



Spain's Place in the World: A Survey of Global Rankings 2011

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1. Introduction

In February 2008, the Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos / Strategic Studies Group published an analysis titled "[Is Spain an Influential Country?](#)" The report examined Spain's position in 25 select global rankings in a variety of categories, such as competitiveness, corruption, demography, economic freedom and so forth.

The objective of the 2008 survey was to try to explain why there was such a big disconnect between Spain's strong economic performance and its relatively low level of influence on the global stage. At the time, Spain was in its 15th year of uninterrupted economic growth, and was enjoying the longest period of expansion in its modern history. But

many observers were asking themselves why Spain had not been able to translate that strong economic performance into increased geopolitical influence.

The report said: "On the surface, it would appear that Spain has all the necessary ingredients to be a leading 'middle power', which is often determined by national capabilities, economic or otherwise (and the willingness to use them). However, an analysis of Spain's relative standing in the international rankings game shows that Spain lies far behind many of its European peers in a wide variety of indicators."

The 2008 survey concluded that one of the biggest impediments to increased Spanish influence abroad was that the country lacked the

leadership and vision to channel its strengths toward meaningful geopolitical ends.

Now fast forward to 2011. Spain's economic fortunes have been completely reversed and the country is slugging through the worst economic crisis in its modern history. The efforts of Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero—who has been in office for almost seven years—to transform Spain into one of the most “progressive” countries in Europe is foundering badly amid record unemployment, spiralling public sector deficits and the threat of a full-blown sovereign debt crisis.

Amid the economic and social chaos engulfing Spain, where does the country stand in the international rankings game in 2011? Has Spain moved up the ladder in influence, or is it losing ground? What follows is a brief summary of Spain's position in 25 select global rankings in a variety of categories.

2. Business Environment

a. Business Competitiveness. The World Bank survey titled [Doing Business 2011](#) reports that Spain is still far behind on the road to international competitiveness. Spain ranks 147th worldwide (out of 183 countries surveyed) in the ease of starting a business in 2011. This marks a significant deterioration since 2008, when Spain ranked 118th. Spain ranks 93rd in protecting investors and 52nd in enforcing contracts. It takes 47 days to open a business in Spain compared to 6

days in the United States. It costs 15 percent of per capita yearly income in Spain to open a business compared to one percent in the United States. Overall, Spain ranks 49th worldwide in the ease of doing business in 2011, which makes it one of the worst locations to do business in the entire developed world (i.e., the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)).

b. Business Competitiveness. Spain ranks 42nd out of 139 countries in The World Economic Forum's [Global Competitiveness Index 2010-2011](#). This marks a significant decline in competitiveness since 2008, when Spain was the 29th most competitive country in the world. Spain has one of the worst rankings in the world in terms of labour market efficiency; it ranks 130th. Its highly inflexible labour market discourages job creation—a matter of particular concern considering the high and persistent unemployment in the country. As in 2008, Spain ranks especially poorly in innovation; it ranks 46th. Spain also ranks 35th in terms of business sophistication, which places it at the bottom of the rung of the developed world.

c. Business Competitiveness. Spain ranks 36th out of 58 countries in the [IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2010](#). This is a six-point drop in the rankings since 2008. The yearbook, which is produced by the Lausanne-based IMD business school, analyses and ranks the ability of countries to create and maintain an environment that sustains the competitiveness of enterprises.

Considered the worldwide reference point to world competitiveness, it ranks 58 national economies using 327 criteria.

3. Technology

a. Information Technology Competitiveness. Spain ranks 25th out of 66 countries in the Economist Intelligence Unit's [IT Industry Competitiveness Index 2009](#) (the latest year for which the survey is available). This is a one-point drop since the previous survey, which was conducted in 2007. In Western Europe as a whole, Spain ranks 14th, just one notch above Portugal and two above Greece. Spain ranks especially poorly in the category of Human Capital, i.e., IT talent, where it is at the very bottom of all OECD countries. The survey is a global effort to benchmark industry environments for IT production—hardware, soft-ware and IT services—and attempts to compare countries' performance in building an environment for IT industry competitiveness.

b. Information Technology Competitiveness. Spain ranks 20th out of 25 developed countries in the [Connectivity Scorecard 2010](#). This represents a seven-point drop in rank since 2008. Connectivity Scorecard is a global ICT (information and communications technology) index—the first of its kind to rank 50 countries (25 developed and 25 developing) not only on their deployment of ICT infrastructure but also to measure the extent to which governments, businesses and consumers make use of connectivity technologies to en-

hance social and economic prosperity, so called “useful connectivity.” The report says: “Spain is still well behind Britain, France, Germany and the Northern European nations of Scandinavia, the Netherlands and even Belgium on most ICT measures. It does perform better than Italy, Greece and Portugal, but this in itself reflects the weakness of those economies rather than the strength of Spain.”

4. Economics and Trade

a. Economics. Spain is the 12th largest economy in the world, according to the [World Economic Outlook](#) produced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is a precipitous drop from 2008, when Spain was the 8th largest economy in the world. Canada, India and Russia have overtaken Spain in 2010; Brazil overtook Spain in 2008.

b. Economic Freedom. Spain ranks 31st out of 183 countries worldwide in the [Index of Economic Freedom 2011](#), an annual survey co-produced by the Washington-based Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal since 1995. Spain's position in 2011 is the same position it held in the 2008 survey. Within Europe, Spain ranks 17th out of 43 countries in 2011, the same position it held in 2008. Spain ranks especially low in labour freedom; it ranks 121st out of 183 worldwide. As in 2008, the 2011 report says inflexible employment regulations hinder overall productivity growth and employment opportunities.

c. Foreign Direct Investment. Spain is the 20th largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment, according to the [World Investment Report 2010](#) published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This is a precipitous drop from the previous survey, when Spain ranked 6th in the world.

5. Demography

a. Fertility. Spain has one of the lowest birth rates (the number of children the average woman will have during her lifetime) in the world: 1.5 births for each woman, according to [data compiled by the OECD](#), or 1.4 births for each woman according to [data compiled by INE](#), Spain's national statistics agency. The OECD figure is up one-tenth of one percent from the year-before survey, but the slight increase is attributed entirely to the growing population of immigrants in Spain. Overall, Spain ranks 32nd out of the world's top 50 economies. France has the highest fertility rate (2.01) in the European Union, followed by Ireland (2.07). A birth rate of 2.1 children per woman is necessary to keep Spain stable in population terms. At the current rate, Spain's population growth is not only declining, but also ageing. Based on current trends, by 2050 there will be three people over 65 years of age in Spain for every four between 20 and 64, compared to a 1-to-4 ratio in 2000.

6. Education

a. Education. In Spain, the proportion of people with an upper second-

ary education is below the OECD average for all age groups, according to [Education at a Glance 2010](#), the annual flagship publication of the OECD. Overall, less than half of all Spaniards age 25 to 64 have attained at least upper secondary education, compared to the OECD average of 68 percent. The report also says Spain spends less on education than the OECD average. The 2010 figures are virtually unchanged from previous OECD surveys.

b. Higher Education. Spain does not have any university that ranks among the top 200 universities in the world, according to the [Academic Ranking of World Universities 2010](#), published by the Institute of Higher Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. In the previous survey, Spain had only one university, namely the University of Barcelona, which ranked among the top 200. The ARWU ranking includes major institutes of higher education ranked according to a formula that takes into account alumni winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (10 percent), staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (20 percent), highly-cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories (20 percent), articles published in Nature and Science (20 percent), the Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts and Humanities Citation Index (20 percent) and the size of the institution (10 percent).

c. Higher Education. Spain has three business schools in the upper ranks of the top [100 Global MBA Rankings 2010](#) published by the London-

based Financial Times. Spain had four business schools in the upper ranks in the 2008 survey. The top school is the IE Business School, which is ranked 6th in the world. The IESE Business School is ranked 11th and the ESADE Business School is ranked 19th.

7. Environment

a. Environment. Spain is the European country with the biggest increase in so-called greenhouse gas emissions since 1990; they increased by 40 percent. The hike in Spain is far greater than in other industrialized countries. According to the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), emissions in Canada went up 20 percent, Australia 18 percent, Japan 11 percent and the United States 14 percent.

b. Environment. Spain ranks 9th among 22 wealthy countries in the [Commitment to Development Index 2010](#), an annual survey that measures how much developed countries are living up to their potential to reduce poverty in developing countries. The survey is conducted by the Center for Global Development. Spain's position in 2011 is an improvement over the index in 2007, when it ranked 15th among wealthy countries.

8. Society

a. Drug Consumption. Spain ranks number one in the world in cocaine consumption among 15- to 64-year-olds, according to the United Nations [World Drug Report 2010](#). This

ranking is unchanged from previous surveys. The percentage of Spanish youths aged 14 to 18 using the drug has roughly quadrupled in the past decade. The report also shows high rates of amphetamine consumption in Spain, compared with other European countries. The survey shows a significant increase in the consumption of the amphetamine designer drug ecstasy among those aged 15 to 64.

b. Gender Equality. There is only one Spaniard on the Forbes ranking of the [World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2010](#). She is: Ana Patricia Botín, the chairman of Banco Banesto (38). In the 2007 survey, there were two Spaniards on the list: Ana Patricia Botín (38) and Rosalia Mera, the co-founder of Inditex (76).

9. Tourism and Leisure

a. Gastronomy. Spain has five restaurants that are included in Restaurant Magazine's [World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2010](#). Ferrán Adrià's El Bulli is ranked as the second-best restaurant in the world. In 2007, Spain had six restaurants on the list and El Bulli was ranked number one.

10. Foreign Policy and Defense

a. Think Tanks. Spain has only one foreign affairs think tank that ranks within the top 50 in the world, according to "[The Global Go-To Think Tanks 2010](#)" produced annually by the University of Pennsylvania. The Centro de Estudios y Documentación Internacionales de Barcelona (CIDOB) ranks 37th out of 50 in the

210 survey. By contrast, Britain and Germany each have 11 think tanks within the top 50 in the world.

b. Military Strength. Spain ranks 27th in the [World Military Strength Ranking](#), which provides and an analytical display of information covering nations from around the world with statistics based on various public sources. Countries covered include the major global players prominent in today's international landscape along with other smaller nations making the news - this spectrum helping to produce a broad comparison of military strengths from across the globe.

11. Other Rankings

a. Corruption. Spain ranks 30th out of 178 countries in Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index for 2010](#). This is a five-point decline in Spain's position since 2007. According to the survey, Spain is one of the most corrupt countries in Western Europe, just above Portugal (32nd) and Italy (67th). The annual Corruption Perceptions Index is a composite index that measures domestic and public sector corruption and ranks countries in terms of perceived levels of corruption as determined by a variety of expert assessments and opinion surveys.

b. Global Brands. Spain has two brands on the [Best Global Brands Ranking for 2010](#), which is published annually by Interbrands. Zara is ranked 48th out of 100 and Banco Santander is ranked 68th. By contrast, Germany has 10 brands in the

top 100 worldwide and France has seven. Spain had only one brand (Zara, 62nd) that ranked in the top 100 worldwide in the 2008 survey.

c. Piracy. Nearly half of all software used in Spain is pirated, according to the [IDC Global Software Piracy Study 2009](#), the latest available survey. Spain has a piracy index of 42 percent, well above the European average, which is 34 percent. Only Malta (45 percent), Cyprus (48 percent), Iceland (49 percent), Italy (49 percent) and Greece (58 percent) are worse. In the previous survey, Spain had a piracy index of 46 percent.

d. Press Freedom. Spain ranks 47th out of 196 countries in the [Freedom of the Press 2010 Global Rankings](#) published by Freedom House. Spain ranked 46th in the previous survey dated 2008.

e. Press Freedom. Spain ranks 39th in the [Press Freedom Index 2010](#), published annually by Reporters Without Borders. Spain ranked 33rd in the previous survey dated 2008.

f. Privacy. Spain has one of the worst rankings in the [2010 International Privacy Ranking](#) published by Privacy International. The survey says there is a systemic failure to uphold privacy safeguards in Spain.

g. Prosperity. Spain ranks in the upper half of the [2010 Legatum Prosperity Index](#), which measures the drivers of both material wealth and life satisfaction. Spain ranks 23rd in the overall index, which is a four-point drop since the last survey dated 2008. Spain ranks 33rd in eco-

conomic prosperity and 38th in safety and security.

h. Quality of Life. Barcelona and Madrid rank far behind most other major European cities in the [Worldwide Quality of Living Survey 2010](#), conducted annually by Mercer Human Resources Consulting. Barcelona ranks 44th and Madrid ranks 48th in the 50 Quality of

Living Cities 2010. That is a significant drop from the 2007 survey, when Barcelona and Madrid ranked 41st and 42nd, respectively. Neither city ranks in the top 50 in Mercer's Worldwide Eco-City Ranking 2010, which includes the following criteria: water availability, water potability, waste removal, sewage, air pollution and traffic congestion.

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