

## **India-Spain Bilateral Relations**

Relations between India and Spain have been cordial since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956 with our High Commissioner in London concurrently accredited since 1958. A Mission headed by a Cd'A was opened in Madrid in 1958. The first resident Ambassador of India was appointed in 1965.

### **High Level Visits**

After a gap of 28 years, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid an official bilateral visit to Spain on 30-31 May 2017. Prime Minister met Mr Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires on 1 December 2018. Former EAM Ms Sushma Swaraj visited Spain on 18 – 19 February 2019. Spanish Foreign Minister Mr Josep Borrell had earlier visited India on 8-9 January 2019 to participate in the Raisina Dialogue. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar met Mr Josep Borrell, now the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on November 23 2019. EAM met the Spanish Foreign Minister Ms Arancha Gonzalez Laya at Munich Security Conference on 16 February 2020. President ICCR Dr. Vinay Sahasrabudhe visited Spain in October 2019 for the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. MoEFCC Mr Prakash Javadekar visited Madrid to deliver India's national statement at the COP25 Conference on 10 December 2019. MoS EA Mr V Muraleedharan visited Spain to attend ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 16 December 2019. MoS EA also participated in a virtual panel discussion on the Alliance for Multilateralism at Club de Madrid thinktank's annual event in October 2020. During the COVID19 crisis, both Prime Ministers had a phone call and the Foreign Ministers spoke four times. Spanish Foreign Minister thanked India for hydroxychloroquine supplies. Commerce and Industries Minister and Spanish Trade Minister Ms Reyes Maroto had a brief virtual bilateral meeting before flagging off India Spain Business Roundtable on 22 April 2021.

The present king, His Majesty Felipe VI, visited India as the Crown Prince on his first official visit from 10-12 November 2009, during which he inaugurated the Cervantes Institute in New Delhi. King Felipe had earlier visited India in February 2001 and October 1997 as Crown Prince. Former Spanish President Jose Rodriguez Zapatero paid an official visit to India on July 3, 2006. A high level visit of Spanish President to India is long overdue. The sixth round of Foreign Office Consultations was held virtually on 21 July 2020 between Secretary (West) and Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in Madrid at Commerce Secretary level in 2018.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations**

Spain is India's 8th largest trade partner in Europe. Bilateral trade during January – December 2020 stood at US\$ 5.015 billion (*MINCOTUR, Govt. of Spain*), after crossing the US\$ 6 billion mark for the first time in 2018. India's exports stood at US\$ 3.765 billion while imports stood at US\$1.51 billion. India's top exports to Spain are textiles, organic chemicals, iron & steel,

seafood, automobiles and leather. India's major imports are mechanical appliances, electrical machinery, chemicals, plastic and mineral fuels. Spain is the 15th largest investor in India with cumulative FDI stock of US\$ 3.439 billion (April 2000 – March 2021). There are 195 Spanish companies in India and nearly 40 Indian companies in Spain. Indian delegations regularly participate in major international trade fairs and conferences in Spain viz. FITUR (Tourism), Mobile World Congress (Telecom), CPhI Worldwide (Pharmaceuticals), Cevisama (Ceramics), ITMA Textile & Machinery Exhibition, InterGift and Smart City Expo World Congress (Smart Cities). Council for Leather Exports organises an Indian Leather Show in Madrid every year in March and Apparel Export Promotion Council organises a buyer seller meet in October in Madrid.

### **Cultural and Academic Relations**

Cultural exchange is an important component of India-Spain bilateral relations. ICCR sponsors cultural groups to Spain and offers ten scholarships annually to Spanish students to study in India. ICCR is offering four scholarships to the Principality of Andorra for the first time in 2021. Casa de la India, a PPP collaboration between ICCR, University of Valladolid and City of Valladolid was founded in 2003 as a platform for the promotion of India in Spain through activities in the fields of culture, education, cooperation and enterprise. University of Valladolid hosts Rabindranath Tagore Chair for Contemporary Indian Studies and Hindi Chair (both vacant at present), established by ICCR. Twinning Agreement between Ahmedabad and Valladolid signed in 2017 was renewed in July 2020 for three years.

Flagship biennial cultural festival *India en Concierto*, film festivals *Imagine India* and *India-Indie*, and festivals such as Janmashtami, Onam, Diwali and Dussehra were celebrated in 2019 and 2020. Indian movies were showcased in the 65<sup>th</sup> SEMINCI Film Festival and in the 17<sup>th</sup> Asian Summer Film Festival in 2020. . 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji was celebrated in November 2019 along with local Gurdwaras in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, in which more than 12000 devotees participated. DG ICCR visited Spain in December 2020 as the birth centenary of Pandit Ravi Shankar was celebrated with an exhibition in the Fernando Gomez Cultural Centre in Madrid and with the Spanish premiere of Ravi Shankar Symphony by David Murphy, Shubhendu Rao, Saskia Rao and the Symphony Orchestra of Castilla and Leon. Mission also hosted ICCR sponsored Musical Treasures of India exhibition, a collection of 52 heritage instruments in 2020.

The 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated in a grand manner in Spain in 2019 with activities including *Vaishnava Jana To* rendition by Spanish artists, contributions to Mahatma Gandhi Anthology by President Pedro Sanchez and Queen Mother Sofia, release of a commemorative stamp by the Spanish Philately Commission, Cycling For Peace, planting of trees on World Environment Day, summer course on Mahatma Gandhi titled 'Gandhi's India and Today's India' at Complutense University, an audio-visual exhibition- "My Life is my

Message” in various Spanish cities and the unveiling of ‘*The Head of the Giant*’ painting on Gandhiji by Cristobal Gabarron, one of Spain’s greatest living mixed-media artist in October 2020. A statue of Mahatma Gandhi gifted by ICCR was unveiled by MoS Mr V Muraleedharan in Tenerife, Canary Islands in December 2019. This was the first official visit by any Indian Minister to the Canary Islands.

While the International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2020 celebrations were held online, IDY 2021 witnessed impressive events in Madrid, Mallorca, Barcelona, Valladolid, Granada, Guadalajara and Andorra la Vella in which more than 1000 people participated. India@75 celebrations in Spain kicked off with the Course on Culture, Arts and Society of India in the University of Valladolid. India Week at *Circulo de BellasArtes* comprising of India Indie Film Festival and Workshops on Yoga, Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Theatre was held in March 2021. Events to commemorate birth anniversaries of Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray were organized in May 2021.

### **Indian community**

The Indian community forms a small percentage of the immigrant population of Spain. Among the Asian communities, the Indian Diaspora is the third largest group. The earliest Indian settlers were Sindhis who came from the subcontinent at the end of the 19th century and settled in the Canary Islands. Many others travelled to Spain from Africa in the 1950’s and 1960’s, while others came directly from India. According to Spanish National Statistics Institute INE, the resident Indian origin population in Spain has gone up from 9000 in 2001 to 54387 in 2020. There are 969 Indian students (November, 2019). By and large the Indian community is peaceful and well respected. The main centres of Indian diaspora are Madrid (8000), Barcelona (53000), Valencia (5000), Canary Islands (8000) and Malaga (1000). The Indian community is peaceful and well respected.

### **Useful Resources**

Embassy of India in Madrid

Website: <https://www.eoimadrid.gov.in/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInSpain>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/IndiainSpain>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eoimadrid/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJdWi0H0pTwsI9kyq97dmjA>