

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA



Statistics on Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship of Residents

Methodology

June 2019

Index

1	Introduction	2
2	Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship	2
3	Objectives	4
4	Definitions and concepts	4
5	Scope	6
6	Information processing	6
7	Calendar and dissemination plan	9

1 Introduction

Throughout the first years of the 21st century, our country has experienced one of the periods with the greatest demographic impetus of its history, fundamentally due to the massive arrival of inhabitants from beyond its borders. Cross-border mobility of populations is an increasingly visible social phenomenon that has transformed the social-demographic dynamic of Spain and which has represented an enormous challenge for the official statistics.

The acquisition and measuring of statistics for foreign population and their characteristics is extremely complex, in fact, it is one of the fields of official statistics on an international level where this is still much to be improved in terms of consistency and comparability of information. These needs are contained in the *Regulation 862/2007 of the European Parliament and Council for Statistics for Migration and International Protection*.

Among other elements, this regulation demands annual information from member states for the people whose permanent residence is in the territory of the member state and who have acquired the nationality of the member state over the course of the reporting year.

The main aim of the *Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship* is to provide a quantitative measure of these acquisitions. In addition, however, it represents one of the basic sources of information from which the *Population Figures* are created since the last census in 2011. In this way, complete consistency is guaranteed between the sources of demographic information of the INE, and it enables the analysis of demographic change from the perspective of any of its components: births, deaths, migrations and acquiring nationality.

The creation of the *Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship* is based on the statistical treatment of the entries in nationality records in the Civil Registry.

2 Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship

Articles 17 to 28 of the Civil Code (CC) consider the following ways in which Spanish nationality can be obtained:

SPANISH NATIONALITY: can be obtained as a result of

-
- **ORIGIN**
 - *Those children born to a Spanish father or mother.*
 - *Those children born in Spain:*
 - a. *To foreign parents if, at least, one of them was also born in Spain.*
 - b. *To foreign parents, if both parents lacked a nationality, or if the legislation of neither of them attributes a nationality to the child (SIMPLE PRESUMPTION)*
 - c. *Children born in Spain to parents of an unknown identity.*
 - *Children under the age of 18 adopted by a Spaniard (ADOPTION)*
-

-
- **ACQUISITION**
 - **BY CHOICE**
 - a. *Those that are or have been under the parental authority of a Spaniard.*
 - b. *Child of a Spanish father or mother born in Spain.*
 - c. *Those persons whose parentage is determined after turning 18 or their birth in Spain.*
 - d. *Those persons whose adoption on behalf of Spanish parents is accomplished after they have turned 18.*
 - **BY NATURALISATION CERTIFICATE**
Authorised by the crown and Spanish government.
 - **RESIDENCE**
In Spanish territory
 - **CONSOLIDATION**
The possession and continued use of Spanish nationality for ten years (POSSESSING A STATUS)
-
- *Furthermore, it can be lost (**LOSSES**) and recovered (**RECOVERIES**)*
-

Depending on this classification, **the Statistics on Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship only take into consideration the processes that involve a change of nationality and that refer to people whose usual residence is in Spain.**

It therefore excludes the nationalisations acquired by adoption and simple presumption, because they do not involve a change of nationality. It also excludes the nationalisations acquired by "Possessing a Status", because they do not involve a change of nationality, as it strictly applies to those persons that already act as Spanish (Article 18 CC).

Losses and recoveries are not considered, because their reduced volume and the effect of compensation of the recoveries for losses mean that their exclusion is not significant.

Since 2013, each month the INE receives the *national record of new acquisitions or losses of Spanish Citizenship* from the General Director of Registry Offices and the Notaries of the Ministry of Justice, which are recorded in the Civil Registry Offices, a process that culminates these administrative procedures and that establishes their effective date.

This information for nationalisations is used as input for the statistics of the Population Figures and, also from this year onwards, are forwarded to the European Office for Statistics, Eurostat. From 2015 onwards, they will be published each year in its own right by means of the Statistics for Residents Acquiring Spanish Citizenship, the series being started in the reporting year 2013. As of 2019, in June, a first publication of provisional data from the previous year is made, which is updated with the final data at the end of the year.

Until 2013, the only available source on nationalisations were the Statistics on the Granting of Spanish Citizenship for Residence, prepared by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, who continues to provide this information. This statistic differs from the Statistics on Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship in two key points: in only considers acquisitions by residents, and the reference date is the date the citizenship was granted, which is a separate procedure that takes place prior to the actual acquisition, leading to a time gap between both statistics.

3 Objectives

The Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship are created for the achievement of three objectives:

- The fundamental objective is to provide the number of persons whose permanent residence is in Spain and those persons that acquire Spanish nationality throughout the course of the reporting year, having previously had the nationality of another country or statelessness.
- On the other hand, from the 2011 census onwards, and in coherence with it, the INE has created the statistical operation *Population Figures*, which provides the information for the resident population and includes, among its disaggregation variables, the country of nationality and the country of birth of the inhabitant. An essential part of this operation consists of guaranteeing the complete consistency of the information in relation with demographic flows (births and deaths of the *Natural Movement of the Population* and migratory movements of the *Statistics for Migrations*) with the population stocks provided in all of the territorial and demographic levels considered. The *Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship* is therefore complementary to the collection of demographic information and to close the circle of consistency between population figures and demographic events, by providing a quantitative measurement of the flow of nationalisations for each year and by enabling the correct classification of the information in terms of the country of nationality.
- Finally, with these statistics, they comply with the requirements for information considered by the Regulation 862/2007 of the European Parliament and Council for Statistics for Migration and International Protection in terms of the acquisition of nationality.

4 Definitions and concepts

The Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship quantify the volume of acquisitions of nationality that have occurred in a year, in line with a series of concepts and definitions that follow the international guidelines for such matter and, in particular, include what is established in the *Regulation 862/2007 of the European Parliament and Council for Statistics for Migration and International Protection* and in the *Regulation 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and Council for European demographic statistics*. These concepts are:

- **Acquiring a nationality:** Action by means of which a person acquires the nationality of the country of reference, having previously had either the nationality of another country or statelessness (without recognition of nationality on behalf of another state).

Spanish legislation regulates various channels by means of which Spanish nationality can be obtained. Nevertheless, in accordance with what is established in the European regulation 862/2007, the Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship only take into consideration the processes that involve a change of

nationality and that refer to people whose usual residence is in Spain and those are as follows:

- *Acquisitions by residence*: requires residence in Spain normally for ten years in a legal and continual manner prior to the application, although the time required is less in some cases.
- *Acquisitions by naturalisation certificate*: authorised by the crown and Spanish government. It has an *ex gratia* nature and it is not subject to the general regulations of the administrative procedure.
- *Acquisitions by choice*: persons whose father or mother would have been Spanish and would have been born in Spain or that are or have been subject to the parental authority of a Spaniard, as well as in some other cases governed by Law, in short, the Law of Historical Memory that enables the acquisition by choice for persons whose father or mother would originally have been Spanish and for the grandchildren of whomever lost or had to give up Spanish nationality as a result of exile.
- **Resident population**: is defined as the resident population in a given geographical area for those persons that on the reference date have their regular residence established therein.
- **Permanent residence**¹: the place where a person normally spends their daily periods of rest, without considering temporary absences due to leisure trips, holidays, visits to family and friends, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. Nonetheless, it must be noted that only the following will be considered as permanent residents in a district:
 - Those persons who, according to the previous definition, have regularly resided therein for a continuous period of at least twelve months.
 - Those persons that, according to the above definition, would have established their regular residence in it less than twelve months before, but intended to stay in it for at least one year.
- **Nationality**: legal link between an individual and a State, acquired by birth or naturalisation if it is by declaration or acquired by choice, marriage or other terms, according to the national legislation. This refers to the nationality at the reference date, classified as Spanish so long as the individual has said nationality, though they may have others as well.
- **Country of birth**: country of regular residence of the mother at the time of birth. Note that the country of birth is not necessarily the place where the birth occurred.

¹ Definition of permanent residence established in the *Regulation 763/2008 of the European Parliament and Council regarding Population and Housing Censuses* and in the *Regulation 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and Council for European demographic statistics*.

5 Scope

Scope of population

The population that is the subject of the study is formed by persons whose permanent residence is Spain and that have acquired Spanish nationality for the year of reference for the information, having previously had the nationality from another country or statelessness.

This means, it only includes the cases that involve a change of nationality and exclude those processes in which Spanish nationality is obtained as a result of their country of origin (due to simple presumption or adoption) or as a result of consolidation (possessing a status for whomever already acts as Spanish).

Classification variables

The acquisitions of nationality are broken down according to the following population characteristics:

- Gender
- Age (grouping information for people aged 65 and over)
- Place of residence (autonomous community and province)
- Previous country of nationality (most relevant countries for each geographical scope)
- Country of birth (most relevant countries for each geographical scope)
- Method of acquisition (Option, Residence or Naturalisation Certificate)

Geographical scope

The whole national territory is investigated and the acquisitions of nationality are provided for the whole national territory, by autonomous communities and by provinces.

Time scope

The reference period for the data is annual.

Units of measure

Registrations of acquisition of Spanish nationality in the Civil Registry.

6 Information processing

Data source

These statistics are created based on the acquisitions of nationality recorded in the Civil Registry database, from the General Management of Registries and Notaries, in which the records corresponding with the entries for registrable events appear (deaths, marriages, guardianship, etc.) and that includes all nationalisations (regardless of their method of acquisition) recorded with their date of registration.

Since January 2013, the Civil Registry issues the INE with files on a monthly basis with the acquisitions of nationality registered, and it is these files that are used for the creation of the Statistics for Residents Acquiring Spanish Nationality.

Statistical processing

Now the nature and administrative purpose of the Civil Registry make it necessary to carry out the statistical processing of the information recorded therein, for the purpose of attaining the best statistical approximation to the phenomenon.

The statistical processing that is applied is as follows:

1) Filtering of the monthly file

The Population Registry Unit of INE carries out a basic validation process for the monthly file received from the Civil Registry. Those records that contain serious errors in the basic identification fields are dismissed (approximately 3% of the information received monthly). Specifically, the following are dismissed:

- Duplicated records (pure duplicates).
- Records with false or incomplete information:
 - Invalid territorial codes
 - Insufficient registry identifications
 - Insufficient information for change of nationality
 - Invalid personal identification
 - Invalid registration of effective dates

2) Identification of the monthly information

After the filtering phase, each validated record is unequivocally identified by means of a numerical code.

Furthermore, variables related with the information from the Population Registry database (hereafter, the *Register*), in those cases in which persons of the registry are identified in the *Register* (between 97% and 98% of the cases).

3) Loading of historical files and processing of impure duplicate records.

The monthly information received is loaded in a unique database that contains the historical files of acquisitions received.

It is compared if the acquisitions deriving from the Civil Registry already exist in the historic record of acquisitions. If so:

- For acquisitions for which the identification information has been found in the Register and correspond with a person that remains in the Register as a foreigner, the most up-to-date information available will be loaded, always guaranteeing a single record per person.
- For those cases in which their identification has not been found in the Register and presents identical values to other historical records of nationalisations for the main demographic and nationality variables, are considered as duplicated and are eliminated.
- The rest of the cases (acquisitions by persons not listed in the registry database, with demographic and nationality values that do not coincide with those from the historical record) are included in the historical record for nationalisations.

4) Allocation of registry information

The information for each record deriving from INFOREG is filtered and completed with registry information in those cases in which the latter is available, in such a way that:

- If any personal identification information is missing (gender, date of birth, previous nationality, country of birth) or it involves an invalid value it is assigned a value that appears in the Register.
- In all of the cases, the permanent place of residence is allocated, as it appears in the Register.

Between 3% and 4% of the acquisitions registered do not manage to cross with the *Register*. For these cases, the information deriving from the Civil Registry is taken (when there is some and it is valid). In this respect, it needs to be highlighted that for these cases in which no province for the permanent residence is available they are allocated the registration province.

5) Allocation of empty variables (country of nationality and country of birth):

Approximately 3.5% of the acquisitions registered do not have a previous country of nationality and approximately 0.3% do not have a country of birth.

For all of these cases, an allocation procedure is carried out taking the most frequent value within the group defined by the province of residence, gender, the previous country of nationality and the country of birth with valid values in all of the variables.

6) Processing of information received after deadline

There is a time lag between the date that the registration occurs for the acquisition in the Civil Registry and the time when this is registered in INFOREG and is received in the INE by the Population Registry Unit. This time lag means that less than 15 of the acquisitions of nationality registered in any given year are received after the date that the results are obtained.

The acquisitions of nationality received for the years prior to the reporting year, but received later (after the last publication of the definitive results), will be included in the estimates of the current reporting year, as if the recorded year of acquisition were the current reporting year.

The choice of this processing method is based on the fact that it allows years to be finalised with a definitive nature. Furthermore, the volume of acquisitions received after the deadline is tiny and does not cause any bias in the results, even any missing information from a year would be compensated with the inclusion of delayed information received from the previous year.

7 Calendar and dissemination plan

7.1 CALENDAR

The Statistics on Resident Acquisition of Spanish Citizenship is published twice per year, according to the following calendar schedule:

- June from year $t+1$: provisional results of year t . (This publication is made since June 2019, until then, data were published only in December)
- November or December from year $t+1$: definitive results from year t .

7.2 GENERAL INDEX OF TABLES

The number of acquisitions of nationality registered in accordance with the following outline are published:

1. Acquisitions of nationality by gender and age
2. Acquisitions of nationality by gender, age group (for the total national) and method of acquisition
3. Acquisitions of nationality by gender and previous country of nationality (group of countries and most important countries for the geographic territory in question)
4. Acquisitions of nationality by gender and country of birth (group of countries and most important countries for the geographic territory in question)
5. Acquisitions of nationality by country of nationality (group of countries and most important countries for the geographic territory in question) in relation with the country of birth (the same one/Spain/another).

The level that each one of the classification variables is broken down into is expanded to the maximum possible extent in the case of information referring to the whole territory and it is grouped together when the geographic scope refers to autonomous communities or provinces.