



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LIFE SCIENCE AND HEALTH IN SPAIN:

The silver economy's opportunities

1. Introduction: Spain

Spain is the world's 14th largest economy in terms of GDP and 5th largest in the European Union. In terms of domestic markets, Spain is one of the most attractive in Europe, with more than 46 million inhabitants. Also, Spain received around 75 million tourists in 2016 (2.3 million are Dutch visitors). In terms of purchasing power, the Spanish market is larger than many of the more consolidated economies or the dynamic emerging ones. The Spanish per capita income is around 22.500 euros.

Spain also could be an optimal port of entry with privileged access to the entire Mediterranean area, North Africa and Latin America. Many Spanish companies operate on five continents and are known all over the world. Indeed, Spain is the world's 11th largest investor in terms of stock and is the 2nd largest investor in Latin America.

2. The Spanish Health market: Population ageing

The current data for Spain show the share of the population aged 65 and over to currently stand at 18%, equal to over 8 million people, of whom approximately 25% are aged over eighty. Furthermore, the projections made in 2015 by the Spanish National Statistics Office suggest the over-65s will make up more than 30% of the population by 2050 (almost 13 million people) and the number of over-eighties will exceed 4 million, representing more than 30% of the total adult population.

Besides, the ageing process is also a fact in the rest of the European countries. We have to take into account that many European pensioners decided to set in Spain as a second home. Spain has the largest number of second homes of any EU state, with a high level of indigenous second home ownership as well as transnational second home owners from other EU states.

The European retirees have various motives for choosing Spain as the destination that are indisputable:

- Spain offers low cost, high quality medical treatment.
- Waiting times are notably shorter, compared to the EU average.
- Spain is renowned for its increased life expectancy and healthy lifestyle and cuisine.
- Combined treatment in Spain with a holiday to Europe's favorite holiday destination. The slogan: "There's no better place to recuperate!"
- Budget flights and low accommodation costs help keep the overall cost of the trip down.

The ageing effect on society in general and the individual's immediate surroundings also need to be considered for new business opportunities. These are issues that are connected to older people's dependence "Ageing is a multifactorial and multifaceted issue".

With this Ageing process, disability and illness line, the Spanish government must aim to promote research efforts in various disciplines that address these problems. This means addressing biomechanical, social and psychological issues, as well as the biomedical dimension.

3. The Health Spanish market: Health tourism destination

Spain's health industry is embracing the idea of developing a health tourism agenda. Last year Health Tourism in Europe generated 2.4 billion euros, 40% of the worldwide earnings. The third edition of FITUR Health was held last January. There were, a B2B workshop for exhibitors to network with a selection of purchasers invited from tourist sending countries that represent medical opinion leaders, national healthcare organizations, providers, specialized international travel agencies and insurance companies.

Spain's Government, together with the health industry, has developed a health tourism agenda with several plans and an overview of opportunities (e.g.: "Turismo de salud en España" and "The Comprehensive National Tourism Plan, 2012-2015").

It concerns visitors who travel abroad to receive treatment for an ailment or medical condition, or for cosmetic surgery. Any organization or company involved in the Health Tourism sector will employ fully licensed medical professionals and procedures are carried out in a registered medical facility. More information: [Professional recognition](#) and [Scientific societies and professional colleges and associations](#).

4. Healthcare System

The Spanish health care system is mostly in the hands of the regions. Despite the decentralized character of the system, eligibility depends on the general regulations of the Central government. Autonomous communities (ACs, i.e.: regional governments) are in charge of the process of accreditation of coverage which is decided in each case by the Social Security authorities dependent on Central government. All of them respect the principle of universal health care in the framework of the Spanish Constitution and State General Health Care and Social Security Laws, extending it not only to the Spanish citizens contributing financially to the system, but also to EU temporary residents and non-residents (non-EU residents, including illegal immigrants are not fully covered) . There is also a Common Basket of services of the National Health System that has to be delivered to the whole population covered.

Spain has a total of 787 hospitals of which 433 are private (55%, 41% of the private hospitals are profit based). In total these hospitals provide 159.297 beds, 65.9% of these beds are provided by the state. More information: [NHS Primary Healthcare Centers Catalogue](#) and [National Catalogue of Hospitals](#).

In Spain, health care for older adults is, as for people of all ages, provided through the National Health System. Presently, everyone is assigned a health center and is served there for free, covered by Social Security. For those aged 65 and older, pharmaceuticals are free of charge. There are both public and private acute care

hospitals and long-term care facilities. Public hospitals are free but may entail waiting for treatment. More information: [National Health System Spain](#).

The social services network for older adults includes (a) home care services and telecare, (b) day care services: senior citizens' centers and clubs for older adults and day care centers for dependent older adults, and (c) residential care services including residential centers and sheltered housing. More information: [Imsero](#).

5. Other Health issues

Biotechnology sector in Spain: Spain has the 2nd largest number of biotech related companies in the world, according to the latest OECD data. 554 companies worked exclusively in biotechnology, while over 2,800 companies used biotechnology in some of their processes. There were over 170,000 jobs in the sector, more than 9,000 of which were in biotechnology R&D. In terms of the sectorial distribution of biotech companies, **most of them work in human health (62%)** and the food sector (27%). Most of these biotechs are located in Catalonia (19.4%), followed by Madrid (17.5%), Andalusia (15.5%) and Valencia (10.1%).

- Spain is considered as a leader in personalized medicine and the development of innovative drugs for the treatment of cancer, Alzheimer's, autoimmune and infectious diseases. Spain is also the European leader in GMO crops.
- Spain is in the top ten in Europe for drug development according to the latest data of the Beyond Borders Report.

More information: [Biospain](#).

ASEBIO: With the support of the Spanish Ministry for Industry (MITYC), Asebio has set an ambitious biotech applications communications program getting the word out about biotech solutions available to Spain's traditional industry sectors. The objective is to offer "bio-solutions" relating to: bioprocess (chemical, textile, foodstuff, **pharmacy**, etc.), quality control technologies, security and traceability based on biotechnology. A network of technological advisors has been created and will carry out technological analyses to determine where biotech solutions could be implemented.

There are 284 organizations that work in the biotech industry, see: [ASEBIO](#).

Pharmaceuticals: The Spanish Pharmaceutical sector employs 40.000 directly and 95.000 indirectly, there are 4.449 that work in the sector's R&D in Spain. The pharmaceutical market can be a great opportunity for the Spanish global market.

For four reasons:

- Innovation: pharmaceutical market is the first sector in innovation. In addition, the probability of death is reduced when the more innovative the drugs are.

- Productivity: it is the second most productive in the country, more than 50% higher than the industry average.
- Export: it is ranked fifth in exportation.
- Employment: it is a significant source of employment.

More information: [Farmaindustria and Self-Regulation System](#)

6. Business Opportunities

Spain is facing a scenario that provides an opportunity for Dutch companies that offer health solutions.

Opportunities:

- Medical services and tourist centers in Spain attract international patients by adapting their working processes to the language and culture of international patients. Medical tourism is not reserved exclusively for large hospitals. Specialization and personalized services are the two competitive advantages of SMEs that define the success of medical facilitator.
- Health tourists spend ten times more than the standard tourist in Spain. There are several success stories of Dutch companies that are doing business at the Spanish coast (Valencia, Murcia, etc.), offering personalized attention health services to foreign people. Spain has a good health system, warm temperatures and competitive prices, so the country finally sees the sector as a great business opportunity.
- Due to an increase of the healthcare products and services demand as a consequence of the ageing process, the Spanish healthcare sector should grow to further in medical specialization, among which are: cardiology, oncology, urology, orthopedics, ophthalmology, dentistry and so on. In this sense, according to *Invest in Spain* (Spanish investment agency), the Spanish healthcare system needs to renew equipment and devices that have become obsolete.
- Many biopharmaceutical treatments will be in high demand, for example treatments for diseases related to the ageing process such as cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis and so on.

7. Sources

[National Statistics Office \(INE\)](#) and [Invest in Spain](#)

Interesting links: [Healthcare Tourism](#), [Spaincares](#), [Healthcare Technology and The Silver Economy](#)

Country: Spain

[Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism](#)

[National Health System Spain](#)

More information:

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