

Living and working in

Catalonia



 Generalitat de Catalunya
Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya



UNIÓ EUROPEA

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Catalonia, located in the north east of the Iberian peninsula, covers approximately 32,000 km² and has a population of some 6 million (around 188 people per km²). It is an autonomous region of Spain, with its own regional government, the Generalitat de Catalunya.

It is bordered to the east by the Mediterranean, to the north by France and Andorra, and the west and south by the regions of Aragon and Valencia. This strategic location has led to close relations with other Mediterranean countries and those of continental Europe.

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and one of the Mediterranean's leading cities. The city and surrounding area account for almost half of Catalonia's population.

In terms of its administration, Catalonia is divided into 4 provinces (Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida and Girona) made up of 41 counties.

Although Barcelona and its surrounding area account for nearly half the population of Catalonia, many people also live in the coastal areas. Nonetheless, there are other important cities that have undergone important economic and demographic growth in recent decades: Girona, Tarragona, Lleida, Tortosa, Vic, Manresa, Figueres, Sabadell, Terrassa and Igualada, amongst others.

Despite not being an area with a great wealth of natural resources, Catalonia has a very high quality of life in absolute terms.

Industry has been one of Catalonia's economic bases since the start of the industrial revolution, which it pioneered. Textile manufacturing has given way to high tech industries: chemicals, pharmaceuticals, precision mechanics, and, more recently, car building and its auxiliary industries, railway materials, petro-chemicals and electronics, amongst others; and we mustn't forget the publishing, graphic-design and fashion industries. The construction sector has played - and continues to play - an important role, often linked to tourism.

Commerce is another key sector in the region's economy. Again, in the tertiary sector, we also need to highlight transport and communications, PR and advertising companies and, above all, the hotel and catering sector, linked to the boom in tourism seen since the 1960.

LANGUAGE

Catalan is the language of Catalonia, where it officially co-exists alongside Spanish. It is a European neo-Latin language that has always had a great vitality, and a rich and long literary tradition.

Catalan is also spoken, with its corresponding dialects, in Valencia, the Balearic Islands, Andorra, a small area on the western border of Aragon, in the town of Alghero (Sardinia) and in Languedoc-Rousillon, which is also known as Catalunya Nord or Northern Catalonia. So Catalan is spoken by some ten million people.

CURRENCY

Since 1/1/2002 the legal currency has been the euro, which definitively replaced the peseta from 1/3/2002.

TIME

Catalonia is in the central European time zone, ie one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

INTERNATIONAL PHONE CALLS

From abroad: - 34 - the 9-digit phone number.

From Catalonia, phoning abroad: - 00 - country code - local code - the phone number.

To call reverse charges from Catalonia, you have to dial 1008.

For local directory enquires in Catalonia, dial 11818. If you need international directory enquiries, dial 11825.

You will find plenty of public telephones in the streets with instructions on how to use them. They can be used to make direct calls or via an operator. Many of these public telephones accept both coins and the following cards for payment: phone cards, for 6 and 12 euros, which are on sale at tobacconists and post offices; the Personal Card, issued by the phone company Telefónica, and American Express and Diners Club.

POSTAL SYSTEM

You can buy stamps for your letters and postcards from tobacconists or post

offices. When buying stamps it is advisable to state the destination and type of letter you're sending to make sure you buy the right amount of stamps. There are easily identifiable post boxes in the streets where you can post your letters. To send small packages (when addressed abroad they should not exceed 2 kg) go to a post office, where they will tell you how much you need to pay based on the weight of the package and whether you want to send it by airmail or surface mail.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergencies / General help: 112

Medical emergencies: 061

Civil Defence: 1006

- **Police services:**

National Police: 091

Local Police: 092

Mossos d'Esquadra (regional police force): 088

Civil Guard: 062

- **Transport:**

RENFE railways: www.renfe.es

Booking information: 902 240 202

International information: 902 243 402

Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya regional railways:

www.fgc.es Inf. 932 051 515

Airports: www.aena.es

Roadside assistance: www.dgt.es Telephone 900 123 505

www.gencat.net - traffic

If you are outside Catalonia: 902 400 012

- **General information**

Citizen helpline: 012

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FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS

EEA citizens can move, live and work freely in any member country, being entitled to the same rights as the nationals of the country in question. This

freedom of movement also extends to their family members, regardless of their nationality.

Thus, if you are an EU national, you can access any professional activity in Catalonia, whether as an employee or self-employed, without having to apply for a work permit and enjoying the same rights as Spanish nationals in terms of salaries, working conditions, access to housing, professional training, social security and unions.

RESIDENCE PERMITS

If you are going to live and work in Catalonia, you can do so without a residence permit.

Those with a valid national passport or identity card can live in Catalonia without a residency permit:

- Nationals from European Union member states that have signed the European Economic Area Agreement or from the Swiss Confederation, whether employees or self-employed, students or those benefiting from the right to reside here permanently.
- Relatives of those referred to in the above paragraph, regardless of their nationality; their spouse, provided they are not legally separated; their children and those of their spouse, provided they are not legally separated, under the age of 21, or over 21 if they are financially dependent upon them; and their parents and those of their spouse, provided they are not legally separated, who are financially dependent upon them, with the exception of the parents of students and those of their spouses.
- Nationals of EU member states, other states that have signed the European Economic Area Agreement or from the Swiss Confederation who work in Catalonia and maintain their residency in one of these states to which they return each day or, at least, once a week.

Despite the above, in any of the aforementioned cases, should anyone apply for a residence permit, the administrative bodies are obliged to inform them that it is not required. Nonetheless, should they apply, the corresponding residence permit or certificate shall be issued.

You can get more information on this subject by calling 900 150 000 (the free number for the Interior Ministry telephone enquiries), or 00 34 915 372 423 from abroad.

Before travelling to Catalonia, you should ask for information regarding your specific situation from the Spanish Embassy or Consulate in your country. (<http://www.mae.es/mae/textos/ambaixades/relalf.htm>)
On arrival, it is advisable to register at your country's Embassy or Consulate, indicating your place of residence in Catalonia. (<http://www.mae.es/mae/textos/missions/default.htm>)

3 THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET IN CATALONIA

The Catalan economy grew by 3.2% in the first quarter of 2005. The year-on-year increase in Gross Domestic Product for Spain was 3.3%, just 0.1% higher than in Catalonia.

Knowing the macroeconomic data for Catalonia allows for the contextualising of the evolution of the employment market.

Growth of the Catalan economy has followed similar lines to that of Spain as a whole. Both are affected by the same factors, such as the rise in the value of the euro, the weakness of European demand or the loss of competitiveness due to inflation in comparison to the other European countries.

The most dynamic sectors that stand out are construction and services, whilst agriculture has seen production fall. Construction is the most dynamic sector of the Catalan economy, with year-on-year growth of 5.0%.

The Active Population Survey (EPA) for the second quarter of 2005 estimated that 3,276,600 people were employed in Catalonia, 170,100 more than

in the second quarter of 2004 (an increase of 5.5% in relative terms). In terms of gender, 58% of those employed were men and 42%, women.

In terms of area, the most important employment growth rates were to be seen in Tarragona (6.4%) and Barcelona (6.1%), followed by Lleida (5%), whereas employment in Girona remained fairly stable, with an increase of 0.5%.

The employment rate for those between 16 and 64, some 70.3%, increased by 2.1 points in comparison with the previous year and, for the first time, reached the employment rate set by the European Union for the year 2010 (70%).

It should be highlighted that only four member states, like Catalonia, have reached this target rate for 2010; they are: Denmark, Holland, the UK and Sweden.

In general terms, the current Employment Market is characterised by:

- Fall in agricultural sector activity.
- Decentralising of production with an increase in small businesses in large urban centres.
- Strong competition between businesses.
- The need to learn and adapt to technological changes in many professions and trades.
- The service sector is that which employs most people.
- An increase in production, but a decrease in employment.
- Mechanisation, robots, industrial automation.

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FINDING WORK IN CATALONIA

To find work in Catalonia, you need to use all the resources available (acquaintances, relatives, press, information centres, professional associations, etc.) as well as the Eures network.

If you know either of the official languages spoken in Catalonia (Catalan or Spanish), you will find it easier to get work here.

THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE:

The Catalan Employment Service (SOC) is the regional government body responsible for employment.

The SOC offers services for Catalan and European companies and workers to aid regional and social cohesion and progress in Catalonia.

To register with the Catalan Employment Service (SOC), you first need to visit your local SOC office.

CATALAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

The Catalan Employment Service has a network of employment offices spread throughout Catalonia.

You must be over 16 and live in Catalonia to use the SOC office's services. You will have to present a valid ID card or passport (with the exception of those nationals from EU expansion countries). The SOC will inform you about job offers, employment creation measures, professional occupational training, applications for benefits, etc.

You have to register in person:

- Providing you have a passport or identity card, the office will register you provisionally which will allow you to apply for job offers.
- Apply for a Tax Number at the local police station.
- Presenting the Tax Number at the SOC office.

Once the registration has been completed, you need to renew your application periodically at the set times and communicate any changes in your personal or professional situation.

You can find the addresses of the SOC offices here: www.oficinatreball.net

If you have applied for the transfer of benefits from your country, you have to register at your local SOC office within 7 days of leaving your country.

EURES (European Employment Services) is a cooperation network set up between the European Commission, the public employment services of the member states, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland and (in border areas) the organisations representing social agents. Business organisations aiding access to job offers can consult a database of job offers in European Economic Area countries and another database providing general information on the living and working conditions in these countries.

It may be useful to contact the EURES network in your country, where they can provide information on job offers and other information of interest to aid your decision and/or guide you in your plans to move.

You can find general information about the EURES network on the internet <http://europa.eu.int/> and on job offers at <http://www.eures-jobs.com>

TEMP AGENCIES

These are private companies that offer temporary employment, contracting workers to offer their services to other companies.

The temp agencies operating in Catalonia are registered at the regional government's Department of Employment and Industry. www.gencat.net/treball

Temp agencies that operate beyond the borders of Catalonia are registered with the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. <http://www.mtas.es/empleo/ett-OIA/inicio.htm>

PRESS

Almost all the newspapers have a daily selection of job offers, though most are to be found in the Sunday papers.

● **Barcelona**

La Vanguardia: <http://www.lavanguardia.es> www.servijob.com

El País: <http://www.elpais.es> www.excoge.com

El Periódico: <http://www.elperiodico.es/>

Diari Avui: <http://www.avui.com>

- **Tarragona**

Diari de Tarragona: <http://www.diaridetarragona.com>

- **Lleida**

Segre: <http://www.segre.com>

La Manyana: <http://www.lamanyana.es>

- **Girona**

Diari de Girona: <http://www.diaridegirona.com>

- **Newspapers specialising in job offers:** www.laboris.net

ASSOCIATIONS, GUILDS AND UNIONS

Other sources of information include the professional guilds and unions. Some professions in Catalonia have an Official College where those who wish to practise such professions have to register.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The chambers of commerce (Official Chamber of Commerce and Industry), both in the country of origin and in Catalonia, can be of help in looking for job offers. General Council of Catalan Chambers of Commerce. www.cambrescat.es

- In Barcelona: www.cambrabcn.es
- In Girona: www.cambra.gi
- In Lleida: www.cambralleida.com
- In Tarragona: www.cambratgn.com

If you need more business information on the other regions of Spain, you can make enquiries at Spain's Council of Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Shipping. www.camerdata.es

5.1 Social security

Spanish public administration guarantees social security protection through different bodies

- The National Social Security Institute (INSS) handles disability pensions and economic benefits derived from occupational illness and accidents at work, temporary occupational incapacity, maternity, retirement, etc.
- The Social Marine Institute (ISM) handles social protection for those working at sea and in the merchant navy.
- The Institute for Social Services and Migrations (IMERSO) provides care and additional social services, care for emigrants and non-contributory social benefits.
- The General Social Security Treasury (TSS) only handles the collection of contributions and control of affiliation.
- The State Public Employment Service (SPEE/INEM) handles unemployment benefits and grants.
- To register you need to have a personal social security number, which can be requested by the worker themselves from the Social Security Treasury offices.

All workers, whether employees or self-employed, have to be registered (affiliated) and contribute to the Spanish Social Security system.

For employees, the paperwork is handled by the company directly. The self-employed have to carry it out themselves. In both cases, affiliation or registration has to be completed before starting work.

When travelling to Catalonia, you need to be aware of the following forms, standardised in the EU, which accredit your position as a beneficiary of social security protection until you start working or come under the auspices of the Spanish system

Forms:

E-100 series - Entitlement to benefits for illness, maternity and postings

E-200 series - For the calculation and payment of pensions.

E-300 series - Entitlement to unemployment benefits.

E-400 series - Entitlement to family benefits.

These forms can be obtained, before leaving, from the corresponding Social Security body in your country.

You can get more information on the Spanish Social Security and its double affiliation system: the General System or Regime (industry and service employees) and Special Regimes (agriculture, self-employed, miners, fishermen and sailors, and domestic staff) on the internet. <http://www.seg-social.es>

5.2 Health

Being affiliated and paying contributions to Social Security entitles workers to free medical and hospital treatment from the public health system. This system also covers 40% of the cost of medical prescriptions, but the only dental treatments covered by the public system are extractions.

The health service in Catalonia is managed by the Catalan Health Service. European Union citizens who travel to Catalonia for a temporary stay can receive urgent health care by presenting the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and proof of identity (passport, identity card, etc.) at a local health centre or at the service required.

Before travelling to Catalonia, request information from the corresponding Social Security body in your country and demand the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which replaced the E-111 A and E-111 B forms from June 1 2004.

Once living in Catalonia, you need to apply for the Personal Health Card (TSI). This provides proof of your entitlement to health services and gives you access to public health system services, centres and benefits. To obtain the **TSI** you have to be registered with the Council where you live. Applications for the TSI have to be presented at your local Healthcare Centre (**CAP**).

For more information on the locations of CAPs, procedures, health services, overnight chemists, etc., you can call **902 111 444 Healthcare Hotline**. www.gencat.net/catsalut.

5.3 Unemployment benefits

The public unemployment benefits system is managed by the State Public Employment Service (SPEE/INEM). If you work in Catalonia and become unemployed, you need to register as a job seeker at your local Catalan Employment Service Office (OSOC). There they will inform you about the documentation needed to apply for unemployment benefits and when you will be entitled to receive them. Generally speaking, the minimum period of contributing before you are entitled to unemployment benefits is 12 months.

To find out the addresses of the SOC employment offices:

www.oficinatreball.net

www.gencat.net/treball

www.cat365.net

Other non-contributory social and health care is managed by the Catalan Institute of Social Services, ICASS. For more information, call 900 300 500 or visit the website. www.gencat.net/benestar

5.4 Transferring unemployment benefits

If you are receiving unemployment benefits or grants from your country, you can transfer them to another member state, so as to look for work there, for a period of up to 3 months; the requirements to do so are:

- To have been available to the Public Employment Service in your country of origin for at least 4 weeks before applying for the transfer.
- To communicate the actual date of departure, and Sec. Social.
- On arriving in Catalonia, to register with the SOC (Catalan Employment Service) within seven days of leaving your country of origin.
- Complete the E-303/5 form that you will have been given by the employment service in your country which provides proof of your entitlement to benefits.

You should take into account that the procedure may take up to 2 months.

We would recommend contacting the Eures advisors in your city before travelling to another country in the European Union.

You can find more information on this and other subjects related to mobility, as well as the addresses of Eures advisors in all EU countries, at www.europa.eu.int/eures

Finally, it is advisable to ask for the E-301 form before leaving a country where you have worked, so that periods during which you have made contributions can be taken into account when calculating possible benefits in another European Union country which you move to.

In Catalonia, you can ask for the E-303 and E-301 forms from the SOC employment offices.

For more information on all the contributory benefits that you are entitled to when working in Catalonia: illness, pensions, accidents at work, maternity, retirement, or disability, visit a Social Security Information Centre, call 900 166 565 (freephone) or go directly to the Provincial Headquarters of the National Social Security Institute.

Barcelona
Carrer Sant Antoni Maria Claret, 5
Tel. +34 932 849 358

Girona
Carrer Santa Eugenia, 40
Tel. +34 972 205 304

Lleida
Carrer Passatge Pompeio, 2
Tel. +34 973 700 700

Tarragona
Carrer Passeig de l'Escullera s/n
Tel. +34 977 259 637

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TAXATION

Taxation is always a complicated subject which requires expert advice. This section offers a brief and very general look at the taxes on earnings. We would recommend that you always consult the competent body for taxation

both in your own country and the destination country, as personal and family circumstances are often key when it comes to paying taxes.

As a general rule, if you reside in a country for more than 183 days in a given tax year, you should declare your earnings in this country, including all income, regardless of where it has come from, as you are considered a resident for tax purposes in this country.

Spanish taxation legislation meets the fundamental principle of non-discrimination, as established by Community law and the international agreements designed to avoid double taxation.

As with the majority of EU countries, the tax system is global, ie the various sources of income are taxed together, though here in Spain, there is the option of paying taxes individually or together with other members of the family unit.

The tax period coincides with the calendar year and the tax return has to be presented using the official form between May and June of the following year. As a general rule, you have to present this tax return if your income exceeds 22,000 euros annually (Income Tax 2004) and you are resident, for tax purposes, in Catalonia.

Generally speaking, the number of bands for taxation is gradually being reduced. Currently, there are 5 bands, the minimum being 15% and the maximum 45%. 60% of taxpayers are usually in the middle band of 25%.

There are different taxes in Catalonia: direct, indirect, special, local, taxing salaried activities, non-salaried activities, assets and consumption.

The direct tax that most affects workers is Income Tax (IRPF) which is a tax which taxes earnings obtained for work, professional or business activities and from assets.

IRPF is relative to the income, thus it is a progressive tax - the greater the income, the higher the percentage taxed. Collection of this tax is made bit by bit, through withholdings at source on earnings from work; thus, each monthly pay slip has an amount withheld for IRPF. If you are self-employed, you have to pay this amount to the tax office quarterly.

The other direct taxation that affects professional activities is Company Tax, which is currently set at 35%.

The most important tax on consumption is value added tax (IVA), which is set at 4% for staple goods and up to 16% for provision of services and imports.

The body in charge of taxation is the Tax Agency which provides advisors and telematic services to help with income tax returns.

TAXATION:

www.aeat.es

www.agenciatributaria.es

Offices in Catalonia:

Barcelona

Pl. Doctor Letamendi, 13-23

Tel. 932 911 100 Fax 934 510 286

Girona

Av Jaime I, 47

Tel 972 588 100 Fax 972 202 723

Lleida

Pl Cervantes, 17

Tel. 973 706 700

Tarragona

Rambla Nova, 93

Tel. 977 257 000 Fax 977 236 952

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WORKING CONDITIONS

Contracts

We would remind you that you have the same rights as Spanish workers when it comes to salaries, promotion, social security, working conditions,

affiliation, unions, etc.

The minimum legal working age in Catalonia is 16, though authorisation or express consent from parents or guardians is required for those under 18, unless they are legally independent.

Form: Despite the law in Catalonia allowing for verbal contracts, the vast majority of contracts are in writing, a form which is obligatory when the contract is for apprenticeships, training, specified works or services, part-time work, permanent occasional work, cover a set time (temporary) over 4 weeks and those formalised in the country for workers working for Spanish companies abroad.

Before signing a contract, carefully check the terms and conditions. Make sure you understand what is written in the contract perfectly. The employer may provide a copy in your language, if this is not the case you should get a translation.

Salary: The salary is set by collective bargaining or in the individual contract and is made up of the following fundamental concepts:

- Base salary.
- Pay supplements: seniority, bonuses, share in profits, travel expenses, etc.
- Workplace supplements: bonuses for arduous or dangerous work, toxicity, shifts, working at night, etc.
- Bonuses for maintenance, accommodation, production, etc.

The minimum general wage (SMI) is set annually by the government. For 2006, the SMI was set at 540.90 euros a month and 7,572.60 euros a year. For domestic staff who provide services paid for by the hour a minimum of 4.01 euros per hour worked was set, which includes the proportional part of extraordinary bonuses and holidays.

If less than a full working day is spent working, the salary is reduced in proportion to the time worked.

Duration and trial period: You should take into account that a works contract may set an indefinite (permanent) or set (temporary) trial period which must be specified in the contract. A trial period may be established for up to 6 months for qualified technicians and for up to 2 months for all other workers.

Working day, holidays and leave: The maximum length of the working

week is 40 hours, with no more than 9 hours in any one day. Overtime can never exceed 80 hours a year and it cannot be compulsory. It has to be paid back in time off or financially. Paid holidays can never be less than 30 days, including Saturdays and Sundays. There are 12 national holidays and 2 local holidays each year. You are entitled to 15 days of paid leave for getting married and between 16 and 18 weeks for maternity, depending on whether it is a multiple birth.

Collective bargaining: Companies with 15 employees are entitled to a union delegate and companies of 50 or more employees are entitled to a Workers' Committee.

Self-employed workers

If you want to be self-employed in Catalonia you should get in touch with a Spanish Consular Office in your country or the Chambers of Commerce if you are already in Catalonia.

The self-employed have to prove that they meet the requirements set and apply for the licences or authorisations required to carry out the activity in question. You have to apply for and obtain a residence permit, register for Economic Activities Tax (IAE) at the Tax Office and register for Social Security under the Special Regime for the Self-employed. It is the self-employed person who has to register for Social Security by visiting the Provincial Headquarters of the General Social Security Treasury or its regional offices within 30 calendar days of starting work.

www.mtas.es (Guia Laboral) (Employment Guide)

www.caras.org

www.ventanillaempresarial.org

8 HOUSING

It is advisable to know where you are going to stay in Catalonia before you leave your own country, thus avoiding possible complications. There are many possibilities. It is a question of your preferences and budget.

RENTAL

If you want to rent a flat during your stay in Catalonia, it is best to check

out the sections dedicated to the housing market in the newspapers. Notice boards at university faculties are also a good source of information.

You can also go to an estate agent (check in the Yellow Pages), who will require a down payment of a month's rent as a deposit and charge commission, which is also often a month's rent.

You need to sign a lease with the owner. The lease, which it is advisable to have on paper, should be on an "official contract form" on stamped paper that can be bought at tobacconists.

In virtually all cases, the residents of a building share the costs and services (doorman, cleaning, garden, pool, etc.). You need to check whether these charges are included in the lease.

If you have any kind of problem with the rental of your home, you can visit the Municipal Consumer Information Office (OMIC), the User and Consumer Associations or the Consumer Arbitration Boards.

The General Secretariat for Young People has a number of programmes and information relating to housing.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON HOUSING

There is the "My home" section on the CAT365 platform. You can find extensive and interactive information that can help make decisions when you come to move home. It also offers warnings about the things you need to take into account and offers information on the grants available and procedures required.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS

Students, whether at university or not, who have to travel to study have the following options: university halls, residences, flats, apartments, rooms in shared houses or youth hostels, alongside other initiatives offering support to help find accommodation.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGE SERVICE

These offices offer the following services: general information about renting accommodation, legal advice regarding rentals (the law on urban leases), management of all the procedures relating to renting accommodation, reception of applications, supervision of contracts and management of insurance.

HOUSING AID

Information on help for buying a home as set out in the Plan for the Right to Housing 2004-2007 and the Plan to Refurbish Housing in Catalonia.

FINDING A FLAT ON THE INTERNET

Along with the traditional ways of looking for a flat or advertising them (the press, estate agents, word of mouth, etc.), the internet offers a new tool for finding a flat to buy or rent.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://www.gencat.net/presidencia/portal_jove
<http://www.lloguerjove.com>

BUYING A PROPERTY

Nowadays, many estate agents in the EEA can handle property purchases in Spain. In Catalonia, you can visit one of the local estate agents.

If you are going to buy property, the legal transaction has to take place before a notary.

Any bank or building society can inform you about the cost of mortgages and the procedures involved. If you want to keep an eye on the prices of newly built housing, the Valuers' Society undertakes a wide-ranging study of the market in which it analyses new housing developments being built in all the provincial capitals of Spain. A summary of the analysis of this data from the Valuers' Society is produced every six months as the ST BULLETIN. The ST BULLETIN contains average house prices, statistics on house price growth over recent years and forecasts about future growth of the property market from experts. <http://www.st-tasacion.es/inicio.html>

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Goods and effects coming from European Union countries are not subject to any kind of customs duty. If you want more information on importing personal effects, contact the Spanish Consulate in your country, where you will be given written information regarding the 'export of household goods and personal effects.

SERVICES

Following deregulation of the sector, electricity can now be contracted from the company of your choice, from those offering services in Catalonia.

Generally speaking, in most large Spanish cities there is a centralised gas supply that is paid for in terms of the amount metered. Central and individual electrical heating systems are also very common in Spain. Nonetheless, bottled butane gas (the so-called "bombones" or canisters delivered to homes) are still widely used.

There is no longer one single national telephone company in Spain. If there is no phone line installed, you can choose whether you want a connection with Telefónica (previously Spain's national telephone company) or other companies (AIRTEL, JAZZTEL, RETEVISION, UNI2, etc.) which also offer telephone services. Being connected can take between 7 and 15 days). You should find out more before contracting a service, as there are differences in the rates and offers depending on the time bands and destinations of calls. (<http://www.teltarifas.com/>)

Invoices for all the above services are sent out every two months, which have to be paid on time, as, if not, you can be cut off.

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THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CATALONIA

The Education System Law establishes free, compulsory education between the ages of 6 and 16, which is the minimum age to start work in Spain. This education is offered by public, public/private and private centres.

Nursery education is a voluntary phase of education for children aged 0 to 6. It is structured on two educational levels: Kindergarten for those aged 0 to 3 and Nursery School for those between 3 and 6.

Primary Education is the first stage in the compulsory education system. It is made up of six academic years, from 6 to 12 years of age, and structured on three levels.

Compulsory Secondary Education, or ESO, lasts four years and is divided into two levels: the first (1st and 2nd ESO) for students between 12 and 14, and the second (3rd and 4th ESO), for those between 14 and 16.

If students graduate from Secondary Education, they have three options:

- Do a baccalaureate
- Undertake vocational training (Mid-level Educational Level)
- Get a job

If they do not pass ESO, the options are:

- Study ESO for another year
- Study an Agricultural Course
- Get a job

The Baccalaureate is a non-compulsory educational stage for those aged between 16 and 18. It involves one educational level, lasting two years, and offers four courses (Arts, Health and Natural Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Technology). On completing these studies, those students who pass receive the baccalaureate and have the following options:

- Higher Education
- Artistic higher education levels, if they pass the corresponding entrance exam
- University studies, provided they pass the entrance exam (PAAU) set by the universities
- Getting a job

Artistic studies and professional mid- and higher-education levels

Specific professional training that qualifies students to carry out activities associated with a particular trade. The contents are organised into theoretical and practical modules which are studied at the educational centre and in the workplace by way of agreements between the college and external business (see the educational system organisational chart to find out about access to higher education).

School calendar: The school year starts in the middle of September and ends in June, with holidays for Christmas, Easter and the summer.

For further information:

GENERALITAT OF CATALONIA

Department of Education: <http://www.gencat.net/educacio>

Regional Services: Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona.

Information about the different educational levels: www.edu365.com.

University studies:

The Catalan university system is similar to that in the other European countries; though there are some differences that are worth knowing about. There is a total of 12 universities in Catalonia, 7 of which are public, 4 private and 1 virtual.

To get a place at university, students have to sit an entrance exam. Universities are independent institutions able to set their own curricula. Students can study higher education at whichever public university they wish, regardless of where they live. There are also private universities.

University studies are grouped together into degrees (first degrees) and postgraduate degrees (master, postgraduate, PhD, etc) and are structured in terms of levels and based on a credit system. A credit is equivalent to 10 hours of study.

1st level studies: Access is via pre-registration at a university. These are completed studies which, once passed, entitle the student to qualifications such as a Diploma or as a Teacher, Technical Architect or Technical Engineer.

2nd level studies: Access to these studies is via 1st level university studies or for those in possession of a qualification such as a Diploma, or Technical Architects, Technical Engineers and Teachers, provided these studies meet the access regulations for the 2nd level studies in question. The university itself regulates access to these 2nd-level qualifications. Passing them entitles students to Degrees.

3st level studies: These are the PhD programmes. To access them, students must have a degree. The PhD Board at each university is the body responsible for admitting students to PhD programmes.

Catalonia's universities offer a series of short courses throughout the summer months on all subjects. The extensive and wide range of summer school courses on offer means that the information contained is updated between the months of April and June.

Catalonia's public universities

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: <http://www.uab.es>
Universitat de Barcelona: <http://www.uv.edu/homeub>
Universitat de Girona: <http://www.upg.edu/>
Universitat de Lleida: <http://www.udl.es/>
Universitat de Politècnica de Catalunya: <http://www.udc.es/>
Universitat de Pompeu Fabra: <http://www.upf.es/>
Universitat de Rovira i Virgili: <http://www.urv.es/>

Catalonia's private universities

Universitat Abad Oliba CEU: <http://www.uao.es/cream/>
Universitat Internacional de Catalunya: <http://www.unica.edu/>
Universitat Ramon Llull: <http://www.url.es/>
Universitat de Vic: <http://www.uvic.es/ca/inici.html>

Distance universities

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC): <http://www.uoc.edu/>
Universidad Nacional de Educación a distancia:
<http://www.uned.es/webuned/home.htm>

For further information on university studies:

Department of Universities, Research and the Information Society
Catalonia's Inter-University Board: <http://www.gencat.net/dursi>

To find out what papers and procedures are required to study at a Catalan university, visit:

<http://www.estudiaracatalunya.net/dursi>

Other addresses:

<http://www.estudiaracatalunya.net/dursi/cat/estudiar/e5.0.tramits.jsp>
<http://www.europa.eu.int/eures>
http://www.eursc.org/SE/htmlEn/IndexEn_home.html
<http://www.gencat.net/dursi>

Learn Catalan: The Language Standardisation Board offers both face-to-face and distance courses in Catalan for all levels, which are annual, semi-intensive or intensive, from its open centre (self-learning): <http://www.cpln.cat/> Spanish for speakers of other languages at the Cervantes Institute www.cervantes.es

You can also obtain information from most of the Catalan universities.

10

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND DIPLOMAS IN THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

One of the objectives of the European Community is to overcome the obstacles to the free movement of people and services throughout the member states. Recognition of qualifications and diplomas is, without doubt, a key element in achieving this goal.

Generally speaking, people who want to work in another member state need to find out whether their activities are regulated or not by Community Directives in the destination country. In other words, whether this activity requires them to hold a specific qualification

You can check out whether the profession is regulated or not in Catalonia and the corresponding body responsible for recognition here: <http://www.mec.es>

The first distinction that needs to be made in terms of the recognition of qualifications is between professional and academic qualifications.

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Regulated professions

In order to guarantee the right to free establishment (art. 43 of the ECT), to the free provision of services (art. 49 of the ECT) and free movement (art. 39 of the ECT), various recognition systems have been established, depending on the type and duration of training

GENERAL SYSTEM DIRECTIVES:

Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC, modified by Directive 2001/19/EC and Directive 99/42/EC. It should be taken into account that these directives do not establish an automatic recognition system for diplomas. It is the member state in which a profession is regulated which can set a series of measures, including aptitude tests, experience or adaptation courses, as part of the recognition of qualifications gained in another member state. These directives do not apply to those professions which have another system for recognition

SECTOR SYSTEM DIRECTIVES

There is a second group made up of a dozen directives which establishes the automatic recognition of qualifications for certain professions: nurses, doctors, dentists, midwives, chemists, vets and architects.

These directives, which were adapted during the 1970s and 80s, establish a principle for the automatic recognition of qualifications, provided they meet certain minimum standards of training established for the whole of the EC.

- Unregulated professions

The system set out in the Directives for the recognition of qualifications is not applied. The competent authorities in the destination state are obliged to recognise qualifications issued in accordance with the principle of free movement established in the ECT.

The Community Directives regarding recognition of qualifications only apply to nationals from the 28 countries that form part of the European Union and the European Economic Area plus Switzerland.

For more information on Community Directives and their area of application:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/naric/sp/sp4.htm>

http://www.infoeuropa.org/catala/Abc/reconeix_titols.htm

RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Approval and/or validating are forms of recognition of academic diplomas or periods of study that allow citizens of member states to be able to continue or expand their studies in another member country. To find out the procedures needed to be able to study at a Catalan university, visit:
<http://www.estudiaracatalunya.net/dursi>

For further information with regard to the recognition of university qualifications, whether academic or professional, you can contact:
NARIC (National Information Centre for Academic Recognition)
Ministry of Science and Education
Department of Qualifications and Recognition of Qualifications, Office of European Union Qualifications
Paseo del Prado, 28 28014 MADRID
Tel. 915 065 600 and 915 065 618
Fax: 915 065 706

The Education Inspectorate in Barcelona
C/ Bergara no. 12
Tel. +34 935 209 603

Government regional offices in:

- Girona
Avda. Jaume I no. 17. Tel. +34 972 069 133
- Tarragona
Pl. Imperial Tarraco no. 3. Tel. +34 977 999 102
- Lleida
Plaza de la Pau no. 1. Tel. +34 973 241 512

You can also get information from any of the Education Offices at the Spanish Embassy or Consulate in your country of origin.
(http://www.mec.es/sgci/ae/dir_con.htm)
www.gencat.net/educacio

*This has to be confirmed by the Department of Education

The customs, way of life and personal relations differ greatly from one country to the next in the EEA. Knowing the language is key for those who wish to integrate themselves into the way of life of another country. In Catalonia, it is important to know both Catalan and Spanish.

<http://spanish.about.com/>

<http://www.el-castellano.com/index.html>

<http://www6.gencat.net/lengcat/aprenecat/>

It is often said that Catalans are hard-working and somewhat thrifty. It is true that the Catalans have been entrepreneurs and traders with a strong industrial culture. There is no doubt that the changes they have gone through over time (above all the wars they have endured and the centuries of repression) have left their mark on the Catalan character down the generations. A typical frank Catalan expression says "anar per feina" (let's get to work), which can be seen to mean that the Catalans don't like to waste time, that they'd rather focus on what they feel really matters. However, for many years now, the situation has thankfully been very different and Catalans nowadays, as well as working and saving, also enjoy the pleasures of life, including the renowned cuisine and their ancient traditions.

It is advisable before arriving in Catalonia to find out about a range of general aspects that may be of help when you start out here. For general information, you can contact the Spanish Tourist Information Office in your country or the Spanish Consulate or Embassy.

If you are already in Catalonia, you can visit the website <http://cultura.gencat.net/> which offers information on: heritage, books, music, theatre, cinema, sports and a range of cultural interests. Visit the town council or the Department of Culture.

Catalonia is home to a patchwork of cultures belonging to the civilisations which, over the centuries, came to inhabit the land: Celts, Iberians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Jews, etc. The historical legacy has been enriched by the variety of this mosaic, by the wealth of nuances and the fusion of each culture's contributions. The great cultural and artistic trends have also left their mark on the internationally renowned creative talent which flourishes here.

Catalonia has a great wealth of artistic, literary and documentary heritage. Contact: the Information and Promotion Service which coordinates the cultural information offered by the Department of Culture. This information is available in different ways, including: <http://cultura.gencat.net/>

CULTURAL INFORMATION POINTS

Barcelona

Rambla de Santa Mònica, 8 08002 BARCELONA
Tel. 933 162 727 Fax 933 162 716
email: publinfo@gencat.net

Girona

Ciutadans, 18 (Casa Solterra) 17004 GIRONA
Ph. 972 225 455 - 972 225 415 Fax 972 225 406
email: infostg@gencat.net

Lleida

Rambla d'Aragó, 8 25002 LLEIDA
Ph. 973 279 200 Fax 973 279 201
email: rflif@gencat.net

Tarragona

Major, 14 43003 Tarragona
Ph. 977 251 500 Fax 977 251 501
email: picultura@gencat.net

The Department of Trade, Consumer Affairs and Tourism provides information of interest about Catalonia. www.gencat.net/turisme

The General Secretariat for Young People offers information about: studying, employment, training, accommodation, cultural and sporting activities, leisure, health, information services for young people, social services and means of transport. <http://www.gencat.net/joventut>

The Catalan Women's Institute (ICD) designs, promotes and supports policies from and for women to be developed by Catalonia's public administrations. It is in charge of producing and leading regional government action plans that show the institutional commitment to Catalan women.

Currently, the ICD has a headquarters and five regional offices. The ICD runs programmes and activities, and informative and awareness-raising campaigns. <http://www.gencat.net/icdona/>

12 LEGAL ADVICE

Remember that during your stay in Catalonia you come under the legislation in force from the Spanish government and the Catalan regional government. The Spanish Constitution and the development of its regulations establish a series of deep-rooted fundamental rights.

If you feel that your rights as an EU citizen have not been respected, you can contact the SOLVIT network, created by the European Commission to ensure compliance with EU legislation.

<http://europa.eu.int/solvit>

E-mail: Solvit@ue.mae.es

When faced with any kind of legal problem contact your country's consulate.

CONSULATES IN BARCELONA

Consulates in Barcelona

<http://www.mae.es/>

Germany	932 921 000
Austria	934 537 294
Belgium	934 677 080
Croatia	932 720 043
Finland	934 431 598
France	934 677 370
Greece	933 212 828
Hungary	934 051 950
Ireland	934 915 021
Iceland	932 325 810
Italy	934 870 002
Luxembourg	934 282 750
Malta	934 156 600
The Netherlands	934 106 210

Poland	933 227 234
Portugal	933 188 150
United Kingdom	933 666 200
Czech Republic	934 141 193
Sweden	934 882 501
Switzerland	933 309 211

13 USEFUL ADDRESSES

EU INFORMATION NETWORKS IN CATALONIA

BARCELONA

Euroinfo. European Commission, representation in Barcelona
 Passeig de Gràcia, 90-1º
 E-08008 BARCELONA
 Telephone: 934 677 380
 Fax: 934 677 381
<http://europa.eu.int/spain/organizaion/index.htm#rpespan>

EIC (Euro Info Centres)

The EICs are the first stop for EU information for SMEs
 Centre for Business Innovation and Development (CIDEM)
 Passeig de Gràcia 129
 08008 BARCELONA
 Telephone: 934 767 210 / 11
 Fax: 934 767 215
<http://www.cidem.com>

Barcelona's Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping

Avinguda. Diagonal, 452-454
 08006 BARCELONA
 Telephone 934169383
 Fax: 934160735
<http://www.cambrabcn.es/euroinfo>

IPE (Info Point Europa)

The IPEs can offer an initial response to any request for information about EU regulations.

The Catalan regional government's General Secretariat for Young People
Calàbria, 147

08015 BARCELONA

Telephone: 934 838 409

Fax: 934 838 362

CDE (European Documentation Centre)

The CDEs generally form part of universities and their main aim is to make the European Community's publications more accessible.

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

<http://selene.uab.es/ce-documentacio-europa>

Escola Superior d'Administració i Direcció d'Empreses (Esade)

Marquès de Mulhacén, 40-42

08034 BARCELONA

<http://www.esade.edu//cde>

GIRONA

European Documentation Centre. (CDE)

Universitat de Girona

<http://biblioteca.udg.es/cde>

LLEIDA

European Documentation Centre. (CDE)

Universitat de Lleida

<http://pv2.sbd.udl.es/cde/cde.html>

Info Point Europa

Lleida City Council

Plaça Amics de Lleida, s/n

25008 LLEIDA

Telephone: 973 222 822

Fax: 973 222 877

Rural information and promotion centres

They offer information on the measures adopted by the EU that may have an affect on life in rural areas, and on the European programmes that are open to those living in these rural areas.

Catalan Pro Europe Association: <http://www.diputaciolleida.net/europa>

TARRAGONA

European Documentation Centre. (CDE)

Universitat Rovira i Virgili

<http://www.fcee.urv.es/serveis/cde>

CATALAN DELEGATION IN BRUSSELS

Catalan Pro Europe Association

Telephone. 00 32 22 31 03 30

<http://www.infoeuropa.org>

CATALAN ADMINISTRATION

Generalitat of Catalonia:

<http://www.gencat.net>

Catalan Employment Service:

www.gencat.net/treballindustria/ocupacio

www.cat365.net

Taxation Portal:

<http://e-tributs.cat365.net>

Department of Education:

<http://www.gencat.net/educacio>

Catalonia's Inter-university Board:

<http://www.gencat.net/dursi>

Health:

<http://www.gencat.net/catsalut>

Catalan Institute of Social Services ICASS:

<http://www.gencat.net/benestar>

SPANISH ADMINISTRATION WEBSITES

Spain's General Administration:

<http://www.administration.es>

State Public Employment Service:

<http://www.inem.es>

Employment and Social Affairs:

<http://www.mtas.es>

Social Security:

<http://www.seg-social.es>

Education and Science:

<http://www.mec.es>

Recognition of EU qualifications:

<http://www.mec.es>

Interior:

<http://www.mir.es>

Taxation:

<http://www.aeat.es>

Public Administration/Competitive examinations information:

<http://www.map.es>

Economy:

<http://www.mineco.es>

Justice:

<http://www.miu.es/>

OTHER STATE BODIES

INJUVE (Institute for Young People)

Cooperation Area

Ph. 913 637 647

Fax: 914 018 160

E-mail: eurespa@mtas.es

<http://www.mtas.es/injuve/index2.htm>

Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

<http://www.aeci.es>

FINDING WORK IN CATALONIA

EURES job offers:

<http://www.eures-jobs.com>

EURES database of CVs:

<http://eurescv-search.com>

The Catalan regional government:

www.cat365.net/Inici/FetsVitals/TrobarFeina1

SPECIALIST OR SECTOR-SPECIFIC JOB EXCHANGES:

Management and qualified professionals:

<http://www.canalcv.com>

Economics and finance:

<http://finanjobs.com/>

Hotels, Tourism and Leisure:

<http://www.bolsindetrabajo.com/>

<http://www.hotelnetjobs.com>

<http://www.turiempleo.com/>

<http://www.turhoreca.com>

Women with technical training:

<http://www.cfnti.net/now/vulcana/empleo/>

Teachers and trainers:

<http://www.internen.es.com/empleo>

<http://www.educajob.com>

Programmers and computer engineers:

<http://www.novanotio.es/>

Health care professionals:

<http://www.secardiologia.es/>

<http://www.geriaticas.com/contenidos/trabajo/>

Jobs for people with disabilities:

<http://www.mercadis.com/>

MORE EMPLOYMENT SEARCH ENGINES:

<http://www.tea-seleccion.es>

<http://www.educaweb.cegos.com/esp/servicios/ofertas/ofertas.asp>

<http://www.estudiesotreballes.com>

<http://empleo.com>

<http://empleofacil.com>

<http://expansionyempleo.com>

<http://www.infojobs.com>

<http://jobpilot.com>

<http://laboris.net>

<http://www.monster.es>

<http://rediris.es>

www.trabajofacil.com

www.infoempleo.com

www.trabajos.com

www.todotrabajo.com

www.metaseleccion.com

www.trabajo.org

www.rekursoshumanos.net

www.acciontrabajo.com

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Consortium for Language Standardisation:

www.cpnl.org/index.htm

General EURES information:

<http://europa.eu.int/eures/>

Working conditions and state-wide legislation: Guide to working and social affairs:

www.mtas.es

Database on Higher Education in Europe. Institutions. Courses. European programmes:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/ortelius.html>

Calls for admission to European Commission Public Bodies are published in series C of the EU's Official Journal and in certain communication media:

<http://europa.eu.int/epso>

EC Directives:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/naric/coun/sp/sp4.htm>

Language schools in Europe:

<http://www.europa-pages.co.uk>

European network for information on education:

<http://www.eurydice.org>

<http://www.mec.es/cide/eurydice/index.htm>

Information on all the EU countries. Living and working conditions.

Educational Systems:

<http://citizens.eu.int/>

International guide to European universities and countries:

www.universia.es/contenidos/internacionales/guia/indice.htm

USEFUL ADDRESSES FOR COMPANIES

www.cat365.net
<http://camerdata.es>
<http://www.ventanillaempresarial.com>
<http://europa.eu.int/business/es/index.html>
<http://www.cepyme.es>
<http://directorio.camaras.org>
<http://cidem.com>

14 DON'T FORGET...

If you come to Catalonia looking for work or for an interview, there are some documents you mustn't forget:

- A valid EU/EEA passport or identity card.
- A certified translation of your qualifications.
- Translations of your CV, letters of presentation and references from previous jobs, academic qualifications and courses.
- The Series "E-100" form issued by the Social Security for health care in the EEA. The E-301 and/or E-303 forms, where applicable.
- European Health Insurance Card.
- A photocopy of your birth and marriage certificates.

Other permits and licences you consider useful: for example, your driving licence. Spain recognises, almost without exception, all driving licences issued throughout the world. These licences are valid for the length of time stipulated therein. Only if you acquire Spanish residency will the validity of your licence be limited to one year. Remember that, alongside your driving licence, you need to check that your car insurance is in order and that you have a Green Card.

Before accepting work, make sure:

- You have a valid EU/EEA passport or identity card.
- You understand the terms and conditions of the works contract perfectly. It is important that you find out who (you or the company) is to pay for the travel costs for the interview and/or to take up the position, as well as any accommodation costs.
- You know how and how often you are to be paid.
- You have somewhere to stay in Catalonia.
- You have adequate health cover.
- Your insurance covers accidents, lost luggage and third-party damage and injury.
- You have sufficient funds to last until you receive your first pay cheque, or to return home if necessary.
- Your level of Spanish and/or Catalan is adequate, or you need to improve it.

Likewise, when you arrive in Catalonia, it is useful and advisable that you:

- Find out about the regulations in force from your local Social Security office. Check that you are registered with the Social Security. Find out by asking for your "employment history".
- When a contract ends, find out from the public offices of the Catalan Employment Service (SOC) about your rights to receive and/or transfer unemployment benefit, and about the documentation that you will need to present when you return to your country. It is important that you bear in mind that the SOC provides information, but that the competent body in processing unemployment benefits is the State Public Employment Service (SPEE).

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Generalitat of Catalonia
Catalan Employment Service (SOC)
Intermediation Service - Eures Network

