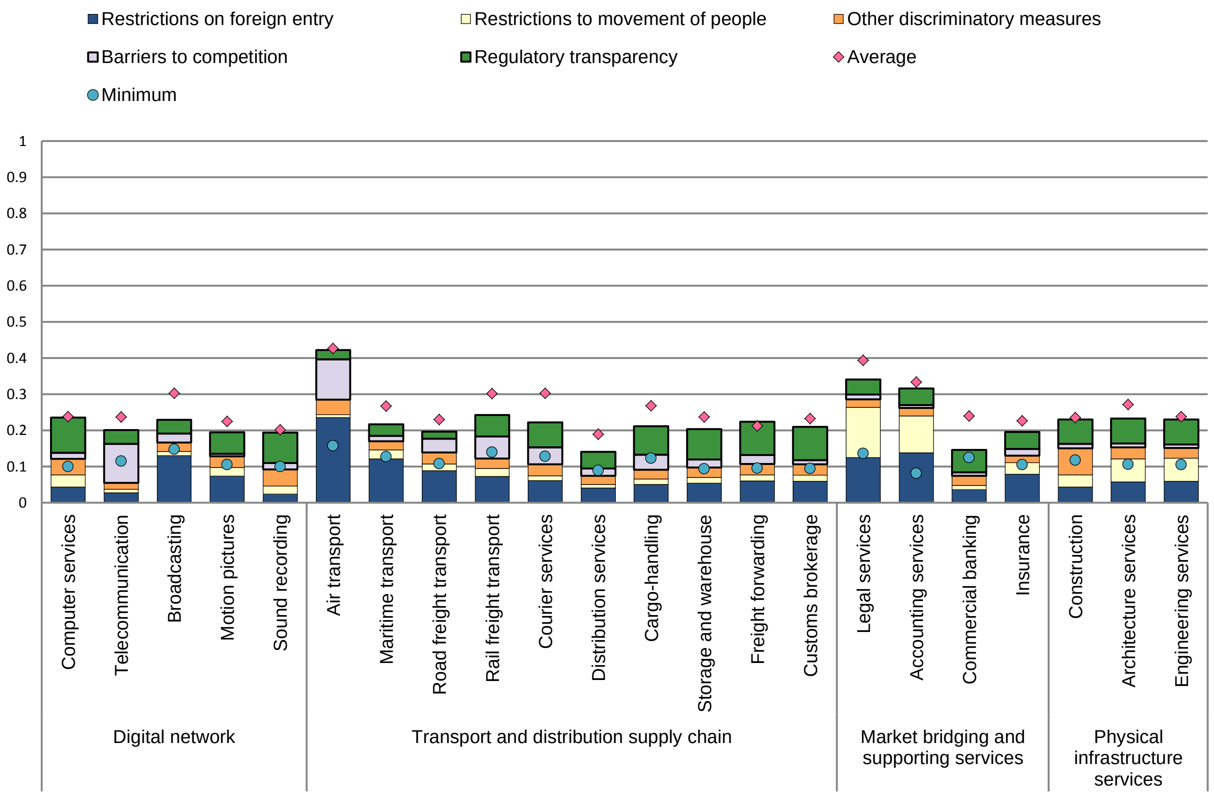
OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Spain

Spain exported services worth USD 127 billion and its services import value was USD 71 billion in 2016. Travel and other business services are the largest services exporting importing sectors. Spain's score on the STRI in the 22 sectors is shown below, along with the average and the lowest score among the 44 countries included in the STRI database for each sector.

STRI by sector and policy area



Note: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. They are calculated on the basis of the STRI regulatory database which contains information on regulation for the 35 OECD Members, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Russia and South Africa. The STRI database records measures on a Most Favoured Nations basis. Preferential trade agreements are not taken into account. Air transport and road freight cover only commercial establishment (with accompanying movement of people).

Horizontal policy measures

Spain has a lower STRI score than the sample average in 21 out of 22 sectors. Spain has a liberal regime on the movement of people, although the duration of stay in the country is limited to 24 months on their first entry permit for contractual services suppliers and independent services suppliers. The standards for the cross-border transfer of personal data are set at the EU level. Transfers to non-EEA economies can only take place when these ensure an adequate level of protection that is substantially similar to that required in the EU or when private data processors, both senders and receivers, establish various safeguards approved by the data protection authorities. Public procurement regulations rely on the principle of non-discrimination, but foreign suppliers are required to present documentation showing that their country of origin grants reciprocity to Spanish companies. There is also at least one major state-owned enterprise in banking, broadcasting, courier services, and rail freight transport. In banking, public ownership stems from recapitalisations during the financial crisis.

The sectors with the relatively lowest STRI scores

Courier services, commercial banking and distribution services are the three sectors with the lowest score relative to the average STRI across all countries. Courier services are fully liberalised with only minor regulations that could impede competition. In banking, the Government maintains majority ownership in BFA-Bankia, Spain's fourth largest bank, but there are no limits to ownership by foreign investors. In distribution services, the score is mainly driven by restrictions that apply across the economy.

The sectors with the relatively highest STRI scores

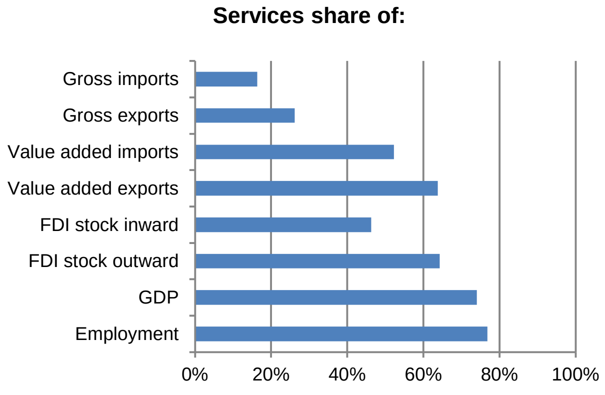
Air transport, computer services and logistics freight forwarding are the three sectors with the highest score relative to the average STRI across all countries. In the air transport services sector, Spain has foreign equity restrictions as a result of common European Union (EU) regulation on air services. Pursuant to this regulation, non-EU nationals cannot own more than 49% in local airlines. Lease of foreign aircrafts with crew from outside the EU can be refused on grounds of reciprocity or conditioned on approval granted on the basis of economic needs. An EU-wide exemption of certain airline arrangements from competition law, and regulations on airport slot allocation and slot trading further contribute to the score in this sector.

Computer services and freight forwarding services are mostly affected by horizontal restrictions. The state-owned rail transport operator Renfe is a major actor in the rail freight sector through its subsidiary LogiRail, operating in the entire supply chain process.

Recent policy changes

As of 2014, labour market tests were lifted for contractual services suppliers. At the same time, their maximum duration of stay was extended from 12 months to 24 months. Also in 2014, the duration of stay for intra-corporate transferees and independent services suppliers was shortened from 60 months to 36 months and 24 months, respectively.

Efficient services sectors matter



Services account for 26% of Spain's gross exports, but 64% in value added terms. This indicates that Spain's exports of goods rely intensively on services inputs. Services also account for three-quarter of GDP and employment, which implies that earnings and aggregate demand depend significantly on productivity in services sectors. The information and communication technology revolution opens new opportunities for inclusive growth in a services economy like Spain. Innovation and adoption of technology relies on access to knowledge and to the networks, people, goods and services that carry the knowledge around the world. In this context, Spain could benefit from more open markets for services trade through the temporary movement of natural persons.

More information

» Access all of the country notes, sector notes and interactive STRI tools on the OECD website at http://oe.cd/stri
» Read more about services trade policies and their impacts in this publication: Services Trade Policies and the Global Economy
» Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org