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# COUNTRY REPORT

Oviedo-Spain



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## **1. PREVALENCE OF FOREIGN POPULATION**

### **1.1. In Spain:**

Spain's role as a destination for migratory movements has varied over the last few decades. Spain began to receive a significant number of immigrants following its admission to the European Union (EU) in 1986, as a result of the economic growth. The increase of immigrants in Spain was such that, in the 2000s, we were the destination of 50% of all foreigners entering the EU. In recent years, however, successive economic crises and the high level of unemployment in the country have slowed down the arrival of people from other countries, although many of them pass through Spain on their way to other European countries.

Data on the local and immigrant population in Spain can currently be consulted at the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE for the Spanish acronym of Instituto Nacional de estadística), which compiles them from the Municipal Register. This is an administrative register in which every resident in Spain is compelled to inscribe, and in which the person's name and surname, gender, nationality, place and date of birth, usual address and identification document number are recorded. It is a requirement for access to health, education and other services, and is therefore very reliable.

According to the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE), the population of Spain on 1 January 2021 was 47,344,649 inhabitants, of which 5,407,822 were foreigners (i.e. 11.4%).

Distributed by nationality, the data on the most numerous communities of foreigners in Spain are as follows (see Figure 1):

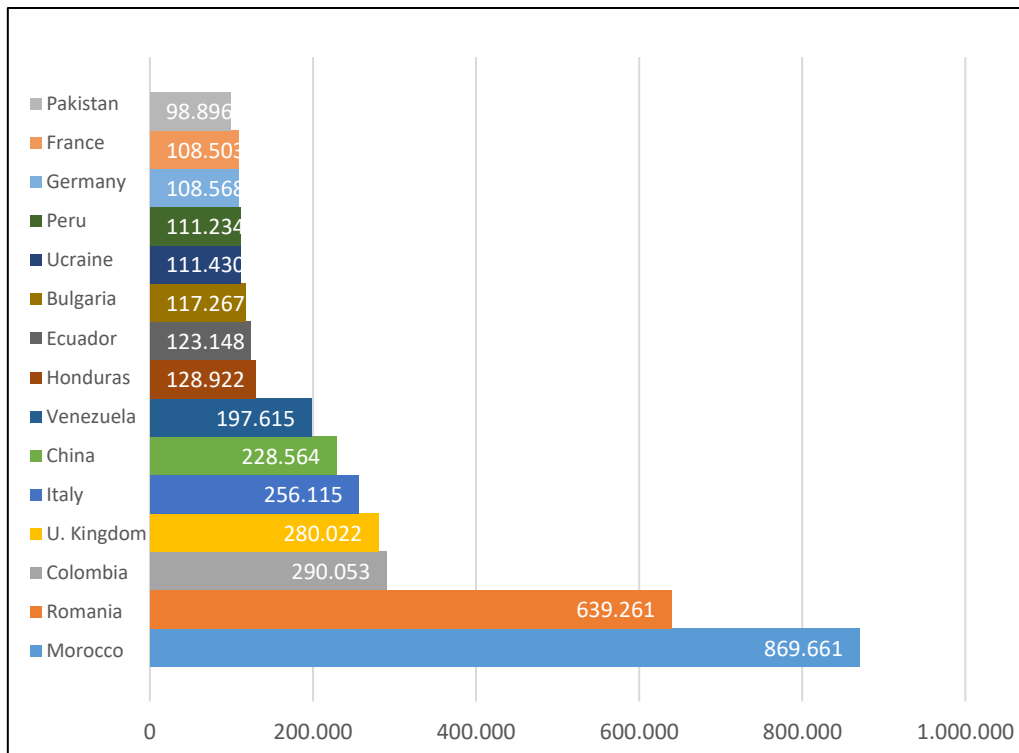


Figure 1: Most numerous communities of foreigners resident in Spain at 1st January 2021. Source: INE.

The distribution of immigrants in Spain is not uniform, but is concentrated in the southern, eastern and central areas of the peninsula. In general, this distribution coincides with that of the Spanish population, which is concentrated in the same areas (see Figure 2 for comparison).

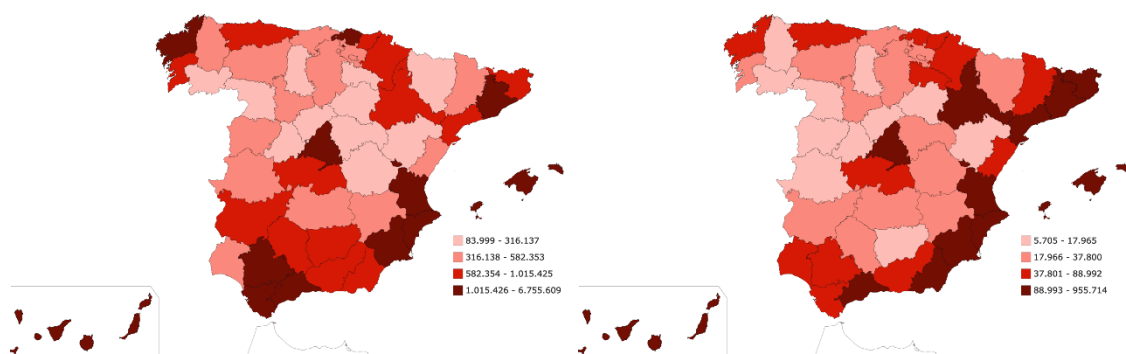


Figure 2: Distribution of Spaniards (left) and immigrants (right) in Spain by province at 1st July 2020. Source: INE.

With regard to the international mobility of immigrants, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on Migration Statistics and population trends. During the first half of 2020, 245,301 people arrived in our country, of whom 221,395, or 90.3%, were non-Spaniards. This is 29.9% less than in the first half of 2019.

Meanwhile, a total of 131,445 people left Spain for a foreign country, which is 4.3% less than in the same period of the previous year. Of these, 90,547 (68.9%) were non-

Spaniards. Even so, Spain's migratory balance with foreign countries was positive in 113,856 people, although it was 46.4% lower than in the first half of 2019.

Among the main nationalities, the largest increases were in the Colombian population (27,931 more people), Venezuelan (17,043 more), Moroccan (10,968 more) and Peruvian (9,054 more). On the other hand, the population from Ecuador (-2,203) and Romania (-3,001) decreased.

### 1.2. In the Principality of Asturias:

The single-province autonomous community of the Principality of Asturias is located in the northwest of the country (see Figure 3). The capital is Oviedo, which is located in the central part of the province and has a total of 219,983 inhabitants (according to Oviedo City Council data at October 2020); however, the most populated city is Gijón (277,554 inhabitants according to data from the Gijón City Council of 30 april 2021), which is located on the central coast. Although the official language is *Castilian* (or *Spanish*), there are two other non-official languages spoken especially in rural areas: *Asturiano* (*Asturian*, also called *Bable*) and *Eonaviego* (also called *Fala* or *Gallego-Asturiano*: that is *Galician-Asturian*).



Figure 3: Principality of Asturias (in red). Source: Wikipedia.org.

Asturias is one of the Autonomous Communities with the smallest population in the country and is also one of those that receives the least amount of immigration (see Figure 4). According to the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE), the population of the Principality on 1 January 2021 was 1,011,560 inhabitants, of which 45,246 were foreigners, i.e. 4.5%. This percentage of immigrants is very low compared to the rest of the country, which is 11.4%.

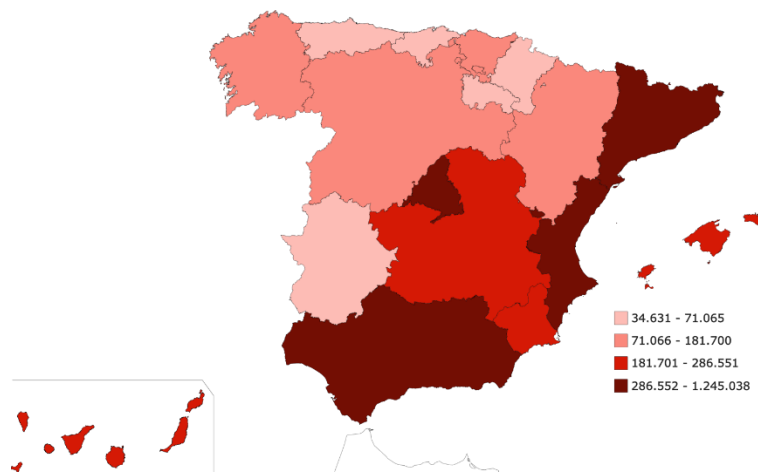


Figure 4: Distribution of immigrants in Spanish Autonomous Communities at 1st January 2021. Source: INE.

Distributed according to their nationality (grouping of countries), the data for the most numerous communities of foreigners in Asturias are as follows:

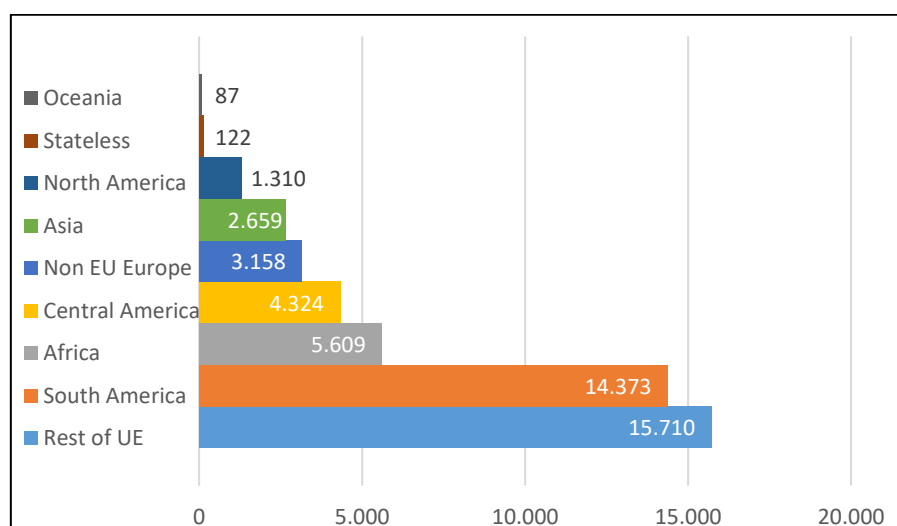


Figure 4: Largest communities of foreigners resident in Asturias at 1st July 2020. British citizens are already counted among the non-EU Europeans. Source: INE.

If we consider nationality, foreigners in Asturias have a similar profile to the rest of the country, with a majority of Romanians (7,535) and Moroccans (3,020). Far behind are the rest of the nationalities, of which the Portuguese community (1,866) is the largest, followed by Dominican (1,549), Senegalese (1,416), Cuban (1,401) and Italian (1,375).

Regarding the mobility of the resident population in Asturias, in the first half of 2019 the migratory balance with the outside was +2,159 people. However, the migratory balance with the rest of the Spanish autonomous communities was negative (-224).

## **2. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN SPAIN AND ASTURIAS**

### **2.1. General information:**

Compulsory education in Spain was implemented in 1945, with the passing of the Law on Primary Education, and concerned only this stage (between the ages of 6 and 12). Enacted during the Spanish post-war period and the subsequent Franco dictatorship, it had a confessional (Catholic) character and established the separation of the two sexes, as well as the use of the Spanish language throughout the national territory, to the detriment of the co-official languages of some territories (such as Catalan, Galician or Basque). Free education at primary level, which had already been introduced in the Second Republic, was maintained.

The General Education Law (LGE) of 1970 increased the duration of compulsory education by two more years, to 14 years, and for the first time achieved full schooling for Spaniards at this compulsory level (the harshness of the post-war period and the dictatorship prevented many families from being able to send their children to school effectively in the previous years).

Almost 20 years later, with the Organic Law for the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE), compulsory schooling was increased by two years, renamed Basic Education, and divided into two stages: Primary (from 6 to 12 years of age) and Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO, from 13 to 16 years of age).

Subsequent education reforms have not introduced changes in this respect and have limited themselves to legislating mainly on organisational and content aspects. Currently, the succession of education laws approved by different governments (7 laws in 35 years) is considered one of the main problems in the country's educational system, as it increases uncertainty among students, families and teachers and has not achieved consensus on the most controversial aspects: coexistence between public and private schools, the presence of the subject of Religion in the curriculum, vehicular languages and the existence of a common core content for all students up to the age of 16.

Although the whole of Spain is governed by the same educational law, the Autonomous Communities have had educational competences transferred to them since the approval of the Organic Law 9/1992 of December 1992. This implies the management of the education system in their territory and a greater capacity to decide on the educational curriculum (they are free to introduce certain contents related to their culture and traditions) or the vehicular language in which most subjects are taught (which may be Spanish or the co-official language of the territory).

### **2.2. Educational stages:**

The Spanish education system is made up of 6 educational levels:

- Pre-school education: from 0 to 6 years old. Non-compulsory, it is divided into two stages: one from 0 to 3 years, which is usually provided in kindergartens or

public or private nursery schools and is not free of charge, and another from 3 to 6 years, which is free of charge and normally offered by ordinary schools.

- Primary education: from 6 to 12 years old. Compulsory and free of charge, it consists of 6 grades in which the contents are common to all pupils.
- Secondary education: from 12 to 16 years old. Compulsory and free of charge, it consists of four years organised in two cycles (the first comprises the first three years and the second the fourth year).

Once pupils have completed basic education, they may choose to drop out of school or go on to one of the following levels:

- Baccalaureate: from 16 to 18 years old. Non-compulsory, but free of charge in public and some private schools. It is divided into 3 modalities or pathways: 1) arts, 2) science and technology and 3) humanities and social sciences, depending on the student's interests. The pathways determine the higher qualification to which the pupil may be entitled.
- Vocational education and training (basic, intermediate or higher level): Non-compulsory, the cost of enrolment varies, with lower prices in public centres. It is made up of more than 150 training cycles organised into 26 professional families. Once students have completed the module, they can go on to the Baccalaureate or to a University Degree.
- Higher education: Non-compulsory and not free of charge. Tuition fees vary greatly depending on the type of university (public or private) and the county. However, public university education is subsidised by the Spanish State, so that between 10 and 20% of the real cost is paid.

In addition to these levels, there are special regime education courses, which are not integrated in the stages that make up the general regime and therefore have their own structure and levels. Most of them are related to the arts (design, music, dance, drama, plastic arts, etc.), but military careers, language learning and sports education also fall into this category.

Of particular interest in this context are the Second Chance Schools (E2O). These are schools that enable young people who have dropped out of school to acquire basic training in order to get a job. The idea is to offer young people excluded from the education system some form of training in order to achieve their social and occupational integration.

### **2.3. Types of schooling centers:**

Schools in Spain are divided into three categories::

- Public: they are funded by public budgets and depend entirely on the State.
- Private subsidised: they are owned by private institutions, but receive public funding as long as they satisfy conditions set by the State.



- Private non-subsidised: they are owned by private institutions and do not receive public funding.

In Spain, public schools are secular, but the majority of privately owned schools (subsidised and non-subsidised) are generally religious in nature, with Catholicism being the predominant religion (63%). The reason for this is that subsidised schools were originally conceived as a complement to the public network, due to the insufficient number of schools at the beginning of the 1980s, when compulsory education was introduced. As a transitional measure, agreements were reached with the Catholic Church so that they could continue to carry out the educational work begun during the Franco dictatorship for a few more years, but these agreements have been maintained over time and have even been extended to non-compulsory educational stages since 2004.

Although today, the public network, which serves 68% of students in general education and 92% of those in special education, is sufficient to cover the entire student body, state-subsidised schools have been maintained mainly for ideological reasons and serve almost a third of pupils in Spain, although this percentage varies according to educational stage and province.

#### **2.4. The right to schooling for immigrant minors:**

Article 27.1 of the **Spanish Constitution** recognises the right to education. However, Article 13 EC (on the rights of foreigners in Spain) indicates that the Laws and International Treaties shall regulate the ownership and conditions of the exercise of this right by foreigners.

Both precepts must be interpreted in accordance with Article 10.2 EC, which imposes an interpretation of fundamental rights in accordance with International Human Rights Treaties. In accordance with these and in line with Article 39 EC, the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989** is particularly relevant. This Convention recognises that all children under 18 years of age - nationals, foreigners and even illegal immigrants - have the right and access to education, free of charge and with equal opportunities. The same recognition is found in Article 14 of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, which includes the right to free and compulsory education and access to vocational training.

In Spain, the right of minors to receive a basic education is reflected in the Organic Law of 3 July 1985 in its first article:

- 1. All Spaniards have the right to a basic education that will enable them to develop their own personality and to carry out an activity useful to society. This education shall be compulsory and free of charge at the level of basic general education and, where appropriate, at basic vocational training, as well as at such other levels as may be established by law.*
- 2. Everyone shall also have the right of access to higher levels of education, in accordance with their aptitudes and vocation, and in no case shall the exercise of*

*this right be subject to discrimination due to the economic capacity, social status or place of residence of the pupil.*

3. Foreigners resident in Spain shall also have the right to receive the education referred to in paragraphs one and two of this Article.

Taking into account the above, the right to education of foreign minors in Spain is structured as follows:

- In relation to early childhood education (of a voluntary nature): the public administrations must guarantee the existence of a sufficient number of places to ensure the schooling of the population that requests it. However, this is a right that is only recognised for foreigners residing in the country.
- Regarding non-compulsory education (other than pre-school): Article 9.3 of the Law on Foreigners stated that "Resident foreigners shall have the right to non-compulsory education under the same conditions as Spanish citizens", which clearly denied this possibility to minors in an irregular situation or registered in the census. The adjective "residents", included in the precept, was declared unconstitutional and null by the Constitutional Court, which is why this difference, introduced by the Law on Foreigners, disappears from the system (STC 236/2007, of 7 November). From then on, support is given to the application of Additional Provision 14 of the Regulation on Aliens (Royal Decree 2393/2004, of 30 December), which provides that the educational administrations may facilitate access by foreign minors registered in a municipality to non-university post-compulsory education levels and to obtaining the corresponding academic qualification under the same conditions as Spaniards of the same age.

Finally, the legislation on immigration regulates in a singular manner the right of access to education of unaccompanied foreign minors who are legally subject to the guardianship of a Spanish institution. Article 92.5 of the **Immigration Regulations** establishes that the fact of not having a residence permit shall not hinder the minor's access to those educational or training activities or programmes which, in the opinion of the competent child protection agency, are most beneficial to the.

## **2.5. School-age immigrants in Spain and Asturias:**

Of the more than 5 million immigrants in our country, 816,663 are minors, of whom 503,045 are of compulsory school age (6 to 16 years old). However, if we also include the stages of Pre-school (3-5 years) and Baccalaureate (17-18 years), which are free of charge in Spain, the number of foreign children attending school in Spain could increase to 754,564 children, as can be seen in the following Figure:

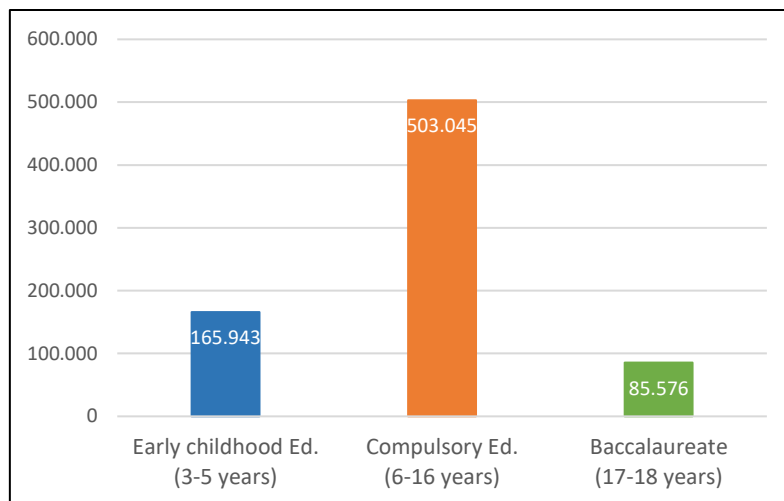


Figure 6: Foreign children in Spain according to their stage of schooling in 2020. Source: INE.

In the case of Asturias, of the 41,626 immigrants in this community, 6,455 were minors and 4,906 were of compulsory school age. However, if we also include the Pre-school (3-5 years) and Baccalaureate (17-18 years) stages, the number of foreign children attending school in Asturias could increase to 6,962 children, as can be seen in the following Figure:

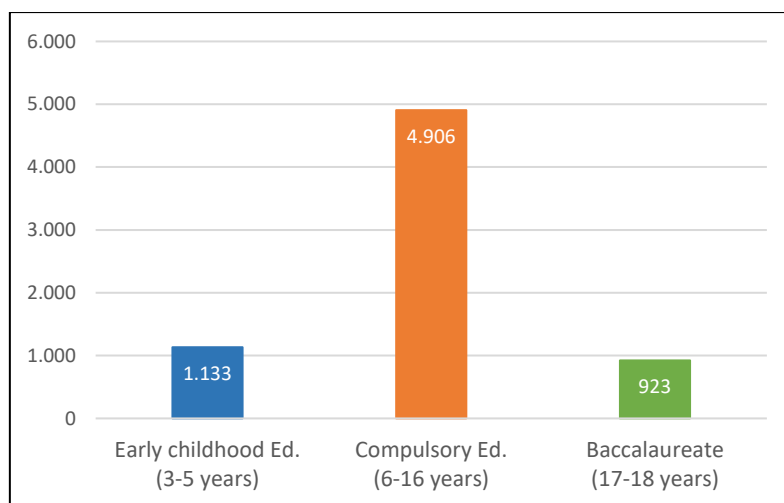


Figure 7: Foreign children in Asturias according to their stage of schooling in 2020. Source: INE.

## 2.6. Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (MENAs):

The arrival of unaccompanied foreign minors (the acronym MENA is often used to refer to them by the Spanish term: Menores Extranjeros No Acompañados) has gone from being considered a sporadic phenomenon to becoming in recent years one of the priority groups for intervention within the child protection system in Spain, both because of the growing number of minors in this situation (see Figure 8) and because of the situation of special vulnerability in which they find themselves due to the fact

that they are under 18 years of age and are in our country without the company of a responsible adult (Fuentes, 2014).

The term "foreigner" in this context refers to minors from non-EU Member States, although there is an increasing tendency to include all unaccompanied foreign minors in this definition, with the aim of being able to offer them greater coverage or to establish comparisons between the two profiles of unaccompanied minors (from EU vs. non-EU countries).

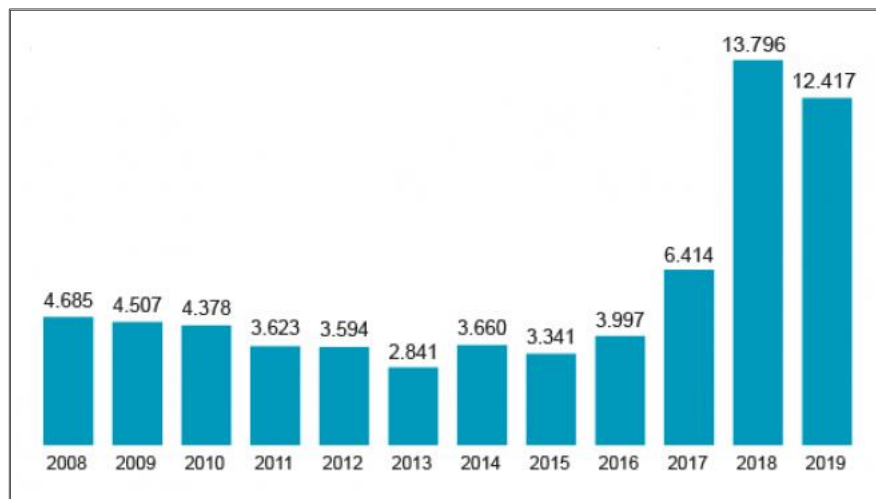


Figure 8: Evolution of the number of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in Spain until 2019. Source: Ministry of the Interior.

Although the circumstances of these minors vary greatly, in general the profile is that of a young person between 15 and 18 years of age, originally from North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Mali...), who migrates mainly for economic reasons. In recent years, there has been an increase in the arrival of girls from sub-Saharan Africa, who are also potentially vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation. The reasons why these girls and some young gay men migrate have more to do with cultural reasons (running away from situations of discrimination or family conflict) than economic ones.

From a legal point of view, these minors are placed under the guardianship of the public entities for the protection of minors which, if it is proved impossible to return them to their families, will be in charge of providing them with a residence permit within a maximum period of 9 months, of implementing training actions and activities to favour their social integration and of providing them with schooling if they are of compulsory school age (up to 16 years old). Minors between the ages of 16 and 18 also have the right to post-compulsory education. This right includes obtaining the corresponding academic qualification and access to the public system of scholarships and grants under the same conditions as other citizens.

However, according to the work of Jiménez (2019), on many occasions the situation of these minors is far from what is established in our legal framework. Their rights are

constantly called into question and the actions of the different administrations do not always make the interests of the minor prevail. Examples of this are the refusals of residence or work permits or the presence of minors in the Foreign Internment Centres (CIE for the acronym in Spanish of Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros), where they live with unknown adults in a situation of almost absolute helplessness. This occurs especially in communities where the number of MENAs is very high (especially Andalusia).

The distribution of these minors in the country is uneven. The highest concentration is found in Andalusia (the most common entry point for young people from African countries) and Catalonia. These two communities host approximately 50 % of the country's minors in this situation. In the other regions, the number varies, although the city of Melilla stands out, which, with less than 90,000 inhabitants, takes in more than 1,000 of these minors, 98% of whom are of Moroccan origin (see Figure 9).

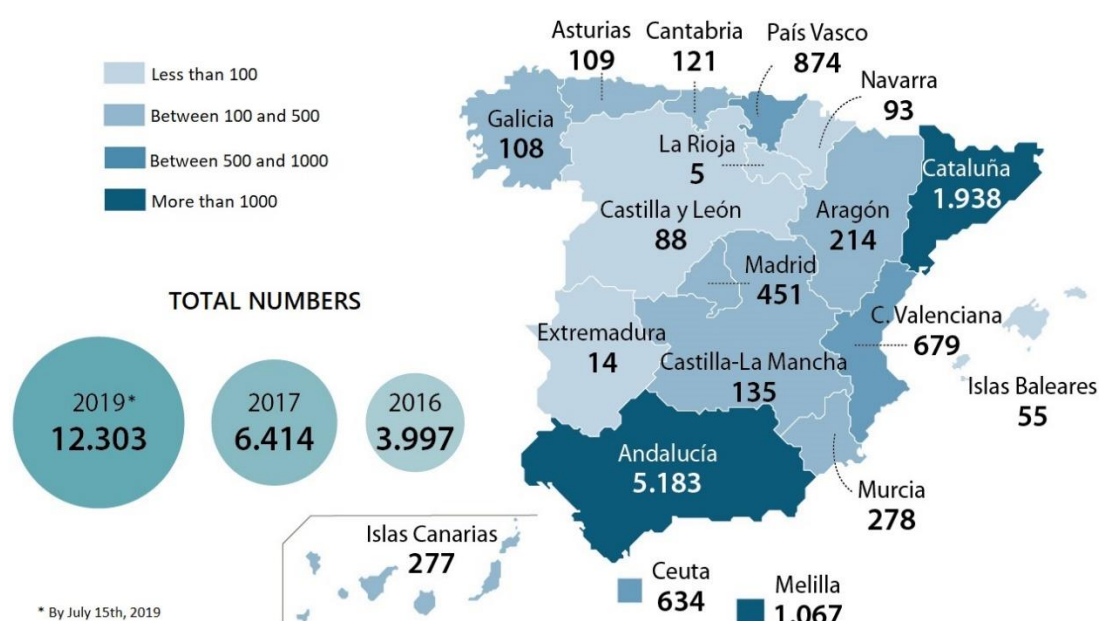


Figure 9: Number of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors by Autonomous Communities in July 2019. Source: National Police MENAs Register.

However, these numbers are highly variable and can fluctuate over weeks or even days, as the mobility of these children is very high. This is mainly due to the saturation of reception centres, which are often unable to provide these children with adequate living conditions due to insufficient funding. This is particularly the case in the regions that receive the most children. Since they are not deprived of their liberty, it is common for them to move to other autonomous communities or European countries where they may have relatives or acquaintances. The irregular situation of most of them (see Figure 10), also contributes to the fact that these young people avoid entering the child protection system or leave it at the earliest opportunity for fear of being deported back to their country.

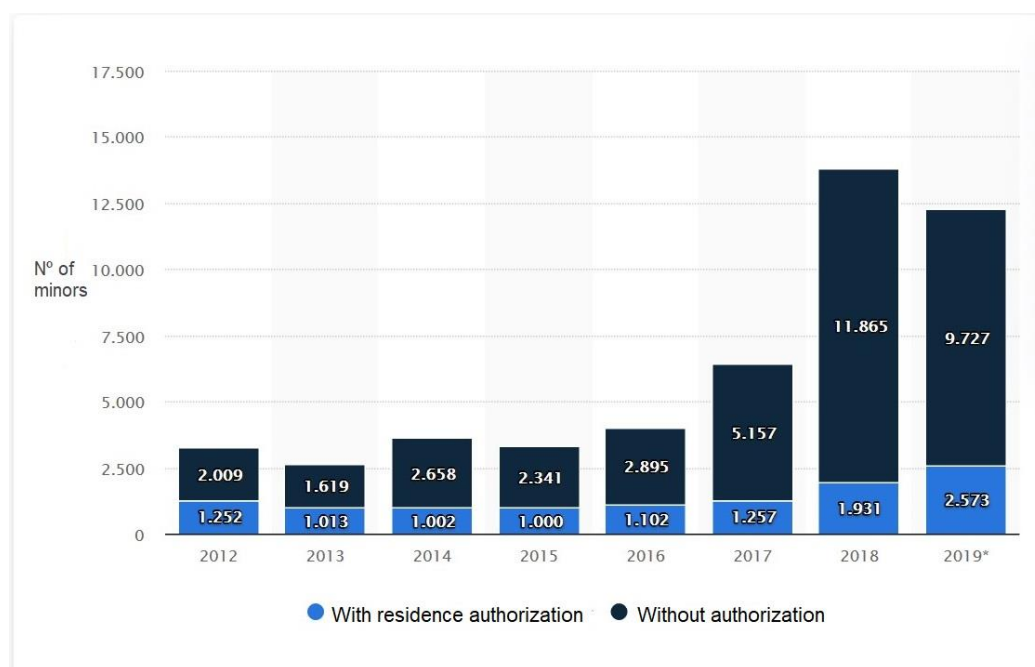


Figure 10: Legal status of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors until 2019. Source: National Police MENAs Register.

In Asturias, the presence of unaccompanied foreign minors is very recent (since 2003) and relatively scarce, as Asturias is far from the most common migratory circuits (Andalusia, Madrid, Valencia and Catalonia, as a transit route to other European countries).

In terms of their profile, according to Escobio (2014), most of them are Moroccan males aged 15 or over, with a very basic level of education (65%) or no education at all (20%). They usually arrive without any documentation, probably to avoid repatriation, and with little knowledge of Spanish. Almost all of them report having migrated for economic reasons, to help their families, and in most cases (80%) they already have work experience obtained in low-skilled jobs in their country of origin.

Once they arrive in Asturias, 85% manage to access some Vocational Training course or the Second Chance School, of which approximately half manage to graduate. The vast majority of those who come with the intention of working tend to emigrate later to other northern European countries, while those who want to study remain in Spain.

At the end of June 2019 there were 105 MENAs in care in Asturias, 9 under provisional guardianship and another 96 under guardianship. Of these, only 11 were of compulsory school age.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN SPAIN AND ASTURIAS

Among the few studies that analyse the mobility of the immigrant population in Europe, Luzán (2013) is noteworthy. This work studies both the mobility and the

itineraries of some of the most numerous foreign populations in Spain: Moroccans, Ecuadorians, Romanians, French, Argentinians and British.

Among the conclusions of the study is the idea that most immigrants' main destination was Spain, where they arrive directly from their country of origin or after having resided in at most one or two other places. Thus, in the case of Moroccans, the vast majority (90%) come directly to Spain. Those whose preferred destination is another country tend to opt for France and to a lesser extent Germany, the Netherlands, Italy or Belgium. Something similar occurs with immigrants from Romania, more than 90% of them came directly to our country, in some cases from other European countries such as Germany, Italy or Hungary. In the case of Ecuadorians residing in Spain, 98% came directly to Spain. The profile of immigrants from other developed countries, such as the United Kingdom and France, is different. Most of them tend to be retirees seeking a golden retirement on the coasts of our country; the young population seeking economic and employment improvements is much scarcer in these cases.

International mobility among the immigrant population in Spain is, in general, quite low, as is mobility within the country (although it is higher than that of Spaniards). According to Luzán's study (2013), 61% of foreign-born residents in Spain had never changed municipality. However, mobility depends largely on the country of origin and gender, since in the case of Moroccans only 25% have never changed municipality, with higher mobility rates found among males. The Romanian community also shows a similar mobility, higher than that of other immigrants, as 60% have changed municipality once or several times since their arrival.

Immigrants usually enter Spain through the big cities, such as Madrid, Barcelona or Alicante, which in most cases is their final destination, although many others also move to other economically dynamic regions.

This dispersion tends to occur from densely populated urban environments to other places with smaller populations but with better job prospects for foreigners. However, this seems to be partly mediated by origin, as immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Europe tend to disperse, while Asians tend to concentrate, usually in urban contexts. It is possible that this tendency is partly due to labour issues, as commerce is one of the main occupations among the Asian population, while Africans tend to be concentrated in low-skilled jobs, and therefore often concentrate in regions with a strong agricultural or cattle-raising tradition. Immigrants from Eastern Europe, on the other hand, seem to prefer to settle on the Mediterranean coast.

In terms of gender, the presence of foreign-born women is higher in larger cities, due to their majority occupations, mainly in the tertiary sector (hospitality, domestic service, childcare and/or care for the elderly).

Since 2004 there has been a decrease in the male ratio among foreigners residing in Spain. This has been due to the stabilisation of the number of foreigners with a higher male weight (Africans) and the increase in the number of foreigners of more feminised nationalities (Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans). The trend in recent years has

been towards a decrease in the sharp contrasts between genders, largely due to the fact that the first wave of migration is made up of young single men who, as soon as they are established, proceed to family reunification, bringing their wives and children with them. The migration pattern among the more settled communities, therefore, is more family-based, with an increase in the number of children and young people (see Figure 11).

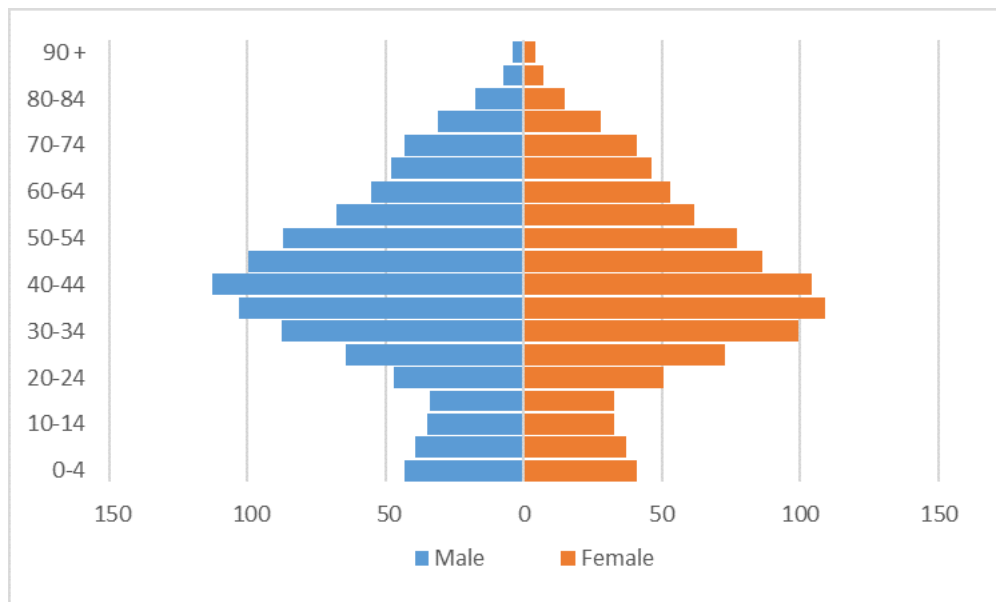


Figure 11: Population pyramid of foreign residents in Spain on 1 January 2020. Source: INE.

We can therefore affirm that the mobility of NAMS is not very high when they arrive in our country accompanied by a responsible adult (usually their parents).

In the case of foreign unaccompanied minors (MENAs), the situation is completely different. According to the study by Jiménez (2019), the lack of guardianship of these children by some administrations is generating numerous disappearances which, according to UNICEF (2019), are warning signs that the services are not adequately complying with the policy of comprehensive protection of the rights of children in the context of migration. This lack of guardianship leads to the mobility of MENAs to other regions of Spain and also to other European countries, including Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. Thus, educators working in Paris and Stockholm note the existence of children under the age of 18 who live in a situation of homelessness on the street in different European countries and who have been first received in Spain, the case of Moroccan children and adolescents being paradigmatic.

However, there are no records at the European level that can reliably map these movements, nor the situations of risk and exploitation in which these minors may find themselves. This is an important issue, as Save the Children (2018) has reported the disappearance of girls and young women from shelters in Spain and other European countries, often victims of human trafficking networks that take advantage of ineffective security regulations to take them away and profit from their exploitation.



Europol also warned in 2016 that at least 10,000 of the unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors who had arrived in Europe in 2015 had disappeared on arrival. They point out that some of these minors may be with relatives, but others may have been recruited by sexual and labour exploitation networks in Europe (Europol, 2016).

#### **4. EDUCATION OF NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANT MINORS (NAMS)**

##### **4.1. Description of schooling systems (with regard to reception, observation, assessment and integration of NAMS)**

The schooling of foreigners in Spain takes place in the same educational centres that cover the rest of the population; however, the distribution according to the type of centre (public or private subsidised) is slightly different from that of the majority of students. While 68% of students are generally enrolled in the public network, this percentage rises to 80% in the case of foreign students, so that students from other countries account for 10% of students in public schools and only 4.9% in subsidised schools. This distribution varies according to the Communities, so that in some, such as Cantabria, the distribution is more balanced, while in others, such as Madrid, Catalonia or Murcia, the percentages are even more unequal (e.g. 14.9% in public schools and 5% in subsidised schools in the region of Murcia).

Some of the reasons for this situation are economic, since in many subsidised schools the first stage of pre-primary education is not free and pupils already enrolled have preference when applying for a place in the same school for the following stages; they are also influenced by the so-called "voluntary contributions", an amount that families donate to the school on a monthly or annual basis and which in many cases are compulsory in practice, since not making them leads to a reduction in the services offered.

Although it is forbidden by law for publicly funded schools to carry out a selection of students, some state-subsidised schools establish some admission criteria that penalise newcomers from other countries, such as if one of the parents is a former student or employee of the school, if they have siblings at the school, etc.

With regard to the initial reception of foreign students by the education system, there is no common protocol for the whole country; each Autonomous Community draws up its own guidelines. In this regard, the Educational Guidance and Teacher Training Service of the Principality of Asturias (Servicio de Orientación Educativa y Formación del Profesorado del Principado de Asturias), in collaboration with the immigrant aid association ACCEM, produced in 2016 a document entitled *"Education and reception. Guidelines for the inclusion of late-incorporated pupils"* (*"Educación y acogida. Orientaciones para la inclusión del alumnado de incorporación tardía"*), with the aim of providing the region's educational centres with:

- Guidelines and proposals for action to enable them to specify their own sociolinguistic reception measures from an intercultural perspective.

- A starting point with practical guidelines and models or suggestions on the actions to be developed in the schooling of late arriving students and, where the case may be, refugees.
- General didactic and methodological considerations on the teaching/learning process of Spanish as a foreign language and on access to the curriculum, without ignoring its socio-emotional dimension and its influence on development.

This plan includes sociolinguistic reception measures which will be specified in each centre according to the target pupils and the resources available, and which involve first reception actions, specific proposals for educational attention and actions with the family. All these actions respond to four main objectives:

- To promote a climate of coexistence, respect and tolerance in the centre, promoting the values that interculturality brings to the whole school community.
- To help new pupils to understand how the school works, to get to know the people, the spaces and the organisation, so that their integration is quicker and fuller.
- To attend to the socio-emotional, communicative and academic needs of foreign students, guaranteeing:
  - A warm welcome at the centre and in the reference group, as a starting point for successful socio-emotional integration.
  - Intensive teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, if necessary.
  - Careful planning of the process of access to the curriculum.
- To enhance the quantity and quality of interactions with the families that make up the educational community in order to favour their inclusion and that of their children.

Among the considerations to be taken into account when teaching the language to immigrant pupils, this document recommends that several factors should be taken into account:

The first is chronological age since, as they point out, it is easier for a child in Infant Education to acquire the new language than for those who join in the last years of Primary or Secondary Education. In the former case, full-time direct immersion in the classroom is recommended. Older pupils, on the other hand, have language learning needs which may require additional support measures to facilitate language acquisition.

Another important aspect is the mother tongue, since factors such as the presence of Latin characters, level of literacy in their language, etc. may be decisive in planning the educational response.

It is recommended not to lose sight of the emotional component, as it should be borne in mind that migrants experience a series of emotions, thoughts, anxieties, feelings

and psychological defences triggered both by the separations they have suffered and by the losses that occur in their lives.

According to the document, learning style must also be taken into consideration, since it is necessary to know the set of aspects that make up the way each pupil learns and the dimensions that affect this learning in order to be able to programme the possible adaptations in methodology that may be necessary.

Finally, they point out that the participation of the pupil and his or her family at school, in the neighbourhood or in the locality can facilitate language acquisition.

The protocol establishes the figure of the reception tutor as a coordinator and intermediary between the pupil and his or her family on the one hand and the educational centre and the school staff on the other. Among his or her functions are the selection and communication to teachers of relevant information about the student, planning, together with the management team and the guidance services, the reception and integration measures, monitoring the work plan designed for each student and intervening, if necessary, in the teaching of Spanish as a second language.

The document details the different actions to be taken upon the arrival of students with these characteristics and establishes actions at various levels:

The centre: a protocol is established for the first contact with the family on their first visit to the centre, recommending to dedicate sufficient time and to provide them with information about how the centre works and all the questions they need to know (school meals, timetables, transport, holiday periods, school material, etc.). If there were language difficulties that could hinder communication, there is a telephone interpreting service in more than 50 languages to facilitate the exchange of information. The pupil is assigned to the level and group according to pedagogical criteria, trying to prioritise integration in classrooms with pupils of the same age, but with a certain degree of flexibility in case there is a significant gap in their level of curricular competence. In those cases in which the pupil has a low or null level of Spanish and/or lacks basic reading, writing or logical reasoning skills, the school may organise *Reception and access to the curriculum classes (Aulas de acogida y acceso al currículo)* to compensate these deficiencies, or request inclusion in one of the 5 *Intensive language immersion classrooms (Aulas intensivas de inmersión lingüística)* in the region (see section 4.3).

The classroom: The protocol also sets out guidelines for teachers, informing them on how to approach the learning of Spanish, how to differentiate between language difficulties and learning disabilities, and how to provide support for the student through signs, indicators in the student's own language and other visual aids. Special emphasis is placed on the inclusion of the pupil, both socially and emotionally, through some practical suggestions and teaching materials aimed at facilitating their integration.

The family: The plan also includes a series of reception measures and a section dedicated to collaboration and participation with families, as they can become involved in the reception process, overcoming possible stereotypes or prejudices that may often exist (see section 4.4). In this sense, several proposals are put forward in relation to working with families, which are included in the [\*Libro blanco de la educación intercultural\*](#) (2010) (i. e. *White Book on Intercultural Education*).

#### **4.2. Overview of actors involved in the integration of NAMS in the school system**

There are not many studies that address the integration of foreign minors in the Spanish education system from the perspective of the students themselves, their families or their teachers. In 2008, however, Sigma Dos (a consultancy firm) and the Pfizer Foundation carried out a study (see website in the list of references) on immigration and the Spanish education system in which 800 surveys were conducted among the general population, teachers and the immigrant population in the provinces of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. The questions included an assessment of the Spanish education system, possible improvements, the existence of barriers to learning, the integration of foreign students and the involvement of families in their children's education.

The results cannot be directly extrapolated to Asturias, as the population density and concentration of immigrants in the regions where the study was carried out are higher than in ours. Nevertheless, they can be considered indicative of the general situation in the country.

In general, the three groups analysed gave an overall positive assessment of the Spanish education system, with the immigrant population giving it the highest score (7.94 points compared to 6.3 for teachers and 6.02 for the Spanish population). All the aspects of the education system under analysis are rated quite highly by all three segments of the population, but once again, immigrants show more satisfaction: most of the attributes score more than 8 points (out of 10); teachers are also more positive than the general population, although they approve the rating of all attributes. Teacher preparation, accessibility to schools, or the number of schools in relation to the population are the most highly rated. The general population and immigrants, although they approve, give the lowest scores to schooling grants.

Undoubtedly, one of the concerns is the school integration of immigrant children into the Spanish education system. The majority opinion of teachers is that the educational needs of these children are being adequately addressed (85.1% very or fairly adequate) and that Spanish teachers are very well or well prepared (49.5%) to deal with the new classroom demographics. According to teachers, the greatest difficulty for immigrant pupils in their integration is the language (43.6% consider it to be very difficult), followed by cultural differences and the gap in the level of studies with respect to their country of origin.

The level of education with the greatest difficulties for the school integration of immigrant children is Compulsory Secondary Education, as stated by 85.1% of

teachers. Despite the logical difficulties of adaptation that may arise, 77.2% of teachers believe that the children of immigrants have adapted very well or well to the Spanish educational system, but it is revealing that, to this same question, 88.7% of the parents of these children (immigrant population) answer that adaptation has been positive. The same is true for integration into the habits and customs of Spanish children: teachers quantify this integration in 46.6% of cases as totally or very much, while the percentage of the immigrant population who say that their children have integrated totally or very much is 65.4%.

The same applies to the adaptation of Spanish children to this new demographic situation: 80.1% of teachers say that they have adapted very well or well. Almost half of the general population (45.4%) believe that it is easier for minority groups to obtain places in public schools, the reasons given being that it is necessary to help those with fewer possibilities and to facilitate integration. Six out of ten Spaniards (general population) value positively the multicultural nature of school classrooms.

Immigrants' children have not encountered many difficulties in schools. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no difficulty at all, immigrants rate cultural differences or adaptation to the rest of their classmates as the biggest problems (3.54). In terms of possible solutions to overcome these barriers, the immigrants rate positively the possibility of being offered extra classes in Spanish or other subjects to reinforce their level.

In short, according to the conclusions of the study, the integration of the children of immigrants is absolutely normal, they have Spanish friends and friends of their nationality, and they have integrated without problems into the games and habits of Spanish children.

#### **4.3. Specific support classrooms for foreign minors**

As mentioned in section 4.1, the Educational Guidance and Teacher Training Service of the Principality of Asturias (Servicio de Orientación Educativa y Formación del Profesorado del Principado de Asturias ) developed a document in 2016 (*“Educación y acogida. Orientaciones para la inclusión del alumnado de incorporación tardía”*) in which it establishes reception and integration guidelines for immigrant minors attending schools in the region. This document describes the two types of classrooms that the Regional Department of Education of the Principality of Asturias (Consejería de Educación del Principado de Asturias) establishes as support resources for immigrant minors with little or no knowledge of Spanish.

The first type of classroom, called *Aulas de acogida y acceso al currículo* (Reception and access to the curriculum classrooms) are resources organised by the centre itself. Their main objectives are the following

- To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, strategies and skills that help them to integrate into the daily life of the educational centres and the environment that surrounds them.

- To provide linguistic competences in Spanish in the four skills (oral comprehension and expression and written comprehension and expression), so that students from other languages are able to join the educational system and the ordinary curriculum.
- To favour the acquisition of a curricular vocabulary of the different areas that facilitates their schooling process, one of the aspects within the concept of Spanish as a language of instruction.
- To introduce knowledge of the natural and social environment, emphasising the social and cultural aspects of Asturias and Spain.
- To reinforce the basic skills of reading, writing and logical-mathematical reasoning.

Depending on the pupil's deficiencies, these classrooms can be organised into the following levels:

Level 1. Linguistic immersion, aimed at new students who have no or very low levels of linguistic competence in Spanish.

Level 2. Linguistic immersion and access to the curriculum, for students from other mother tongues who have already acquired basic linguistic competences in Spanish after having passed the first level.

Level 3. Access and curricular guidance, aimed at pupils of other mother tongues who have passed the previous levels or pupils of Spanish origin who have a curricular gap of at least two years in the instrumental areas, these being understood as Spanish Language and Literature and Mathematics.

Since 2002, the Regional Department of Education of the Principality of Asturias (Consejería de Educación del Principado de Asturias) has also had the so-called *Aulas intensivas de inmersión lingüística* (Intensive Language Immersion Classrooms), an extraordinary resource for the teaching of the Spanish language aimed at pupils from the 3rd year of Primary Education to the 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education. The main objectives are:

- To provide pupils with the basic linguistic competence in the Spanish language to enable a minimum of social interaction with the educational community in which they are enrolled.
- To introduce a basic vocabulary of the curricular areas or subjects.
- To carry out activities to develop adaptive school habits in order to favour the educational inclusion of pupils.
- To initiate, if necessary, literacy processes in pupils with little or deficient previous schooling.

These classrooms are located in Secondary Schools and are staffed by almost ten teachers specialised in teaching Spanish as a second language who dedicate their entire timetable to the language immersion programme.

There are currently 5 intensive language immersion classrooms in Asturias, located in the main urban centres of the region (2 in Oviedo, 1 in Gijón, 1 in Avilés and 1 in the Nalón and Caudal mining areas), with more than 140 primary and secondary school pupils. The operation of these classrooms is carried out in two modalities:

- Intensive attention (up to 20 hours a week): for secondary school pupils. These pupils go to the immersion classroom for the first four sessions in the morning and the rest of the time they return to their usual school. The duration of this programme is 3 months initially, extendable according to the evolution of the pupil up to a maximum of one school year.
- Itinerant attention (up to 10 hours a week): for pupils from 3rd to 6th year of Primary Education. The sessions are held in the ordinary centre for two sessions a day. The duration of this programme is also one term, extendable up to one school year (two more terms).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary to change the dynamics of normal operation, as it is not possible to group students from different centres. The teachers combine the transfer to schools in institutes with telematic classes.

Precisely this online educational task has been reinforced by means of a web page to support all teachers whose students are late incorporation pupils. It is called [WEB de Acogida](#). It is a tool to publicise the resources available to teachers to promote the adaptation, literacy and schooling of students. With it, they can access different documents and work tools to practice linguistic immersion.

Oviedo City Council has also financed the programme called *Escolinos de Babel*. This is a project developed by the private association Accem in collaboration with the Department of Social Policies of the Oviedo City Council (Concejalía de Políticas Sociales del Ayuntamiento de Oviedo), for linguistic and socio-educational support for late entrants to primary education, which promotes the active participation of the entire educational community in intercultural activities.

It is currently being developed in 5 schools in the city of Oviedo (*Pablo Miaja*, *San Pedro de los Arcos*, *Ventanielles*, *Germán Fernández Ramos* and *Nazaret*), selected according to the percentage of foreign pupils (all of them have at least 75% of immigrants among their students, even reaching 95% in the case of *Pablo Miaja* public school). So far, they have worked with more than 130 children of 20 nationalities.

After the work experience in recent years, the participation and inclusion of all the people who are part of the educational community was considered essential, so a series of complementary activities are developed, such as Spanish classes, welcome sessions and training workshops on different topics in which AMPAS, teachers, families and other entities and institutions take part.

#### **4.4. Communication and support for parents and other family members**

The protocol of the Principality of Asturias for the reception and integration of immigrant pupils (see section 4.1) identifies the family and its relationship with the school as one of the fundamental fields of action. Some proposals and suggestions to be taken into account when planning the participation of families in reception measures are (adapted from the proposal of the *Libro blanco de la educación intercultural* White Book on Intercultural Education):

- Make parents and legal guardians feel welcome in order to "attract" them to the school.
- Involve families in the life of the school, within the Parents' Association or in specific programmes such as family schools, self-help groups, etc.
- Stimulate educational co-responsibility between families and teachers.
- Take care with the allocation and content of homework, bearing in mind that it can sometimes lead to unequal opportunities to achieve success at school, which is why it could be beneficial to create spaces for doing homework at the school, such as tutor libraries.
- Create spaces and activities for participation, such as joint working committees in which family members, teachers, community members and other educational and social agents make decisions together and subsequently evaluate the fulfilment of these decisions.
- Include family members as volunteers in heterogeneous classrooms, supporting the learning of all students, as it has been proven that interaction with different profiles of adults improves academic performance.
- Providing families with spaces for their own educational needs outside school hours, such as Spanish classes, reading and writing, computer classes, English, maths workshops, social gatherings, etc.

In Asturias (in the cities of Oviedo and Gijón), the ACCEM association itself, a partner in the publication of this protocol, runs the *Programa de Sensibilización Intercultural y Participación de Familias Migrantes en la Escuela* (Intercultural Awareness and Participation of Migrant Families in Schools Programme) with the aim of promoting the participation of migrant families in the educational community and in the process of social integration of their children in schools. Among the activities carried out are the following: family schools, talks on the culture of origin, workshops on the educational system, intercultural awareness-raising activities.

Through this programme, the educational community as a whole is brought closer to the culture of origin of migrant families and spaces for exchange are created to promote an intercultural society; the tool of intercultural mediation is used for the prevention and resolution of possible conflicts and support is given to the Parents' Associations (*Asociación de Madres y Padres de Alumnos: AMPA*) to encourage the participation of migrant families in them.

#### **4.5. Funding for schools and municipalities**



Funding for schools in Spain, as noted above, is mainly public. The reception and support programmes for immigrants described above are also maintained with public funds, albeit from different entities. Thus, both the *Aulas de acogida y acceso al currículo* (Reception and Access to the Curriculum Classrooms) and the *Aulas intensivas de inmersión lingüística* (Intensive Language Immersion Classrooms) are funded by the Government of the Principality of Asturias itself, through the Regional Department of Education and Culture (*Consejería de Educación y Cultura*). The *Escolinos de Babel* Programme is funded by the City Council of Oviedo and the Intercultural Awareness and the *Programa de Sensibilización intercultural y participación de familias migrantes en la escuela* (Participation of Migrant Families in Schools programme) is funded by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones) (Dirección General de Inclusión y Atención Humanitaria; General Directorate of Inclusion and Humanitarian Attention) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (Fondo de Asilo, Migración e Integración FAMI).

La financiación de las escuelas en España, como ya se señaló anteriormente, es mayoritariamente pública. Los programas de acogida y apoyo a los inmigrantes que se han expuesto también se mantienen con fondos públicos, aunque provenientes de distintas entidades. Así, tanto las *Aulas de acogida y acceso al currículo* como las *Aulas intensivas de inmersión lingüística* están financiadas por el propio Gobierno del Principado de Asturias, a través de la Consejería de Educación y Cultura. El programa *Escolinos de Babel* está financiado por el Ayuntamiento de Oviedo y el programa de *Sensibilización intercultural y participación de familias migrantes en la escuela*. Lo financian el Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (Dirección General de Inclusión y Atención Humanitaria) y el Fondo de Asilo, Migración e Integración (FAMI).

#### **4.6. Teacher recruitment, training and competence system**

The teaching of Spanish as a foreign language (whether in Spain or abroad) has been one of the main objectives of the Instituto Cervantes since its creation in 1991. This public institution dedicated to the dissemination of Spanish and Latin American language and culture has a Teacher Training Centre in Madrid which offers a Master's Degree in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language, in collaboration with the Menéndez Pelayo International University. However, there are many other universities that offer a Master's degree in this subject, such as the University of Barcelona, the University of Salamanca or the International University of La Rioja (UNIR), to give a few examples. There are also associations, such as ACCEM, which train their own professionals, whose backgrounds are varied (teachers, educational psychologists, psychologists, etc.).

There are currently many resources on the web that teachers can use in their daily practice. ([Profe de ELE](#), [AIL Madrid](#), [Practica español](#), [Spanish learning...](#)) Even the [Instituto Cervantes](#) itself has a website dedicated to teaching the Spanish language to immigrants.

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Websites for teachers of Spanish as a foreign language:

- Instituto Cervantes (Cervantes Institute): [https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/inmigracion/default.htm](https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/inmigracion/default.htm).
- Profe de ELE (Teacher of ELE): <https://www.profedelee.es/>.
- AIL Madrid: <https://www.ailmadrid.com/es/recursos-linguisticos/recursos-ele>.
- Practica español (Practice Spanish): <https://www.practicaespanol.com/>.
- Spanish learning: <https://www.spanishlearninglab.com/el-mejor-laboratorio-para-aprender-espanol/>.