

*Focus on Spanish Society* is published by the Social Studies Office of Funcas. The aim of this publication is to depict the Spanish social situation and provide brief insights into some of its most relevant aspects. *Focus on Spanish Society* consists of three sections. The first one, “Spain in Europe”, draws attention to recently published statistical data and puts the Spanish case in comparative perspective. The second section, “Public opinion trends”, examines in more detail one particular social issue as perceived by the Spanish public and manifested through opinion surveys. Finally, the third section “Follow-up social data” presents several social indicators related to demography and families, labour market and education, health and welfare benefits and services.

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## Section I. Spain in Europe

### I.1. Convergence in public expenditure in terms of GDP

Eurostat has recently published public expenditure data for the year 2020. The data reflect the impact of the first ten months of the pandemic and show the effort made by European states to combat the health crisis and mitigate its most severe economic and social effects.

The first piece of evidence that stands out is the significant increase in Europe's public spending in 2020. While the average public spending in the EU-27 amounted to 46.5% of GDP in 2019, it rose to 53.1% in 2020. This 6.6 percentage point increase clearly highlights the strong growth in the volume of the public sector in European economies.

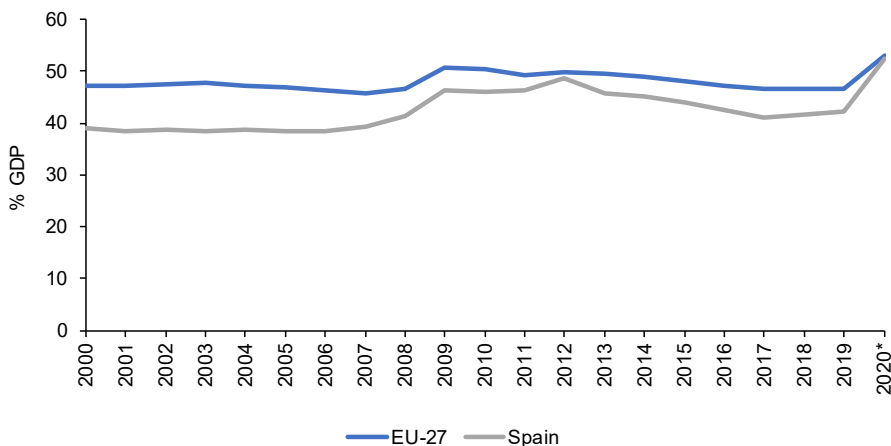
In Spain, increase in public expenditure in 2020 has been even more significant. Between 2019 and 2020, it soared by 10 percentage points, from 42.1% to 52.4% (reaching approximately 588 billion euros). Thus, Spain's public expenditure, traditionally below the EU average, has converged with it (Figure I.1).

The 2020 increase in public expenditure as a percentage of GDP is the result of the growth in spending in absolute terms resulting from the economic and social policies adopted by European governments in response to the pandemic, but also of the decrease in GDP. In other words, while the numerator of the ratio (public expenditure) has increased, the denominator (GDP) has shrunk.

Since Spain experienced the biggest fall in GDP in the EU-27 in 2020 (-10.8%), the 2020 convergence between Spanish and European public spending is not in itself good news. In a way, the price of convergence has been a steep decline in GDP. Furthermore, it has to be taken into consideration that Spain ended 2020 with the highest public deficit within the European Union (11%).

Figure I.1

#### Evolution of general government expenditure (EU-27 and Spain, 2000-2020)



\* Provisional data.

Source: Eurostat [gov\_10a\_exp].

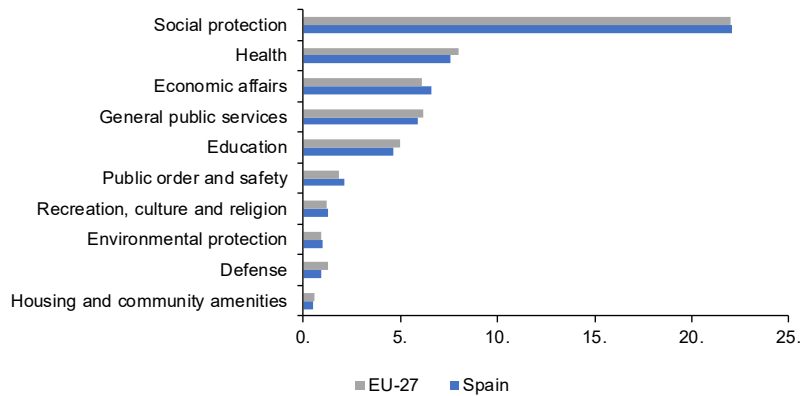
1.1. Significant increases in health and social protection expenditure

The most significant spending growth between 2019 and 2020 was in the areas of health and social protection. Public expenditure on both functions accounted for 30% of GDP in the EU-27 as a whole as well as in Spain (Figure I.2).

The EU-27 average public spending on health increased in 2020 by one percentage point, from 7% to 8% of GDP. As regards spending on social protection, it rose strongly in the EU during the Great Recession (2009-2013) and maintained a high level since then, around 19-20% of GDP. However, the pandemic boosted the EU-27's average public spending on social protection to 22% of GDP (Figure I.3).

Figure I.2

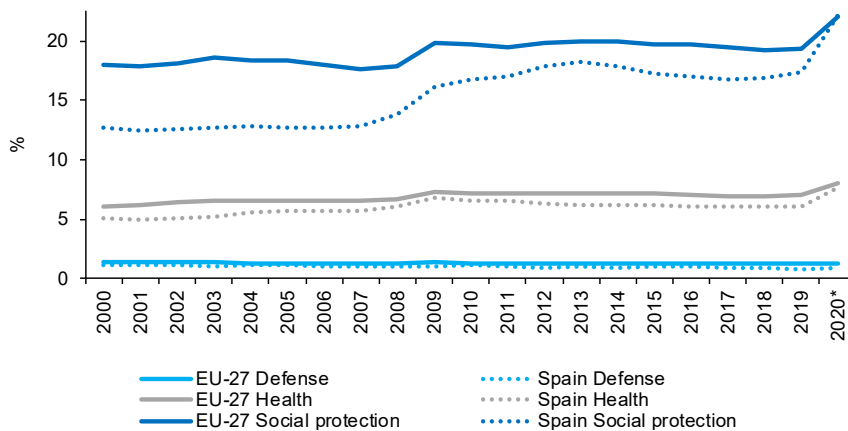
General government expenditure by expenditure function (EU-27 and Spain, 2020)



Source: Eurostat [gov\_10a\_exp].

Figure I.3

Evolution of government expenditure on health, social protection and defense (EU-27 and Spain, 2000-2020)



\* Provisional data.

Source: Eurostat [gov\_10a\_exp].

Spain's public expenditure on social protection also reached 22% in 2020, 2.7 pp more than in 2019 (from 217 to 248 billion euros). Health expenditure increased by 1.5 pp, from 6.1 to 7.6 (from 76 to 85 billion euros).

### 1.2. Stable expenditure on defense

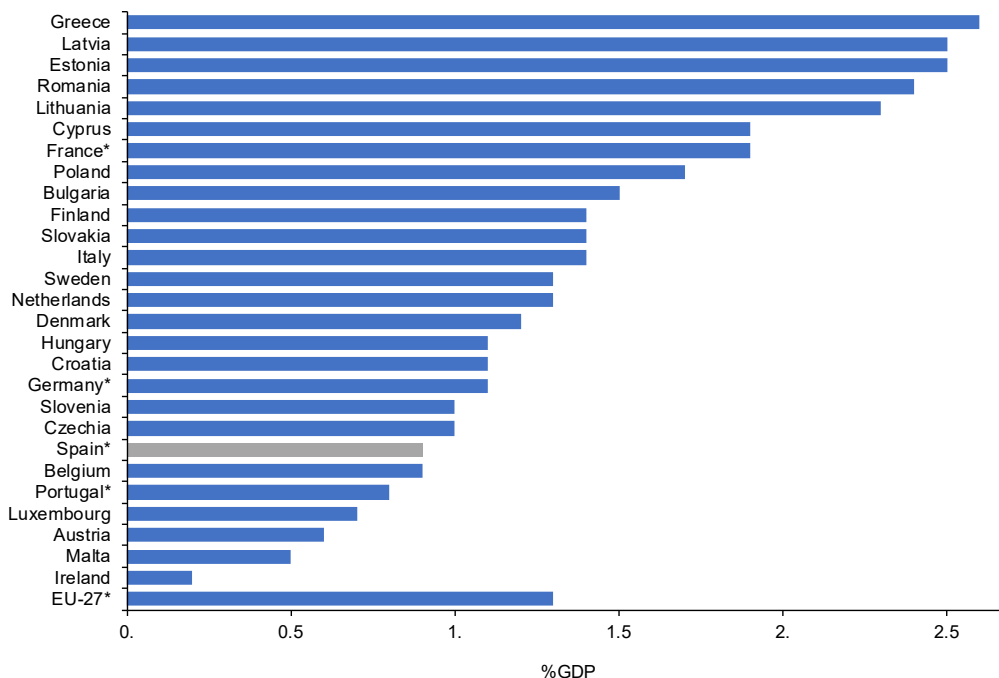
Defense spending is, together with housing, one of the expenditure headings to which the EU Member States devote fewer public resources (Figure 1.2). Average EU-27 government expenditure on defense amounts to 1.3% of GDP. However, differences across EU Member States are visible, with Greece, the Baltic Republics and Romania spending

more than 2% of their GDP on this area in 2020 (Figure 1.4). These are countries which, for different reasons, feel external security threats. By contrast, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Ireland, Malta and Luxembourg spend less than 1% of their GDP on this expenditure category.

Average public expenditure on defense increased slightly in the EU-27 in 2020 (from 1.2% to 1.3% of GDP). The increase in Spain was also modest (from 0.8% to 0.9% of GDP). In absolute terms, Spanish public spending on defense approached 10.6 billion in 2020, approximately the monthly cost of Social Security contributory benefits.

Figure 1.4

### Public expenditure on defense as a percentage of GDP (EU-27 countries, 2020)



\* Provisional data.

Source: Eurostat [ilc\_lvph04].

## I.2. Strong natural population decrease

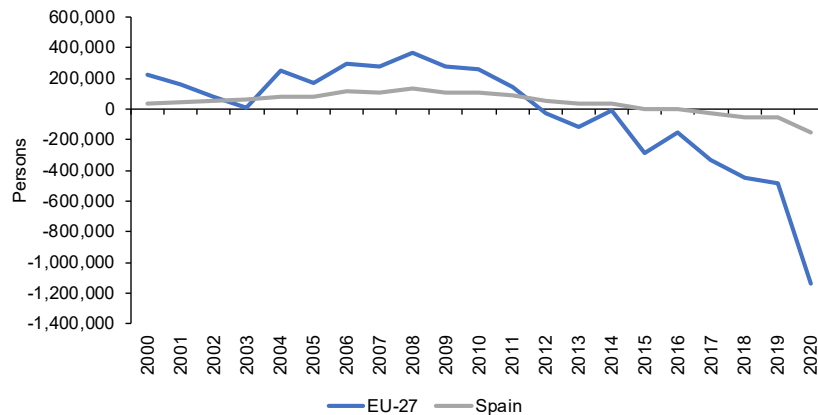
than the drop recorded in 2019) (Figure I.5). In Spain, the pandemic has also strengthened the natural population decrease documented since 2017, with a drop in 2020 2.7 times larger than that confirmed in 2019.

According to provisional population data released by Eurostat, the number of deaths in the EU-27 exceeded the number of births in 2020 by nearly 1,140,000. Although the EU has faced since 2013 natural population decreases, the drop in 2020 has been by far the largest (2.4 times bigger

Since immigration to the European Union also dropped drastically in 2020 due to the pandemic, in contrast to previous years, it did not manage to counter the natural population decrease. Thus, at the beginning of 2021, the population of the EU-27 showed a decrease (Figure I.6).

Figure I.5

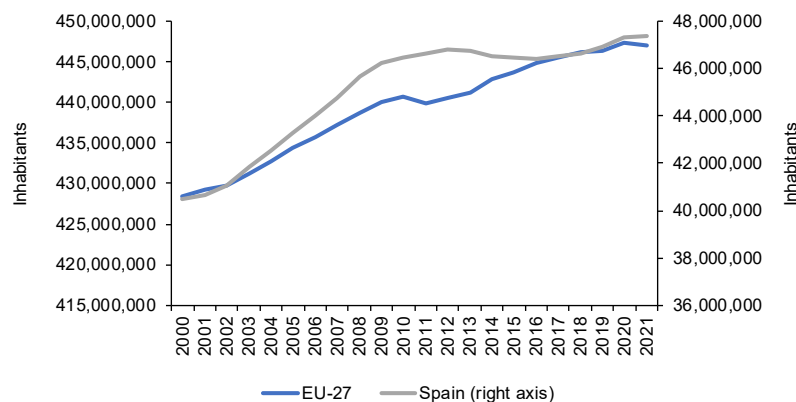
### Natural change of population (EU-27 and Spain, 2000-2020)



Source: Eurostat [demo\_gind].

Figure I.6

### Total population on January 1<sup>st</sup> (EU-27 and Spain, 2000-2021)



Source: Eurostat [demo\_gind].

Many European countries began 2021 with less population than a year before (among them, Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Greece), but not Spain, whose net migration (approximately 215,000 people) countered its natural population decrease (approximately 153,000) (Figures I.6 and I.7).

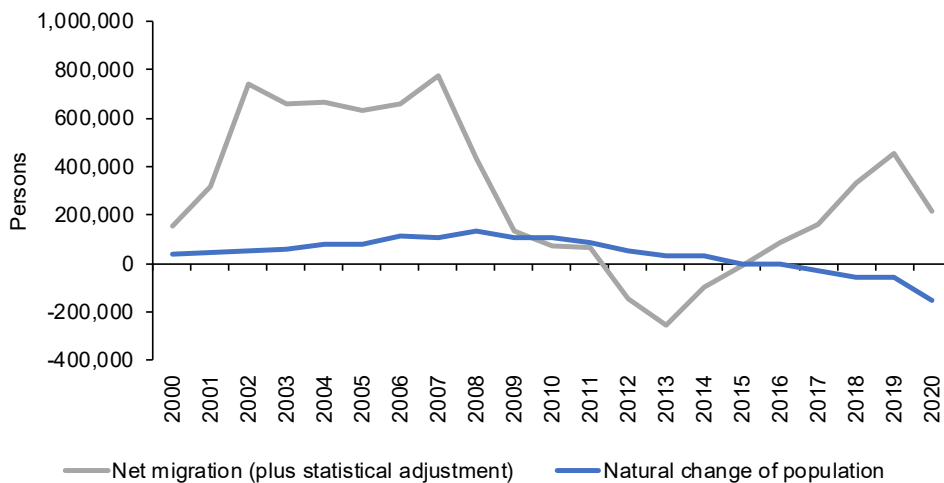
Spain's population on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, amounted to 47,394,00 inhabitants and represented 11% or the EU-27 population. Being the fourth country which contributes more population to the EU-27, after Germany (19%),

France (15%) and Italy (13%), it also holds this position in the ranking of Member States in terms of contributions to EU GDP (8%).

However, Spain belongs to the group of countries whose contributions to the EU in terms of GDP are lower than those in terms of population. In contrast, Germany, France, the Benelux, the Nordic countries, Austria and Ireland stand out for showing higher contribution rates to EU GDP than to EU population (Figure I.8).

Figure I.7

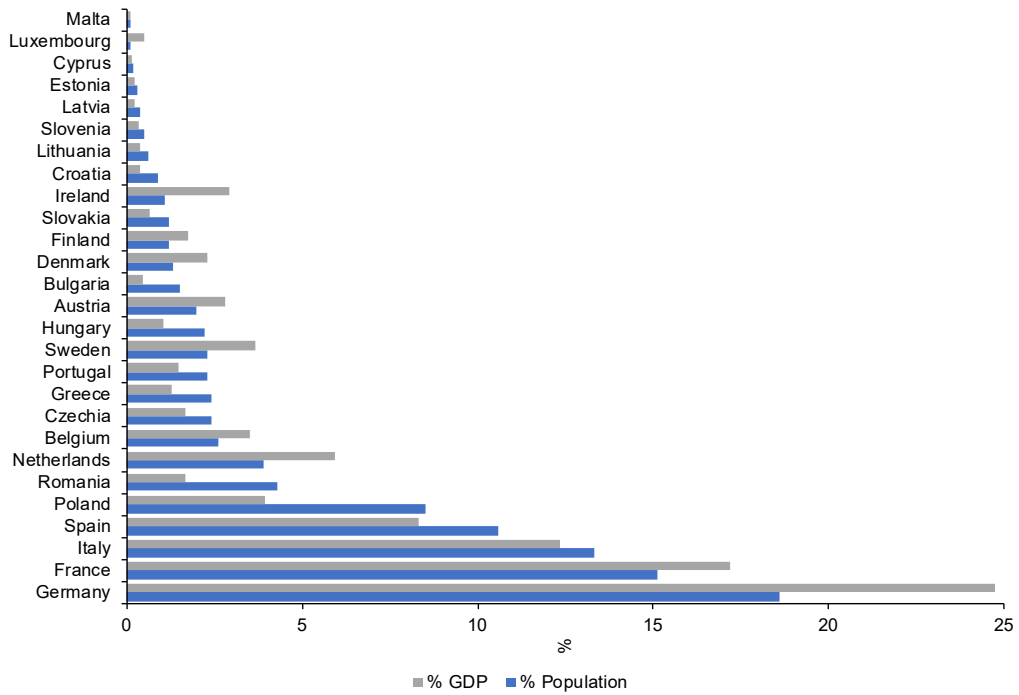
**Natural change of population and net migration (Spain, 2000-2020)**



Source: Eurostat [demo\_gind].

Figure I.8

**Contribution to EU population and to EU GDP (EU-27 countries, 2020)**



Source: Eurostat [demo\_gind] and [nama\_10\_gdp].

## Section II. Public opinion trends

### Weak public support of government expenditure on defense

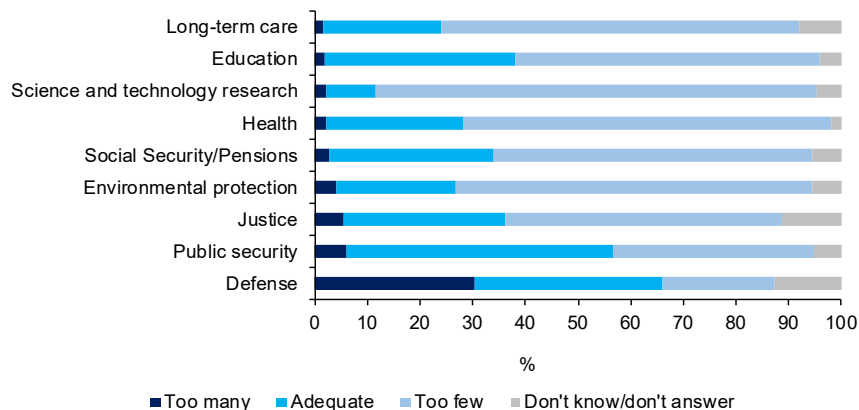
Spain's comparatively low government expenditure on defense must be put into the context of an unfavorable public opinion as regards military spending. The majority of Spanish citizens thinks that resources devoted to this expenditure heading are adequate (36%) or outsized (30%), according to the yearly survey on fiscal policy conducted by the Center for Sociological Research (CIS) in 2021. Compared with other government functions, social preferences for defense spending are very low. While the percentage of people

who believe too few resources are devoted to health, pensions, long-term care, scientific research or environmental protection oscillates between 60% and 80%, those considering that defense is underfunded only amounts to about a fifth (21%).

Certainly, if we look at the survey responses to this same question since the mid-1980s, a trend towards decreasing opposition to devoting public resources to defense becomes evident (Figure II.2). But this trend has gone hand in hand with a slow downward trend in government spending on defense.<sup>1</sup> However, since 2019, there are signs that public opinion is slowly changing towards a less hostile attitude on increasing expenditure on defense. It seems likely that the Russian invasion of the Ukraine reinforces this trend.

Figure II.1

### Opinion on public resources devoted to different public services (Spain, 2021)



*Question:* "As you know, public administrations devote the money that we pay in Spain through taxes to finance public services and benefits. Tell me please if you think that too many, adequate or too few resources are devoted to each of the services I am going to mention".

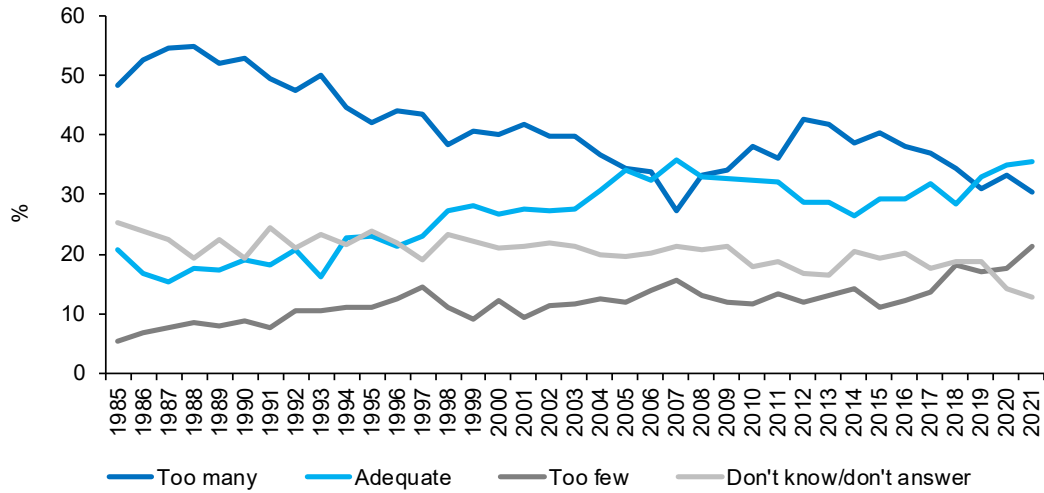
*Source:* CIS ([www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es)), survey 3332 ("Public Opinion and Fiscal Policy"), July 2021.

<sup>1</sup> According to the database of the Stockholm Institute of Peace Research (SIPRI), which offers data for Spain since 1955, public spending on defense reached its maximum as a percentage of GDP in the mid-1980s (3%), stabilizing below 1.5% as of 2003 (<https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>).



Figure II.2

**Opinion on public resources devoted to defense (Spain, 1985-2021)**



*Question:* “As you know, public administrations devote the money that we pay in Spain through taxes to finance public services and benefits. Tell me please if you think that too many, adequate or too few resources are devoted to each of the services I am going to mention”.

*Source:* CIS ([www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es)), yearly surveys on “Public Opinion and Fiscal Policy” (1985-2021).

## Section III. Follow-up social data

Table III.1

### Population

	Total population	Average age	65 and older (%)	Life expectancy at birth (men)	Life expectancy at birth (women)	Dependency rate	Dependency rate (older than 64)	Foreign-born population (%)	New entries (all nationalities)	New exits (born in Spain)
2008	46,157,822	40.8	16.5	78.2	84.3	47.5	24.5	13.1	701,997	33,053
2010	47,021,031	41.1	16.9	79.1	85.1	48.6	25.0	14.0	441,051	39,211
2012	47,265,321	41.6	17.4	79.4	85.1	50.4	26.1	14.3	344,992	51,666
2014	46,771,341	42.1	18.1	80.1	85.7	51.6	27.4	13.4	368,170	66,803
2015	46,624,382	42.4	18.4	79.9	85.4	52.4	28.0	13.2	417,655	74,873
2016	46,557,008	42.7	18.6	80.3	85.8	52.9	28.4	13.2	492,600	71,508
2017	46,572,132	42.9	18.8	80.4	85.7	53.2	28.8	13.3	592,604	63,754
2018	46,722,980	43.1	19.1	80.5	85.9	53.6	29.3	13.7	715,255	56,745
2019	47,026,208	43.3	19.3	80.9	86.2	53.7	29.6	14.4	827,052	61,338
2020	47,450,795	43.6	19.4	79.6	85.1	53.5	29.8	15.2	523,618	41,708
2021●	47,344,649	43.8	19.7			53.4	30.2	15.4		
<i>Sources</i>	EPC	EPC	EPC	ID INE	ID INE	EPC	EPC	EPC	EVR	EVR

EPC: *Estadística del Padrón Continuo*.

ID INE: *Indicadores Demográficos INE*.

EVR: *Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales*.

Dependency rate: (15 or less years old population + 65 or more years old population)/ 16-64 years old population, as a percentage.

Dependency rate (older than 64): 65 or more years old population/ 16-64 years old population, as a percentage.

● Provisional data.

Table III.2

### Households and families

#### Households

	Households (thousands)	Average household size	Households with one person younger than 65 (%)	Households with one person older than 65 (%)
2008	16,742	2.71	12.0	10.2
2010	17,174	2.67	12.8	9.9
2012	17,434	2.63	13.7	9.9
2014	18,329	2.51	14.2	10.6
2015	18,376	2.54	14.6	10.7
2016	18,444	2.52	14.6	10.9
2017	18,512	2.52	14.2	11.4
2018	18,581	2.51	14.3	11.5
2019	18,697	2.52	14.9	11.2
2020	18,794	2.52	15.0	11.4
2021	18,919	2.50		
<i>Sources</i>	LFS	LFS	EPF	EPF

Table III.2

**Households and families (continued)**

<b>Nuptiality</b>						
	<b>People getting married (per 1,000) (Spanish)</b>	<b>People getting married (per 1,000) (foreign population)</b>	<b>Divorce rate (per 1,000)</b>	<b>Mean age at first marriage (men)</b>	<b>Mean age at first marriage (women)</b>	<b>Same sex marriages (%)</b>
2008	8.5	8.4	2.39	32.4	30.2	1.6
2010	7.2	7.9	2.21	33.2	31.0	1.9
2012	7.2	6.7	2.23	33.8	31.7	2.0
2014	6.9	6.5	2.17	34.4	32.3	2.1
2015	7.3	6.5	2.08	34.8	32.7	2.3
2016	7.5	6.8	2.08	35.0	32.9	2.5
2017	7.3	6.9	2.10	35.3	33.2	2.7
2018	7.1	6.6	2.04	35.6	33.4	2.9
2019	7.1	6.7	1.95	36.0	33.9	3.1
2020	3.8	4.1	1.63	37.1	34.9	3.5
<i>Sources</i>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>MNP</b>

<b>Fertility</b>						
	<b>Median age at first child (women)</b>	<b>Total fertility rate (Spanish women)</b>	<b>Total fertility rate (foreign women)</b>	<b>Births to single mothers (%)</b>	<b>Abortion rate</b>	<b>Abortion by Spanish-born women (%)</b>
2008	29.3	1.36	1.83	33.2	11.8	55.6
2010	29.8	1.30	1.68	35.5	11.5	58.3
2012	30.3	1.27	1.56	39.0	12.0	61.5
2014	30.6	1.27	1.62	42.5	10.5	63.3
2015	30.7	1.28	1.66	44.4	10.4	65.3
2016	30.8	1.27	1.70	45.8	10.4	65.8
2017	30.9	1.24	1.70	46.8	10.5	66.1
2018	31.0	1.20	1.65	47.3	11.1	65.3
2019	31.1	1.17	1.59	48.4	11.5	64.1
2020	31.2	1.12	1.45	47.6	10.3	65.8
<i>Sources</i>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>ID INE</b>	<b>MSAN</b>	<b>MSAN</b>

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.

EPF: *Encuesta de Presupuestos Familiares*.

ID INE: *Indicadores Demográficos INE*.

CGPJ: *Consejo General del Poder Judicial*.

MSAN: *Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad*.

MNP: *Movimiento Natural de la Población*.

Marriage rate: *Number of marriages per thousand population*.

Divorce rate: *Number of divorces per thousand population*.

Total fertility rate: *The average number of children that would be born per woman living in Spain if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years and bore children according to a given fertility rate at each age*.

Abortion rate: *Number of abortions per 1,000 women (15-44 years)*.

Table III.3

**Education**

<b>Educational attainment</b>				
	<b>Population 16 years and older with primary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 30-34 with primary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 16 years and older with tertiary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 30-34 with tertiary education (%)</b>
2008	32.1	9.2	16.1	26.9
2010	30.6	8.6	17.0	27.7
2012	28.5	7.5	17.8	26.6
2014	24.4	6.1	27.2	42.3
2015	23.3	6.6	27.5	40.9
2016	22.4	6.6	28.1	40.7
2017	21.4	6.6	28.5	41.2
2018	20.5	6.4	29.2	42.4
2019	19.3	6.3	30.3	44.7
2020	17.7	6.1	31.3	44.8
2021	16.4	5.8	32.3	46.7
<i>Source</i>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>

**Students involved in non-compulsory education**

	<b>Pre-primary education</b>	<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>Vocational training</b>	<b>Under-graduate students</b>	<b>Post-graduate students (except doctorate)</b>
2008	1,763,019	629,247	472,604	1,377,228	50,421
2010	1,872,829	672,213	555,580	1,445,392	104,844
2012	1,912,324	692,098	617,686	1,450,036	113,805
2014	1,840,008	690,738	652,846	1,364,023	142,156
2015	1,808,322	695,557	641,741	1,321,698	171,043
2016	1,780,377	687,595	652,471	1,303,252	190,143
2017	1,767,179	676,311	667,984	1,287,791	209,754
2018	1,750,579	667,287	675,971	1,290,455	217,840
2019	1,749,597	673,740	706,533	1,296,379	237,118
2020●	1,622,353	684,804	772,417	1,340,632	248,460
<i>Source</i>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>

**Education expenditure**

	<b>Public expenditure (thousands of €)</b>	<b>Public expenditure (% GDP)</b>
2008	51,716	4.63
2010	53,099	4.91
2012	46,476	4.47
2014	44,846	4.32
2015	46,598	4.31
2016	47,579	4.25
2017	49,458	4.24
2018	50,807	4.23
2019	53,053	4.26
2020●	55,266	4.93
<i>Sources</i>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>INE</b>

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.MECD: *Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*.INE: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*.

● Provisional data.

Table III.4

**Social protection: Benefits****Contributory benefits\***

	Unemployment		Retirement		Permanent disability		Widowhood	
	Total		Total	Average amount (€)	Total	Average amount (€)	Total	Average amount (€)
2008	1,100,879		4,936,839	814	906,835	801	2,249,904	529
2010	1,471,826		5,140,554	884	933,730	850	2,290,090	572
2012	1,381,261		5,330,195	946	943,296	887	2,322,938	602
2014	1,059,799		5,558,964	1,000	929,484	916	2,348,388	624
2015	838,392		5,641,908	1,021	931,668	923	2,353,257	631
2016	763,697		5,731,952	1,043	938,344	930	2,364,388	638
2017	726,575		5,826,123	1,063	947,130	936	2,360,395	646
2018	751,172		5,929,471	1,091	951,838	946	2,359,931	664
2019	807,614		6,038,326	1,138	957,500	975	2,361,620	712
2020	1,828,489		6,094,447	1,162	952,704	985	2,352,680	725
2021	922,856		6,165,349	1,190	949,765	994	2,353,987	740
2022	834,060♦		6,227,556■	1,247■	951,156■	1,034■	2,352,877■	775■
<i>Source</i>	<b>INEM</b>		<b>INSS</b>	<b>INSS</b>	<b>INSS</b>	<b>INSS</b>	<b>INSS</b>	<b>INSS</b>

**Non-contributory benefits**

	Social Security			
	Unemployment	Retirement	Disability	Other
2008	646,186	265,314	199,410	63,626
2010	1,445,228	257,136	196,159	49,535
2012	1,327,027	251,549	194,876	36,310
2014	1,221,390	252,328	197,303	26,842
2015	1,102,529	253,838	198,891	23,643
2016	997,192	254,741	199,762	21,350
2017	902,193	256,187	199,120	19,019
2018	853,437	256,842	196,375	16,472
2019	912,384	259,570	193,122	14,997
2020	1,017,429	261,325	188,670	13,373
2021	969,412	262,177	184,378	11,892
2022♦	908,685	264,821	183,995	11,150
<i>Sources</i>	<b>INEM</b>	<b>IMERSO</b>	<b>IMERSO</b>	<b>IMERSO</b>

INEM: Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal.

INSS: Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social.

IMERSO: Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales.

\* Benefits for orphans and dependent family members of deceased Social Security affiliates not included.

■ Data refer to January-February.

♦ Data refer to January.

Table III. 5

**Social protection: Health care**

**Expenditure**

	Public expenditure (% GDP)	Public expenditure (million)
2008	6.1	67,344.0
2010	6.6	71,136.0
2012	6.3	64,734.0
2014	6.2	63,507.0
2015	6.2	66,489.0
2016	6.1	67,724.0
2017	6.0	69,312.0
2018	6.0	72,157.0
2019	6.1	75,929.0
2020●	7.6	85,383.0
<i>Sources</i>	<b>Eurostat</b>	<b>Eurostat</b>

**Resources**

	Medical specialists per 1,000 inhabitants	Primary care doctors per 1,000 people assigned	Specialist nurses per 1,000 inhabitants	Primary care nurses per 1,000 people assigned
2008	1.8	0.8	3.0	0.6
2010	1.8	0.8	3.2	0.6
2012	1.8	0.8	3.1	0.6
2014	1.8	0.8	3.1	0.7
2015	1.9	0.8	3.2	0.7
2016	1.9	0.8	3.3	0.6
2017	1.9	0.8	3.4	0.6
2018	2.0	0.8	3.5	0.7
2019	2.0	0.8	3.5	0.7
<i>Sources</i>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>

**Satisfaction (0-10 scale)**

**Time on waiting list (days)**

	With the working of the health system	With medical history and tracing by family doctor or pediatrician	Non-urgent surgical procedures	First specialist consultations
2008	6.4	7.0	71	59
2010	6.6	7.3	65	53
2012	6.6	7.5	76	53
2014	6.3	7.5	87	65
2015	6.4	7.5	89	58
2016	6.6	7.6	115	72
2017	6.7	7.5	106	66
2018	6.6	7.5	129	96
2019			115	81
2020			148	99
2021			121	75
<i>Sources</i>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

INCLASNS: *Indicadores Clave del Sistema Nacional de Salud*.

● Provisional data.

Table III.6

**Labour market**

	Employment		Unemployment				Social Security affiliation		
	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Rate (men)	Rate (women)	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Foreign population (in thousands)
2008	11,805	8,665	1,320	1,276	10.1	12.8	10,884	8,121	2,052
2010	10,424	8,301	2,536	2,104	19.6	20.2	9,710	7,872	1,841
2012	9,608	8,025	3,131	2,680	24.6	25.0	9,034	7,705	1,693
2014	9,443	7,902	2,917	2,694	23.6	25.4	8,853	7,639	1,555
2015	9,760	8,106	2,559	2,497	20.8	23.6	9,154	7,864	1,608
2016	10,001	8,341	2,213	2,268	18.1	21.4	9,421	8,097	1,688
2017	10,266	8,559	1,905	2,011	15.7	19.0	9,758	8,369	1,802
2018	10,532	8,795	1,675	1,805	13.7	17.0	10,058	8,643	1,947
2019	10,746	9,034	1,528	1,720	12.4	16.0	10,286	8,903	2,043
2020	10,430	8,773	1,679	1,852	13.9	17.4	10,038	8,729	2,046
2021	10,652	9,122	1,599	1,831	13.1	16.7	10,285	8,964	2,167
2022♦							10,392	9,143	2,228
Sources	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	BEL	BEL	BEL

BEL: *Boletín de Estadísticas Laborales*.

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.

♦ Data refer to January.







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