migrants in the processes of intercultural coexistence and education

Associations of migrants play an essential role in the processes of coexistence and interculturality. However, the migrant associative movement has been decreasing in Spain and needs to be managed in such a way as to guarantee or at least allow the insertion of migrant communities in society, through strategies and intervention plans in the long, short and medium term.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in its publication "*The Power of Contact: Designing, Facilitating and Evaluating Social Mixing Activities to Strengthen Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion Between Migrants and Local Communities - A Review of Lessons Learned*", recommends encouraging the participation of migrants and receiving communities through the following actions: enjoyable activities that foster joy and goal orientation; mutual appreciation; shared ownership; guided reflection; supervision and trust-building; sustained and regular intervention; and institutional support and partnership.

Institutional support is essential to promote and facilitate constructive efforts and strengthen inter-group relations. Social and cultural activities, understood as a programmatic intervention strategy to facilitate the inclusion of migrants in receiving communities, are important insofar as they offer non-institutional spaces for interaction, where, through spontaneous human contact, social bonds are built based on the experiences, stories, emotions and life trajectories of the participants.

The 2030 Agenda also speaks of the need to work on the inclusion of migrants, but from a legal and political participation perspective, more specifically in its Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, targets 16.9 and 16.7. These activities not only help immigrants adapt to their new environment, but also foster mutual respect and social cohesion.

Moreover, the phenomenon of associations of migrants has become a vital tool for active participation in public life. Associations of migrants act as valid interlocutors for the needs and interests of newcomers, providing a space for participation and empowerment. In most European countries, immigration is still seen as a strictly socio-economic issue and immigrants are perceived as mere workers with little social relevance.

Faced with these situations, the associations present themselves as an important point of reference in everyday life and social relations for immigrants who would otherwise have no voice and no possibility of social participation. Therefore, immigrants channel their needs by participating in

associations and, in turn, associations play a role as interlocutors between the new members of society and the host society itself.

4.4. Proposals and final thoughts

4.4.1. Proposals for mediation in schools

We present below some of the work proposals that may be useful for promoting intercultural mediation in different educational spaces and in social groups or entities.

- ⊙ Training of intercultural mediators to enable a fast and dialogue-based response to situations of tension. In short, it is a matter of promoting intercultural understanding as a necessary practice of coexistence.

- ⊙ Development of specific educational programmes beyond school with direct and indirect impact on the whole educational community. The implementation of workshops that link the educational centres with the environments in which they are located is a proposal that allows us to fulfil a dual goal: better knowing our environment and improving relationships between the people who make up the different communities and appreciating the richness of their cultures.

- ⊙ Creating spaces where people from different cultures can meet, share, enter into a sensitive and enriching dialogue; this fosters bonds of coexistence and allows for a lively exchange of experiences.

- ⊙ Collaboration with social organisations and cultural associations in the development of their integration and intercultural projects. The aim is to promote the development of joint programmes focused on coexistence, accompaniment and integration in order to generate the kind of environment in which healthy societies and relationships thrive.

- ⊙ Carrying out specific awareness-raising campaigns to encourage civil society to understand cultural diversity, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of intercultural mediation and respect for cultural diversity.

- ⊙ Implementation of community integration projects that promote intercultural mediation as an indispensable means for integration and mutual understanding.

Some experiences that have had a successful outcome in their journey towards intercultural mediation are:

- ⊙ **Classroom work**. Intercultural mediation is an inclusion tool that can be easily adapted to the educational framework; schools should

provide opportunities to introduce mediation in their ultimate goal of promoting inclusion and improved coexistence inside and outside the classroom.

→ **Mediation and communication**. Based on the experiences of social organisations, cultural mediation advocates intercultural and communicative classrooms, which are based on dialogue, respect and empathy.

→ **Intra-group mediation**. Peer-to-peer mediation between students allows the educational community to understand conflicts from the point of view of all the parties involved.

→ **Awareness-raising workshops**. Targeting all students, teachers and families to raise awareness on the importance of cultural diversity and peaceful and coexistence for the proper functioning of the educational community.

→ **Collaboration projects**. Between schools and associations of migrants to promote inclusion and cultural exchange.

→ **Inclusive curriculum**. The aim is to integrate intercultural education into the academic curriculum, including content that reflects cultural diversity and encourages respect, empathy, care and mutual understanding.

→ **Dialogue spaces**. It is proposed to create spaces for dialogue and thought in educational centres where students, teachers and families can share their experiences and concerns related to cultural diversity.

4.4.2. Final thoughts

Associations of migrants accumulate talent and cultural richness, and should be seen as an added value in diversity management and intercultural mediation. Intercultural mediation by migrant organisations plays an important role in fostering more democratic societies and a more pluralistic educational culture that benefits the whole educational community and society as a whole.

The role of the female mediators, moreover, allows female students and mothers and families to have their own relationship spaces where they can openly share their thoughts, doubts and conflicts and bring with them new perspectives, innovative ideas and creative approaches that facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas. Intercultural mediation also recognises the need to introduce a gender and intersectional perspective in order to work with students to help break down prejudices against women and girls and to understand cultural diversity as a contribution to their personal growth and empowerment.

As our final conclusion, we would like highlight that the option of intercultural mediation that social organisations can implement in educational environments constitute a valuable tool in managing diversity in schools and promoting coexistence, dialogue and understanding in the educational

community with other scenarios. In addition, the mediation and contribution of associations of migrants in this field is important for the construction of a lively and collaborative school culture.

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