

2. Spain

2.1 Definition of a minority in Spain

Spain counts several national minorities, like the Gypsies (Roma), Basks, Catalonians, and the Arab people from Ceuta and Manilla. Furthermore, there is a significant migrant population mainly from Ecuador, Columbia, Peru and Morocco, and the numbers of Eastern Europeans rise steadily. Altogether, 2,6 Million (6,4 %) foreigners live in Spain. With the exception of Kosovo, most non-Spanish are legally defined in terms of nationality, not minority. There are some Asian people (ex-UDSSR) and some Africans, namely from Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, French Guinea, Ethiopia e Eritrea. In terms of asylum, there were around 5000 requests and 220 recognitions in 2003. Many not-yet-decided or rejected cases disappear and add to the approximately 500,000 persons in irregular circumstances.

It is important to mention that the Moroccan population distinguishes significantly from the majority population in terms of religion and language. Also, the Maghreb migrants in general are now more target of xenophobic aggression since the bombings in Madrid. On the other side, the refuge and migration movement from Latin America is an old phenomenon linked to the economic crises in Columbia, Ecuador and Brazil, which means that this is a superficial migration: people do not leave to stay. This seems also true for the refugees who come mainly from Cuba and Columbia.

In short, the differences between the various refugee and migration populations in Spain are huge. There is a lot of exploitation in the labour market (domestic work, low salary, no contract) and housing (high rents, sub-sub-sub-rented), but it hits all vulnerable groups (undocumented, foreigners, etc.), not necessarily minorities.

Resuming the findings of the interviews, a minority is a group that has something distinct in common, defined in linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural, political, nationality, and/ or physical terms, that provides and maintains a cultural system, identity and roots.

2.2 The national institutional framework and its responsibilities

There is no national government involvement in protection and promotion of minority cultures in Spain, but on local level, especially Catalonia and Basque, but also Madrid (CASI – Centro de Acolhimento Social dos Imigrantes). Also, NGOs and the migrant associations work in that field (media, lobbying, language courses, etc.).

Institution	Activities facilitating return
IMERSO – Instituto de Migraciones y Servicios Sociales, Ministry of Employment and Social Security	Financial help for voluntary return: transport, help for trip, reintegration support (400 euro per person, 200 euro for each child, maximum 2400 euro). These activities are implemented through other bodies: IOM, RESCATE, etc. Precondition: no return to Spain (Returnee needs to sign a paper assuring the final return and to give up residence permit and health card). Subsidy partially paid in Spain, partially in COR.
OAR – Oficina de Asilo y Refugiados, Ministry of Interior	Assistance to arrange documents.
CEAR – Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (different NGOs and UNHCR)	Information, orientation, coordination.
AECI – Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional	Development agency, financial help of NGOs working with refugees and return.

2.3 Spanish Organisations supporting Minorities

NGO/ International Organization	Activities facilitating return
RESCATE – Comité Internacional de Rescate	Return programme for refugees (ERF-financed) and migrants (IMSERO-financed). Interview, information about options: integration, resettlement in 3 rd country or return. Contact family, accompaniment, legal help, reintegration plan, travel cost, financial reinstallation help, follow up.
ACCEM – Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migración	Return programmes for refugees (ERF, UNHCR) and migrants (IMSERO), esp. Colombia, Russia/ Chechnya, Armenia, Cuba, Bulgaria and Angola. Counselling, legal help, training, economic support: travel costs, habitation, reinstallation. Follow up in collaboration with local NGO.
Fundación Iberoamérica Europa/ CIPIE – Centre of Investigation, Promotion and International Cooperation	Return programme, mainly migrants, but also refugees. Interview, preparation, travel and initial financial help (90-100 euro), follow up. Partially training for individual initiative of self-employment, access to micro credit scheme. Also involved in project “Rétale” (Ecuador). Collaboration with IOM, Red Cross, ACCEM, Rescate, etc. local team in some COR.
Red Cross Spain	Emergency, repatriation. Coordination of the Return Projects of Rescate and ACCEM.
IOM	Spain is not an IOM member; IOM Spain does not realize return projects. Only Kosovo 1999/2000: return programme for contingent refugees. International network and political mandate for migrants. Social, cultural, economic reintegration, but no funding. Information campaign in Spain. Project “Rétale”: Reintegration of talents in Ecuador. Project planning, accompaniment by local NGO, training, credit, help for travel costs.
UNHCR	work for integration of refugees only, no involvement in return programme.
MPDL – Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad	90s: return programme Balkans. Legal assistance, individualized social help, agricultural development of the Popovo Polje Valley on the border of Croatia and Bosnia, awareness raising in Spain. Ecuadorian and Romanian immigrants. Training courses for employability, mediation and counselling for employment, accompaniment of return, travel costs and 50 euro reintegration help. follow up only in Ecuador (local office).
Karibu – Amigos del Pueblo Africano	NGO and pressure group, working for social, political, economical integration of African migrants in Spain.
COMRADE – Comité de Defensa de los Refugiados y Asilados de España	Integration of refugees and asylum seekers.
VOMADE - Voluntariado de Madres Dominicanas	Support for foreigners in terms of labour market integration, legal advice, rights, etc.
ATIME – Asociación de Trabajadores e Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España	Social participation and integration, rights, legal advice, labour market, sensibilization.

2.4 Perceptions and expectations among the minority groups

The difficulty to find work in one's area as a qualified, educated professional makes it very hard both to integrate during as to re-integrate after the exile. As long as it is impossible to find a job, those years are lost years.

One essential step is self-organization in associations and NGOs. This body could play an important role in informing the refugees about return programmes, since this is a crucial and still missing aspect.

2.5 Perceptions and expectations among the officials

Spain has no high numbers of refugees and minorities, so that the issue of return does not play a major role. Today's refugees might become tomorrow's minorities in the host country society. Therefore, it makes sense to create conditions to go back and forth, in that way allowing circular or rotational migration. The conservative concept of a refugee as someone who never can go back derived from the Cold War and needs to be re-thought.

At the moment, the migration movements are very chaotic, there is no organization. There is a need to de-traumatize the movement.

2.6 Perceptions and expectations among the NGOs

Without a severe and profound preparation process, a return project does not make sense. The future in the COR after the return has to be thought through before the trip, especially in relation to housing situation, social security, family situation, work possibilities, impact on the returning children, etc.

Those returnees whose migration project in Europe failed need special attention and cautious mentoring. In those cases, the decision to return is connected with despair. The coordination and communication between the various NGOs and governmental institution could be better. A standardized return could improve the quality of the programmes and prevent mistakes. Not all refugees and migrants who ask for support can be helped, because the financial means are not enough.

More sensibilization work and awareness raising should be done, in order to inform and educate the society about the true reality of foreigners in Spain. There should be also more information about refugees, exile, return and return programmes, both in HC as in COR. Returnees have a big influence in the development process of their COR because of the qualifications and expertise they gained in the host country. More attention has to be given to reintegration process in COR.

2.7 Recommendations and Conclusions drawn from the findings

It proved to be crucial to plan ahead, especially in terms of discrimination and necessary assistance in COR after the return. The security situation is the biggest hindrance to return. The second biggest is the missing capital to start ones new life. Preferring multiplier effects showed good results: training for trainers, so that the returnee can give the knowledge he gained to those who stayed and therefore support local development.

The follow up in the COR needs qualified technicians who can accompany the reintegration processes.