

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA



Migration Statistics

Methodology

January 2023

1 Introduction

The objective of the *Migration Statistics* is to provide a quantitative measurement of the migratory flows for Spain, for each Autonomous community and for each province with foreign countries, as well as the inter-Autonomous Community and inter-provincial migrations. The results are broken down by year of occurrence, sex, year of birth, age, country of nationality and country of birth of the migrant, and country or province of origin and destination of the migration. This statistical operation is integrated within the European legislative framework governed by *Regulation No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection*.

The *Migration Statistics* is, moreover, one of the basic sources of information from which the *Population Figures* are prepared, with the results of both sources being totally consistent with the other, and, in addition, to the *Vital Statistics*, remaining consistent at all breakdown levels considered. In this way, consistency is guaranteed in all demographic statistical sources, and it enables the analysis of demographic change from the perspective of any of its components (births, deaths and migrations).

These statistics have been compiled since the year 2013, initially from the residential variations recorded in the Municipal Register database. Now the nature and administrative purpose of the Register 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 observation of variations in the Register might not be enough for the measurement of the migratory flows. Thus, this operation stems from the idea of incorporating into its calculation methodology as many additional sources of information and methodological improvements as are considered appropriate for better identifying and measuring the phenomenon of migration. These methodological improvements will be incorporated over the course of the next issues, and will be documented for researcher and user knowledge.

2 Definitions and concepts

Resident population: the population resident in a given geographical scope is defined as those persons who, at the time of the interview, have established their regular residence therein.

The **regular residence** is understood to be¹ the place where a person normally spends her/his daily rest periods, regardless of temporary absences for leisure purposes, holidays, visits to relatives and friends, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that only regular residents in a district will be considered:

- Those who, according to the previous definition, would normally have lived therein for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

¹ Definition of regular residence established in Regulation 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses and Regulation 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European demographic statistics.

- Those who, according to the previous definition, would have established their regular residence therein less than 12 months ago, but with the intention of remaining therein for at least one year.

Immigration²: action by which a person establishes her/his regular residence in a territory for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months in duration, having previously been a regular resident of another territory.

Emigration: Action by which a person who, having previously been a regular resident in one territory, ceases to have regular residence therein for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months in duration.

Migrant: person who takes part in a migration (immigration or emigration).

Foreign immigration: immigration in which the prior regular residence of the migrant was in a foreign country.

Foreign emigration: emigration in which the new regular residence of the migrant is in a foreign country, with the prior regular residence in Spain.

Inter-Autonomous Community immigration: immigration to a destination in an Autonomous Community in which the prior regular residence of the migrant was located in a Spanish municipality not belonging to said Autonomous Community.

Inter-Autonomous Community emigration: emigration with an origin in an Autonomous Community in which the next regular residence of the migrant is located in a Spanish municipality not belonging to said Autonomous Community.

Inter-provincial immigration: immigration with a destination in a province in which the prior regular residence of the migrant was located in a Spanish municipality not belonging to said province.

Inter-provincial emigration: emigration with an origin in a province in which the next regular residence of the migrant is located in a Spanish municipality not belonging to said province.

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, through individuals many have others as well.

Country of birth: country in which the birth occurred.

3 Calculation method

The Municipal Register records different types of variation, registrations and delistings, that are, or may be associated, with a residential change with an origin abroad, and therefore, with foreign migrations, or with a residential change with an origin in another region of Spain, and therefore, with domestic migrations. A significant part of such

² Definitions of immigration and emigration established by *Regulation No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection*.

variations is registered by the interested party, while another part is carried out by the municipal administration itself. In short, this is as follows³:

- *Registrations (Delistings) due to Change of Residence* with origin (destination) abroad or another region of Spain.
- *Registrations due to Omission*, with or without origin abroad, caused either when a regular resident in a municipality requests registration in the Register thereof, stating that they do not know if they appear in the Register of another municipality or in the Register of Spaniards resident abroad, or when the Municipal Council ex officio states the registration, in the Register, of a person who regularly resides in the municipality and does not appear recorded in its Register, this being the administrative procedure established for this case.
- *Delistings due to Undue Registration*, carried out ex officio by the Municipal Council in order to resolve duplicities in the Register, or so as to delist those registrations that do not meet the requirement demanded of regular residence in the municipality⁴.
- *Delistings due to Expiry*, resulting from the application of the "immigration law" reform⁵ of 2003 that established the obligation of non-community foreign nationals without a permanent residence permit to renew their registration in the Register every two years, and the expiry of said registrations in the case of not renewing them, with the corresponding Municipal Council then having the power to execute, ex officio, the *Delistings due to Expiry* thereof.

This must consider that the fact that registration in the Municipal Register is required as a necessary condition for exercising very basic rights, such as the right to health coverage, to schooling or for the future attainment of legal residence permits, leads to the Municipal Register recording the vast majority of the immigration flow from abroad.

Regarding emigration abroad, the monthly contrast of the Continuous Register with the records of the consular register abroad enables registering the emigration of Spaniards, but only if they register in the corresponding consulate. In the case of foreign citizens, there are few that request delisting in the Register of their municipality of residence at the time of their departure from Spain. Nonetheless, the actual mechanism for delistings carried out ex officio by the Municipal Councils for those cases of non-regular residence in the municipality or the launching of the expiry process of the registration records of non-community foreign nationals without a permanent residence permit, guaranteeing that emigration abroad of persons with foreign nationality not stated by the interested party in their municipality of residence, for the most part, ends up registering in the Register, sooner or later. For both Spaniards and foreigners, there is also a process of "natural cleaning" of the register, which occurs when new residents in a dwelling are entered in the Register, indicating that former residents should be removed.

For community and non-community foreign nationals with a permanent residence permit, we must bear in mind the measures adopted by the Municipal Councils and the

³ Resolution of 30 January 2015, of the Presidency of the National Institute of Statistics and of the General Directorate of Coordination of Competencies with the Autonomous Communities and Local Entities, on technical instructions to the Town Halls on municipal register management

⁴ Article 54 of the Regulation on the Population and Territorial Demarcation of Local Entities, of 11 July 1986 (RD 1690/1986).

⁵ Organic Law 14/2003, of 20 November, reform of Organic Law 4/2000, of 11 January, on rights and duties of foreign nationals in Spain and on their social integrations.

INE itself at the heart of the Registration Council. It was agreed to perform periodical checks of the continuity of the residence of these citizens, who are not obligated to renew their registration every two years. These checks have been carried out since March 2009, and are performed when movements have not occurred in a period of five or two years, depending on whether they are registered in the Central Foreign National Register or not⁶, and may result in opening a delisting file in the event that the Municipal Council so decides.

In fact, the methodology used in the *Migration Statistics* is based on the statistical use of the variations registered in the Municipal Register, but intends to improve the observation of the demographic phenomenon beyond the reality offered by the registrations and delistings that might be associated with true migratory movements.

This is the reason for proceeding to a statistical treatment of the registration variations, quantified as migratory flows, consisting of the following:

- 1. Selection of register movements** compatible with international or internal migrations of the period under consideration. In the case of Registrations due to Omission or Deletions due to Improper Registration, only those related to foreign citizens are considered.
- 2. Adjustment of the register information to the concept of migration.** With the purpose of having the most exact approach to the definition of migration, the stays in Spain for less than 12 months are not registered as migration movements. For this, the consecutive charges (entrance) and discharges (exits) for the same person are eliminated if between them the period has been less than one year.

Symmetrically, those stays abroad for less than 12 months will not be registered, not considering either the discharge abroad or its subsequent registration.

The same criterion applies for stays in the different regions of Spain⁷.

- 3. Previous imputation of the country of birth, country of nationality and country of origin or destination** (this latter variable only for foreign migrations) previous that have one or more of these variables blank or with invalid values, based on well-completed records with country of birth, nationality and country of origin (international immigration) or destination (international emigration).
- 4. Final adjustment on international migration data** resulting from the above steps, consisting of eliminating those foreign emigrations by population groups that do not appear as residents in Spain, according to the *Population* Figures, resident in the country at the beginning of each month, or adding the corresponding foreign

⁶ Proposal for actions toward the periodical checks of the residence of those foreign nationals not obligated to renew their registration NO_ENCSARP (citizens of Member States of the European Union and other States that are part of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, States other than the above with a Community Residence Card or with a Permanent Residence Permit). Checking residence is carried out in the following cases:

- For those that do not appear in the Central Foreign National Register: the latest register record with the intervention of the inhabitant is over two years old.
- For those that appear in the Central Foreign National Register:
 - The latest register record with the intervention of the inhabitant is over five years old.
 - The residence card is expired or the registration certificate in the Central Foreign National Register was issued more than five years ago (if any exists).

⁷ As of 2017, an error in internal migration affecting age 0 is corrected

immigrations if this was not possible, and guaranteeing total consistency between demographic flows and population stocks.

5. **Year of arrival in Spain:** from June 2019, the year in which people who leave the country arrived in Spain is published, beginning the series in the emigrations abroad in the year 2018. This estimate is made based on the history of each person's registration movements. If a person entered Spain on more than one occasion, it is considered the last entry.
6. **Level of education, relationship to economic activity and occupation:** as of December 2021, these variables are published for people leaving the country, starting the series on outward emigrations in 2019, and only for final annual data. These data are obtained from administrative records and reflect the situation of the person at 1 January of the year in question; they do not, therefore, reflect the situation at the time of emigration.

4 Dissemination of results

The *Migration Statistics* are disseminated twice a year, as of 2013, according to the following publication calendar:

- **June** of year $t + 1$:
 - **provisional results for year t** (the corresponding results to the first half of the year update the flows that, for the same period, had been provided in the previous month of December).
- **December** of year $t + 1$:
 - Final results for year t .
 - Provisional results for the first half of year $t + 1$