Resettlement and humanitarian admission - Spain

Overview

Content updated and validated on: 1/09/2025

Relevant EU legislation

Spain is bound by the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation (URF) and applies its provisions directly.

National legislation

Law No 12/2009 of 30 October 2009 regulating the right of asylum and subsidiary protection (Asylum Law), First Additional Provision and art. 38. | Ley 12/202009 de 30 de octubre reguladora del derecho de asilo y la protección subsidiaria , Disposición Adicional Primera y art. 38.

Council of Ministers' Yearly Decision on the annual quota.

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authorities responsible for establishing resettlement and humanitarian admission policy	Council of Ministers; Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations Ministry of the Interior

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Identification and referral of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	a) and c) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may authorise the transfer to Spain of persons in need of international protection, who will formalize their application once in Spain.
Selection of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	a) Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Secretary of State for Migration | Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (MISSM), Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones (SEM) Spanish Asylum Office | Oficina de Asilo y Refugio (OAR), under the Ministry of the Interior | Ministerio del Interior b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may authorise the transfer to Spain of persons in need of international protection, who will formalize their application once in Spain. c) Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration; Oficina de Asilo y Refugio (OAR), under the Ministry of the Interior; Regional Governments with a sponsorship agreement.
Pre-departure assistance a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	a) and c) Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Secretary of State for Migration | Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (MISSM), Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones(SEM); IOM

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Travel arrangements a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	a) and c) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation | Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (MAEUEC) Ministry of Inclusion, Social security and Migrations IOM
Arrival and reception a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	National Police | Policía Nacional Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Secretary of State for Migration | Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (MISSM), Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones (SEM) Spanish Asylum Office (OAR) UNHCR IOM In the case of community sponsorship programmes, the regional governments of Pais Vasco and Navarra. Civil society organisations manage reception facilities and provide services based on an agreement with the MISSM.

Programmes currently in place

Currently, the following programmes are in place:

- resettlement programme based on annual quotas; and
- community sponsorship programmes which are part of the resettlement quota.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

- humanitarian admissions.

National quotas on resettlement and humanitarian admission

National commitments for resettlement, humanitarian admission and emergency quota

2-year Union Plan	National commitment for resettlement	National commitment for humanitarian admissions	Emergency quota
Period 2024-2025	2,400 refugees (1,200 refugees per year)	3,400 refugees	No emergency quota as such is available
Period 2026-2027			
Period 2028-2029			

Spain pledged to receive 2,400 refugees under resettlement and 3,400 refugees under humanitarian admission programmes for the period 2024-2025.

Procedural and practical arrangements

The admission procedure

Identification and referral

UNHCR carries out the first identification of refugees fulfilling the requirements for resettlement and presents results to both the Ministry of the Interior and the MISSM

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Information provision activities are carried out during this stage of the procedure through UNHCR as implementing partner in collaboration with whom info material is developed.

At this stage, UNHCR introduces Spain and the Spanish Resettlement program through a Q&A document elaborated in cooperation with the Secretariat of State for Migrations from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations. UNHCR uses this document to give refugees general information and information related to the process, the reception arrangements, rights, obligations and expectations. Resettlement team also has regular communication with UNHCR.

Selection

The criteria for the selection of the resettlement beneficiaries are specified in the Annual Program considering the priorities defined by UNHCR or the European Union. It could be referred to nationality, family and individual characteristics and are designed to help to achieve a better integration in Spain.

The resettlement program includes the organization of selection missions.

The Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations organise and take part in the selection missions, during which interviews are conducted to assess cases and analyse the profiles of candidates for resettlement. Candidates are interviewed to detect vulnerabilities or other circumstances to look for the better reception facilities and integration solutions. The Ministry of the Interior conducts preliminary interviews aimed at assessing the determination of international protection in Spain.

Selection missions may be carried out in person, with interviewers traveling to the country of first asylum where the candidates are located, or alternatively online, with interviews conducted virtually. In the latter case, information is provided, in part, through IOM as implementing partner. Information material is developed at national level in collaboration with IOM. The information is provided through a video, in which experiences of previous resettled people are delivered, and also in a written document.

During the selection missions, the Ministry of Inclusion staff provide information about the reception system in Spain and answer all the questions that the refugees may have.

EUAA operational tools for resettlement particularly developed for information provision (e.g. former EU-Frank tools) are not used at this stage.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Spain regularly develops and improve relevant tools and guidance. In terms of information provision, different materials for all stages of the procedure have been developed at national level (video, written documents, verbal information, presentations, etc.).

Regular contact with implementing partners (UNHCR and IOM) is maintained to coordinate information activities and identify weak points. Resettlement team also analyses new requirements to update documents and materials, to improve the information system in general.

Assessment

In addition to the assessment carried out by the Ministry of Inclusion, regarding vulnerability and integration capacity, and by the Asylum Office of the Ministry of the Interior, the security control of the candidates is carried out by the Secretariat of State for Security of the Ministry of the Interior. Health screenings are conducted by IOM once individuals have been selected for resettlement, and prior to their transfer to Spain.

Type of protection granted and residence permit issued after the admission procedure

Resettled refugees enjoy the same legal rights as those who have been granted international protection status following a procedure within the Spanish territory. These rights include permanent residence and labour permit, family reunification, socio-economic integration rights and access to public services as nationals.

In December 2020, the Spanish Supreme Court ruled that refugees who are resettled in Spain through a government approved programme, in cooperation with UNHCR, automatically become beneficiaries of refugee status (and not beneficiaries of subsidiary protection).

Pre-departure assistance

Pre-departure orientation activities are mainly carried out by IOM, although material used for this phase is developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Inclusion (see next section on information provision in resettlement). The resettlement unit of the Ministry of Inclusion take part, directly, in some of the PDO activities (Information provision).

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Before departure, refugees selected for resettlement are provided with a cultural orientation session that includes information about the national reception system in Spain.

Cultural orientation includes the provision of knowledge about the aspects of functioning in Spanish society, such as the information on education system, transportation, employment market, the operation of banking system. Selected refugees receive also information on what kind of assistance they could expect to receive upon arrival (e.g., interpretation services, education support, cultural courses that will be available for them after arrival to Spain, etc.)

In this phase, information activities are implemented through IOM, as partner organisation, following a hybrid modality. Info material used is also developed in collaboration with them (shared ownership).

No EUAA operational tools are used, as Spain develops its own tools, guidance and materials on info provision for resettlement.

At this stage of the process, IOM introduces Spain and its Resettlement programme through different documents, each of them focuses on a different topic (job expectations, rights once in Spain, education, health care...) and a video elaborated in cooperation with the Secretariat of State for Migrations (under Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations). IOM uses these documents in order to give selected refugees general information and information related to the process, the reception arrangements, rights, obligations and expectations.

The monitoring on the implementation of the programme is done through regular communication between the resettlement unit at that Ministry of Inclusion and IOM.

IOM and the Ministry of Inclusion, in collaboration, regularly update these documents. Recently they made the recording of a new informative video and a new brochure. The update will also include last changes approved in the Spanish Reception System.

Travel arrangements

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues the documentation required to travel (visa or *laissez passer*).

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

UNHCR and/or OIM give support by assisting with exit permits issued by the authorities in the country of first asylum.

Refugees will be escorted by IOM personnel. IOM is also responsible for the provision of information including aspects related to the travel phase. This information is provided face-to-face, and material is developed in collaboration with the implementing partner (shared ownership).

Pre-tranfer health activities for refugees bound for Spain will consist of Migration Health Assessment (MHA) and Pre-Embarkation Check (PEC), and will aim to:

- Detect medical conditions of public health and public safety concern;
- Identify other medical conditions requiring follow-up after arrival;
- Timely transmission of medical information to the receiving party to enable adequate reception and continuity of care;
- Determine Fitness to Travel (FTT) and identify travel requirements;
- Initiate treatment, including pre-departure stabilisation treatment if necessary;
- Provide preventive measures, such as vaccinations

In cases involving the transfer of individuals with medical vulnerabilities, a medical escort may accompany the person to ensure a safe transfer.

Urgent transfers have been carried out for individuals facing extreme risk in the country of first asylum, at the request of UNHCR and in coordination with all Spanish authorities, UNHCR and IOM. In such cases, pre-departure procedures are expedited to enable the fastest possible transfer.

Arrival and reception

Resettled persons are granted international protection before arriving to Spain. The notification of the decision is handed over upon arrival.

Reception and integration measures are the same for resettled refugees as for beneficiaries of international protection, so their reception in Spain will follow the same phases:

- in exceptional cases, an initial phase of evaluation and transfer
- phase 1: reception phase, up to 6 months
- phase 2: autonomy phase, up to 12 months

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

- In some exceptional cases, due to vulnerability, the total support period may be extended from 18 to 24 months.

Quality standards for the reception are based on general EUAA Guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators. Compliance with that quality standards is monitored through visits to the centres.

No distribution mechanism is in place to allocate reception for resettled refugees.

Resettled refugees may receive a financial aid provided by the Ministry of the Inclusion or the regional authorities, in cases of community sponsorship programmes. This financial allowance will vary through the reception phases (while in phase 1, resettled refugees will only receive a financial aid to cover out of pockets costs; during phase 2 they will have received a financial help to rent a home and cover other basic needs).

During the reception phase, information is provided directly by the national authorities (Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration) and the implementing partners (national NGOs). Info material for this stage is also developed in collaboration between both (shared ownership). Face-to-face sessions are organised at this stage.

Upon arrival at the airport, resettled persons receive notification of their refugee status from OAR staff and the national NGOs will accompany them to their accommodations, answering all the questions that refugees may have at this point.

Integration support to resettled and admitted refugees

In Spain, support for resettled individuals is primarily delivered through the International Protection Reception System, overseen by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration.

This system is designed to meet basic needs and facilitate the integration and autonomy of resettled individuals within Spanish society. Core services are provided through a nationwide network of reception centers and an individualised integration itinerary tailored by professionals within the system.

The integration itinerary includes:

• Emotional and psychological support

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

- Legal assistance
- Educational guidance
- Help securing housing and employment
- Training in Spanish language and cultural orientation
- Community engagement activities

Resettled individuals access the National Reception Program for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. While they are accommodated in the same reception centers as other applicants or beneficiaries, differences exist in the duration of their stay in each phase of the system. Notably, unlike asylum applicants who complete the entire integration process within the reception center, resettled individuals transition to a second phase — the autonomy phase — where they live independently in their own apartment. During this phase, they receive financial assistance to cover rent and maintenance costs, along with continued social, psychological, and other support provided by professionals within the reception system.

Resettlement programmes

Resettlement programme is based on annual quotas.

The resettlement programme of refugees is implemented through the procedural aspects of international protection by the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations carries out the integration part of beneficiaries. According to the Asylum Law (No 12/2009 of 30 October), the government should approve an Annual Resettlement Programme at the end of each year including the quota for the next year.

As a result, since the approval of the first PNR in 2011, more than 6,000 people from places such as Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Turkey or Costa Rica have benefited from Spanish PNRs.

Traditionally, the program has mainly benefited Syrian nationals who were displaced in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan fleeing the armed conflict that has ravaged the country since March 2011. As a novelty in 2023, due to the significant increase in displaced persons from Central and South America towards the Mexican-US border, the geographical scope of the PNR to be implemented in that year was expanded for the first time, as well as the nationalities of the beneficiaries, including Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Within the same Latin American context, it is also worth highlighting the creation of a complementary labor mobility pathway, in addition to resettlement, approved through the extension of the National Resettlement Program (PNR) for 2023, agreed upon by the Council of Ministers at its meeting on May 3, 2023, and which authorized the arrival of refugees, preferably in Central and South America, for the years 2023 to 2025, with profiles that would be determined according to their employability.

Taking into account the new circumstances of the international scene, and in accordance with the Recommendations of the European Commission and the UNHCR, Spain maintains its firm commitment to continue supporting resettlement as a safe route to international protection and as a vehicle for cooperation and solidarity with those countries that receive massive flows of refugees.

National Resettlement Plan approved for 2024 and 2025 established a quota of 1,200 refugees respectively.

Humanitarian admission programmes

During the last years, Spain has developed humanitarian admission schemes, for instance those related to evacuations from Afghanistan.

Complementary pathways

Community sponsorship schemes related to state-led resettlement programmes

In the last years, Spain has developed different refugee sponsorship programmes with the participation of civil society actors. For the implementation of community sponsorship programmes, national and regional authorities cooperate through the signature of an official agreement where it is established the main elements of the programmes and the competences of each authority.

In this context, the Secretary of State for Migrations together with the regional government of the Pais Vasco and UNCHR implemented a community sponsorship pilot project in partnership with civil society organisations and local communities (Community Sponsorship for the Reception and Integration of

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Refugee) in 2019 within the national resettlement programme. The pilot was designed as a model for reception and integration of resettled refugees in which the initiative and responsibility was jointly assumed by Public Administration and private actors (individuals, businesses, non-profit entities, etc), offering citizens the opportunity to directly participate in the integration process. Programme evaluation available here.

A new pilot Community Sponsorship Programme for the reception of refugees was established in 2021. The program will be carried out in five localities of the *Comunidad Valenciana* with the aim to facilitate the integration of newly arrived refugees. Read more here.

In 2021 and, again in April 2024, agreements to implement the Community Sponsorship program in Navarra were published. Information about this programme can be found here and here.

The reception and integration of resettled refugees under the sponsorship programs is characterised by the intensity of the support provided by volunteers and the civil society organizations that signed and implemented the sponsorship agreements.

Community sponsorship schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian admission programmes

Spain doesn’t have community sponsorship schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian admission programmes.

Community sponsorship schemes linked to other complementary pathways

Spain doesn’t have community sponsorship schemes linked to other complementary pathways.

It is worth mentioning though that since 2023 Spain has implemented its own version of a labor mobility program for refugees. The Spanish program was approved through an extension of the National Resettlement Program. As such, the Spanish program is closer to traditional resettlement (it can be characterized as employer-sponsored resettlement).

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Within the framework of this Program, sponsoring companies provide employment offers in Spain to beneficiaries and may assume financing commitments related to installation, transportation, or other expenses.

The Spanish labor mobility program for refugees is scheduled to remain in effect until December 31, 2025.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.