



SPAIN

OFFICIAL NAME: Kingdom of Spain; **COMMON NAME:** Spain.

LOCATION: Spain is located in the southwest of Europe on the Iberian Peninsula and shares the peninsula with Portugal. Its total area is 504,750 km². In addition to the mainland, Spain also includes the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea, the Canary islands in the Atlantic Ocean, and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in the north of Africa. It is the third largest country in Europe in terms of area and the fifth largest in terms of population.

CLIMATE: Spain is a country with a mild climate and abundant sunshine, although there are significant variations in its weather.

POPULATION: Spain has a population of 46,745,807. Currently, there are 5,648,671 foreigners registered as living here. Of these, 2,660,000 are EU citizens, which is about 12% of the total population. In recent years, a very large number of foreigners has arrived and settled in this country and it is estimated that the number of foreign residents has quadrupled since 1998.

Almost 60% of these foreigners live in the Communities of Madrid, Balearic Islands, Catalonia and Valencia. This shows that foreigners prefer to go to the big cities like Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Spanish state is a parliamentary monarchy. The legislative power is based on a parliament (Las Cortes Genera/es), which has two houses; The Congress of Deputies and the Senate. Spain has both a President and a Head of State, the king.

Spain is a "State of Autonomies" and is made up of 17 Autonomous Communities: Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, the Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla—La Mancha, Castilla-Leon, Catalonia, the Valencian Community, Extremadura, Galicia, Balearic Islands, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarre, and the Basque Country. Each of these regions has its own parliament and president, so that it can be said that the organization of political power in Spain is characterized by decentralization.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Spain has enormous cultural diversity and this is reflected in the number of languages spoken in the country. The official language for the whole country is Spanish or castellano ; however, in many Autonomous Communities V it coexists with other official languages, such as Basque (euskera), Catalan, Galician (gallego) and Valencian, which are each found in their own geographical areas.

CURRENCY.- Spain's legal currency is the Euro.

HEALTH CARE: The quality of health care in Spain is quite good. There are both public hospitals (that belong to the Social Security) and private ones. The basic Spanish Social Security health care network is organized around primary care centres, known as "Health Centres", specialized care centres and hospitals. Spain has reciprocal health care agreements with a number of countries (including all the countries in the European Union). The citizens of these countries need to apply for a European Health Card in their home country to be able to use the public medical services in Spain.

Treatment is free under the public Social Security system. If specialist treatment is required, the doctor will send the patient to a specialist with an official report. The Spanish Social Security system's pharmaceutical benefits provide medicines to users at reduced cost. This ranges from a 40% reduction up to free medicines for pensioners. Some medicines are not covered by the Social Security system. Hospital treatment is free under the Social Security system and patients also have a right to receive certain services, such as prostheses, orthopaedic appliances, transfusions, etc., free of charge when they are needed.

WORKDAYS, HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE: The maximum length of the normal working day is 40 hours per week of average. The number of normal working hours can never be more than nine a day, unless there is a collective agreement or an agreement between the company and the workers' representatives establishing a different distribution of daily work. In all cases, the rest time between

workdays (a minimum of 12 hours) and the weekly rest time (an uninterrupted day and a half) must be respected.

Annual holidays can be agreed individually or collectively and their annual length may not be less than 30 days, including Saturdays and Sundays. There are also twelve national holidays and two local holidays per year.

Workers are also entitled to 15 days off for marriage and 16 uninterrupted weeks off for maternity, adoption or foster care. The father can take off part of this time if both parents work.