



Implementing Education Policies – Spain SUPPORT FOR TACKLING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN SPAIN

A collaborative project between the OECD, the European Commission (DG Reform) and the Spanish Government

Context and objectives

Spain has made significant efforts to reduce the high early school leaving (ESL) rates, which have fallen considerably in recent years. However, Spain remains the country with the highest rate of ESL in the European Union (EU), at around 16% in 2020, above the EU average (10.2%) and the EU medium-term target (9% in 2030). There are many reasons for the persistence of high levels of ESL in Spain, and they are social, economic and educational in nature. The complex way in which these elements interact at the level of Autonomous Communities makes the design of a single strategy at national level difficult. ESL may be associated with high levels of school repetition, low socio-economic status of students' families, low motivation and a low social value placed on education, or the existence of incentives to take a job in low-skilled economic sectors. The relevance and kind of interaction between these and other factors vary across Spain.

Furthermore, the administrative decentralisation of education policies in Spain has led to a wide variety of responses, approaches and actions by each regional government. While this has generated a number of good practices, there is a need to improve the dissemination of such information and co-operation at regional and national levels for peer learning as part of the joint effort to reduce ESL and to achieve a greater accumulation of highly qualified human capital.

In December 2020, the Spanish Government approved a new education law (LOMLOE) which aims to bring a more inclusive approach to school performance and will develop a regulatory framework to prevent ESL. In order to contribute to the development of such a framework, the Spanish Government requested technical assistance from the European Commission (DG Reform) to design an action plan adapted to the national context to tackle ESL levels in all Autonomous Communities. The work will be carried out jointly by the OECD, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and DG Reform. This work will be based on previous analyses of the Spanish case and the identification of good practices at regional and European level.

Main project activities

To achieve its objectives, the project will include the following activities:

- In-depth analysis and review of relevant documentation and databases to understand the reality of ESL in Spain at national level and by Autonomous Community.
- Interviews and discussions with relevant actors in the system by various means (video-conference, phone calls, email, group and individual interviews, and field visits).
- Short and concise reports on:
 - initial analysis of the state of ESL in Spain
 - results of the interviews with relevant actors in the Spanish education system



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- identification and relevance of successful case studies at the Spanish and European level
- analysis of the results of the working groups with agents from the Autonomous Communities.
- Discussion workshop with international (European) experts.
- Elaboration and discussion of an action plan for the implementation of a co-ordinated policy to tackle ESL in all the Autonomous Communities of Spain.

Main results of the project

Analysis of ESL in Spain and measures for their prevention and correction	Discussion and learning events with international experts	Workshops for discussion and learning among relevant agents from all the Autonomous Communities	Proposal for an action plan to tackle ESL in Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-depth analysis of the main variables that determine the existence and evolution of ESL in Spain. ● Identification and study of successful policies to tackle ESL at regional level in Spain and at European level. ● Analysis of the main characteristics that should be included in a plan to tackle ESL in Spain that is sensitive and adaptable to the needs of all the country's Autonomous Communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning from the perspective of other European countries with a similar context to Spain. ● In-depth discussion (at an event/ seminar) with international experts on the relevance of their experience to the challenges of ESL in Spain. ● Accompaniment of international experts throughout the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General discussion and presentation of the perspectives of relevant actors in the education system of all the Autonomous Communities on ESL in their territories. ● Discussion focused on the incorporation and adaptation of international and Autonomous Communities' experience in Spain on co-ordinated policies to tackle ESL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elaboration, presentation and discussion of a plan to tackle ESL in all Autonomous Communities in a co-ordinated manner and based on national and European best practices.

Relevance for other countries

The work carried out through this project can be of relevance to other countries, not only in the European environment, but also to anyone who wants to learn about the development and improvement of public policies to reduce ESL. In particular, this project can offer other countries a rigorous perspective on the following aspects: 1) identification and analysis of the main variables that determine the emergence and evolution of ESL at national and regional levels; 2) analysis of factors that can be integrated in an education policy to reduce ESL; 3) co-ordination of policies to tackle ESL in a decentralised territorial setting.

For more information:

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