India - Spain Relation

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

High Level Visits

The first ever state visit to Spain by an Indian head of state was paid by President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil from 20-23 April, 2009. The then King, His Majesty King Juan Carlos I, paid a state visit to India from 24-27 October 2012, accompanied by a high level delegation, including the Spanish Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Industry, Energy and Tourism and Infrastructure and Transport. During the visit, agreements/MOUs were signed in the areas of Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion; Defence Cooperation; Road Transport Sector; Audio-Visual Co-production and Railways.

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. His Majesty had earlier visited India in February 2001 and October 1997 as Crown Prince. The then Spanish PM Jose Rodriguez Zapatero paid an official visit to India on July 3, 2006. The last standalone bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Spain was in 1988 by Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

The then External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna, visited Spain from 19-23, April, 2012 for the HOMs conference. Other recent high level visitors from India to Spain include: Minister of Communications and IT (27-29 February 2012),MOS (IC), Tourism (January 29 - February 3, 2013), Health Minister (28 October -1 November 2014) and Minister of Urban Development (17-20 November 2014).

From Spain, the year 2015 has seen a flurry of bilateral visits. The Secretary of State for Trade, Mr. Jaime Garcia Legaz, visited India on 02 February 2015 to attend the 10th session of the India Spain Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ignacio Ybañez Rubio, visited India for Foreign Office Consultations on 2 March 2015. The Spanish Defence Minister visited India on 4-5 March 2015. The Spanish Foreign Minister visited India on 27 April 2015 after a gap of 43 years. The upswing in the frequency of VVIP interactions is demonstrative of the warmth in bilateral relations.

The visit by the Spanish Foreign Minister to India in April took place on the heels of the Nepal earthquake, in which nearly 500 Spanish nationals were trapped. India extended its full-fledged support to the Spanish government in the evacuation of Spanish nationals and their safe return home. The two sides also came out with a Joint Communiqué, underlining major areas of cooperation in future, ranging from defence and nuclear cooperation to trade and science and technology. To commemorate 60 years of India-Spain Diplomatic Relations in 2016, the Ministers agreed to formulate a programme of activities for the year to deepen cooperation and foster closer people-to-people ties. The Communiqué highlighted specific points of action to enhance the bilateral relationship, including a Security Policy Dialogue, led by the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Cooperation of Spain to assess common strategic security challenges; collaboration of experts in the fields of foreign affairs and security from their respective think tanks and academia; and cooperation between the diplomatic training institutes of the two countries. Apart from expressing satisfaction at the intensification of bilateral relationship, the Joint Communiqué also agreed to enhance high level interactions.

**Economic and Commercial Relations**

Bilateral Trade between India and Spain in 2015 (January to May) stood at around $3 billion; Spain’s exports to India during the given period stood at $1.0 billion and India’s exports to Spain stood at $2.2 billion. Spain is India’s 7th largest trading partner in the European Union. Given the infrastructure push that is planned in India in the areas of power, roads, ports, airports, telecom and urban infrastructure, especially as part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the Make in India campaign, the possibilities for cooperation are immense. India, on the other hand, could offer Spain quality options in the fields of IT and services, pharmaceuticals (particularly generics) and the chemicals sector.

Indian exports to Spain include organic chemicals, textiles and garments, iron and steel products, automotive components, marine products and leather goods. Indian imports consist largely of machines and mechanical appliances, vehicles and automobiles, plastic manufactures, electrical appliances, rubber and rubber products and olives/olive oil.

Spain is the 12th largest investor in India with $1.8 billion in FDI, mostly in infrastructure (IsoluxCorsan, Grupo San Jose), renewable energy (Gamesa), auto components (Gestamp), water desalination (Abengoa) and single brand retail (Inditex – Zara/Mango). A total of around 200 Spanish companies have subsidiaries, joint ventures, projects or liaison offices and purchase offices in India. There are over 30 Indian companies in Spain, the most significant ones being in the areas of IT (TCS, Tech Mahindra), energy (Avantha) and automobiles (Mahindra). The stock of Indian investment in Spain is approximately 800 million euros.

In order to give an impetus to trade and investment relations, the India-Spain Joint Economic Commission (JEC) was set up under the 1972 Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, and has since met ten times. The 10th Session of the JEC was held in New Delhi on 2nd February 2015 and was chaired by Shri Rajeev Kher, Commerce Secretary of India and his Spanish counterpart, Mr. Jaime García-Legaz Ponce, Secretary of State for Trade of Spain. Issues of mutual interest were discussed and both sides noted the remarkable growth in bilateral trade despite the global economic slowdown over the past few years. Opportunities to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in the areas of Smart City cooperation, renewable energy, high speed railways, water treatment, agriculture and food processing, infrastructure and tourism are being further developed.

There are several important fairs held in Spain in the cities of Madrid and Barcelona, in which Indian companies regularly participate to promote their products and technology. FITUR 2015, the annual Tourism Fair, was held in Madrid in the month of
January and India participated in it. The Council for Leather Exports (CLE) held a BSM in the month of March and footwear and leather goods were the focus of the event.

**Cultural and Academic Relations**

Cultural exchange is an important component of India-Spain bilateral relations. ICCR sponsors visits of cultural troupes for performances in various parts of Spain and offers five scholarships to Spanish students every year to study in India. Mission brings out a quarterly publication titled ‘Hola Namaste’ carrying articles on contemporary events in India.

Casa de la India was founded in 2003 as a platform for the promotion of India and Spain and Indo-Spanish relationships in the field of culture, education, cooperation and enterprise. It has the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, City Council of Valladolid, and the Valladolid University as its main patrons.

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in Madrid by Her Majesty the Queen of Spain on 2nd October 2013. This is the third statue of Mahatma Gandhi to be installed in Spain, the earlier two being in Valladolid and Gran Canarias.

The Indian performing arts scene has become increasingly vibrant in Spain. During the first half of 2015, Indian artists like Dr. Jayanta Kumar Das (RudraVeena), Pt Sandip Chatterjee (Santoor), Gundecha Brothers (Dhrupad vocal) and Ms Aranyani Bhargav (Bharatanatyam) have performed in various parts of Spain. Three editions of the biennial Indian music festival in Spain titled ‘India enConcierto’ have successfully been organized till date, the most recent one being in June, 2014.

The photographic exhibition ‘Religions of India’ (ICCR sponsored) has been hosted in La Laguna and Valladolid in 2015.

India was the Guest Country in the 2014 edition of the mega Art Restoration and Heritage Management Biennial ‘AR&PA’ organized by the Government of Castillia y León. An India Week was organised in La Laguna de Tenerife by the Council of La Laguna and Harmatan Cultural Services in April, 2015.

Spain witnessed one of the most enthusiastic celebrations of the first International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2015. The Embassy, with the support of the Government of Spain and of the City Council of Madrid, and working jointly with 12 leading institutions in the field of Yoga as well as other aspects of Indian culture, organized a mega Master Class of Yoga attended by over 1200 Yoga enthusiasts in the precincts of the iconic Plaza de Colón. A Conference on Yoga later in the same day saw an excellent exposition of the different interpretations and philosophies of Yoga followed in Spain. Apart from the lead event in Madrid, Mission was also in touch with proposed celebrations across Spain. As a result, at least 17 cities across the country followed the Common Yoga Protocol designed by the Ministry of AYUSH.

The Alliance of 4 Universities (A-4U) is a partnership of four leading Spanish public universities to promote their international profile. The alliance has signed framework agreements with leading Indian institutes to establish exchange programmes. University of Valladolid has an on-going arrangement with the University of Ahmedabad in the areas of heritage conservation and management. The University has also hosted an ICCR Hindi Chair from 2004 to 2012 wherein a visiting professor taught Hindi at the basic and intermediate levels. Introductory Sanskrit is taught in the Universities of Salamanca,
Barcelona, Complutense (Madrid) and Santiago de Compostela. IE University, Madrid has attracted considerable number of Indian students in recent years.

The Institute of Indology in Madrid is a private initiative of academicians and friends of India in Spain. The institute conducts regular academic activities focused on India, the most important of these being the Summer Courses and the Autumn Courses on India. The Summer Course 2015 was organized in July, 2015 in collaboration with the Embassy. The Spanish Association for Interdisciplinary Indian Studies (AEEII in Spanish) also organizes conferences on India every alternate year at different venues.

Indian Community

The Indian community forms a very small percentage of the immigrant population of Spain. Among the Asian communities, the Indian Diaspora is the third largest group, after Chinese and Pakistanis. 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 statistics, the resident Indian population in Spain has gone up from 9000 in 2001 to 34323 as on 31.12.2014. There are 570 Indian students as on 31.12.2014. By and large, the Indian community is peaceful and well respected.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Madrid website:
https://www.embassyindia.es

Embassy of India, Madrid facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInSpain

Link to AIR FM Gold’s India Global Programme on Spain:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOwruToDy4c

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Annex

Bilateral Agreements

India has the following treaties/agreements with Spain:

1. Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (1972)
2. Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (1982). The CEP for the period 2005-08 was signed in March 2005
9. MoU between Technology Development Board (TDB) and the Centre for Development of Industrial Technology (2006).
10. MoU of cooperation in the field of S&T (2007)
11. MoU on Agriculture and Allied Fields (April 2009)
12. MoU on cooperation in Tourism (April 2009)
14. Protocol for amending the Convention and Protocol between India and Spain for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital orginally signed in February 1993 in New Delhi. (October 2012)
15. Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation. (October 2012)
16. Memorandum of Understanding on Roads and Road Transport Sector. (October 2012)
17. Agreement between India and Spain in the field of Audio-visual Co-production (October 2012)
18. Agreement on the Protection of classified information in the field of Defence (March 2015).