

SPANISH EXTERNAL SECTOR AND COMPETITIVENESS: FACTS AND FIGURES

Updated: 21 November 2019

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1. EXPORT-IMPORT PERFORMANCE

International trade of goods (Secretariat of State for Trade of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism with Customs data, declared trade; [reports](#) and [customizable data](#))

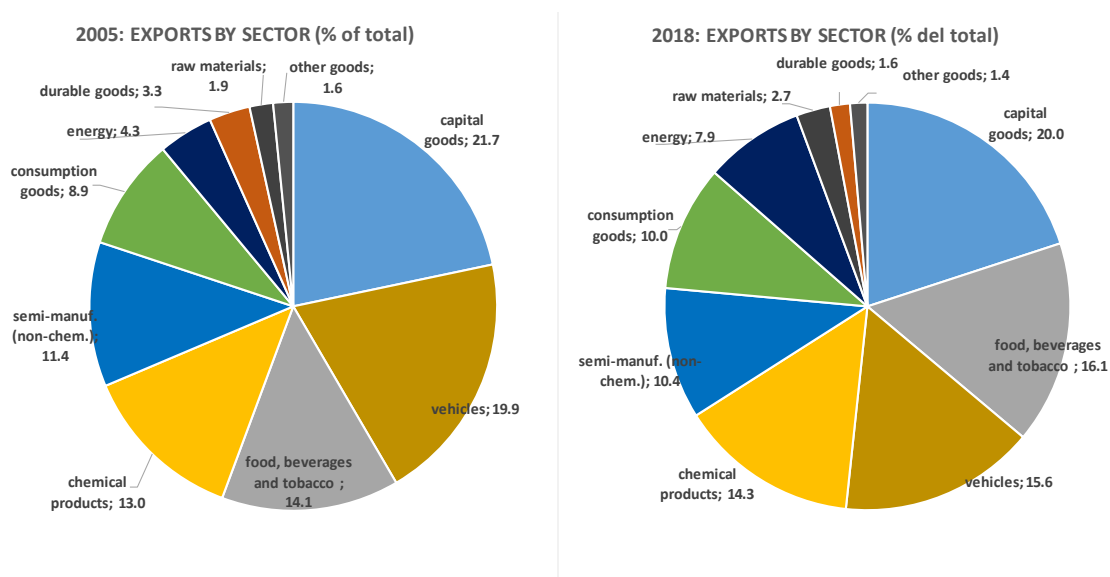
- In **2018**, exports increased by 2.9% compared to 2017 to an unprecedented amount of 285,023.9 million euros, and imports expanded by 5.6% year-on-year to 318,863.9 million euros, also historical record (provisional data). In real terms, exports declined by 0.1% year-on-year, as export prices increased by 3.0% (according to [unit value indices](#)), while imports grew by 1.1% year-on-year, as import prices rose by 4.5%.
- Spain's trade deficit increased to 33,840.0 million euros (provisional) from a deficit of 26,288.3 million euros in 2017 (definitive). The export/import coverage ratio reached 89.4%, 2.4 percentage points lower than in 2017 (91.8% with provisional data).
- In the period of **January-September 2019**, Spain's exports grew by 1.6% compared to the same period of 2018 to 215,600.0 million euros, and imports augmented by 2.0% year-on-year to 241,045.7 million euros. In real terms, exports advanced by 0.9% year-on-year, as export prices increased by 0.7%, and imports expanded by 1.9% year-on-year, as import prices rose by 0.1%.

Sectoral composition

- Spain's **leading exporting sectors** in 2018 (provisional) were capital goods (representing 20.0% of total exports, growing by 1.1% year-on-year), food, beverages and tobacco (16.1% of total, increasing by 0.2%), vehicles (15.6% of total, falling by 1.5%) and chemical products (14.3% of total, augmenting by 5.1%). The **main contributions** by sector to the annual change of Spain's exports (up by 2.9%) were energy products (1.1 percentage points), chemical products (0.7 points) and semi-manufactures (non-chemical) (0.6 points).
- The largest shares by sector of **Spain's imports** in 2018 were capital goods (representing 20.6% of total and growing by 1.5% year-on-year), chemical products (15.3% of total imports, surging by 8.5%), energy (15.0% of total imports, advancing by 18.3%) and vehicles (12.6% of total imports, growing by 2.7%). The **main contributions** by sector to the annual change of Spain's imports (up by 5.6%) were energy products

(2.4 percentage points), chemical products (1.3 points) and semi-manufactures (non-chemical) (0.7 points).

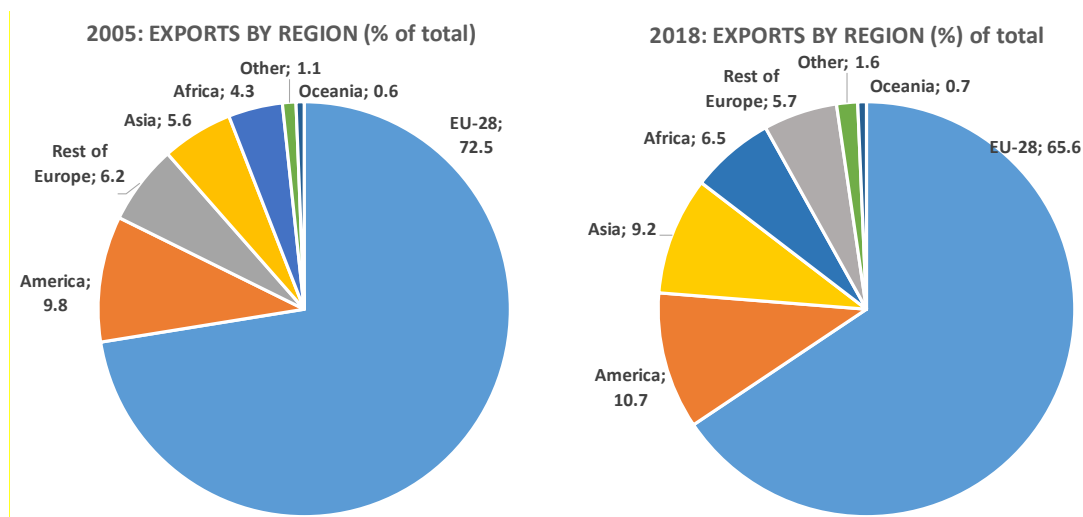
- In the period of **January-September 2019**, main exporting sectors were capital goods (representing 20.4% of total exports, rising by 5.3% year-on-year), food, beverages and tobacco (16.5% of total, advancing by 4.5%), vehicles (15.2% of total, declining by 2.7%) and chemical products (14.7% of total, expanding by 3.8%). The largest shares by sector of Spain's imports were those of capital goods (representing 21.2% of total and increasing by 5.0% year-on-year), chemical products (16.0% of total imports, growing by 6.0%), energy (13.9% of total imports, diminishing by 3.3%) and vehicles (12.6% of total imports, advancing by 1.1%).
- Although Spain still has a lower degree of diversification than our main European trade partners (Germany, France or Italy), it has notably changed its export mix to a higher degree of sectorial diversification from 2005 to 2018.



Geographic analysis

- **Exports to the European Union (EU)** represented 65.6% of total exports in the period (down from 65.7% in the same period of 2017) and advanced by 2.6% year-on-year, while exports to the euro area ran at 51.5% of total (51.6% in the same period of 2017) and went up by 2.7%. Exports to the rest of the world amounted to 34.4% of total exports (34.3% in the same period of 2017) and increased by 3.3% year-on-year (provisional).
- Along the decade, exports to non-EU countries have **increased their share** in Spanish exports from 27.5% of total in 2005 to 34.4% in 2018, with a maximum of 37.4% in 2013. In 2018, exports to North America increased by 3.7% year-on-year (exports to the U.S. increasing by 2.6% y-o-y, while those to Canada growing by 8.6%), and those to Latin America rose by 0.4% (especially to Chile by 11.7%). Exports to Asia augmented by 1.4% (Singapore by 68.8%, South Korea by 15.6%, Japan by 3.3% and China by 0.3%) and those to Africa increased by 5.1% (particularly to Egypt by 30.1%, Algeria by 26.6% and Morocco by 2.4%). Finally exports to Oceania decreased by 3.6% (Australia diminishing by 2.4%).
- In the period of **January-September 2019**, exports to the European Union represented 65.8% of total exports in the period (equal value as in the same period of 2018) and

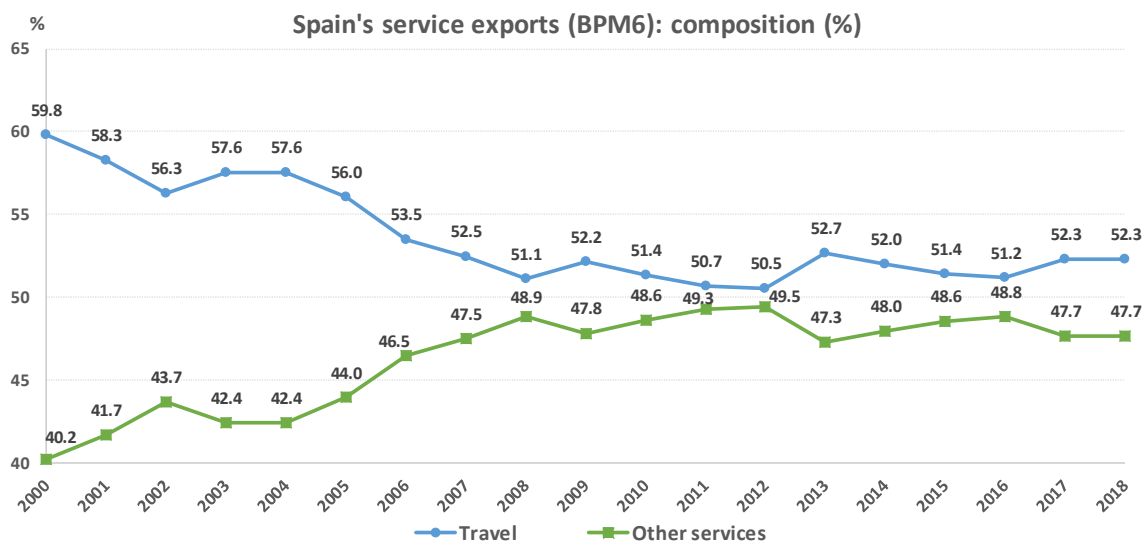
rose by 1.6% year-on-year, and exports to the euro area ran at 51.4% of total (51.6% in the same period of 2018) and grew by 1.1%. Exports to the rest of the world amounted to 34.2% of total exports (similar value as in the same period of 2018) and augmented by 1.6% year-on-year. Imports from the European Union accounted for 53.2% of total imports in January-September 2019 (down from 53.9% in the same period of 2018) and went up by 0.7% year-on-year. Imports from the euro area amounted to 42.2% (43.5% in the same period of 2018) and shrank by 1.0%. Imports from the rest of the world ran at 46.8% of total imports (46.1% in the same period of 2018) and expanded by 3.4% year-on-year.



- In 2018, imports of goods and services grew more intensively than exports leading to a **negative contribution of the external sector to GDP of -0.3 p.p.** (2.4% GDP y-o-y change in real terms), according to the [National Statistics Institute](#) (INE). According to [Government's Macroeconomic Scenario 2019-2022](#) (updated on 15.10.19) the forecast for the contribution of the external demand is 0.6 p.p. for 2019, and 0.2 p.p. for 2020. The Bank of Spain, in turn, forecasts a contribution of the external demand of 0.6 for 2019, 0.0 for 2020 and 0.1 for 2021 ([Macroeconomic projections for the Spanish economy 2019-2021, September 2019](#)).

Sectorial and geographic analysis of exports of services (Bank of Spain, Balance of Payments, BPM6, [monthly](#), and [quarterly](#)).

- In 2018, exports of services increased by 3.5% year-on-year to 131,913 million euros, the highest value ever-achieved ([Bank of Spain](#)). This rise in 2018 was due to the 3.5% increase both travel (tourism) as well as other services.
- The **share of other services** in the total exports of services has grown from 40.2% in 2000 to 47.7% in 2018, with a maximum of 49.5% in 2012.

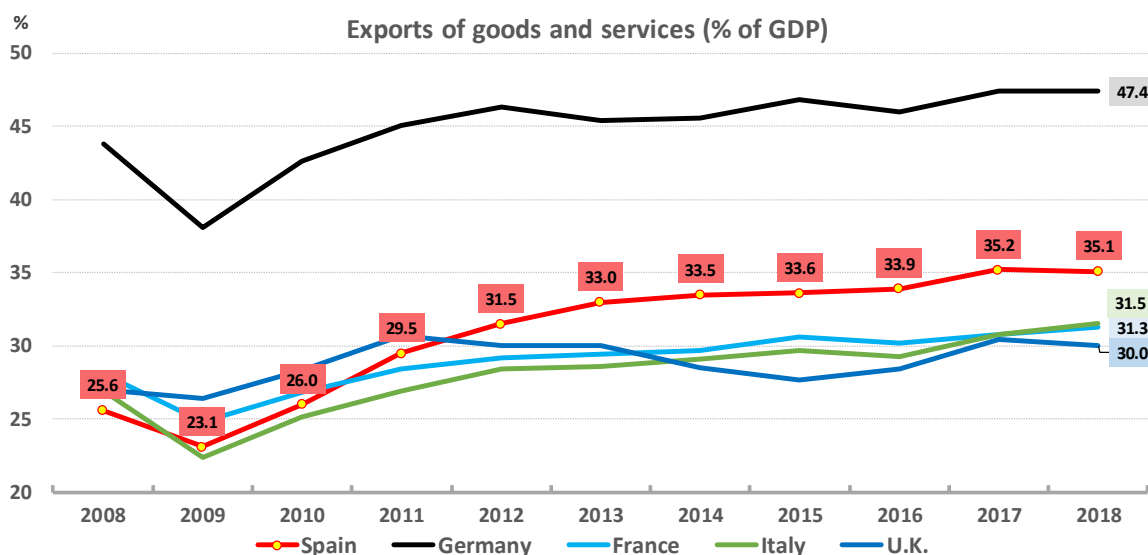


Source: Bank of Spain, Balance of payments. 26.09.19

- **In 2018** (BPM6, [Bank of Spain](#)), 47.7% of Spanish exports of services corresponded to other services (non-travel). By type of service, other business services represented 16.4% of total service exports, followed by transport services with 11.3% of total, and by telecommunications, computer and information services with 9.2% of total.
- **In 2018** (BPM6, [Bank of Spain](#)), 74.1% of Spanish exports of total services went to the Europe (65.0% to EU-28 and 42.8% to the euro area), 9.1% to Europe non-EU, 7.0% to North America, 6.9% to Asia, 5.4% to South America, 2.9% to Central America, 2.7% to Africa and 0.9% to Oceania. By countries, the most important destinations were the U.K. (15.9%), Germany (11.2%), France (10.8%), the United States (6.3%), the Netherlands (5.1%) and Switzerland (4.9%).

Exports of goods and services, % of GDP ([Eurostat](#))

- In the last few years, Spanish exports of goods and services have risen steadily in terms of GDP. According to Eurostat, Spanish exports of goods and services reached 35.1% of GDP in 2018, 12 p.p. higher than in 2009, and a greater ratio than in Italy, France or the United Kingdom.



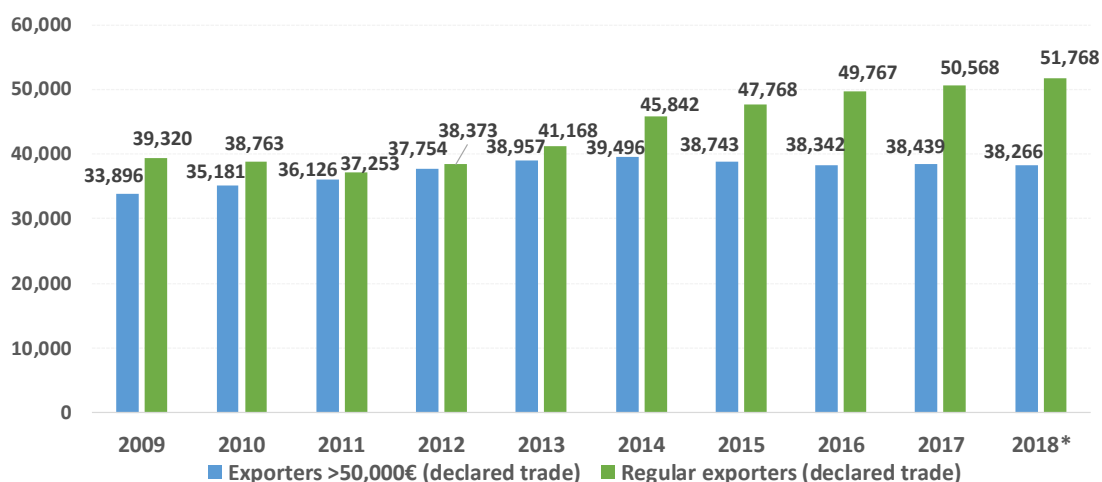
Source: Eurostat, updated: 18/11/19

2. EXPORT BASE

Spanish exporters (Secretariat of State for Trade of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism with Customs data; [customizable data](#))

- Another factor explaining the good performance of the Spanish external sector is the **increase in the export base**. In 2018, the number of **regular exporters** (those that have already exported in the current year as well as in each of the three preceding years with declared trade) **rose by 2.4%** year-on-year and reached 51,768, the seventh consecutive year of increase (1.6% in 2017, 4.2% in 2016 and 2015, 11.4% in 2014, 7.3% in 2013 and 3.0% in 2012). The number of exporters over 50,000€ remained fairly stable well over 38,000, and 8.8% higher than in 2010.

Spanish exporters (declared trade)



Source: Secretariat of State for Trade with Customs data. * provisional data

- The number of regular exporters has risen by 12.9% in the period 2014-2018. In 2018, regular exporters accounted for 95.4% of total declared exports and 4,134 firms exporting over 5 million euros (in the current year as well as in each of the three preceding years) accounted for 82.0% of Spain's foreign declared sales.

SPANISH REGULAR EXPORTERS (DECLARED TRADE)*

Minimum exports	Number of exporters					Annual rate of change (%)					18/14
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	%
Total exporters	147,845	147,334	148,658	161,392	204,196	-2.2%	-0.3%	0.9%	8.6%	26.5%	38.1%
Regular exporters	45,842	47,768	49,767	50,568	51,768	11.4%	4.2%	4.2%	1.6%	2.4%	12.9%
x>=25.000 €	25,498	26,228	27,020	28,014	28,377	5.2%	2.9%	3.0%	3.7%	1.3%	11.3%
x>=50.000 €	22,663	23,327	24,064	24,864	25,109	5.2%	2.9%	3.2%	3.3%	1.0%	10.8%
x>=500.000 €	12,626	13,102	13,719	14,302	14,720	5.6%	3.8%	4.7%	4.2%	3.1%	16.6%
x>=5M€	3,426	3,603	3,760	3,954	4,134	6.4%	5.2%	4.4%	5.2%	4.8%	20.7%
x>=50M€	391	435	438	465	510	9.5%	11.3%	0.7%	6.2%	9.4%	30.4%
Minimum exports	Value of exports in millions of euros					Annual rate of change (%)					18/14
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	%
Total exporters	240,581.8	249,794.4	256,393.4	276,142.9	285,023.9	2.0%	3.8%	2.6%	7.7%	2.9%	18.5%
Regular exporters	223,421.0	233,440.1	241,727.3	262,515.1	272,041.6	3.0%	4.5%	3.5%	8.6%	3.3%	21.8%
x>=25.000 €	221,140.5	231,314.0	239,336.8	260,207.4	270,038.2	3.1%	4.6%	3.5%	8.7%	3.5%	22.1%
x>=50.000 €	220,485.0	230,680.6	238,648.2	259,399.5	269,357.3	3.3%	4.6%	3.5%	8.7%	3.6%	22.2%
x>=500.000 €	214,365.2	224,357.2	232,452.1	252,959.0	263,213.5	3.4%	4.7%	3.6%	8.8%	3.8%	22.8%
x>=5M€	188,338.1	196,738.2	203,911.1	223,061.1	233,625.5	3.9%	4.5%	3.6%	9.4%	4.4%	24.0%
x>=50M€	127,173.7	134,604.9	138,986.3	150,854.2	161,109.2	4.8%	5.8%	3.3%	8.5%	5.9%	26.7%

Source: Secretariat of State for Trade with Customs data. *2018 provisional data.

- In 2018, the number of Spanish exporters selling abroad over 50,000€ annually (38.266 exporters), were responsible for almost all exports by value (99.8%). In the upper sections, in 2018 there were 742 companies exporting more than 50 million euros from 594 in 2014, concentrating 63.5% % of total exports in 2018 from 61.2% in 2014.

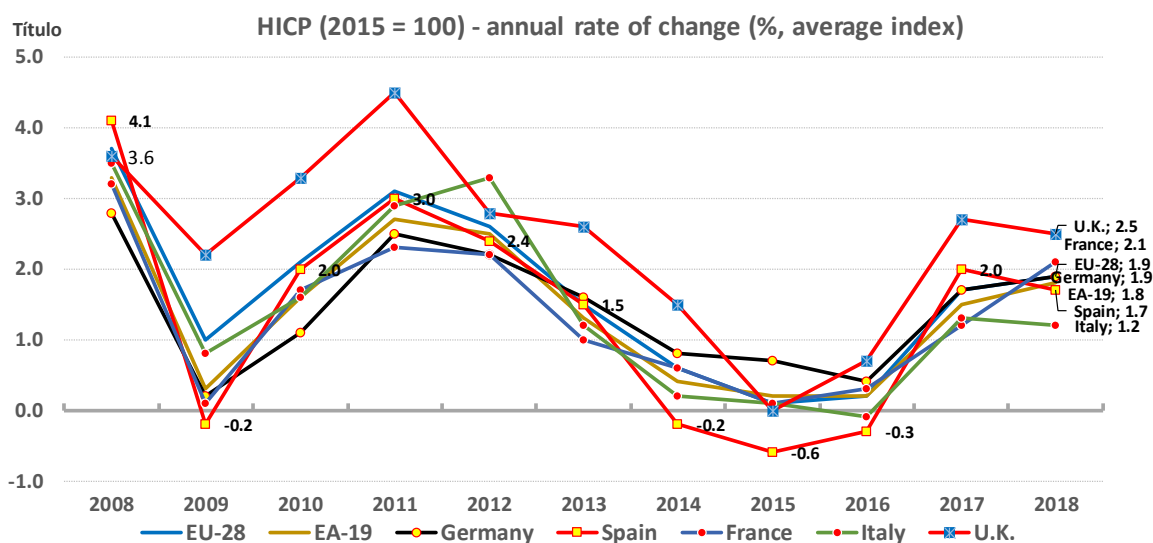
SPANISH EXPORTERS (DECLARED TRADE)											
Brackets (value of exports)	Number of exporters					Annual rate of change (%)					18/14 %
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
TOTAL	147,845	147,334	148,658	161,392	204,196	-2.2%	-0.3%	0.9%	8.6%	26.5%	38.1%
x<50.000€	108,349	108,591	110,316	122,953	165,930	-3.4%	0.2%	1.6%	11.5%	34.9%	53.1%
x>=50.000€	39,496	38,743	38,342	38,439	38,266	1.4%	-1.9%	-1.0%	0.3%	-0.4%	-3.1%
50.000€ <= x < 0,5M€	19,725	18,602	18,089	17,806	17,662	0.3%	-5.7%	-2.8%	-1.6%	-1.1%	-10.5%
0,5M€ <= x < 5M€	14,635	14,780	14,795	14,880	14,746	2.2%	1.0%	0.1%	0.6%	-0.6%	0.8%
5M€ <= x < 50M€	4,542	4,727	4,804	5,026	5,116	3.1%	4.1%	1.6%	4.6%	2.1%	12.6%
50M€ <= x < 250M€	492	530	546	604	622	4.0%	7.7%	3.0%	10.6%	3.0%	26.4%
x >= 250M€	102	104	108	123	120	2.0%	2.0%	3.8%	13.9%	-2.4%	17.6%
Brackets (value of exports)	Value of exports in millions of euros					Annual rate of change (%)					18/14 %
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
TOTAL	240,581.8	249,794.4	256,393.4	276,142.9	285,023.9	2.0%	3.8%	2.6%	7.7%	2.9%	18.5%
x<50.000€	612.2	606.2	596.1	599.9	595.7	-6.7%	-1.0%	-1.7%	0.6%	-0.8%	-2.7%
x>=50.000€	239,969.7	249,188.3	255,797.3	275,543.1	284,428.3	2.0%	3.8%	2.7%	7.7%	2.9%	18.5%
50.000€ <= x < 0,5M€	3,799.7	3,496.3	3,415.6	3,325.6	3,281.2	0.6%	-8.0%	-2.3%	-2.6%	-1.6%	-13.6%
0,5M€ <= x < 5M€	24,454.1	25,089.9	25,444.7	25,726.9	25,720.0	2.7%	2.6%	1.4%	1.1%	0.1%	5.2%
5M€ <= x < 50M€	64,599.5	67,511.5	68,787.6	72,141.1	74,396.3	1.9%	4.5%	1.9%	4.9%	3.5%	15.2%
50M€ <= x < 250M€	48,841.6	52,464.1	53,913.3	58,771.6	62,292.3	2.7%	7.4%	2.8%	9.0%	6.1%	27.5%
x >= 250M€	98,274.7	100,626.5	104,236.0	115,577.9	118,738.5	1.7%	2.4%	3.6%	10.9%	1.5%	20.8%

Source: Secretariat of State for Trade with Customs data. * 2018 provisional data.

3. COMPETITIVENESS

Price-based competitiveness indices

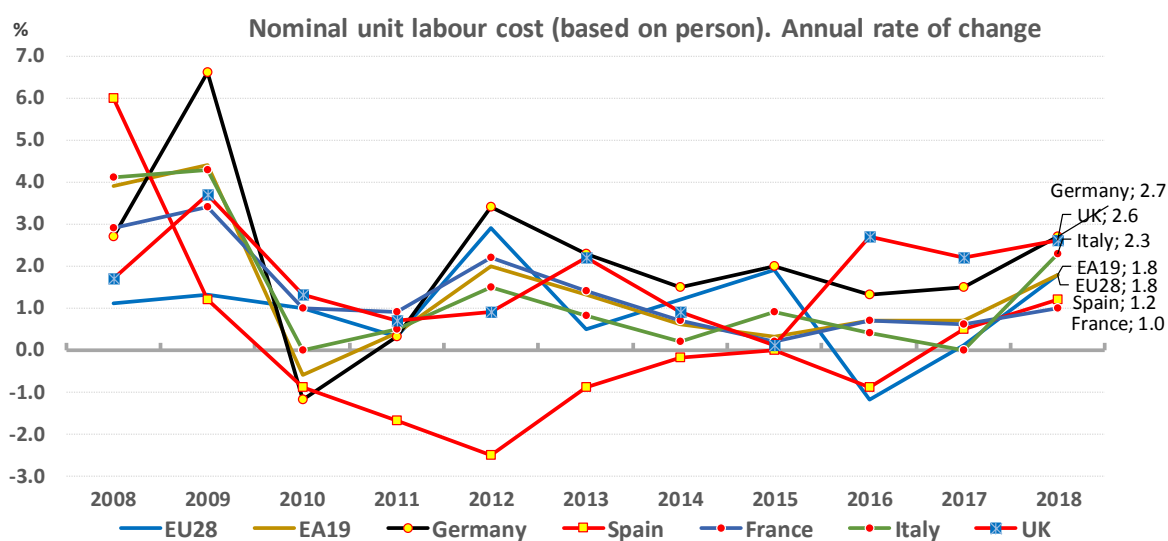
- In 2018, according to [Eurostat](#), the average inflation rate in Spain reached 1.7% year-on-year, second positive annual rate, after three years in negative. In the EU-28, the inflation annual rate was 1.9% and 1.8% in the euro area. In the EU largest economies, the inflation rates were in Germany, 1.9%, France, 2.1%, Italy, 1.2%, and in the U.K., 2.5%.



- According to the [Quarterly Report on Competitiveness Indices](#) of the Secretariat of State for Trade (11.11.19), with data based on ICP (index of consumer prices), Spain increased its price competitiveness in the period January-September of 2019 compared to the same period of the previous year vis-à-vis the euro area (-0.6%) as well as vis-à-vis the EU (-0.6%). In the latter, this is due to the gains in relative prices (-0.8%) that more than offset the appreciation of the euro in the period (0.2%). In 2018 as a whole, Spain gained competitiveness against the euro area (-0.1%), but lost it against the EU (0.1%), in the latter due to the appreciation of the euro against the rest of the currencies of the EU-28 countries. Vis-à-vis the OECD countries, Spain's competitiveness increased in the period January-September of 2019 (-2.3% y-o-y), due to the combination of the depreciation of the euro against the currencies of the OECD countries (-1.4%) and lower inflation (-0.9%). Vis-à-vis the emerging economies (BRICS), Spain gained price competitiveness in the period January-September of 2019 (-2.9% y-o-y) due to gains from relative prices (-2.3%) and the appreciation of the euro (-0.6%). However, in 2018 Spain lost competitiveness vis-à-vis the OECD countries (2.0%), and against the BRICS (4.1%). In both cases due to the appreciation of the euro.

Other competitiveness indicators

- The evolution of nominal unit labour costs (ULC) in Spain is helping to gain competitiveness. According to [Eurostat](#), Spanish nominal ULC based on persons increased by 1.2% y-o-y in 2018, second increase in the last nine years. The ULC increased to a greater extent in the EU (1.8%), EA (1.8%), Germany (2.7%), Italy (2.3%) and the U.K. (2.6%).



- Total Factor Productivity (TFP) in Spain has risen for the sixth year in a row in 2018, according to European Commission data ([AMECO](#), updated 7.05.19). TFP increased in Spain in 2018 by 0.35%, a lower expansion than those of the EU-28 (0.67%), the euro area (0.57%) and France (0.55%), but higher than those of Germany (0.29%), Italy (0.25%) and the U.K. (0.22%). For 2019, the prospects show increases in TFP in Spain (0.07%), as well as in EU-28 (0.20%) and the U.K. (0.29%). In France it remains stable (0.00%), whereas it falls in the euro area (-0.04%), Germany (-0.49%) and Italy (-0.37%).

Market share – based competitiveness indicators

- According to the latest data of the WTO (April 2019), in 2018 **Spain's exports of goods** reached 345.2 billion USD, **maintaining its weight** in international goods exports **at around 1.8%**, and attaining 16th position in the ranking of leading exporters (source: [WTO Data](#), September 2019).

Country	WTO: leading merchandise exporters (world share %)					Dif. 18-17	Rank 2018
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
China	12.34	13.75	13.09	12.77	12.78	0.02	1
USA	8.54	9.09	9.06	8.72	8.57	-0.16	2
Germany	7.87	8.02	8.33	8.17	8.02	-0.15	3
Japan	3.64	3.78	4.03	3.94	3.79	-0.14	4
Netherlands	3.54	3.45	3.56	3.68	3.72	0.04	5
South Korea	3.02	3.19	3.09	3.24	3.11	-0.13	6
France	3.06	3.06	3.13	3.02	2.99	-0.03	7
Hong Kong	2.76	3.09	3.22	3.10	2.92	-0.18	8
Italy	2.79	2.76	2.88	2.86	2.81	-0.05	9
United Kingdom	2.66	2.78	2.55	2.49	2.50	0.01	10
Belgium	2.49	2.40	2.49	2.43	2.40	-0.03	11
Mexico	2.09	2.30	2.33	2.31	2.32	0.01	12
Canada	2.51	2.48	2.43	2.37	2.32	-0.06	13
Russia	2.62	2.06	1.76	1.99	2.28	0.29	14
Singapore	2.16	2.13	2.06	2.11	2.12	0.02	15
Spain	1.71	1.71	1.81	1.80	1.77	-0.03	16
Taiwan	1.69	1.73	1.75	1.79	1.73	-0.06	17
India	1.70	1.62	1.65	1.69	1.67	-0.02	18
UAE	1.81	1.82	1.84	1.77	1.63	-0.14	19
Switzerland	1.64	1.75	1.89	1.69	1.60	-0.09	20

Source: WTO (September 2019)

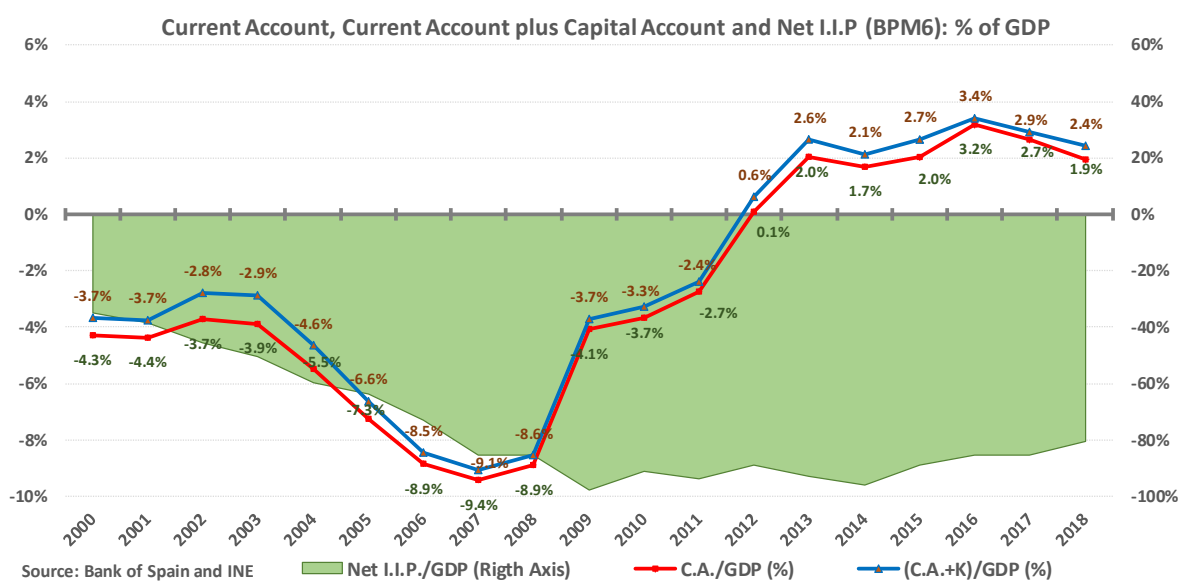
- Regarding trade of commercial services, the value of exports from Spain attained 149.0 billion USD in 2018 and obtained a **2.58%** share, maintaining the **11th position** in the ranking of leading exporters (source: [WTO Data](#), May 2019).

Country	WTO: leading commercial services exporters (world share %)					Dif. 18-17	Rank 2018
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
USA	14.09	15.03	14.92	14.53	14.01	-0.52	1
United Kingdom	7.22	7.20	6.95	6.59	6.46	-0.13	2
Germany	5.75	5.56	5.66	5.66	5.64	-0.02	3
France	5.30	5.21	5.23	5.11	5.04	-0.07	4
China	4.26	4.45	4.20	4.23	4.59	0.37	5
Netherlands	3.98	4.00	3.80	4.03	4.17	0.14	6
Ireland	2.58	2.72	3.00	3.35	3.56	0.21	7
India	3.06	3.18	3.25	3.45	3.54	0.10	8
Japan	3.11	3.24	3.44	3.39	3.25	-0.14	9
Singapore	3.04	3.18	3.16	3.22	3.18	-0.03	10
Spain	2.60	2.41	2.55	2.58	2.58	0.00	11
Switzerland	2.33	2.29	2.36	2.24	2.13	-0.12	12
Belgium	2.40	2.28	2.25	2.19	2.10	-0.09	13
Italy	2.21	1.99	2.01	2.07	2.09	0.03	14
Hong Kong	2.09	2.13	1.98	1.95	1.97	0.03	15
Luxembourg	2.00	2.00	1.96	1.91	1.95	0.04	16
South Korea	2.17	1.98	1.89	1.61	1.65	0.04	17
Canada	1.71	1.63	1.64	1.62	1.59	-0.03	18
Thailand	1.08	1.26	1.36	1.40	1.45	0.05	19
Austria	1.33	1.20	1.23	1.23	1.28	0.04	20

Source: WTO (May 2019)

4. CURRENT ACCOUNT B. AND LENDING CAPABILITY ([Bank of Spain](#))

- The good performance of the Spanish trade balance is the main factor that explains the correction of the current account deficit, from -9.1% of GDP in 2007 to 1.9% surplus in 2018, 7th consecutive surplus, with data from [Bank of Spain](#) (23,284 million euros, data published on 26 September 2019 by [Bank of Spain](#)).
- The services balance has also played a positive role in the last few years, moving from a surplus of 3.0% of GDP in 2007 to a surplus of 5.2% of GDP in 2018 (61,948 million euros, [Bank of Spain](#)).
- The aggregate balance of the capital account and the current account in 2018 shows a surplus against **the rest of the world of 29,052 million euro, 2.4% of GDP with BoP data**, 7th consecutive surplus (in 2017, 33,929 million euro, 2.9% of GDP), in sharp contrast with the borrowing needs of 97,533 million euros (-9.1% of GDP) in 2007.



- According to Spanish Government forecasts ([Macroeconomic Scenario](#) updated on 15.10.19), Spain is expected to attain a current account surplus of 1.8% in 2019 and 1.6% in 2020, and to achieve a net lending capacity vis-à-vis the rest of the world of 2.3% in 2019 and 2.1% in 2020.

APPENDIX: MAIN FORECASTS FOR SPAIN

MAIN FORECASTS FOR SPAIN																					
% annual change (unless otherwise indicated)	Exports of goods and services			Imports of goods and services			Current account bal. (% GDP)			Net lending vis-à-vis ROW (% GDP)			External sector cont. GDP (*)			Domestic demand cont. GDP (*)			GDP		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Spanish Gov. ¹	2.2	1.7	2.3	3.3	0.1	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.6	2.4	2.3	2.1	-0.3	0.6	0.2	2.6	1.5	1.6	2.4	2.1	1.8
IMF ²	2.3	2.4	3.3	3.5	1.3	2.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	-	-	-	-0.3	0.4	0.2	2.9	1.8	1.7	2.6	2.2	1.8
EC ³	2.2	2.0	2.3	3.3	0.5	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.9	3.1	-0.3	0.6	0.2	2.4	1.3	1.3	2.4	1.9	1.5
OECD ⁴	2.3	0.8	3.7	3.5	0.6	4.3	0.9	0.8	0.7	-	-	-	-0.3	0.1	-0.1	3.0	2.2	2.1	2.6	2.2	1.9
Bank of Spain ⁵	2.2	2.2	3.0	3.3	0.5	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.3	0.6	0.0	2.7	1.4	1.7	2.4	2.0	1.7

(*) Contribution to GDP growth in percentage points.

1. [Macroeconomic Scenario 2019-2020, 15 October 2019](#)

2. [FMI. WEO October 2019](#)

3. [European Economic Forecast, Autumn, November 2019](#)

4. [OECD Economic Outlook 105, May 2019](#)

5. [Macroeconomic projections for the Spanish economy \(2019-2021\), September 2019](#)

