

8TH
EDITION

Living and Working in

Spain

THE LEADING SERIES FOR EXPATS FOR
25
YEARS



The best-selling book about living in Spain containing up to twice
as much information as similar titles

David Hampshire

Living & Working in **SPAIN**

● A Survival Handbook ●



David Hampshire




Survival Books ● London ● England

First published 1995
Second Edition 1998
Third Edition 2000
Fourth Edition 2003
Fifth Edition 2004
Sixth Edition 2006
Seventh Edition 2007
Eighth Edition 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or
recorded by any means, without prior written
permission from the author.

Copyright © Survival Books 1995, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009

Cover photograph: Canteras Beach, Las Palmas,
Gran Canaria © spanishalex ( www.dreamstime.com)
Illustrations and maps © Jim Watson

Survival Books Limited
Office 169, 3 Edgar Buildings, George St,
Bath, BA1 2FJ, United Kingdom
+44 (0)1225-462135, info@survivalbooks.net
www.survivalbooks.net and www.londons-secrets.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP record for this book is available
from the British Library.
ISBN: 978-1-905303-65-6

Printed and bound in India by Ajanta Offset

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the successful publication of this eighth edition of *Living and Working in Spain* and previous editions of this book. I would particularly like to thank Joanna Styles (research and updating), Joe and Kerry Laredo (editing and proofreading) and Di Tolland (desktop publishing). I would also like to thank Catherine Wakelin, Charles Peard Clarke, Ron and Pat Scarborough, Pam Miller, Charles King, John Knight, Veronica Orchard, Adèle Kelham and everyone else who contributed to this and previous editions. Also a special thank you to Jim Watson for the superb illustrations, maps and cover design, and to the many photographers (listed on page 374), whose beautiful images add colour and bring Spain to life.



What readers & reviewers have said about Survival Books:

'If you need to find out how France works then this book is indispensable. Native French people probably have a less thorough understanding of how their country functions.'

Living France

'It's everything you always wanted to ask but didn't for fear of the contemptuous put down. The best English-language guide. Its pages are stuffed with practical information on everyday subjects and are designed to compliment the traditional guidebook.'

Swiss News

'Rarely has a 'survival guide' contained such useful advice – This book dispels doubts for first-time travellers, yet is also useful for seasoned globetrotters – In a word, if you're planning to move to the US or go there for a long-term stay, then buy this book both for general reading and as a ready-reference.'

American Citizens Abroad

'Let's say it at once. David Hampshire's Living and Working in France is the best handbook ever produced for visitors and foreign residents in this country; indeed, my discussion with locals showed that it has much to teach even those born and bred in l'Hexagone – It is Hampshire's meticulous detail which lifts his work way beyond the range of other books with similar titles. Often you think of a supplementary question and search for the answer in vain. With Hampshire this is rarely the case. – He writes with great clarity (and gives French equivalents of all key terms), a touch of humour and a ready eye for the odd (and often illuminating) fact. – This book is absolutely indispensable.'

The Riviera Reporter

'A must for all future expats. I invested in several books but this is the only one you need. Every issue and concern is covered, every daft question you have but are frightened to ask is answered honestly without pulling any punches. Highly recommended.'

Reader

'In answer to the desert island question about the one how-to book on France, this book would be it.'

The Recorder

'The ultimate reference book. Every subject imaginable is exhaustively explained in simple terms. An excellent introduction to fully enjoy all that this fine country has to offer and save time and money in the process.'

American Club of Zurich

'The amount of information covered is not short of incredible. I thought I knew enough about my birth country. This book has proved me wrong. Don't go to France without it. Big mistake if you do. Absolutely priceless!'

Reader

'When you buy a model plane for your child, a video recorder, or some new computer gizmo, you get with it a leaflet or booklet pleading 'Read Me First', or bearing large friendly letters or bold type saying 'IMPORTANT - follow the instructions carefully'. This book should be similarly supplied to all those entering France with anything more durable than a 5-day return ticket. – It is worth reading even if you are just visiting briefly, or if you have lived here for years and feel totally knowledgeable and secure. But if you need to find out how France works then it is indispensable. Native French people probably have a less thorough understanding of how their country functions. – Where it is most essential, the book is most up to the minute.'

Living France

A comprehensive guide to all things French, written in a highly readable and amusing style, for anyone planning to live, work or retire in France.

The Times

Covers every conceivable question that might be asked concerning everyday life – I know of no other book that could take the place of this one.

France in Print

A concise, thorough account of the Do's and DONT's for a foreigner in Switzerland – Crammed with useful information and lightened with humorous quips which make the facts more readable.

American Citizens Abroad

'I found this a wonderful book crammed with facts and figures, with a straightforward approach to the problems and pitfalls you are likely to encounter. The whole laced with humour and a thorough understanding of what's involved. Gets my vote!'

Reader

'A vital tool in the war against real estate sharks; don't even think of buying without reading this book first!'

Everything Spain

'We would like to congratulate you on this work: it is really super! We hand it out to our expatriates and they read it with great interest and pleasure.'

ICI (Switzerland) AG

Important Note

Spain is a large country with myriad faces and many ethnic groups, religions and customs. Although ostensibly the same throughout the country, many rules and regulations are open to local interpretation, and are occasionally even formulated on the spot. Laws and regulations have also been changing at a considerable rate in recent years. I cannot recommend too strongly that you check with an official and reliable source (not always the same) before making any major decisions or undertaking an irreversible course of action. However, don't believe everything you're told or read, even, dare I say it, herein!

Useful addresses and references to other sources of information have been included in all chapters and **Appendices A, B and C** to help you obtain further information and verify data with official sources. Important points have been emphasised, some of which it would be expensive or even dangerous to disregard. **Ignore them at your peril or cost!**

Note

Unless specifically stated, the reference to any company, organisation or product in this book doesn't constitute an endorsement or recommendation. None of the businesses, products or individuals mentioned in this book have paid to be mentioned.

Contents

1. FINDING A JOB

17

Economy	17
Employment Prospects	18
Spain & the European Union	20
Qualifications	20
Regional Employment Services	21
Teaching & Translating	23
Seasonal Jobs	25
Temporary & Casual Work	26
Job Hunting	27
Salary	28
Self-Employment	29
Starting a Business	31
Trainees & Work Experience	31
Au Pairs	32
Illegal Working	34
Language	35

2. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

39

Employment Contracts	40
Salary & Benefits	40
Working Hours	43
Holidays & Leave	44
Insurance	46
Retirement & Pensions	46
Education & Training	47
Union Membership	47
Other Conditions	48

3. PERMITS & VISAS

51

Bureaucracy	52
Visitors	52
Visas	53
Registration Certificate	54
Residence Permits	54
Work Permits	57

4. ARRIVAL

61

Immigration	61
Customs	62
Embassy Registration	64

Finding Help	64
Checklists	65

5. ACCOMMODATION **67**

Property Market	67
Temporary Accommodation	68
Relocation Consultants	68
Buying Property	69
Rented Accommodation	69
Moving House	74
Electricity	76
Gas	79
Heating	80
Air-Conditioning	80
Waste Disposal	81
Water	81

6. POSTAL SERVICES **85**

General Information	86
Letter Post	89
Parcel Post	89
Registered & Recorded Post	90
Post Collection	91
Financial Services	92

7. TELEPHONE **95**

Emergency Numbers	95
Service Numbers	96
Installation & Registration	96
Using the Telephone	97
Charges	100
Bills	101
Directories	102
Public Telephones	102
Mobile Phones	103
Internet	104

8. TELEVISION **107**

Television	107
Radio	112

9. EDUCATION **115**

State Schools	116
Baccalaureate	121
Private Schools	122
Vocational Training	123

Higher Education	124
Learning Spanish	126

10. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

131

Rail	131
Trains	132
Underground Railways	134
Buses & Trams	135
Taxis	137
Ferries	138
Airline Services	140

11. MOTORING

145

Importing a Car	146
Car Hire	148
Buying a Car	148
Registration	150
Technical Inspection	152
Road Tax	153
Car Insurance	154
Driving Licences	157
Roads	160
Emergencies	162
Rules of the Road	162
Speed Limits	166
Parking	166
Spanish Drivers	169
Traffic Police	169
Motorcycles	171
Drinking & Driving	172
Car Crime	173
Fuel	173
Breakdown Insurance	174
Motoring Organisations	175

12. HEALTH

177

Health Benefits & Risks	177
Emergencies	179
Doctors	181
Medicines	183
Hospitals & Clinics	185
Dentists	187
Opticians	188
Births & Deaths	188
Medical Treatment Abroad	190

13. INSURANCE

193

Insurance Companies & Agents	194
Insurance Contracts	194
Social Security	195
Supplementary Pensions	200
Private Health Insurance	201
Dental Insurance	204
Household Insurance	204
Travel Insurance	206

14. FINANCE

209

Foreigner's Identification Number	210
Spanish Currency	210
Importing & Exporting Money	211
Banks	213
Credit & Charge Cards	219
Mortgages	220
Taxation	222
Value Added Tax	225
Income Tax	226
Wealth Tax	234
Property Tax	235
Capital Gains Tax	237
Inheritance & Gift Tax	239
Wills	242
Cost of Living	244

15. LEISURE

247

Accommodation	248
Camping & Caravanning	251
Bullfighting	252
Cinema	254
Festivals	255
Flamenco	256
Gambling	257
Museums & Galleries	258
Music	259
Nightlife	260
Bars & Cafes	261
Restaurants	265
Theatre, Opera & Ballet	268
Tourist Offices	269

16. SPORTS

271

Aerial Sports	271
Cycling	272
Fishing	273
Football	274
Golf	275
Hiking	277
Mountaineering & Rock-Climbing	279
Pelota	279
Racket Sports	279
Skiing	281
Swimming	282
Watersports	284

17. SHOPPING

287

Shopping Hours	288
Food	288
Alcohol	292
Clothes	296
Furniture & Furnishings	296
Household Goods	297
Newspapers, Magazines & Books	298
Markets	300
Supermarkets & Hypermarkets	301
Department & Chain Stores	303
Tobacconists'	304
Duty-Free Allowances	304
Internet Shopping	306
Receipts	307
Consumer Protection	307

18. ODDS & ENDS

309

Business Hours	309
Citizenship	309
Climate	310
Crime	312
Geography	315
Government	316
Legal System	319
Marriage & Divorce	322
Military Matters	323
Pets	323
Police	326
Population	328
Religion	328

Social Customs	329
The Spanish Royal Family	330
Time Difference	331
Tipping	331
Toilets	331

19. THE SPANISH

335

20. MOVING HOUSE OR LEAVING SPAIN

341

Moving House	341
Leaving Spain	342

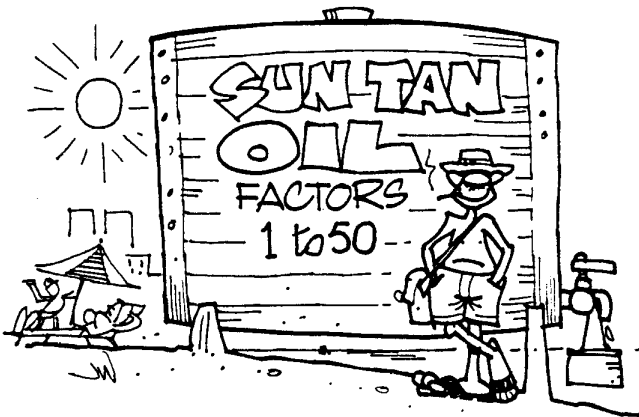
APPENDICES

345

Appendix A: Embassies & Consulates	345
Appendix B: Further Reading	349
Appendix C: Useful Websites	352
Appendix D: Weights & Measures	354

INDEX

359



Authors Notes

- ◆ Frequent references are made in this book to the European Union (EU) which comprises Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway comprise the European Economic Area (EEA).
- ◆ References to the Spanish language mean Castilian, spoken as a first or second language throughout Spain, unless otherwise stated (see **Language** on page 117).
- ◆ Spanish place names (shown in brackets below) are often written differently in English, as in this book, e.g. Andalusia (*Andalucía*), Alicante (*Alacant*), Cadiz (*Cádiz*), Cordoba (*Córdoba*), Malaga (*Málaga*), Majorca (*Mallorca*), San Sebastian (*San Sebastián*), Seville (*Sevilla*) and Zaragoza (*Zaragoza*).
- ◆ Times are shown using am (Latin: ante meridiem) for before noon and pm (post meridiem) for after noon, e.g. 10am and 10pm.
- ◆ Prices quoted should be taken only as estimates, although they were mostly correct when going to print and fortunately don't usually change significantly overnight. Most prices in Spain are quoted inclusive of value added tax (IVA incluido), which is the method used in this book unless otherwise indicated (e.g. más IVA).
- ◆ His/he/him/man/men, etc. also mean her/she/her/woman/women, etc. This is done simply to make life easier for both the reader and the author, and **isn't** intended to be sexist.
- ◆ The Spanish translation of key words and phrases is shown in brackets in italics, and warnings and important points are shown in **bold** type.
- ◆ The following symbols are used in this book: ☎ (telephone), 📠 (fax), 🌐 (Internet) and ✉ (email).
- ◆ Lists of **Useful Addresses**, **Further Reading** and **Useful Websites** are contained in **Appendices A**, **B** and **C** respectively.
- ◆ For those unfamiliar with the Spanish system of **Weights and Measures**, conversion tables (Imperial/metric) are included in **Appendix D**.
- ◆ A physical map of Spain and a map showing the regions and provinces are shown at the end of the book.



Platja d'Aro beach, Costa Brava

Introduction

Whether you're already living or working in Spain or just thinking about it – this is **THE BOOK** for you. *Living and Working in Spain* is designed to meet the needs of anyone wishing to know the essentials of Spanish life – however long your intended stay, you'll find the information contained in this book invaluable. Since the first edition was published in 1995, *Living and Working in Spain* has been the most comprehensive and up-to-date book available to people planning a new life in Spain and it's the only one revised annually or biennially. Furthermore, this updated and fully revised 8th edition is printed in full colour.

Since Spain joined the European Union in 1986, the country has altered beyond recognition and each year brings further changes as Spain catches up with its more advanced fellow members. These are the changes newcomers need to know about and this is the book that informs you about them! Inside you'll find the latest information on taxes, residence and work procedures; regional health services, prices and procedures, as well as a wealth of other essential information to help you make a success of your time in Spain.

You may have visited Spain as a tourist, but living and working there is another matter altogether. Adjusting to a different environment and culture and making a home in any foreign country can be a traumatic and stressful experience, and Spain is no exception. You need to adapt to new customs and traditions and discover the Spanish way of doing things, for example finding a home, paying bills and obtaining insurance. As anyone who has lived in Spain knows only too well, accurate, up-to-date information for newcomers is difficult to find, particularly in the English language. My aim in writing this book was to help fill this void and provide the comprehensive practical information necessary for a relatively trouble-free life.

Living and Working in Spain is designed to help reduce your 'beginner's' phase and minimise the frustrations, and will help you make informed decisions and calculated judgements, rather than uneducated guesses and costly mistakes. Most important of all, it will help you save time, trouble and money, and will repay your investment many times over.

Although you may find some of the information a bit daunting, don't be discouraged. Most problems occur once only and fade into insignificance after a short time (as you face the next half a dozen!). The majority of foreigners in Spain would agree that, all things considered, they relish living there. A period spent in Spain is a wonderful way to enrich your life, broaden your horizons and hopefully please your bank manager. I trust that this book will help you avoid the pitfalls of life in Spain and smooth your way to a happy and rewarding future in your new home.

¡Mucha suerte!

David Hampshire

September 2008



1.

FINDING A JOB

Finding a job in Spain isn't easy, particularly outside the major cities, where unemployment is high in many regions. Furthermore, if you don't qualify to live and work in Spain by birthright or as a national of a European Union (EU) country, obtaining a residence permit (see page 54) can be more difficult than finding work. Americans and other foreigners without the automatic right to work in Spain must have their employment approved by the Spanish Ministry of Labour (Ministerio de Trabajo) and obtain a visa before entering Spain. All EU nationals have the same employment rights as Spanish citizens, with the exception of nationals from Bulgaria and Romania, who require a work permit.

Spain attracts few migrants compared with the UK, France and Germany, although the number of foreign residents has been increasing considerably every year since 2001 and over 11 per cent of the Spanish population is now foreign. There's also a large 'floating' population of unregistered foreigners. Just under 40 per cent of foreign residents in Spain come from the EU, the vast majority of these from the UK, Germany and Romania; in some provinces (particularly Malaga and Alicante) over 60 per cent of foreign residents are from the EU.

Many Spaniards also work abroad, notably in France, Germany and Switzerland, and Spain imports low-paid workers from Morocco (the largest group of foreign residents), Colombia, Ecuador and Eastern Europe (mainly Ukraine). Spain (particularly the Canaries and coastal Andalusia) is a key entry point for North African immigrants into Europe, many of whom enter the country illegally.

ECONOMY

Spain has experienced an economic 'miracle' in the last few decades, during which it has been transformed from a basically agricultural country into a modern industrial nation. However, its economic fortunes have been

somewhat up and down, with two massive booms – during the '80s and from 1998 to 2006 – and two slumps. The first slump, during the '90s, was severe, as it was in much of the developed world; the second began in late 2007 and was forecast to last at least until late 2009. After three years of the strongest growth rate among the original 15 members of the EU (3.8 per cent in 2007), Spain entered economic decline mainly due a slowdown in the building industry and the effects of the global recession triggered by the US 'sub-prime' mortgage crisis.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) forecasts 1.6 per cent growth for 2008 and 1.1 per cent for 2009. Government predictions are (not surprisingly) more optimistic, the Ministry of the Economy forecasting growth of just over 2 per cent in 2008. However, many experts believe that there won't be another recession and that Spain's economy will start to recover in late 2009 or early 2010.

Unemployment

The recent strength of the Spanish economy had a dramatic impact on its unemployment rate, which fell from over 20 per cent in the '80s to under 9 per cent in 2007. However, the current economic slump has affected

the unemployment rate, which reached 9.6 per cent in June 2008, the second highest in the EU. Unemployment is high and rising in the construction and service industries, the 'engines' of growth in Spain, and is expected to near 11 per cent during 2009. Unemployment is high among those aged 20 to 29 (who represent over 40 per cent of the unemployed) and foreigners, almost 14 per cent of whom are registered as unemployed.

The unemployed are often unskilled or even illiterate, although a significant percentage of university graduates are also unemployed. Unemployment in some areas is much higher than the national average. Andalusia, Extremadura and the Canaries are the regions with the highest unemployment rates (between 14 and 15 per cent), while Aragón, Navarra and the Basque Country have the lowest rates (between 5.6 and 6 per cent).

Unemployment has a particularly debilitating effect on the Spanish economy on account of the high social security benefits claimed by those out of work. Reducing unemployment continues to be one of the government's main priorities.

Workforce

Spanish workers have an affluent lifestyle compared with just a decade ago, and employees (particularly executives and senior managers) enjoy high salaries and good working conditions. Spain has a reasonably self-sufficient labour market and doesn't require a large number of skilled or unskilled foreign workers. Women have professional and salary equality with men, although they still fill most low-paid jobs. However, workers' security has been seriously eroded in recent years with an increasing number of workers employed on short-term rather than indefinite contracts. Many Spaniards (particularly low-paid civil servants) hold down two jobs and work overtime and extra shifts in order to pay their bills.

Industrial Relations

Spain has traditionally had more strikes (*huelgas*) and lost more production days due to strikes in the last few decades than any country in the EU, but industrial relations have improved dramatically in recent years, during

which the number of working hours lost to strikes has been reduced by over 20 per cent. Despite the squeeze on pay rises to meet the European Monetary Union (EMU) criteria and qualify for the single currency (in 2002), there has been little industrial unrest in the last few years and in 2007 there were around 750 strikes (down 4 per cent on 2006).

In June 2008, the country almost came to a standstill when lorry drivers and fishermen went on strike in protest against rising fuel prices. Factories and building sites were forced to shut down due to lack of supplies, and panic buying by consumers led to empty petrol stations and supermarket shelves. The situation was brought under control after massive intervention by the police, who escorted non-striking lorry drivers to their destinations.

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

You shouldn't plan on obtaining employment in Spain unless you have a firm job offer, exceptional qualifications or experience for which there's a strong demand. If you want a good job, you must usually be well qualified and speak fluent Spanish. If you intend to arrive in Spain without a job, you should have a detailed plan for finding employment and try to make some contacts before your arrival. Being attracted to Spain by its weather and lifestyle is understandable but doesn't rate highly as an employment qualification! It's almost impossible to find work in rural areas (apart from low-paid farm work) and it isn't easy in cities and large towns, particularly if your Spanish isn't fluent.

Many people turn to self-employment or starting a business to make a living, although this path is strewn with pitfalls for the unwary.

Many foreigners don't do sufficient homework before moving to Spain. The secret to successful relocation is research, research and more research!

While hoping for the best, you should prepare for the worst and ensure that you have a contingency plan and sufficient funds to last until you're established. Before arriving

in Spain, you should dispassionately examine your motives and credentials. What kind of work can you realistically expect to do? What are your qualifications and experience? Are they recognised in Spain? How good is your Spanish (or other languages)? Unless your Spanish is fluent, you won't be competing on equal terms with the Spanish (you won't anyway, but that's a different matter!).

Spanish employers aren't usually interested in employing anyone without, at the very least, an adequate working knowledge of Spanish. Are there any jobs in your profession or trade in the area where you wish to live? Could you be self-employed or start your own business?

The answers to these and other key questions can be disheartening, but it's better to ask them **before** moving to Spain than afterwards. Comprehensive information about employment prospects in Spain can be found in this book's sister publication *Making a Living in Spain*.

Women

The number of working women in Spain has increased considerably in the last 20 years and nearly 50 per cent of Spanish women now work full or part time (nearly 80 per cent of part-time workers are women). The number of women in the professions has steadily increased over the years in line with the increase in the number of women graduates (which now exceeds that of men). Women represent nearly half of the working population but well over half of Spain's unemployed.

Nowadays, professional women are common in Spain, particularly doctors and lawyers, and there's less sexism in the professions than in other Latin countries. The government has done much to boost professional women's position by appointing a woman (Teresa Fernández de la Vega) to the vice-presidency and women to over half the cabinet posts. Career women are common in many fields that were previously closed to them, although they still have difficulty reaching senior management positions, only 2 per cent of which are filled by women, *macho* Spanish men often feel threatened by female bosses, and Spanish employers are often reluctant to hire women for responsible positions, particularly if they think they're planning a family.



Women are protected by law against discrimination on the grounds of their sex. A woman doing the same or broadly similar work to a man and employed by the same employer is legally entitled to the same salary and other terms of employment. Women's average salary is around 20 per cent lower than men's, although this is partly due to the fact that most women work in lower-paid industries and hold lower-paid positions than men, rather than to discrimination. Most women are employed in distribution and transport, nursing and healthcare, education, secretarial professions, and service industries such as retailing.

Although there's no official discrimination, in practice it's often otherwise, and it's estimated that women earn up to a third less than men in similar posts. The fact that 'the best man for the job may be a woman' isn't often acknowledged by Spanish employers (or employers anywhere) and women must generally be twice as qualified as men to compete on equal terms. The situation has improved considerably in recent years, however, and women are exploited less in Spain than in some other western European countries.

Under recent legislation promoting sexual equality and regulating positive discrimination, companies whose workforce is less than 50 per cent female may hire only women for new posts.

Spain celebrates a 'day of the working woman' (8th March) and there are associations of business women in many provinces.

Sexual harassment is quite common in Spain but women are now encouraged to report any advances that go beyond complimentary remarks, which are an accepted part of Spanish life and not to be taken seriously. If you receive a sexual advance from your boss, you should report it to your union representative or another superior. Under the sexual equality law, cases of sexual harassment are given priority in courts and resolved urgently.

SPAIN & THE EUROPEAN UNION

On 1st January 1986, Spain became a full member of the European Union (EU), which now consists of 27 states. The European Economic Area (EEA) was formed on the 1st January 1994 and comprises the EU member countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The Single European Act, which came into effect on 1st January 1993, created a more favourable environment for enterprise, competition and trade, and made it easier for EU nationals to work in other EU countries.

Today, nationals of all EU states (except Bulgaria and Romania) have the right to work in Spain or any other member state without a work permit, provided they have a valid passport or national identity card and comply with the member state's laws and regulations on employment. All EU nationals are entitled



to the same treatment as Spanish citizens in matters of pay, working conditions, access to housing, vocational training, social security and trade union rights, and families and immediate dependants are entitled to join them and enjoy the same rights.

There are, however, still some barriers to the freedom of movement of EU workers. For example, some jobs require applicants to have specific skills or vocational qualifications in certain countries, qualifications obtained in some member states aren't recognised in others, and there are restrictions on employment in the civil service, e.g. on the grounds of public policy, health or security. Nevertheless, mutual acceptance of EU educational and professional qualifications by member states has made it easier to study, train and work abroad, and all equivalent professional and trade qualifications are recognised throughout the EU (although local examinations may be necessary).

QUALIFICATIONS

The most important qualification for working in Spain is the ability to speak Spanish fluently (see **Language** on page 35 and **Learning Spanish** on page 126). Once you've overcome this hurdle, you should establish whether your trade or professional qualifications and experience are recognised in Spain. Theoretically, all qualifications recognised by professional and trade bodies in any EU country are recognised in Spain. However, recognition varies from country to country and in certain cases foreign qualifications aren't recognised by Spanish employers, professional or trade associations. All academic qualifications should also be recognised, although they may be given less 'value' than equivalent Spanish qualifications, depending on the country and the educational establishment that awarded them.

A ruling by the European Court in 1992 declared that where EU examinations are of a similar standard, with limited areas of difference, individuals should be required to take exams only in those areas. EU citizens may become public employees, e.g. teachers and postal workers, and fill other civil service positions in Spain.

Foreigners may take any job in Spain except in the armed forces and the police, which are open to Spanish nationals only.

Professionals whose training was compulsory (regulated by statute, statutory instrument or a professional college) and consisted of at least three years' degree-level training plus job-based training can have their qualifications recognised automatically in member states. These are, however, subject to any professional codes and limitations in force. For example, in Spain a medical practitioner must have his qualifications accepted by the medical college of the province where he intends to practise and by any controlling specialist bodies. He must also show that he is in good standing with the professional authorities in his country of origin. However, professional colleges (*colegios*) in Spain can no longer obstruct the practice of professions by EU citizens holding recognised qualifications earned in another EU country.

All EU member states issue occupation information sheets containing a common job description with a table of qualifications. Intended to help someone with the relevant qualifications look for employment in another EU country, these cover a large number of trades, including agriculture, chemicals, clerical work and administration, commerce, construction, electrical trades and electronics, food, hotel and catering, metalworking, motor vehicle repair and maintenance, textiles, tourism, transport and public works.

In order to have your qualifications recognised in Spain, you must go to the provincial office of the Ministry for Education, Social Policy and Sport (Delegación Provincial del Ministerio de Educación, Política Social y Deporte) in your provincial capital and apply for a *Homologación*, for which you must pay a fee: currently €88.32 for a degree or €44.17 for a lower qualification. You're expected to supply translations of your certificates and a 'transcript', which is a summary of all the examinations, projects and/or course work included in the course(s) you've followed. A transcript is usually obtainable from the

university, school or college that awarded the certificate. The recognition process can take up to 18 months for a degree (six to eight months for lower qualifications), so you should apply for recognition well in advance of your Spanish job hunt.

Further details are available from the Ministry for Education website (☎ 902 218 500, 🌐 www.mepsyd.es in Spain; ☎ 020-7727 2462, 🌐 www.mepsyd.es/exterior/uk in the UK; and 🌐 www.mepsyd.es/exterior/usa in the US). Those with British medical or architectural qualifications can use a faster recognition system: go to the National Academic Recognition Information Centre/NARIC website (🌐 www.naric.co.uk) for details or contact NARIC in Spain (☎ 915 065 593).

Information regarding the official validation of qualifications and the addresses of Spanish professional bodies is obtainable from the education department of Spanish embassies. A direct comparison between foreign qualifications and those recognised in Spain can be obtained from any Spanish regional employment office (*oficina de empleo* – see below) where there's a representative of the National Reference Point for Academic Qualifications (Punto Nacional de Referencia sobre Cualificaciones Español/PNR). In the UK, information can be obtained from the National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications, UK NARIC, Oriel House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1XP (☎ 0870-990 4088, 🌐 www.uknpr.org.uk).

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

All regions run their own employment agencies under the 'umbrella' of the National Employment Institute (Instituto Nacional de Empleo/INEM). Some regions provide a more comprehensive service than others, but all are striving to give a more personalised and helpful service. Jobs in the local province are sometimes advertised on a bulletin board, as are perhaps a few national positions requiring specialised experience, training or qualifications. Regional employment offices may also provide a comprehensive career resource library, including lists of Spanish companies, trade publications and a wide

range of reference books. If you have a residence permit (*residencia*) – without which you may receive no further help – a personal counsellor may be assigned to your case.

In addition to offering a job placement service, employment offices provide assistance to those wishing to start a business or be self-employed. The INEM website (www.inem.es) provides good basic information, as well as links to regional employment offices.

The INEM publishes a useful guide, *Working in Spain*, downloadable in PDF in English, French, German and Spanish (www.inem.es – go to *Publicaciones* and then *Guías para trabajar en el EEE*).

INEM services are available to all EU nationals and foreign residents in Spain. Unemployed foreigners must register as job seekers (*demandantes de empleo*), after which they receive a document permitting them to legally remain in Spain for six months while seeking employment. However, INEM offices are usually unhelpful to foreign job seekers unless they speak fluent Spanish (or even Catalan in certain parts of Spain!), have already been employed in Spain or are unemployed and receiving unemployment benefit. The INEM isn't service-oriented and the quality of service and co-operation varies with the region, the office and the person handling your case, although the regional services are trying to change this. Most Spanish employers advertise in daily newspapers for personnel.

There's also a European Employment Service (EURES) network, which includes all EU countries. Member states exchange information on job vacancies on a regular basis and you can also have your personal details circulated to the employment

service in selected countries, e.g. to the INEM in Spain. Details are available in local employment service offices in each member country. Advice on how to apply for jobs is also provided from ☎ 00-800 4080 4080 (freephone in most EU countries, including the UK and Spain) and 🌐 <http://europa.eu.int/eures>. Note, however, that it isn't a reliable or quick way of finding a job in Spain and an application through EURES can be protracted. If you're intending to apply through EURES, you should obtain a *Número de Identificación de Extranjero (NIE)* in advance (see **Foreigner's Identification Number** on page 210).

Private Employment Agencies

Most private employment agencies in Spain operate as temporary employment bureaux (*empresas de trabajo temporal*) only. Most agencies are based in the major cities and deal with enquiries from within Spain only, although you can consult lists of vacancies via the internet. As well as general agencies handling vacancies in a range of industries and professions, there are agencies specialising in particular fields, such as accounting, banking, computing, construction, engineering and technical businesses, hotel and catering, industry, insurance, nanny and nursing, sales, and secretarial and clerical work.

Multinational agencies such as Adecco, Flexiplan and Manpower are common in cities and large towns, and generally hire office staff and unskilled and semi-skilled labour.

Many secretarial jobs are for bilingual or trilingual secretaries with word processing experience (an agency usually tests your written language and word processing skills).

To be employed by a temporary agency, you must be eligible to work in Spain and



have a social security card. You must usually register, which entails completing a registration form and providing a curriculum vitae and references (you can register with any number of agencies). **Always ensure you know exactly how much, when and how you will be paid.** Your salary should include a payment in lieu of holidays and a deduction for unemployment insurance. Due to the long annual holidays in Spain and maternity leave, companies often require temporary staff, and a temporary job can frequently be used as a stepping stone to a permanent position.

Agencies are listed in the yellow pages under *Trabajo Temporal: Empresas* or *Selección de Personal* and most have websites where you can search for jobs (e.g. www.adecco.es, www.flexiplan.es, www.interempleo.com, www.manpower.es and www.temps.es).

Several agencies specialise in finding employment for foreigners fluent in at least English and Spanish, mainly on the Costa del Sol and in Gibraltar. These include Exposure Career Network (www.exposure-eu.com), offering a comprehensive list of vacancies throughout the country and Gibraltar; JobtoasterSpain (☎ 952 587 453, www.jobtoasterspain.com), offering vacancies in several locations, including the Costa del Sol, Barcelona, Cadiz and Granada; Recruit Spain (☎ 952 667 986, www.recruitspain.com), with job opportunities on the Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol and in Gibraltar; and Wemploy (☎ 956 785 320, www.wemploy.com), with vacancies on the Costa del Sol and in Gibraltar. All websites also offer comprehensive information about working in Spain.

Executive recruitment companies ('headhunters') are common in cities and large towns and have traditionally been used by large Spanish companies to help recruit staff, particularly executives, managers and professionals. Agents place advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers and trade magazines but don't usually mention the client's name (not least to prevent applicants from approaching the company directly, thus depriving the agency of its fat fee). Unless you're an outstanding candidate with half a dozen degrees, six languages and years of experience (but still under 30), sending an

unsolicited CV to a headhunter is usually a waste of time.

There are recruitment agencies in many other European countries which recruit executives, managers and professionals for employers in Spain.

TEACHING & TRANSLATING

English teachers are in huge demand in Spain, where learning English (and other languages) has become extremely popular in the last decade. There are over 20,000 English-language teachers in Spain and, due to the constant demand and high turnover, some schools don't insist on formal teaching qualifications and a graduate native English speaker can often get a job without other qualifications. Nevertheless, anyone with a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) certificate is at a distinct advantage.

Other teaching jobs are few and far between in Spain, and Spanish or equivalent EU qualifications are usually required to teach in state schools. Jobs are also available in international and foreign schools teaching American, British and other foreign children. Teaching jobs in Spain are advertised in the *Times Educational Supplement* (Fridays) and through the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), 21B Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 3EL (☎ 01730-268244, www.ecis.org). For more information about teaching English, obtain a copy of the monthly *EL Gazette* (UK ☎ 020-7481 6700, www.elgazette.com) – one of the best resources for English teachers.

Private Language Schools

There are numerous private language schools in Spain (which has the largest number of language schools of any country in Europe) offering English classes for adults and children. The quality of schools and rates of pay vary considerably, and contracts should be carefully examined before committing yourself. Salaries

are low – usually between €800 and €1,200 a month or around €8 an hour, although board and lodging may be subsidised by the school (and you can supplement your earnings by giving private lessons). Hours are long and anti-social and schools occasionally exploit teachers.

Teachers are usually employed on short-term contracts, which may run parallel with school terms (September to June). Many jobs, particularly those in smaller schools, are advertised locally only and those advertised abroad tend to be for the larger schools, international agencies and government institutions. Several recognised international language schools have branches in Spain, including Berlitz, International House and Linguarama, although they often require applicants to attend their own teacher-training courses.

Information about language schools is provided by Spanish consulates or you can write to the Association of Language Teaching Institutions in the region you wish to teach in (e.g. in Andalusia, the Asociación de Centros de Enseñanza de Idiomas de Andalucía, C/Asunción, 52, 41011 Sevilla (☎ 954 274 517, 🌐 www.aceia.es). The organisation TESOL-Spain also offers information about English-language teaching in Spain, including schools, contracts and teaching resources (🌐 www.tesol-spain.org). Language schools are listed in yellow pages under *Idiomas* or *Escuelas de Idiomas*.

The British Council

The British Council (🌐 www.britishcouncil.org) recruits English-language teachers and supervisory staff for two-year placements in its language centres in Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca, Segovia and Valencia. It's necessary to have an RSA diploma or PGCE in TEFL and two years' experience for most positions. For managerial posts, a postgraduate qualification and a minimum of five years' experience are required. For further information contact the British Council by phone (UK ☎ 0161-957 7755) or online (🌐 www.britishcouncil.org) – the website includes vacancies and allows online applications. The British Council in Spain

(☎ 932 419 977, 🌐 www.britishcouncil.org/spain) can also provide a list of major English-language schools in Spain.

Private Tuition

There's high demand for private English teachers in Spain and many teachers employed in language schools supplement their income by giving private lessons. You can advertise in local schools, universities and retail outlets and, once you're established, additional students can usually be found through word of mouth. You could also try placing an advertisement in a Spanish newspaper or magazine. The rate for private lessons varies considerably with the city or area and the competition – between €10 and €30 an hour.

☑ SURVIVAL TIP

The demand for private lessons is particularly strong during the summer months, from parents of children who failed their end-of-term English examination.

Language Assistants

The language assistants' scheme enables students from the UK and over 30 other countries to spend a year working in a school or college in Spain assisting language teachers. Assistants spend 12 to 15 hours a week in the classroom under the supervision of the English (or other language) teacher, helping students improve their command of English and gain an insight into the Anglophone way of life. Graduates and undergraduates aged 20 to 30 of any discipline with the relevant foreign language qualification, e.g. at least A Level standard in the UK, are eligible to apply. Students aged 18 to 20 with an A Level or equivalent qualification in Spanish can apply for a position as a junior language assistant at secondary schools in Spain from January to June. Comprehensive information for language assistants and a guide to making applications can be found on the British Council website (🌐 www.britishcouncil.org).