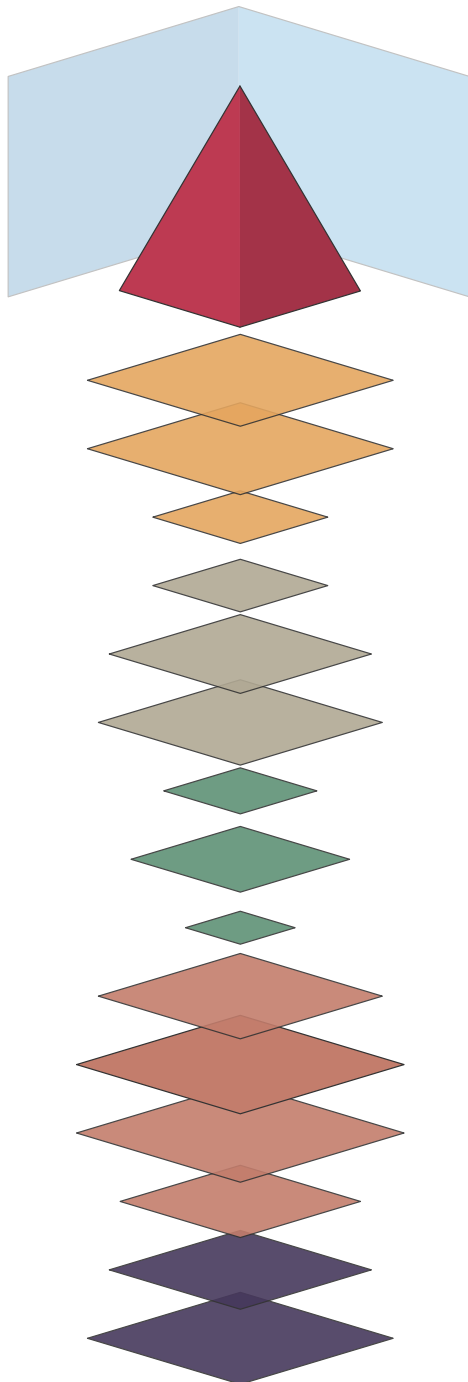




SPAIN



5.90

CRIMINALITY SCORE

54th of 193 countries

5th of 44 European countries

2nd of 8 Southern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.70

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 7.00

HUMAN SMUGGLING 7.00

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING 4.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 4.00

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS 6.00

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS 6.50

FLORA CRIMES 3.50

FAUNA CRIMES 5.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 2.50

HEROIN TRADE 6.50

COCAINE TRADE 7.50

CANNABIS TRADE 7.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 5.50

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES 6.00

FINANCIAL CRIMES 7.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

6.10

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 6.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 7.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 5.00

FOREIGN ACTORS 7.50

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS 5.00



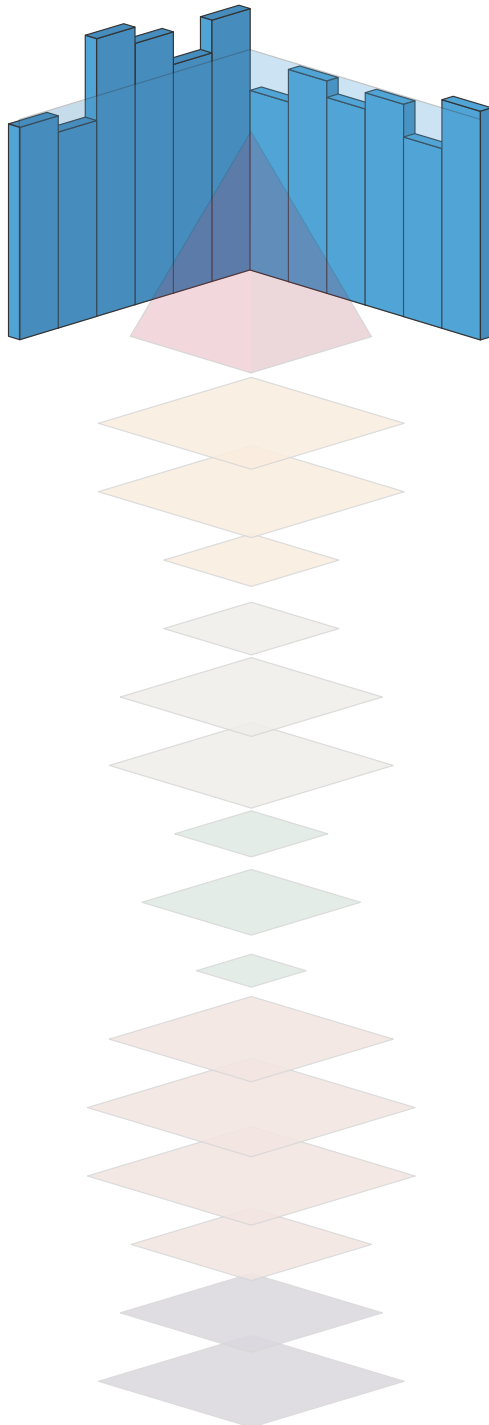
6.75

RESILIENCE SCORE





SPAIN



6.75

RESILIENCE SCORE

28th of 193 countries

20th of 44 European countries

1st of 8 Southern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	8.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50
PREVENTION	5.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00



5.90

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 5.70



CRIMINAL ACTORS 6.10



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Spain plays a major role in transnational human-trafficking markets, operating predominantly as a transit and destination country. Sexual exploitation is the primary form of human trafficking in Spain, with Andalusia being the region where it is most prevalent. Chinese and Spanish networks dominate the sex trafficking market in large urban centres. Victims are usually girls and women coming from Eastern Europe, South and Central America, Vietnam, Thailand, China and Nigeria. Labour exploitation is also common, particularly in the hospitality, household, textile, construction, industrial, beauty, elder care, retail and agriculture sectors, as well as among seasonal workers. It has been reported that labour traffickers continue to exploit men and women from Eastern Europe and South and East Asia, particularly Pakistan. Despite the high number of cases detected, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, human trafficking is believed to be under-reported. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most pervasive criminal markets in the country.

Spain is also a transit and destination country in the transnational human smuggling market. People from sub-Saharan countries, as well as North Africa, are among those being more frequently smuggled across the Mediterranean. While the western Mediterranean route continues to be consistently used and the Canary Islands remain a significant transit point for smuggling flows, routes have started to shift away, largely because of increased law enforcement surveillance of the Strait of Gibraltar. Foreign criminal networks play an important role in the human smuggling industry. However, besides criminal groups operating outside of Spanish borders, there are also migrant smuggling organizations that are settled in Spain and use the structures of drug trafficking networks to smuggle people into the country. Several criminal networks in fact combine human-smuggling activities with drug trafficking and money laundering, and there is a notable crossover between the criminal markets for human smuggling and human trafficking.

Historically, extortion and protection racketeering in Spain have been linked to terrorist activities. However, owing to law enforcement efforts, there has been a decline in such activities over the last decade. While some organized crime groups in the country do use extortion as a means to obtain money, it is not typically linked to the control of certain areas or criminal markets. Nevertheless, extensive criminal organizations active in Valencia and Catalonia have engaged in serious extortion rackets.

TRADE

Spain's strategic location makes it a transit point for firearms trafficking to countries in North Africa, as well as further south on the African continent. However, the market is not particularly pervasive and criminal networks involved in this activity are usually local and small. They generally acquire non-registered weapons at the French border or assemble separate parts obtained on the deep web.

Counterfeit goods represent a significant illicit market in Spain, with criminal organizations focusing on counterfeiting food, lighters, tobacco, clothing, technology, hygiene products, toys and jewellery. Most of the counterfeit goods seized by national authorities were found along the Mediterranean coast, possibly owing to the high number of tourists in that area. While most of the merchandise comes from Asian countries, mainly China, some criminal organizations have been discovered to be producing counterfeit products in small factories within Spain. To a lesser extent, the country is also a transit point for some counterfeit goods.

The illicit trade of excise goods is also a significant problem in Spain. Most illegal tobacco comes from neighbouring locations, such as Gibraltar and Andorra, where taxes are lower. Illegal tobacco represents around 10% of all tobacco in the country, with the highest regional incidence being in Andalusia, due to its proximity to Gibraltar. Despite crackdowns, criminal organizations continue to smuggle tobacco, using rented vans to transport it to Madrid, where it is sold from food stores. The smuggling of other products, such as alcohol and medicines, is not as extensive as the tobacco trade. Nevertheless, the smuggling of excise goods remains a profitable business owing to low penalties.

ENVIRONMENT

Spain's strategic geographic location makes it vulnerable to transnational flora crimes, with illegal timber and ornamental plant trafficking being the most common. Much of the illegally harvested timber imported into Europe via Spain comes from South and Central America, as well as from Africa. Valencia, Galicia and Algeciras are the main ports of entry for illegal timber, and international criminal groups that are active in various illicit activities often use timber shipments to hide drugs or other illegally traded goods. Criminal networks see wood trafficking and the illegal trade of protected plant species as a profitable business with low risk. However, the market remains limited in scope and it is believed that there is a certain degree of social acceptance of the illegal flora trade.

Wildlife trafficking is a more significant issue in Spain. The country is both a key transit point and source for wildlife products being trafficked into Europe. It is an important

illegal importer of live mammals, birds and reptiles, as well as reptile products, particularly reptile skins, with Spain being the world's leading destination for reptile leather. The trafficking of black-headed turtles, native to North Africa, is a significant concern, with a large number of specimens being transported from Algeria and Morocco through the Strait of Gibraltar. Illegal fishing, including the illicit trade of bluefin tuna, is also prevalent. The demand for eels from China has led to a rise in their illegal capture. Spain is also an illegal entry point into the EU for both eggs and live parrots trafficked from Latin America.

Although Spain's role in the illegal non-renewable resources market is negligible, there have been isolated cases of diamond and gold trafficking. Spain also imports sand for construction and beaches, some of which is linked to illegal extraction in and outside Morocco.

DRUGS

Spain is a significant destination for the transnational heroin market. Three routes have been identified as relevant for heroin trade, transiting the Netherlands, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean. Criminal groups from Turkey and Albania control the heroin flows, and distribution is concentrated in large urban centres, such as Madrid and Barcelona. Galicia, where the drug arrives through seaports, has become a logistical centre for heroin, indicating a level of corruption among officials in customs and law enforcement. Cocaine trade is also a serious issue in Spain, and the increasing number of seizures, as well as stronger involvement by foreign actors in major Spanish ports, suggests a growing market in the country. Both domestic and foreign criminal organizations are involved in this trade, including Colombian cartels, Italian mafia groups, Moroccan networks, and Serbian groups using the Balkan route, making the scenario relatively complex. Valencia and Algeciras are the main entry points for the drug, while Sevilla, Catalonia, Galicia and Spanish islands are important distribution points. Criminal groups use various routes, including along the Sahel strip and through Algeria and Libya, and cocaine is brought into Spain via containers or thrown into the sea to be picked up and distributed. Shipments entering Spain from Latin America are still active and Colombian traffickers continue to play a major role as suppliers and distributors within the country. Cocaine is the second most popular drug in Europe and Spain is one of the top countries in the EU with regards to cocaine consumption among young adults. This domestic consumption contributes to the high local demand.

Cannabis trade is also a major organized criminal threat in Spain, with marijuana and hashish being the most consumed illicit drugs in the country. Spain is the leading producer of cannabis in Europe and the main entry point for cannabis from North Africa. High profits are generated by local consumption and foreign distribution. The groups involved are usually foreign criminal actors based in France but

originating from North Africa. Once the product reaches Spain, these groups divide the cargo for distribution, with the participation of various other foreign actors. The increase in cannabis-related drug seizures over the past few years is a cause for concern. In many cases, local cannabis plantations exacerbate labour exploitation or human trafficking. The synthetic drug trade in Spain is an increasingly worrying problem, mainly targeting young people. The drugs are primarily sourced from the Czech Republic, followed by the Netherlands, Belgium, and Poland, with Madrid being a key distribution point. Locally, small home laboratories produce drugs such as ecstasy (MDMA). In January 2022, the largest seizure of synthetic drugs in Spain's history occurred, with 11 people of various nationalities being arrested. Although seizures of speed and amphetamines have decreased in recent years, seizures of crystal meth and the synthetic hallucinogen 2C-B (Nexus) have increased significantly. Currently, the country is experiencing significant problems with synthetic cathinones, rare stimulants similar to ecstasy coming mainly from China. These are difficult to regulate owing to their constantly changing composition and thus can easily evade customs controls and circumvent European and Spanish legislation.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime is on the rise in Spain, with malware being the most common type of attack. Critical infrastructure is often targeted, the most affected being the energy sector, tax and financial systems, transport, and information and communications technology (ICT). The COVID-19 pandemic also provided novel opportunities for illicit cyber activity, with public services and national public administration falling victim to cyber-attacks. Experts suggest that cybercrime is becoming more professional, with perpetrators making use of automated attacks and expanding their activities using new technology. There is also evidence of criminal organizations gaining profit through cryptocurrency fraud and theft.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial fraud has become a key organized crime activity in Spain and online fraud now accounts for a significant portion of all reported crimes. Over the past few months, authorities have dismantled several criminal networks involved in financial crimes. Criminal organizations use identity theft to carry out large-scale credit card fraud, and Ponzi schemes lure in minors with promises of access to easy money through fake trading programmes.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The criminal ecosystem in Spain is dominated by foreign criminal groups, mainly of Italian, Albanian, Russian, Nigerian, Serbian, Turkish, Mexican and Dutch origin, all of which

have a sustained presence in the country. Cities such as Madrid, Barcelona and Marbella are hotspots for these organizations. They operate various illicit activities and frequently span multiple generations. These groups are generally identified as foreign mafia-style organizations and tend to be very specialized, focusing on specific markets (and even specific functions in the supply chain of these markets) and geographical areas. For example, Italian and Colombian mafia-style groups control a substantial part of the cocaine trade; Turkish and Balkan groups control the heroin market; Romanian, Chinese and Nigerian organizations control human trafficking; and Moroccan and French–Algerian groups exercise heavy influence over the cannabis market. There is no single powerful organization, but rather than becoming a mafia-style war zone, Spain is an organized crime laboratory where gangs exchange experience and develop new methods for their illicit activities. Criminal organizations in Spain are interdependent specialized groups that provide services to each other, requiring cooperation for successful illicit trade.

Mafia-style groups of domestic origin are generally less influential than their foreign counterparts, but they continue actively to operate in the country. These family clans resemble traditional mafia groups in size and structure, but have slightly different internal structures, permanence, and criminal methods. They are primarily involved in drug trafficking and money laundering, often collaborating with Italian mafia groups. In addition to mafia-style groups, Spain is also home to a vast number of smaller, more decentralized, criminal networks, most of which are involved in drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, fraud, and money laundering. The majority of these groups engage in low-level violence and are concentrated in large cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona, as well as popular tourist

areas such as Malaga, Alicante, Valencia, and the Balearic and Canary Islands. The proliferation of youth gangs that engage in violent robberies, theft and street wars is also a cause for concern. These gangs are mostly made up of local youths, and a large number of members are younger than 14 years old.

Although cooperation between private actors and criminal organizations is not widespread, it does occur. Criminals involved in drug trafficking take advantage of legitimate import and export activities, although it is unclear to what extent private actors are aware of and consent to these practices. In some recent cases where national authorities have dismantled criminal organizations involved in activities such as financial fraud, property theft and money laundering, private sector actors, including lawyers, agencies, and financial entity directors, were found to be part of the criminal network. Evidence also suggests that some businesses have been involved in the illicit trade of excise goods, counterfeit products, and the illegal sale of counterfeit clothing. The presence of international mafia-style groups and drug trafficking networks in the south of Spain has also led to an increase in corruption among state actors, especially low-level local officials. While law enforcement and security forces have control mechanisms to prevent illicit activities, officials in charge of customs often facilitate the criminal activities of organized groups. Judges and politicians are also involved in granting protection, allowing illegal activities to consolidate in certain regions. The increase in corruption among state actors in the south of Spain poses a significant challenge to the country's efforts to combat organized crime and ensure public safety. However, there have been no reports of corruption within the country's political leadership.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Spain is currently facing a complex political situation, with tensions rising between the political class and civil society. Although these debates may sometimes have overshadowed more systematic and comprehensive discussions on criminality in Parliament, the government has a strong position and clear national strategies against crime and has achieved various operational results in recent years. Moreover, Spain has recently shown political will to combat all types of cybercrime, and the government recently approved a new plan to strengthen the fight against crimes happening in cyberspace. Nevertheless, the polarization between citizens and political parties may worsen if there is no clear improvement in the economic and political climate, which

would lead to an increase in public dissatisfaction towards the current political situation.

Spain has distinct regional bodies dedicated to anti-corruption and transparency mechanisms. However, the country continues to be among those with the largest economic impact stemming from corruption in the EU. Despite the existence of the Transparency Act, activists have called for improvements to the law and mechanisms to enable more access to judicial and parliamentary documents. Party financing is also a significant concern with regards to official corruption. Nonetheless, levels of corruption in Spain are generally considered moderate and, while the government could improve on its transparency, its

institutional and legal anti-corruption framework is largely capable of combating corruption and ensuring convictions.

Spain is committed to international cooperation in the fight against organized crime and has signed various international treaties to comply with international standards. The country has also cooperated with foreign authorities in multiple operations combating organized crime, including Italian mafia group activity in Spain, cybercrime, counterfeit products, and tobacco smuggling. Spain's legal framework for organized crime focuses on a wide range of criminal offences, from drugs and arms trafficking, to environmental crime and human trafficking. A strategic plan to inhibit the lucrative nature of criminal activities through an improved tracing and seizing system has been drafted and the government has reinforced the capacity of the Asset Recovery and Management Office to combat money laundering. Despite complying with national legal frameworks, regulations do not always work in practice. In some cases, justice is delayed and victims are re-victimized, while security and justice operators face bureaucratic obligations that impede them from achieving their goals efficiently and effectively.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Spanish judicial system is effective in prosecuting individual actors who commit certain organized crime offences, such as drug mules and small-scale thieves. However, it faces challenges when investigating larger mafia-style groups or organized criminal networks, owing to concerns over police and judicial corruption linked to organized crime. Although Spanish prisons meet most international standards, prison conditions are not always adequate, and healthcare standards inside some detention facilities have been found to be lacking. The Spanish police force is effective and, despite having a wide range of specialized units dedicated to issues of organized crime, cooperation is one of its strongest points. Control of physical and cyber borders is also seen as an important feature of Spain's fight against transnational organized crime, with over a thousand officers patrolling border crossings and a number of units specialized in cybercrime operational within the different police bodies. However, challenges within the police force remain, such as the lack of preparedness to control mafia groups and protect the victims of related crimes.

Spain's geographical location makes it a key transit country for drug trafficking and human smuggling. These issues are further complicated by the country's large continental territory, which includes several islands in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, as well as two enclaves in Africa. These factors make it challenging to control and regulate incoming flows, despite surveillance efforts by police and paramilitary forces. In fact, record numbers of drugs continue to be trafficked into the country.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Spain has been identified as a hub for money laundering. Illegally obtained capital from drug trafficking is channelled into properties such as shopping centres, hotels, restaurants, and apartments. The country has taken measures to counter this, including passing legislation and establishing a commission to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing. Despite these efforts, organized crime groups continue to use legal companies in certain sectors to launder money. Authorities still face challenges when attempting to confiscate property and economic assets, and effective mechanisms to follow money trails related to organized crime are yet to be consolidated. Banking secrecy prevails over the obligation to report possible criminal acts, and investigations involving accounts situated in tax havens outside Spain are difficult to pursue. The Spanish government needs to hire more tax personnel to meet the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's standard.

Spain has an established economic regulatory framework to ensure that legitimate businesses operate free from criminal activity. However, small companies face difficulties in accessing credit and corruption in public procurement and money laundering cases, particularly in the housing sector, indicate that current mechanisms are not always effective. While organized crime is not yet a significant impediment to conducting business in Spain, cooperative alliances between criminal groups and legal companies occur. The legal framework protects property rights, and the registration system functions efficiently. Spain continues to improve in terms of economic freedom, although heavy government spending and poor fiscal health still weigh on the country's economy.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Overall, the main issues with Spain's victim protection framework lie in the identification of victims, which is only done by the Spanish police, and the ineffective protection of witnesses. Within this system, women victims of human trafficking still face challenges, as they are required to cooperate in the investigation and testify against their captors. Nevertheless, the government has a robust framework providing support to victims of modern slavery seeking to exit it. Government-funded NGOs, in particular, assist potential victims by providing workforce re-entry training, legal assistance, shelter, and asylum and residence permit application assistance.

Spain is in the early stages of developing new crime prevention strategies, and police units are implementing predictive policing programmes, including some prevention campaigns with the private sector regarding fraud prevention. The national strategy against organized crime prioritizes intelligence gathering for the prevention and anticipation of threats. The prevention approach in Spain has focused on increasing penalties for crimes, increasing the number

of police officers, and improving the institutional and legal framework to prevent and combat corruption. The government has also taken measures to prevent human trafficking, including raising awareness through social media, distributing anti-trafficking awareness brochures, and supplying a telephonic hotline and email address for reporting suspected cases.

Non-state actors in Spain play a vital role in combating organized crime, particularly human trafficking, where the state lacks adequate measures. These actors include anti-corruption associations, whistle-blowers, and civil society organizations. While the media in Spain reports on organized crime without fear of retaliation, there have been cases where journalists have faced harassment and physical assault by protesters and the police while covering demonstrations. Although civil society organizations in Spain faced challenges during the pandemic, including cuts in funding from several public authorities, the Spanish government continues to guarantee media freedom, and NGOs operate without significant restrictions. Reforms to the controversial public safety law, which establishes large fines for offences that include spreading images that could endanger police officers or protected facilities, were recently proposed, but tangible results are yet to be seen.

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