



MANAGING ARRIVALS AT THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS: ACCESSING PROTECTION IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

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This report was written by Eleonora Testi and Marie Trapet of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

The visit to Spain was conducted as part of the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) managed by ECRE, which provides up-to-date information and analysis of the legal framework and practice with regard to asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention and content of international protection in 27 countries. This report complements and should be read together with the [AIDA Country Report on Spain](#).

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GLOSSARY & LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAED	Centre for Emergency Assistance and Referral Centro de Atención de Emergencia y Derivación
CATE	Centre for the Temporary Assistance of Foreigners Centro de Atención Temporal de Extranjeros
CEAR	Spanish Commission of Aid to Refugees Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado
CIAR	Inter-Ministerial Commission of Asylum Comisión Interministerial de Asilo y Refugio
CIE	Detention Centre for Foreigners Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros
CREADE	Emergency and Referral Centres Centros de Recepción, Atención y Derivación para personas desplazadas desde Ucrania
DGAHSAPI	Directorate General for Humanitarian Assistance and for the Reception System of International Protection Dirección General de Atención Humanitaria y del Sistema de Acogida de Protección Internacional
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERIE	Emergency Immediate Response Teams Equipos de Respuesta Inmediata en Emergencia
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
SEM	State Secretary for Migration Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

THE ASYLUM INFORMATION DATABASE (AIDA)

The [Asylum Information Database](#) is a database containing information on asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention and content of international protection across 27 countries. This includes 21 European Union (EU) Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia) and 6 non-EU countries (Egypt, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom).

The overall goal of the database is to contribute to the improvement of asylum policies and practices in Europe and the situation of asylum seekers by providing all relevant actors with appropriate tools and information to support their advocacy and litigation efforts, both at the national and European level. These objectives are carried out by AIDA through the following activities:

- **Country reports**

AIDA contains [national reports](#) documenting asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention and content of international protection in 27 countries.

- **Comparative reports**

AIDA comparative reports provide a thorough comparative analysis of practice relating to the implementation of asylum standards across the countries covered by the database, in addition to an overview of statistical asylum trends and a discussion of key developments in asylum and migration policies in Europe. Annual reports were published in [2013](#), [2014](#) and [2015](#). From 2016 onwards, AIDA comparative reports are published in the form of thematic updates, focusing on the individual themes covered by the database. Thematic reports have been published on [reception](#) (March 2016), [asylum procedures](#) (September 2016), [content of protection](#) (March 2017), [vulnerability](#) (September 2017), [detention](#) (March 2018), access to the [territory and registration](#) (October 2018), [reception](#) (May 2019), [asylum authorities](#) (October 2019), [digitalisation of asylum procedures](#) (January 2022), [family reunification](#) (February 2023) and [places and conditions of detention](#) (June 2026).

- **Fact-finding visits**

AIDA includes the development of fact-finding visits to further investigate important protection gaps established through the country reports, and a methodological framework for such missions. Fact-finding visits have been conducted in [Greece](#), [Hungary](#), [Austria](#), [Croatia](#), [France](#), Belgium, Germany, [Poland](#) and [Romania](#).

- **Legal briefings**

Legal briefings aim to bridge AIDA research with evidence-based legal reasoning and advocacy. With the assistance of information gathered from country reports, these short papers identify and analyse key issues in EU asylum law and policy and identify potential protection gaps in the asylum *acquis*. Legal briefings so far cover: (1) [Dublin detention](#); (2) [asylum statistics](#); (3) [safe countries of origin](#); (4) [procedural rights in detention](#); (5) [age assessment of unaccompanied children](#); (6) [residence permits for beneficiaries of international protection](#); (7) [the length of asylum procedures](#); (8) [travel documents](#) for beneficiaries of international protection; (9) [accelerated procedures](#); (10) [the expansion of detention](#); (11) [relocation](#); and (12) [withdrawal of reception conditions](#).

- **Statistical updates**

AIDA releases short publications with key figures and analysis on the operation of the Dublin system across selected European countries. Updates have been published for [2016](#), the [first half of 2017](#), [2017](#), the [first half of 2018](#), [2018](#), the [first half of 2019](#), [2019](#) and the [first half of 2020](#), [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#) and [2024](#).



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INTRODUCTION

The fact-finding visit to Spain took place against the backdrop of two developments: the sustained numbers of sea arrivals of migrants in the Canary Islands, particularly along the Atlantic route, and the ongoing implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (the Pact), which will significantly reshape migration and asylum management at the European Union's external borders. In the past years, the Canary Islands have become one of the principal entry points of migrants to the European Union. This has generated considerable pressure on reception facilities and child protection services, while also raising broader questions regarding cooperation with third countries, access to protection, and the management of mixed migratory movements at the EU's southern external border. The implementation of the Pact is particularly relevant in this context. Several of the new instruments, including the Screening Regulation and the expanded use of border procedures, will have a direct impact on operational practices in the Canary Islands. At the same time, Spain has been recognised by the European Commission as one of the Member States facing migratory pressure and is therefore eligible to benefit from solidarity measures under the EU Solidarity Pool from mid-2026. The Canary Islands therefore provide an important case study for examining both the challenges of migration management at the external borders and the practical implications of the new European framework.

The report presents the findings of a fact-finding visit to Spain conducted by ECRE between 23 and 27 February 2026. The visit included meetings in Madrid with representatives of national authorities and international organisations, as well as a four-day mission to the Canary Islands, where the majority of interviews and site visits were conducted. While the report contains observations on certain aspects of the Spanish asylum and migration system more broadly, its primary geographical focus is the Canary Islands, reflecting their particular significance within the Spanish and European migration context.

During the visit, ECRE's delegation met with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, the Government of the Canary Islands, the Vice-Ministry of Social Welfare and the Directorate-General for Childhood of the Canary Islands, the Public Prosecutor's Office for Immigration, the Public Prosecutor's Office for Minors, the National Police, UNHCR, IOM, EUAA, the Tenerife Bar Association and civil society organisations. The delegation also visited two facilities destined, respectively, to hosting unaccompanied minors and victims of gender-based violence and trafficking.

Information and data gathered through interviews and observations conducted during the visit are complemented by desk research and authoritative sources on the Spanish asylum system and the situation in the Canary Islands, including information collected in the framework of the Asylum Information Database (AIDA).

The report is structured into three chapters:

- » **Chapter I** examines access to the territory and entry checks, including trends in arrivals, cooperation with third countries, search and rescue operations, and procedures carried out following disembarkation.
- » **Chapter II** analyses asylum procedures and procedural guarantees, including access to the asylum procedure and safeguards for vulnerable applicants.
- » **Chapter III** focuses on the reception system, examining both reception conditions for adult asylum applicants, the Humanitarian Assistance Programme, and the specific challenges associated with the reception and protection of unaccompanied children.

Throughout the report, particular attention is paid to the implications of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum for the Spanish context, identifying the main legal, institutional and operational changes required for its effective implementation. A final section sets out conclusions and recommendations to national and local authorities based on the findings of the visit.

CHAPTER I: ACCESS TO THE TERRITORY AND ENTRY CHECKS

1. Trends and routes of arrival

In 2025, 36,775 migrants arrived in Spain by land and sea, representing an overall decrease of 42.6% compared to the 64,019 arrivals in 2024.¹ The vast majority of arrivals registered were by sea (32,925). In 2025, there was a significant decrease (-62%) of people arriving in the Canary Islands compared to the previous year, while there was an increase (24.5%) of people arriving in the Balearic Islands. Despite this registered decrease, in absolute numbers the Canary Islands are still the main point of arrival by sea, with 17,778 persons reaching the archipelago throughout the year.

Migration to the Canary Islands by sea occurs through the Western African Atlantic Route which includes movements departing from the West African and North African coasts, arriving in the Canary Islands via the Atlantic Ocean. Before 2025, Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal were the main countries of embarkation for the sea. In recent years, this route saw record-breaking numbers of arrivals to Europe, with the highest increase of arrivals from 2022 to 2023 (155%, from 16,000 to 40,000). This route has experienced fluctuating trends in the past, with notable peaks in 2006 and 2024. The resurgence in recent years is due to worsening conditions in some countries of origin and increased restrictions on other routes to Europe, including the Western and Central Mediterranean routes through increased border enforcement measures at land borders and at sea in North African countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. The primary countries of origin of migrants using this route are Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Morocco and Mauritania.² However, agreements with Mauritania have significantly reduced departures from the country (see below: 2. Cooperation with third countries).

Risks along the route

An increase in arrivals is usually accompanied by an increase in the number of deaths along the route.³

According to IOM's figures, a total of 1,172 persons died or went missing on the Atlantic route in 2025,⁴ while the NGO *Caminando Fronteras* estimated that 1,906 persons lost their life on the Canary route.⁵

Since mid-January 2026, the NGO *Humanitarian Pilots Initiative (HPI)* carried out monitoring flights over the Atlantic Ocean - a zone where humanitarian ships are not present - and found numerous migrant boats in distress.⁶

There are also reports of violence on the ships during the crossing of the Atlantic route.⁷

The number of persons present on each boat varies depending on the point of departure. 'Cayucos' departing from Senegal can carry up to 200 people, while boats coming from Mauritania usually carry around 80 people. From Morocco, the number is generally lower. In the case of The Gambia, boats can carry up to 140 people.⁸ In addition, a rising number of boats departed from more distant ports (i.e. Guinea-Conakry), implying dangerous sea journeys surpassing 2,000 kilometres. In some cases, the journeys may last up to ten days. However, it was noted that these longer journeys are not necessarily the only dangerous ones, as larger vessels are usually used in these cases. The main problem identified relates to the lack of experience of the 'crews' steering the boats. In many cases, those operating the vessels have no knowledge of navigation and are simply instructed to steer the boat in a straight line towards the islands. In this context, El Hierro represents

1. Ministerio del Interior, 'Inmigración irregular 2025. Datos acumulados del 1 de enero al 31 de diciembre', January 2026, available [here](#).
2. IOM, Western African Atlantic, available [here](#).
3. Reuters, 'Migrants using more distant, riskier departure points to Canaries after Mauritania crackdown, Red Cross finds', 14 January 2026, available [here](#); Info Migrants, 'Spain: Migrants taking riskier 2,000-kilometer sea journeys to reach Canaries', 27 June 2025, available [here](#).
4. IOM, Western African Atlantic, available [here](#).
5. Caminando Fronteras, 'Monitoreo del derecho a la vida – Año 2025', December 2025, available [here](#) - It is worth noting, looking at the gap between the figures provided by IOM and Caminando Fronteras, that the methodology and source differ between the two data sets. Caminando Fronteras receives calls from people who have lost contact with their family members who had undertaken a migratory journey, and report disappearances accordingly, thus indicating higher numbers than, IOM, Salvamento Marítimo and the National Police.
6. Info Migrants, 'NGO monitors Atlantic migration route to the Canary Islands from the sky', 13 February 2026, available [here](#).
7. Politico, 'The Cost of Passage: Violence and Death on the Atlantic Route to Spain', 16 June 2025, available [here](#).
8. Information provided by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

the last island before open sea, meaning that if a vessel fails to locate it, there are no chances of survival unless the boat is identified and rescued.⁹ This phenomenon appears due to the fact that, in some cases, migrants reported having negotiated passage in exchange for piloting vessels.¹⁰

Profile and demographics of arrivals

As regards demographic composition, recent changes have been observed.

According to a report by the Mixed Migration Centre published in March 2025, migrants travelling along the Atlantic route are primarily West Africans and include nationals from the countries of embarkation, i.e. Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco. The number of Malians using the Atlantic route has increased due to ongoing conflict and insecurity, with 10,000 arrivals between January and September 2024. The report informed also on the increasing use of the Atlantic route by nationals of south-Asian countries.¹¹ In 2024 and 2025, arrivals have also been recorded from more distant countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Yemen, reflecting a certain diversification of the profiles involved in the migration routes.

Among those arriving in the Canary Islands by sea, nationalities from West Africa are the most represented. According to the information collected, Mali and Senegal each represent approximately 30% of arrivals. These are followed by nationalities such as Guinea Conakry, Morocco, Ivory Coast and Gambia.

Women represent approximately 10% of arrivals. In 2024, this proportion was lower, standing at around 7%.¹² Among the women that reached the Canary Islands in 2025, represented nationalities were Mali, but also Mauritania and the Comoros Islands.¹³ In an arrival in Fuerteventura at the beginning of 2026, for example, eight women were recorded, four of them from the Comoros Islands.¹⁴

According to the Spanish Red Cross, an increase in the arrival of extended family units compared to previous periods has also been registered recently.¹⁵

As regards children, available figures indicate that they represent approximately 14% of persons arriving in 2025. However, statistics do not always clearly distinguish between accompanied and unaccompanied minors. In practice, it is assumed that a significant share corresponds to unaccompanied minors. The number of minors has increased very significantly since 2020, although this is not an entirely new phenomenon. For example, during the 2006 crisis, significant numbers of minors were also recorded among those arriving. Among unaccompanied minors, there is a marked gender imbalance: approximately 95% are boys and only 5% are girls. In absolute terms, around 423 girls were recorded in 2025. This represents a relative increase compared to previous years, although overall numbers remain low. According to the observations collected, many of these girls arrive in contexts characterised by structural violence, including situations of trafficking in human beings, forced marriage, or female genital mutilation.¹⁶ Before 2023, around 90% of the minors were Moroccan boys. Over the past three years instead, there has been an increase in minors from Sub-Saharan Africa (Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Sierra Leone, etc.), as well as in girls, mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa and some from Morocco.¹⁷

2. Cooperation with third countries

Cooperation with third countries is a central element of Spain's migration policy.

In the past years, Spain has signed different bilateral agreements with third countries such as Mauritania, Morocco and Senegal. Some of these agreements are solely focused on returns, while others also aim at

9. Information provided by Maritime Rescue, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

10. Mixed Migration Centre, Evidence from the Atlantic Route: Migrant smuggling and risks on journeys to the Canary Islands, May 2026 available [here](#), p.17.

11. Mixed Migration Centre, Beyond restrictions: migration & smuggling across the Mediterranean, the Atlantic & the English Channel, March 2025, available [here](#).

12. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

13. Information provided by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

14. Information provided by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

15. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

16. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

17. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

strengthening border management in partner countries.¹⁸

Mauritania

Mauritania is a longstanding transit country at the crossroads between the Sahel, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, and plays a central role in migration cooperation with Spain, especially regarding control of migration movements to the Canary Islands. Mauritania's internal context also influences these dynamics. Mauritania is a country of approximately five million inhabitants, with limited resources and significant challenges in access to services, while also being strategically located between Africa and Europe and bordering Mali, a country in conflict. Since the first arrivals of Malian refugees in 2012, the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the country have grown to around 309,000 according to UNHCR's estimations¹⁹ (while Mauritanian authorities reported that the country hosted more than 400,000),²⁰ placing considerable strain on the country. The refugee population present in the country is highly vulnerable, with around 80% consisting of women and children, who face heightened risks of trafficking, family separation and other rights violations.²¹ In addition to Malian refugees, Mauritania hosts diverse populations from other regions, including Sudan, Burkina Faso and even countries such as Syria or Yemen, creating complex and varied protection needs within a context of limited state capacity and declining humanitarian funding.²²

This generates interest on the part of the Mauritanian Government in managing migration within its territory and in cooperating with European partners. Mauritanian cooperation with EU external migration management over time has mainly taken place within a broader framework of relations with the EU. More recently, under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), Mauritania has been allocated €125 million of EU funds between 2021 and 2024.²³ Migration and border management projects fall under this allocation, but it also concerns other areas such as support to the health system, the education system, and professional training and employment.²⁴ The European Union also finances two temporary reception centres in Mauritania, one in the capital Nouakchott and another in Nouadhibou. The centres are managed by the Mauritanian Red Crescent and provide temporary accommodation for migrants rescued at sea while registration procedures are completed. A screening process is conducted by UN agencies and human rights organisations, including the national human rights commission, which has access to the centres and a complaint mechanism.²⁵

Spain is also investing in strengthening the country's migration management capacities, including training Mauritanian forces by the Spanish Guardia Civil, as well as financing specialised equipment for border control, such as helicopters and vessels. In 2025, Spain renewed its cooperation agreement on migration with Mauritania,²⁶ and launched an initiative on circular migration with the country.²⁷ Since mid-October 2025, two detention centres for migrants financed by the Spanish Ministry of External Affairs were also opened in Mauritania. The aim is to for these centres to host migrants for up to 72 hours after being intercepted in Mauritanian waters en route to the Canary Islands.²⁸

As a result of the support received, Mauritania has progressively strengthened its legal and policy framework on asylum, having ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and engaging in efforts to develop a national asylum system. A draft asylum and migration law is under preparation – with support provided by UNHCR.²⁹ It includes important elements, such as the principle of non-refoulement and the right to asylum, but also presents shortcomings, particularly regarding differentiation between migrants and refugees, access to territory and institutional responsibilities.

At the same time, however, Mauritania is increasingly shifting towards a more security-oriented migration

18. See AIDA country report on Spain – Update on 2025.

19. UNHCR data, Mauritania, available [here](#).

20. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Mauritania, available [here](#).

21. Ibid.

22. ECRE - Dr Hassan Ould Moctar, The EU-Mauritania Partnership: Whose Priorities?, October 2024, available [here](#).

23. European Commission, Mauritania, available [here](#).

24. European Commission, "REPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE DE MAURITANIE : PROGRAMME INDICATIF PLURIANNUEL 2021-2027," 2024.

25. The Arab Weekly, Mauritania emerges as model for Europe's tough migration strateg, 16 June 2026, available [here](#).

26. Euractiv, 'Spain boosts cooperation with 'key partner' Mauritania on migration, security', 17 July 2025, available [here](#).

27. Info Migrants, Spain's circular migration policy explained, 5 September 2024, available [here](#).

28. Global State of Democracy Initiative, Mauritania - October 2025, available [here](#) and information share in the context of the event 'Retos y oportunidades de las migraciones en el Sahel: el caso de Mauritania' organised by CEAR, 18 March 2026.

29. UNHCR, Mauritania Annual Results Report 2025, available [here](#), p.5.

management approach, which can exacerbate vulnerabilities and restrict mobility. Access to migrants remains a key concern, particularly considering large-scale expulsions often carried out rapidly and sometimes collectively. These practices limit the ability of humanitarian actors to assess vulnerabilities and provide assistance. Although standard operating procedures for search and rescue and disembarkation were adopted in May 2025, and reception centres have been established, significant gaps remain. Shortcomings are also registered in terms of existing procedural safeguards. The fear of expulsion discourages migrants from coming forward and hampers individual vulnerability assessments, including for those in need of international protection, minors or victims of trafficking. Limited resources and time constraints compound these difficulties. Access to legal documentation is another major issue, as most migrants arriving in Mauritania lack identification, which restricts access to basic services such as healthcare and requires complex coordination with consular authorities.³⁰

In its 2025 annual report, Human Rights Watch found that Spain assisted Mauritania with border control, migration management, and anti-smuggling operations, including through financial and material support, and deployment of some Spanish forces in Mauritania, despite ongoing migrants' rights violations by local authorities.³¹ In June 2025, the Council of Europe also reported on the unlawful arrests, collective expulsions, excessive use of force and other human rights violations occurring in Mauritania.³²

Morocco

Spain has worked with Morocco on migration management for a long time. The cooperation among the two countries has been used as a blueprint for other cooperation agreements at the EU and national level. According to official data, in December 2023 the Moroccan Government declared having prevented the arrival of 70,000 migrants to Spain in the previous three years.³³ In the same year, the two countries issued a joint declaration establishing the renewal and reinforcement of the cooperation in the fight against irregular migration, border management, the fight against smuggling and the readmission of migrants in irregular situations.³⁴ The joint declaration adopted following the 13th high-level meeting between Morocco and Spain held at the beginning of December 2025 acknowledged their commitments in strengthening their efforts in the fight against irregular immigration, human smuggling, forgery of documents and human trafficking by adopting effective measures and developing cooperation with third countries, among other means. In this regard, Spain welcomed 'Morocco's exemplary and loyal cooperation in these areas'.³⁵

In recent years, Spain has provided Morocco with substantial funding and various types of equipment for the purposes of border management and migration control. Available information indicates that, between 2019 and early 2024, Spain allocated a total of EUR 118 million in EU-funded support to Morocco.³⁶

Senegal

In September 2022, Spain and Senegal started negotiations to resume returns of migrants irregularly staying in the Spanish territory.³⁷ In October 2024, the EU announced the approval of €30 million funds dedicated to strengthening the Senegalese authorities' capacity to aid migrants at risk and fight migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The European Commission already funds a €5.75 million project strengthening the capacity of Senegalese security forces to combat irregular immigration, trafficking and migrant smuggling.³⁸

30. See, inter alia, Global Detention Project, *Mauritania: Mass Arrests and Deportations as EU Continues Efforts to Create "Bulwark" Against Irregular Migration*, 27 May 2025, available [here](#); Human Rights Watch, *'Mauritania: Years of Migration Control Abuses'*, 27 August 2025, available [here](#); El País, *'Palizas, hambre y expulsiones: la violencia en Mauritania que explica la caída de llegadas de cayucos a Canarias'*, 27 August 2025, available [here](#); Global Detention Project, *UN Special Rapporteur Calls on Mauritania to End Abuses Against Migrants and Refugees*, 18 September 2025, available [here](#); UNHCR, *Mauritania Annual Results Report 2025*, available [here](#), p.4; Al Jazeera, *Migrants in hiding as Mauritania pushbacks drastically cut Europe arrivals*, 28 April 2026, available [here](#).

31. Human Rights Watch, *'World report 2026. Spain. Events of 2025'*, February 2026, available [here](#); Público, *'Regularizar dentro, blindar fuera: Human Rights Watch suspende a España en política migratoria'*, 5 February 2026, available [here](#).

32. Council of Europe, *'CoE, Externalised asylum and migration policies and human rights law'*, June 2025, available [here](#).

33. Heraldo, *'Marruecos impidió en los últimos tres años a 10.000 migrantes entrar en Ceuta y Melilla'*, 7 December 2023, available [here](#).

34. La Moncloa, *'XII reunión de alto nivel Marruecos-España. 1-2 febrero 2023. Declaración conjunta'*, February 2023, available [here](#).

35. La Moncloa, *'XIII Reunión de alto nivel Marruecos-España. 4 de diciembre de 2025. Declaración Conjunta'*, 4 December 2025, available [here](#).

36. The Objective, *'El Gobierno ya lleva donados 118 millones a Marruecos para vigilar sus fronteras y costas'*, 18 February 2024, available [here](#).

37. Público, *'España y Senegal negocian para retomar las deportaciones de migrantes'*, 19 September 2022, available [here](#).

38. Le monde, *'EU announces €30 million package to prevent irregular migration from Senegal'*, 16 October 2024, available [here](#).

In 2025, Spain and Senegal's cooperation in combatting human trafficking and smuggling networks prevented 3,500 irregular migrant departures. Until the end of October 2025, less than 600 people have arrived irregularly in the Canary Islands from the Senegalese coast. Spain currently has 40 security agents stationed in Senegal, working together with the Gendarmerie and National Police through land, sea, and river patrols, supported by patrol boats, a helicopter, vehicles, and surveillance aircraft.³⁹

A media investigation published in November 2025 raised concerns regarding the use of EU funding in Senegal, suggesting that it may be contributing to strengthened migration control to the detriment of the rights of persons attempting to reach Europe.⁴⁰

3. Search and rescue operations and border monitoring

Maritime Rescue (*Salvamento Marítimo*), an authority under the Ministry of Transport, is responsible for search and rescue operations in Spain's Search and Rescue

(SAR) zones.⁴¹ In February 2025, the Council of Ministers approved the new National Plan on Maritime Rescue for the period 2025-2027, with the allocation of a budget of €163 million.⁴² Approximately 95% of irregular arrivals by sea are handled through rescues or interventions by Maritime Rescue.⁴³

In the Canary Islands there are two SAR zones managed by Maritime Rescue. One of the authority's offices is based in Gran Canaria and mainly covers the eastern islands of the archipelago. The second is based in Tenerife and covers the islands of Tenerife, El Hierro, La Palma and La Gomera.

The SAR zone based in Tenerife is not shared with other countries, whereas the SAR zone managed from Gran Canaria is shared with Morocco, which entails additional coordination in certain operations.

Maritime Rescue is not directly responsible for cooperation with neighbouring countries. This function falls under the responsibility of the 'Guardia Civil', through its Regional Coordination Centre. However, Maritime Rescue, under its functions and in the context of the National Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (*Centro Nacional de Coordinación de Salvamento*) coordinates with other countries in the management of maritime emergencies.

In practice, coast guards in neighbouring countries inform the Guardia Civil about possible departures of vessels, and this information is then transmitted to Maritime Rescue, which is responsible for monitoring its SAR zone and attempting to locate the vessels within its area of responsibility.⁴⁴

There are no Frontex operations providing direct support to SAR operations conducted in the Canary Islands. Frontex' role is limited to providing support to the National Police in the context of entry checks conducted in Centre for the Temporary Assistance of Foreigners (see below).⁴⁵ However, Frontex does cooperate with third countries neighbouring Spain such as Senegal.⁴⁶

Representatives of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Tenerife reported operating two large rescue vessels, one smaller vessel, one helicopter and one aircraft, although the latter was under repair at the time of the visit. The vast maritime area under SAR responsibility of the Centre constitutes a significant operational challenge, meaning that vessels reported to have departed from neighbouring countries cannot always be located. Maritime Rescue also highlighted the frequent arrival of overcrowded boats and the regular identification of persons with medical needs and other vulnerabilities. Following rescue operations, an initial triage is carried out to identify individuals requiring urgent assistance. Persons with serious medical conditions and other vulnerable groups, such as young children and pregnant women, may be transported by helicopter

39. Info Migrants, 'Atlantic route: Spain and Senegal join forces against irregular migration, IOM launches West Africa initiative', 6 November 2025, available [here](#).

40. Follow the Money, 'Senegal's EU-funded migration crackdown puts innocent people behind bars', 20 November 2025, available [here](#).

41. CEAR, 'Refugiados y migrantes en España: Los muros invisibles tras la frontera sur', December 2017, 8.

42. Ministerio de Transportes y Movilidad Sostenible, 'El Gobierno aprueba el nuevo Plan Nacional de Salvamento Marítimo con una inversión de 163 millones de euros para modernizarse', 4 February 2025, available [here](#).

43. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

44. Information provided by Maritime Rescue, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

45. Info Migrants, Spain: Canary Islands request more help from Frontex, 22 August 2025, available [here](#).

46. ECRE- Bandara Ndiaye, La stratégie de gestion des migrations de l'Union Européenne envers les pays africains analysée depuis le Sénégal et l'Afrique de l'ouest, May 2022, available [here](#).

to the islands. Where possible, boats are escorted to the nearest port; otherwise, passengers are transferred to a rescue vessel.⁴⁷

UNHCR carries out monitoring activities at Spanish sea and land borders. Until the beginning of 2025, UNHCR carried out these activities including through presence of its staff in Melilla, Algeciras (covering Ceuta and Cádiz), Málaga (covering Málaga, Granada and Almería), and in the Canary Islands, where UNHCR has deployed a team since January 2021.

In 2025, due to funding reasons, UNHCR had to reduce its presence and operations in Spain, including at the country's external borders.⁴⁸

4. Entry checks upon disembarkation and return procedures

Since 2018, sea arrivals in Spain have been managed around the Centres for Temporary Assistance for Foreigners (CATE), which function as extensions of police stations.

The process following disembarkation is structured in different phases:

- » *Disembarkation and initial humanitarian assistance:* Maritime Rescue brings people to the port, where the Red Cross provides initial humanitarian assistance. This phase generally lasts up to four hours and takes place in port facilities. It includes basic assistance but does not constitute a formal administrative procedure.
- » *Start of the administrative procedure/screening (CATE):* Once this first phase is completed, individuals fall under the Aliens Law. They are transferred to the CATE, where a return procedure is automatically initiated. A return order is issued, and identification is carried out by the police. The return procedure is summary in nature but includes the right to legal assistance. Detention has a maximum limit of 72 hours, in accordance with the Spanish Constitution, a limit that is respected in practice and often not exhausted.
- » *Referral to the reception system:* After their stay in the CATE, individuals are released and referred to the reception system managed by the Ministry of Inclusion. They are channelled either into the international protection system or into the humanitarian assistance programme.

When people arrive at the port, different actors might be present. In most cases, the National Police and the Spanish Red Cross are responsible for providing immediate assistance to newly arrived individuals. The Guardia Civil may also be present and, in some cases, conducts inspections of the vessels to obtain information relevant for security-related investigations or human trafficking operations.⁴⁹

The Spanish Red Cross is present at the main sea arrival points with its Emergency Immediate Response Teams (*Equipos de Respuesta Inmediata en Emergencia*, ERIE). The ERIE is composed of Red Cross staff and volunteers who are usually medical personnel, nurses and some intercultural mediators.⁵⁰ Assistance upon disembarkation is structured around two main components: healthcare and social support. Healthcare is provided in coordination between the Red Cross and the Canary Islands Health Service, while social assistance includes the provision of clothing, footwear, food, first aid, and an initial identification of vulnerabilities. The time available for intervention at the coast is very limited and the context is often chaotic, which makes the proper identification of vulnerable profiles difficult. At this stage, intercultural mediators (PREPI teams) attempt an initial screening, supported by a system of coloured wristbands used to classify individuals according to their health condition or potential vulnerabilities. The intervention varies depending on the point of arrival, the number of persons and the condition of the vessel. Information (i.e. vulnerabilities, international protection needs, family unit, trafficked persons, UAMs, persons transferred to hospital, diseases, shipwrecks, etc.) collected by the Spanish Red Cross during this first humanitarian assistance to newcomers is transferred to the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration within 24 hours, so that the reception facility where persons are referred will know this preliminary individual information.⁵¹

4.1 Centres for the Temporary Assistance of Foreigners (CATE)

47. Information provided by Maritime Rescue, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

48. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

49. Information provided by Maritime Rescue, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

50. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and ES country report 2025.

51. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026

After the initial humanitarian assistance provided at ports, disembarked migrants come under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, specifically the National Police. They are then transferred to Centres for the Temporary Assistance of Foreigners (CATE), where identification, vulnerability screening and, where necessary, DNA tests are carried out. Unaccompanied children should not, in principle, be transferred to CATEs, except in cases where their minority is not evident and has not been initially identified. When a person declares themselves to be a minor, this is recorded and communicated to both the public prosecutor's office and the court.⁵² If a person is identified as an unaccompanied minor, they are directly referred to the Government of the Canary Islands, which is the competent authority for child protection.

In a decision taken in November 2024, the Spanish Supreme Court clarified the juridical nature of CATEs, by establishing that foreign nationals apprehended whilst attempting to enter Spain irregularly and who are taken to and detained in a CATE are deprived of liberty, and the nature of these facilities is that of police facilities. Consequently, the legal regime applicable to such centres is that applicable to police facilities, and therefore persons detained therein shall be entitled to the rights granted to foreign nationals who are deprived of their liberty in police facilities.⁵³ The maximum period of stay in these centres is 72 hours.⁵⁴ In practice, as reported regarding the Canary Islands, the procedure within the CATE is typically completed within 24 to 48 hours, and the maximum time limit of 72 hours is not exceeded.⁵⁵

During the permanence in CATEs, a return procedure is automatically opened. The return procedure has to be suspended in two cases: (a) the person applies for international protection or (b) when there is no prospect of return, for example due to lack of identity documents. According to representatives of the National Police, if the intention to apply for asylum is expressed before the opening of the return procedure, the latter is not initiated and, therefore, no return order is issued.⁵⁶ However, according to stakeholders operating in this context, it appears that, in practice, the large majority of persons passing through CATEs is actually issued a return decision, with removal then suspended based on the impossibility to carry out returns (see below, *Access to asylum in CATEs*).⁵⁷

Upon arrival, a NIE (national identification) number is directly assigned to individuals. Subsequently, the documentation status varies depending on the case. In the case of an application for international protection, a document certifying person expressed the intention to apply for international protection is issued until the interview takes place. If the person does not apply for asylum, they only hold a document relating to the return order, which does not constitute an identification document as such, but merely includes the assigned NIE and the declared name. In these cases, it may take up to two years to access a pathway to regularisation through social roots/meaningful links ("*arraigo*").⁵⁸

Challenges and concerns regarding the timeliness of the legal assistance provided to migrants following sea arrivals, the lack of privacy during interviews, the lack of interpreters, as well as on the conditions of CATEs have been raised in the years.⁵⁹

Infrastructure and conditions

In the Canary Islands, CATEs are present in Tenerife (Adeje), Gran Canaria (Barranco Seco), El Hierro (San Andrés) and Lanzarote (Arrecife).⁶⁰ In January 2026, the construction works for a new CATE in the south of Tenerife started, with a budget of €7 million. The plan foresees the construction of two main buildings with 256 beds, and a smaller module with 92 additional places. Thus, the facility will be able to accommodate 348 people arriving by boat. The planned construction period is 10 months.⁶¹ In the past, El Hierro – one of the islands on which most arrivals have been registered recently – did not have a CATE, which created significant logistical challenges during periods of higher numbers of arrivals. Specific infrastructure has now been installed, although it largely consists of temporary structures similar to field hospitals, with plastic modular

52. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

53. Tribunal Supremo, Sala de los Contencioso, STS 5869/2024, 27 November 2024, available [here](#).

54. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026

55. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026 and the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

56. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

57. Information provided by the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

58. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

59. AIDA country report on Spain – Update on 2025.

60. Defensor del Pueblo, Informe Anual 2025 – Anexos, March 2026, available [here](#), p.50.

61. Canarian Weekly, 'Work starts on new €7 million migrant reception centre in the south of Tenerife', 10 January 2026, available [here](#); Canarian weekly, 'Work begins on new Migrant Reception Centre in the south of Tenerife', 22 February 2026, available [here](#).

units.⁶²

The Spanish Ombudsperson (*Defensor del Pueblo*), acting in its capacity as National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), highlighted several concerns regarding conditions in Temporary Centres for Foreigners (CATE). The institution stressed the need to ensure access to outdoor areas and shaded spaces for detained persons, particularly given the high exposure to sun in locations such as the Canary Islands and the Mediterranean coast. It also criticised inadequate sleeping conditions, noting that overnight stays on the floor remain unacceptable and calling for all centres to provide properly equipped rooms with bunk beds, direct access to bathrooms, and adequate lighting and ventilation. In addition, the MNP raised concerns regarding the confiscation of mobile phones throughout detention, which prevents contact with relatives and lawyers and may hinder the effective exercise of the right to defence. It recommended allowing detainees to keep their phones or, alternatively, guaranteeing the possibility to make phone calls at the beginning of detention. Finally, the Ombudsperson reiterated the need for all CATE facilities to maintain complaint and suggestion registers accessible in multiple languages.⁶³

Access to lawyers, international organisations and NGOs

Legal assistance in CATEs is mainly framed under the national Immigration Law (*Ley Orgánica de Extranjería*) – rather than under asylum rules – and is provided by local Bar Associations, in charge of organising legal assistance when sea arrivals occur. In many cases, when a vessel is still approaching the islands, the authorities inform the competent Bar Association, which allows it to organise the deployment of lawyers from other islands. Due to the limited number of professionals in El Hierro, when large numbers of persons arrive, lawyers are deployed from Tenerife or other islands. In some cases, between 12 and 14 lawyers – depending on the numbers of arrivals – may be present on the island the day after an arrival to assist newly arrived individuals. However, challenging logistical conditions were experienced in the past. During certain periods of mass arrivals, when it was not possible to organise all legal assistance in El Hierro, some individuals were transferred to Tenerife, where the National Police carried out the relevant administrative procedures. Within CATEs there are spaces designated for meetings with lawyers. In El Hierro, there are no formal offices. Interviews take place in spaces that provide a certain level of privacy, although with limitations due to the available space. In general, a maximum of two people can be present during the legal assistance, while maintaining some separation from other interviews taking place at the same time. Challenges are reported also regarding the lack of interpreters present on site, which hinders the possibility for lawyers to provide complete information to their clients.⁶⁴

In practice, lawyers often only manage to intervene at the moment the return order is served.⁶⁵ This must occur in the presence of a lawyer,⁶⁶ a requirement that appears generally respected in practice. However, this late intervention often leads to the persons involved not having always received information on the possibility of presenting an asylum application before the issuance of a return decision. After legal assistance is provided however, the persons assisted generally make an asylum application, and thus the return order has no longer effect.⁶⁷

Other actors can access CATEs upon authorisation of the National Police. UNHCR, IOM and Save the Children have access to these centres, but do not have a constant presence.⁶⁸ IOM coordinates its access with the Ministry of the Interior and generally enters the facilities after the initial identification, fingerprinting and vulnerability assessment procedures have been completed. Its role is limited to providing humanitarian assistance and general information on migrants' rights, including the possibility of applying for international protection, while individuals expressing an intention to seek asylum are referred to UNHCR.⁶⁹ Save the Children's access is likewise coordinated with the police and varies between islands, often depending on the presence of clearly identifiable minors. Time available for interventions is generally short and dependent on

62. RTCV, Los centros de Atención Temporal de Extranjeros Lanzarote y El Hierro se encuentran en plena transformación, 28 October 2026, available [here](#); information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

63. Defensor del Pueblo, Informe Anual 2025 – Anexos, March 2026, available [here](#), pp.50-51.

64. Defensor del Pueblo, Mecanismo Nacional de Prevención, 'Informe anual 2024. Anexos. Anexos del Mecanismo Nacional de Prevención (MNP)', March 2025, available [here](#) and information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

65. Information provided by the UNHCR and the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

66. Article 20 Immigration Law, available [here](#).

67. Information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

68. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026, by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026 and by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

69. Information provided by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

operational circumstances.⁷⁰ At the same time, as resulted from exchanges with relevant stakeholders interviewed in the context of the visit, access to CATEs is not granted to NGOs specialised in asylum nor to the EUAA. This may limit opportunities for newly arrived persons to receive comprehensive and specialised information on access to the asylum procedure at the earliest stage following arrival.

Access to asylum in CATEs

As seen above, one of the main shortcomings of the system appears to lie in access to the asylum procedure in the Centres for Temporary Assistance for Foreigners (CATEs). In CATEs, immigration law is primarily applied, meaning that individuals are considered irregular migrants from the outset and are subject to return procedures. In this context, there is no formal mechanism to register an expression of intent to apply for asylum or to lodge an application. Practices vary significantly across territories. In Las Palmas, for example, an informal solution has been developed consisting of the issuance of “diligencias” that record the intention to seek asylum. However, these documents have no formal recognition within the system and do not amount to an effective registration of the application. In other locations, such as Tenerife or the Balearic Islands, such practices are absent or differ, further reinforcing the lack of uniformity. As a result, many individuals who express their intention to apply for asylum are not registered as applicants, which has implications both for their access to rights and for the reliability of statistics.⁷¹

In the past, when UNHCR had a more active presence in CATEs, the organisation issued a document to individuals who expressed interest in seeking international protection confirming that they had verbally expressed their intention to seek protection. However, this document did not change the person’s initial administrative status, as they still received the return order issued by the authorities. However, currently UNHCR is progressively reducing its operational presence in the Canary Islands.⁷² At the time of the visit, only one protection officer remained in Tenerife.

4.2 Return procedure and Foreigners’ Detention Centre (CIEs)

As mentioned above, most people reaching the Canary Islands by sea are issued a return order following the process in CATE. In most cases, a lawyer assists the person at this phase and presents an appeal against the return order, or it is suspended by the authorities based on the lack of perspective for the return due to the lack of identity documents.

If the return procedure is not suspended, detention in a Foreigners’ Detention Centre (CIE) can be requested before a court. This request is followed by a hearing in which the feasibility of return and the necessity and proportionality of detention are assessed. For this reason, the use of CIEs for migrants has been very limited in recent years, with most individuals detained in CIEs coming from the penitentiary system.⁷³ In February 2026, it was reported that only one person was detained in the CIE of Hoya Fría (Tenerife), with a capacity of 210 places. Similarly, only one person was detained in the CIE of Barranco Seco (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), with a capacity of 100 places.⁷⁴

Additionally, in practice, few forced returns are carried out. Among the countries to which returns take place more frequently are Morocco and Colombia.⁷⁵

IOM provides information on voluntary return programmes, both in CATEs and after persons are on the territory. Between 2022 and 2023, a specific return programme was implemented for Moroccan nationals, with more than 60 returns from the Canary Islands. In 2024, more than 50 return requests were registered, both from the Canary Islands and from the mainland. Approximately 80% of these requests concern individuals who had already been transferred to the mainland. Requests also come from individuals present in Tenerife and Las Palmas. To access the programme, certain requirements must be met, in particular the possession of travel documents. Where these are not available, IOM cooperates with consulates to issue laissez-passers, providing support up to the point of departure. The annual number of requests ranges between 50 and 60, with the most common nationalities being Colombia, Honduras, Morocco, Senegal and Mali. The support provided includes a plane ticket, a financial allowance of approximately EUR 450, and a reintegration programme. The

70. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

71. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026

72. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

73. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

74. Europa Press, ‘El 70 por ciento de las plazas de los centros de internamiento para extranjeros están desocupadas en la Región de Murcia’, 7 February 2026, available [here](#).

75. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

latter is based on the development of a project linked to the person's previous experience (for example, fishing or transport), facilitating access to the necessary tools or resources.⁷⁶

Reflections on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Screening process

Under the rules introduced by the Screening Regulation,⁷⁷ applicable from 12 June 2026, persons reaching the Canary Islands by sea will have to be subjected to a mandatory screening upon arrival.

As seen above, measures of deprivation of liberty require judicial oversight if lasting more than 72 hours. As such, it is foreseen that screening (regardless of whether conducted at the external borders or on the territory) will only last up to three days.⁷⁸

Regarding relevant actors in the context of the screening process, the National Police is expected to be the main actor responsible for carrying out the screening; under Article 13 of the Regulation, a possibility that other actors (for example, organisations specialised in trafficking or child protection) may participate in a supporting role is foreseen. The General Commissariat of the Ministry of the Interior will then be responsible of determining which other actors may be involved. The Directorate-General for International Protection will not directly participate in the screening procedure. Its involvement will begin once an application for international protection is formally lodged, or relevant vulnerabilities are identified.⁷⁹ The Ministry of Inclusion is working in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior on logistical aspects related to the exchange of information in the framework of the future screening form foreseen under the Pact.⁸⁰

Two main changes compared to the current system are the introduction of a screening form, determining to which procedure the person should be channelled after initial checks, and the introduction of an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee the screening process. Regarding the first, the Screening Regulation (Article 11) introduces more detailed obligations concerning the provision of information at the earliest stage of arrival. Persons undergoing screening must be informed about the purpose, duration and possible outcomes of the procedure, their right to apply for international protection, their rights and obligations during screening, and, where relevant, information relating to return procedures and relocation. Such information must be provided in a language that the person understands or is reasonably presumed to understand, and special safeguards apply to children, who should receive information in a child-friendly and age-appropriate manner. The Regulation also allows Member States to involve national, international and non-governmental organisations in the provision of information during the screening phase. Especially in light of the ongoing focus at the European level on border procedures and returns, effective implementation of these information obligations will be essential to ensure that persons in need of international protection are able to identify and communicate their protection needs at the earliest possible stage and are channelled into the appropriate procedure.

No formal role is foreseen for UNHCR in the screening procedure, while IOM is included in the implementation plans, particularly in relation to training on vulnerabilities.⁸¹ Concerning monitoring functions, according to the European Commission's communication on the state of play on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁸² Spain would designate the national Ombudsperson as the body responsible for carrying out the monitoring activities envisaged under the Pact. In Spain's national implementation plan, it is indicated the mandate would be shared with IOM.⁸³ However, this Ombudspersons can only carry out certain activities within the framework of a mandate from the Congress of Deputies and requires additional budgetary resources, which raises questions regarding its operational capacity, particularly in a context where public budgets are currently blocked.⁸⁴

76. Information provided by IOM, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

77. Regulation (EU) 2024/1352 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2019/816 and (EU) 2019/818 for the purpose of introducing the screening of third-country nationals at the external borders.

78. Ministerio del Interior, Pacto Europeo de Migración y Asilo, available [here](#).

79. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

80. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

81. España - Plan Nacional De Implementación, December 2024, available [here](#).

82. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - State of play on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, 8 May 2025, available [here](#).

83. España - Plan Nacional De Implementación, December 2024, available [here](#), point 2.9.2.

84. Information provided by the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

Discussions with representatives of the National Police⁸⁵ suggested that the future screening procedure is not expected to differ substantially from the processes currently carried out in the Temporary Reception Centres for Foreigners (CATEs), and that only limited adaptations to existing structures and workflows would therefore be required. Nevertheless, the screening procedure appears considerably more demanding than current practices. Within a very short timeframe, authorities will be required to carry out identity, security, vulnerability and health checks, while also ensuring the provision of information and the identification of any special procedural or reception needs. The process must culminate in the completion of a screening form that determines the appropriate procedural pathway for each individual. Given the volume of arrivals regularly experienced in the Canary Islands, particularly during periods of increased migratory pressure, the effective implementation of these requirements may prove challenging without additional staffing and specialised personnel, especially in relation to vulnerability assessments and other expert evaluations.

Recommendations

Spanish authorities should:

- » Ensure that cooperation with neighbouring countries on migration management is accompanied by regular assessments of the human rights situation of migrants and asylum seekers, including access to international protection and compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.
- » Ensure that all persons arriving by sea receive comprehensive information on their right to seek international protection from the earliest stage of arrival and establish a formal mechanism to register expressions of intent to apply for asylum in CATEs/screening centres.
- » Strengthen access to legal assistance and qualified interpretation in CATEs, ensuring that individuals receive effective legal advice before return procedures are initiated.
- » Facilitate regular access to CATEs for UNHCR and relevant civil society organisations in order to strengthen the identification of protection needs and access to asylum.
- » Ensure that CATEs comply with the safeguards applicable to places of deprivation of liberty, including adequate material conditions, access to communication, and effective complaints mechanisms.
- » Allocate sufficient financial resources, staffing and specialised expertise to enable the effective implementation of the Screening Regulation, particularly regarding vulnerability assessments and the provision of information during screening.
- » Ensure that the independent monitoring mechanism established under the Screening Regulation is provided with a clear mandate, adequate resources and sufficient operational independence to effectively monitor compliance with fundamental rights.

85. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

CHAPTER II: ASYLUM PROCEDURES AND GUARANTEES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. Asylum trends

In 2025, Spain received 140,396 applications for international protection. While representing a decrease compared to previous years (in 2024, 167,366 applications were presented, and 163,220 in 2023), it still makes Spain the 3rd country per number of lodged applications at the EU level in 2025 (17% of total applications lodged in EU+ countries).⁸⁶ As an ongoing trend in the past years, the majority of asylum applications continues to be presented by Latin American nationals. In 2025, Venezuela, Mali, Colombia, Peru, and Senegal were the top five nationalities of applicants. Among them, 58.7% were men, while 41.3% were women. The recognition rate for international protection remained low, with only around 12.42% of cases being granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, but the overall recognition rate reaches almost the 52.1% if decisions granting humanitarian protection are taken into account. The top 5 countries of persons granted a form of international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) in 2025 were Mali, Nicaragua, Colombia, Palestine, and Afghanistan.⁸⁷

According to the Ministries of Interior and Inclusion, the reduction of asylum applications in Spain in 2025 may be linked to the reform of the Immigration Law adopted in November 2024 (in force since May 2025)⁸⁸. The Ministries noted that the most significant decrease in applications occurred during the second half of 2025, following the entry into force of the reform. In particular, the amended framework no longer allows periods spent as an asylum applicant to be counted towards certain residence permits based on social integration (*arraigo*). According to the authorities, this reduced the incentive for some migrants, particularly nationals of Latin American countries, to use the asylum procedure as a pathway to subsequent regularisation through immigration channels.⁸⁹ Several organisations working on asylum and migration instead criticised the reform as negatively affecting asylum seekers.⁹⁰

According to the Directorate General for International Protection of the Ministry of Interior, the recognition rate in Spain is relatively low compared to other Member States, largely due to the profile of applicants, especially from Latin America. By contrast, nationalities such as Mali have very high recognition rates (around 98%), especially if compared with other European countries.⁹¹ However, organisations such as CEAR have argued that the focus on other forms of regularisation for migrants often leads to a more restrictive approach to asylum cases.⁹²

The number of applications in the Canary Islands largely depends on the volume of irregular arrivals. Approximately 8,600 applications were recorded in 2023, and 7,710 in 2024.⁹³ The Canary Islands were the 4th Autonomous Community in 2025 per number of asylum applications presented, with 7,825 (out of which 4,432 were presented in Tenerife).⁹⁴ In the first three months of 2026, out of 32,819 applications lodged in Spain, 1,654 applications were presented in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, most of which (1,017) in Tenerife.⁹⁵ These figures may be influenced by transfer mechanisms, and the fact that registration of applications often occurs after the transfer to the mainland. For example, in 2024, procedures were introduced allowing applications from persons initially arriving in the Canary Islands to be lodged in Madrid, which affects statistical distribution.⁹⁶

86. EUAA, EU+ asylum applications down by one fifth in 2025, amid shifting geopolitical dynamics, 3 March 2026, available [here](#).

87. AIDA country report on Spain – Update on 2025.

88. Royal Decree 1155/2024 of 19 November 2024, approving the new Regulation implementing Organic Law 4/2000 (Reglamento de Extranjería), entered into force on 20 May 2025.

89. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

90. CEAR, Las entidades sociales ven luces y sombras en la reforma del Reglamento de Extranjería, 24 November 2025, available [here](#).

91. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

92. RTVE, España es el tercer país de la UE que más peticiones de asilo recibe y uno de los que menos concede, 15 June 2026, available [here](#).

93. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

94. Info Extranjería, Datos protección internacional, temporal y aplicación Reglamento de Dublín a 31.12.2025, available [here](#).

95. Info Extranjería, Datos protección internacional, temporal y aplicación Reglamento de Dublín a 31.03.2026, available [here](#).

96. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

2. Access to the asylum procedure

The asylum procedure operates at two levels:

- » The registration of applications is carried out in a decentralised manner by police units;
- » The processing and decision-making on applications is carried out by the Directorate-General for International Protection in Madrid.

The Ministry of Inclusion is responsible for applicants within the reception system.

The EUAA is present in Spain and in the Canary Islands in the context of its Operational Plan for Spain (2023–June 2026).⁹⁷ The Agency works primarily through the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, as well as the Ministry of Youth and Children, without a direct agreement in place with the Government of the Canary Islands. The EUAA team in the Canary Islands consists of approximately 11 staff members, which are mainly based in Tenerife. Its role focuses on management support, particularly in the areas of children, vulnerabilities and the provision of information (limited to the preparation of materials and training), without direct involvement in the management of reception centres. The Agency does not have staff permanently deployed in the centres. Its work is mainly oriented towards the development of protocols, operational tools and information materials, as well as strengthening institutional capacities.⁹⁸

The Spanish asylum system, particularly in the context of the Canary Islands, appears to be characterised by structural fragmentation resulting from the separation between border management and international protection within the Ministry of the Interior. On the one hand, the General Directorate of the Police, together with the Directorate-general responsible for external relations and migration control, manage arrivals and border control. On the other hand, the Directorate-General for International Protection is responsible for the asylum procedure. This division results in a system lacking in coordination, in which different actors operate according to divergent logics and priorities. In practice, provincial branches of the National Police enjoy a broad margin of discretion, leading to significant territorial differences in the application of the rules. This is compounded by a widespread institutional perception that the asylum system is being ‘abused’ by persons who access the asylum procedure without actual protection needs, which affects both access to the procedure and the quality of decision-making.

Making, registering and lodging an asylum application

In the Spanish context, different terms are used to refer to the stages of access to the asylum procedure. Administrative practice distinguishes between “verbalizar” (to verbally express), “manifestar” (to register), and “formalizar” (to lodge) the application. “Verbalizar” refers to expressing the intention to apply for international protection; “manifestar” refers to the registration of this intention with the competent authorities; and “formalizar” refers to the formal submission of the asylum application. From the moment a person verbally expresses their intention to apply for international protection, they should be considered an asylum applicant, although in administrative practice effective recognition is often linked to later stages of the procedure.

For sea arrivals, after the process in CATEs, where the person might have had the possibility to make an asylum application, the police carry out a personal interview and relevant assessments, after which the file is sent to the Asylum and Refuge Office (OAR) in Madrid. Previously, there was a formal admissibility phase, but this is no longer applied as a distinct procedure. If the OAR considers that additional information is needed, it may contact the applicant directly and may request a second interview. At this stage, the police is no longer involved. For accompanied minors, DNA tests are generally conducted to confirm family links – in which case, the parent’s application is extended to the child. If the result of the DNA test is not yet available, the extension is not carried out, although the parent’s interview takes place, and the file is completed once the DNA result is available.⁹⁹

A 2024 judgement of the Spanish Supreme Court¹⁰⁰ clarified that access to the international protection procedure must be guaranteed from the moment a person expresses their intention to apply for asylum (*manifestación de voluntad*), even where the formal application has not yet been registered. The Court held that such an expression of intent has the effect of suspending return procedures. However, the practical

97. Operational Plan 2023-2026 Agreed by the European Union Agency for Asylum and Spain, 12 June 2023, available [here](#).

98. Information provided by the EUAA, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

99. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

100. Spanish Supreme Court (Tribunal Supremo), Administrative Chamber, Section 5, Judgment No. 1772/2024 of 6 November 2024 (Appeal No. 7691/2022; ECLI:ES:TS:2024:5568).

implementation of this requirement remains challenging, as the Spanish system is still largely based on the formal registration of asylum applications as the moment from which the person is considered an asylum applicant. As an interim solution, police authorities issue an official record documenting the expression of intent and suspending the execution of return procedures until the application can be formally processed.¹⁰¹

Making of asylum applications in the Canary Islands

As seen in Chapter I, the possibility of accessing the asylum procedure from CATEs remains limited in practice. For most individuals, effective access to the asylum procedure does not occur until they reach reception centres under the humanitarian assistance programme (see Chapter III) or are transferred to the mainland. Moreover, personnel of the national police is not usually present in reception centres to register applications, which prevents a multidisciplinary approach. In practice, the expression of intent often results in the allocation of appointments for registering the application with significant delays, frequently when the person has already been transferred to the mainland.

This system generates significant dysfunctions: there is no uniform model for access to the procedure across the national territory, many individuals with protection needs remain within the humanitarian assistance system without being registered as asylum applicants, and a substantial number of potential applicants does not appear in official statistics. A good practice that can instead be highlighted is the experience of the CREADE in Madrid, where specific mechanisms have been implemented for the swift lodging of applications upon transfer to mainland, particularly for Malian nationals.¹⁰²

Registering and lodging asylum applications in the Canary Islands

In the Canary Islands, access to the international protection procedure is organised through weekly appointments with the National Police. Each week approximately 30–40 appointments are made available to express the intention to apply for international protection. However, after this first step there is a second stage consisting of the lodging of the application, for which the number of available appointments is more limited. Until recently, the National Police provided individuals with a document indicating that they should send an email to request an appointment to formalise the asylum application. The Tenerife Bar Association proposed that the appointment should be granted directly when the intention to apply for asylum is expressed, or that NGOs should be formally designated to support asylum seekers in presenting their requests.¹⁰³

Access to lodging an application presents some differences between the islands. In Las Palmas, individuals can present themselves in person at a police station or police headquarters. There, an initial form is completed, and, within approximately two weeks, the person obtains the registration of their application, which formally activates the procedure. In Tenerife, access to the procedure usually begins by requesting an appointment online, generally by email.¹⁰⁴ According to Accem, very few appointments are granted each month for lodging (approximately 2–3 per month).¹⁰⁵ In general, having a verified address is required in order to formalise the application. This requirement may create difficulties in the Canary Islands, as many people accommodated in shelters or reception facilities cannot formally register their residence at those addresses. In practice, however, there are exceptions. In such cases, the SAVI certificate may be accepted as sufficient documentation to proceed with the formalisation of the application.¹⁰⁶

Many applications for international protection are not lodged in the Canary Islands despite that being the point of arrival on Spanish territory for the prospective applicant, but rather once individuals have been transferred to the Spanish mainland. In particular, the CREADE centre in Madrid plays an important role, as a significant number of asylum applications from people who initially arrived in the Canary Islands are formally lodged there.¹⁰⁷

101. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

102. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

103. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

104. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

105. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

106. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

107. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

3. Procedural guarantees

Asylum interviews

As regards the conduct of the asylum procedure, in the majority of cases, the only asylum interview is carried out by the police, while the final decision is taken by the Office for Asylum and Refuge (OAR) solely on the basis of the written record. The OAR has progressively ceased to conduct interviews directly, partly in response to the increase in applications and the lack of resources. As a consequence, second interviews are exceptional, and the decision-making process relies on information collected by an actor that is not the competent authority in matters of international protection. This situation raises concerns. The police generally lack the specialised training required and do not consider this task to fall within their core mandate. This is compounded by the pressure resulting from the high volume of interviews, the lack of appropriate facilities, and the absence of a modern and integrated IT system. All of this negatively affects the quality of interviews and, consequently, the quality of decisions. Although guidelines and training materials exist (including internal police instructions and OAR guidelines developed with UNHCR's participation), their practical implementation appears to remain limited.¹⁰⁸

Quality of decision-making

The recognition rate for international protection in Spain stood at around 12% in 2025, compared with 18% in 2024. According to the observations collected, this relatively low recognition rate can be largely explained by the profile of the nationalities prioritised in decision-making, particularly cases from Latin America that are often channelled towards forms of humanitarian protection rather than international protection.¹⁰⁹

UNHCR observed that there remains scope to reinforce the quality of decision-making within the asylum system. While the OAR has made efforts to respond to increasing caseloads, including through the use of simplified procedures and standardized tools such as nationality-based “template reports”, continued attention to quality assurance measures would contribute to strengthen consistency and individualized assessment. In this context, UNHCR has encouraged the creation of a structured internal quality control mechanism within OAR. Areas that may benefit from further development include credibility assessment, the identification of protection needs, and the distinction between refugee status and subsidiary protection.¹¹⁰

Information provision and interpretation

Interpretation and information provision are formally guaranteed throughout the return and asylum procedures in Spain, although important practical challenges remain. Migrants are informed of their rights at different stages of the procedure, including when return orders are notified. Access to legal assistance is considered a constitutional safeguard linked to deprivation of liberty, meaning that lawyers are involved from the beginning of the return procedure. Interpretation services are officially available 24 hours a day, both in person and remotely by telephone.¹¹¹ Additionally, once persons are transferred to reception centres under the Humanitarian Attention Programme (see Chapter III), after a short period to settle they are provided information by personnel of the managing entity of the centre, also through information materials developed by the EUAA.¹¹²

Interpretation support has been reinforced in the past years through a UNHCR-funded programme implemented with Accem, particularly in the Canary Islands, where interpretation in minority African languages has facilitated communication between authorities, lawyers, NGOs and newly arrived migrants. In 2025 alone, interpretation support was reportedly provided to around 7,000 individuals of different nationalities, contributing to the identification of international protection needs and referrals to asylum procedures and services. Particular attention was also given to asylum interviews and to supporting child protection authorities in the identification of unaccompanied children in need of protection.¹¹³

Despite these efforts, shortcomings persist in both the availability and quality of interpretation (see Chapter I – CATEs). The current model has become more centralised, with interpreters now largely operating remotely

108. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

109. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026, by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026 and by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

110. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

111. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

112. Information provided by the EUAA, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026 and by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

113. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

from Madrid on an on-demand basis rather than being permanently deployed in the Canary Islands.¹¹⁴ Legal practitioners interviewed highlighted that the shortage of interpreters, especially in locations such as El Hierro, remains one of the main obstacles to effective legal assistance. Interpretation is frequently conducted by telephone, which can hinder communication and negatively affect the provision of information on the right to seek asylum. The diversity of languages and dialects spoken by newly arrived migrants further complicates access to adequate interpretation services. In some cases, other migrants have reportedly been used to facilitate communication, raising concerns regarding confidentiality and accuracy.¹¹⁵

Legal aid and appeals

Legal assistance for persons arriving by sea is organised through Bar Associations (Colegios de Abogados), through the specialised legal aid roster for immigration matters. Lawyers participating in the specialised immigration legal aid roster must have specific training, including on maritime arrivals and international protection. This kind of legal support is financed through the Department of Justice of the Government of the Canary Islands, which pays the amounts corresponding to the duty lawyer system.¹¹⁶

Duty lawyers mainly intervene in two situations: when the person expresses their intention to apply for asylum during the initial legal assistance, or when the assisting NGO requests the intervention of a lawyer.

When providing initial legal assistance in CATEs, lawyers also inform individuals about the possibility of applying for asylum and about the relevant procedure. However, it is challenging to maintain contact with individuals once they have been transferred to mainland Spain. Different administrative practices have developed regarding the relationship between the expression of the intention to apply for asylum and the initiation of return proceedings. In Gran Canaria, the criterion applied was that if a person expressed their intention to apply for asylum, return proceedings would not be initiated (as mandated by EU law). However, initially in Tenerife and El Hierro return proceedings were initiated even if the person interested made an asylum application, a practice that was later rectified.¹¹⁷

Regarding the international protection procedure, the role of national Bar Associations is currently relatively limited. In most cases, once a person expresses their intention to apply for asylum, non-governmental organisations take over support in the administrative procedure. Different organisations providing legal counselling to migrants and asylum seekers in the different islands of the archipelago (i.e., CEAR, Accem, the Spanish Red Cross, Cáritas,¹¹⁸ Fundación Cruz Blanca,¹¹⁹ etc.). This support is however generally limited to the preparation of the interview. During interviews with the police, legal advisors are generally not present, unless there is formal legal representation or upon request by the police. There is a right to legal assistance, usually provided by duty lawyers/solicitors.¹²⁰

Access to legal assistance in the Canary Islands has reportedly improved in recent years.¹²¹ However, a major challenge remaining is that in practice, it is disconnected from the asylum procedure, as it is primarily triggered under immigration law, particularly upon the issuance of return orders (see Chapter I - CATEs). This creates paradoxical situations in which individuals who do not apply for asylum have easier access to legal assistance than those who do. The presence of lawyers during asylum interviews is exceptional outside border procedures, and many applicants have no effective access to legal advice at any stage of the process. NGOs play a key role in providing assistance, but their capacity is limited and does not cover all individuals, especially those outside the reception system. The lack of financial incentives further exacerbate the situation. In the case of minors, the situation is particularly concerning, with an almost complete absence of legal assistance, even at critical stages such as interviews.¹²²

Judicial appeals in asylum and immigration cases continue to face a number of structural and procedural challenges in Spain. Appeals in international protection cases fall under the jurisdiction of the National Court within the administrative jurisdiction, where the lack of judicial specialisation remains a persistent issue,

114. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

115. Information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

116. Information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

117. Information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

118. Cáritas, see [here](#).

119. Fundación Cruz Blanca, see [here](#).

120. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

121. Defensor del Pueblo, 'Informe anual 2024', March 2025, available [here](#).

122. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026, by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

despite some judges developing expertise through practice and recent efforts by the General Council of the Judiciary to provide specialised training on international protection.¹²³ Significant delays in contentious-administrative proceedings were also reported, with some cases expected to be resolved only several years after submission. In immigration-related appeals, practical difficulties have arisen regarding proof of legal representation and the admissibility of appeals against return decisions, particularly where migrants could no longer be located after moving elsewhere in Spain or abroad.¹²⁴ This issue was clarified by the Spanish Supreme Court in Judgment 584/2024 of 30 January 2024, which confirmed that the appointment of a procurator by the Bar Association is sufficient to establish procedural representation, without requiring the person concerned to grant a notarial power of attorney or appear personally before the court.¹²⁵ While this judgment simplified access to judicial review, concerns remain regarding the overall quality of legal argumentation in appeals and the need for further specialised training for legal practitioners.¹²⁶

Reflections on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

According to the Ministry of Interior, since 2024, measures have been taken to strengthen processing capacity. In 2023, the Directorate-General for International Protection was created, with new sub-directorates and improvements to procedural safeguards. These reforms led to a record number of decisions in 2025 (over 160,000, compared to 96,000 in 2024). Further strengthening of resources is expected to address the implementation of the Pact and the backlog of pending cases.¹²⁷

In terms of legislative changes, some concerns were expressed by national stakeholders regarding the possibility to adopt necessary reforms in time for the applicability of the new rules. While the Government had planned a series of legislative reforms within the framework of the National Implementation Plan (NIP),¹²⁸ it is unclear whether this path will actually be followed. Instead, the implementation of the Pact will likely take place through administrative instructions and the direct application of EU regulations. Adjustments may be introduced in relation to legal assistance, without altering elements that would conflict with the constitutional framework.¹²⁹ A notable lack of transparency regarding the planned changes was noted both by national NGOs operating in the migration and asylum field.¹³⁰

The role of the EUAA in supporting implementation of the Pact in Spain is foreseen to remain mainly technical. Under the current Operational Plan, the Agency is developing a protocol on information provision regarding access to international protection and preparing multilingual materials adapted to different national contexts, expected in mid-2026. However, it is not envisaged that the EUAA will directly provide information to applicants, this remaining a national responsibility. Its support in legal assistance is mainly through guidance materials, such as its Practical Guide on Legal Counselling.¹³¹ A new Operational Plan is expected in 2026, but no significant expansion of the EUAA's operational role in procedures is foreseen, with its contribution likely remaining focused on training, country of origin information, and capacity-building.¹³²

Asylum procedures

The implementation of the Pact presents both risks and opportunities in the context of the Spanish asylum system. On the one hand, there are concerns about a potential reduction in procedural safeguards, particularly at stages such as screening. On the other hand, it may offer an opportunity to improve coordination and harmonise access to the procedure.

Regarding the asylum procedure, one of the main changes to the Spanish asylum system based on new legislation regards the use of border procedures. At the time of the visit, the border procedure in Spain was applied only at air borders. Under the rules of the Asylum Procedure Regulation however, their use will be expanded, given the introduction of cases in which border procedures become mandatory. To ensure its

123. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

124. Information provided by the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

125. Spanish Supreme Court, Judgment 584/2024 of 30 January 2024.

126. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

127. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

128. España - Plan Nacional De Implementación, December 2024, available [here](#).

129. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026, the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

130. Information provided by the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

131. Information provided by the EUAA, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

132. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

'adequate capacity' to carry out mandatory border procedures, Spain has to allocate 3,301 places.¹³³ The exact location of these places is not yet disclosed, but some places will certainly have to be made available on the Canary Islands, also considering that several of the nationalities of asylum applicants in Spain of people arriving after disembarkation would fall under the 20% recognition rate at first instance, and would as such have mandatorily to be treated in a border procedure.

Regarding the use of detention or restrictions of the freedom of movement in the context of border procedures, the Ministry of Inclusion considers that it will not be necessary to systematically detain asylum applicants. Instead, the application of restrictions on freedom of movement during the procedures is envisaged. Among the ideas under consideration is, for example, the introduction of systems to register entries and exits in reception centres or other administrative monitoring mechanisms by the authorities. The objective would be to develop alternatives to detention rather than substitute mechanisms within a detention regime.¹³⁴ In this context, alternatives to detention are being explored, with some organisations attempting to collaborate with the Government in developing proposals in this area.¹³⁵ Despite these reassurances, other stakeholders observed that there are fears regarding how containment of people on the islands will be managed in practice.¹³⁶

Legal assistance

At the time of the visit, the legal assistance framework applicable to asylum procedures distinguished between applications lodged on the territory and those examined under border procedures. For applicants on the territory, legal assistance during the administrative phase of the asylum procedure was not mandatory, although free legal information and advice were often provided by specialised non-governmental organisations. By contrast, legal assistance was mandatory in border procedures, including those conducted at airports, where Bar Associations already played a central role in ensuring access to legal representation.¹³⁷

The legal aid system further provided access to publicly funded legal representation in the context of judicial appeals, including, where relevant, proceedings before the Constitutional Court.¹³⁸ Interviewees noted that the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum was likely to increase the use of border procedures and other accelerated processes, which could in turn require a significant expansion of legal assistance services. In particular, Bar Associations are expected to strengthen their capacity in light of the anticipated increase in cases requiring mandatory legal representation. More broadly, the entry into application of the Pact has altered the legal framework governing asylum procedures, including the circumstances in which border procedures may be used. At the time of the visit, however, there was still limited clarity regarding the practical organisation of legal assistance under the new framework and the respective roles that legal aid lawyers and specialised organisations would play in the newly introduced procedures.¹³⁹

Recommendations

Spanish authorities should:

- » Ensure that access to the asylum procedure is guaranteed from the moment an individual expresses the intention to seek international protection, in line with the case law of the Spanish Supreme Court and the requirements of EU law.
- » Strengthen the availability and quality of interpretation in the asylum procedure by ensuring sufficient numbers of qualified interpreters, including for less common languages, and limiting reliance on remote interpretation.
- » Ensure that all applicants have timely access to free legal counselling and legal assistance throughout the asylum procedure, including during screening and border procedures, and strengthen the capacity of Bar Associations and specialised legal aid providers in view of the implementation of the Pact.
- » Introduce a structured quality assurance mechanism for asylum decision-making within the Directorate-

133. Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/2150 of 5 August 2024 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards the adequate capacity of Member States and the maximum number of applications to be examined by a Member State in the border procedure per year - Annex I.

134. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

135. Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

136. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

137. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

138. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

139. Information provided by the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026, Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and the Tenerife Bar Association, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

General for International Protection, including regular quality reviews, training and feedback, while ensuring that all applications continue to receive an individual assessment.

- » Ensure that police officers involved in asylum interviews receive specialised and continuous training on international protection, vulnerability assessment and interviewing techniques, and progressively strengthen the role of the asylum authority in conducting personal interviews.
- » Ensure sufficient staffing and resources for the implementation of the Pact, particularly in relation to the increased use of border procedures, while preserving procedural safeguards and the quality of decision-making.

4. Guarantees for vulnerable groups

4.1. Identification of vulnerabilities

The Spanish Red Cross has a strong focus on the identification of vulnerabilities in its intervention upon disembarkation of persons reaching the Canary Islands via sea. Identified vulnerabilities include both primary and secondary situations (i.e. evident and hidden vulnerabilities) such as reduced mobility, chronic illnesses, mental health issues, as well as situations of violence, including gender-based violence, trafficking in human beings and female genital mutilation.

While the Red Cross conducts an initial screening, in-depth assessments and specialised support take place mainly in the centres hosting migrants and asylum applicants. Where necessary, referrals are made to the Canary Islands Health Service, which has specialised teams for the migrant population. When unaccompanied minors are identified, they are directly referred to the Government of the Canary Islands. If trafficking indicators are identified, places are requested within the national humanitarian assistance system.¹⁴⁰ The initial identification of vulnerabilities is realised through a wrist-band system, with different colours assigned based on the type of vulnerability.¹⁴¹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, only few actors beyond the National Police have access to CATEs, where persons are generally brought after disembarkation. Save the Children is the only NGO allowed regular access to these centres. In this context, Save the Children mainly identifies children who travel unaccompanied or that claim to be minors and situations of family violence and violence experienced during the migration journey. Through dedicated workshops, individuals (especially families) recount experiences of violence during the journey. The organisation commented on the difficulty to identifying trafficking cases in emergency contexts.¹⁴²

Regarding suspected cases of trafficking in human beings, an initial screening is carried out in CATEs through vulnerability indicators. In case of suspicion, cases are referred to specialised police units (UCRIF) and to specific facilities managed by NGOs.¹⁴³ The identification process includes several phases: detection of indicators, assessment of reports, and definition of an intervention by a multidisciplinary technical team (psychologists, educators, etc.). The risk of abandoning the assigned accommodation is also assessed. Interventions can take two forms: (1) general awareness-raising workshops for women; (2) specific interventions when indicators are present, including information on risks and available resources in Europe, or self-identification exercises when there is no immediate risk.¹⁴⁴

The representative of the Public Prosecutor's Office for Immigration for the Canary Islands noted that the identification of trafficking cases presents significant difficulties, to the point that only three criminal proceedings for trafficking were recorded in 2025. Throughout the year, an increase in arrivals of young women (16–19 years old) - mainly from Gambia and the Ivory Coast – was noted. Some cases may be linked to forced marriages, family violence, or possible concealed trafficking situations.¹⁴⁵ In its 2023 evaluation report, GRETA expressed concern about the low number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions for human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation in Spain and urged the authorities to increase proactive investigations into this type of trafficking and recommended further training of relevant professionals on the specificities of

140. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

141. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

142. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

143. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026 and by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

144. Information provided by the Cruz Blanca Fundación, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

145. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

human trafficking.¹⁴⁶

The López Bota centre managed by the Cruz Blanca Fundación is the only specialised resource on human trafficking in the entire Canary archipelago. It is a protected housing facility that, although part of the humanitarian reception system, is specialised in trafficking survivors. Stays may range from two months to one year, with longer stays generally due to administrative, health-related reasons or lack of available places in other resources. There is also a centre specifically for women that addresses all forms of vulnerability. In these centres, efforts are made to refer women to the mainland or to more specialised resources, since although they provide comprehensive care, they are still considered “border” facilities intended for temporary stays. According to the Fundación staff, the women assisted mainly come from Guinea, Senegal, Gambia and Côte d’Ivoire, and the main reasons for fleeing include forced marriage, intra-family violence and other forms of violence. Many women wish to continue their migration route towards countries such as France. Specific materials and workshops on trafficking have been developed, in addition to the use of EUAA protocols.¹⁴⁷

Upon arrival, identified minors are separated from the adults and referred to child-protection authorities. Regarding age assessment, the role of the National Police is limited to an initial evaluation based on cases in which the minority is evident.¹⁴⁸ If a minor is not immediately identified, identification can take place in the reception phase.

When there is suspicion that a person may be a minor, the procedure to request an assessment might be initiated by staff of the centre, through a declaration by the person concerned or through documentation indicating possible minority. In such cases: the person is separated from other residents, an interview is conducted with the legal team and an interpreter, and a biopsychosocial report is prepared.¹⁴⁹ The report is sent to the Public Prosecutor’s Office for Minors, which decides whether to recognise the person as a minor directly or to request medical age assessment tests.¹⁵⁰

4.2. The protection system for unaccompanied children in the Canary Islands

Unaccompanied minors reaching Spain are under the responsibility Autonomous Communities, both in terms of legal representation and for their reception. Unaccompanied minors applying for international protection are instead under the responsibility of the central government, and more specifically of the Ministry of Inclusion, regarding access to reception conditions. Guardianship of minors lies with the Government of the Canary Islands, even when they are transferred to mainland Spain, unless it is assumed by the receiving Autonomous Community. Minority of age can be disputed; in such cases, the Public Prosecutor is responsible for age determination.

In the context of the visit, several stakeholders identified a number of persistent shortcomings in the system in relation to access to protection and age assessment of unaccompanied foreign minors, including concerns regarding the application of the principles of the benefit of the doubt and the presumption of minority, insufficient verification of identity documents through consular authorities, the limited availability of effective appeal mechanisms against age determination decisions, and procedural safeguards in border facilities where children may undergo assessments without legal assistance or guardianship support.¹⁵¹ Another challenge identified is that of minors ‘aging out’ of protection, as limited support is provided to former minors under guardianship at the time of turning 18, both in terms of inclusion and access to the labour market.¹⁵² It should be noted that the archipelago continues to experience high numbers of arrivals (despite the decrease registered throughout the past year), placing considerable pressure on child protection and age determination systems (see Chapter III – Reception of unaccompanied minors).

Age assessment

Responsibility for age determination currently rests with the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors. Since 2024, a specialised working group on non-EU foreign minors has been established, focusing on age determination

146. GRETA, Evaluation Report Spain, Third Evaluation Round, 12 June 2023, available [here](#).

147. Information provided by the Cruz Blanca Fundación, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

148. Information provided by the National Police, Tenerife, 26 February 2026.

149. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

150. Article 35 Immigration Law – Unaccompanied minors, available [here](#).

151. Information provided by the Cepaim Fundación, Madrid, 23 February 2026 and AIDA country report on Spain – Update on 2025.

152. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

procedures, reviews of child protection files, and regular visits to reception and protection centres.¹⁵³ The age assessment procedure generally consists of three stages: examination of available documentation, medical assessments and interviews where doubts persist, and a final decree issued by the prosecutor.¹⁵⁴

Age assessment remains a contentious issue affecting unaccompanied minors, especially regarding delays in conducting such procedures, identified as a matter of concern also by the Spanish Ombudsman.¹⁵⁵ In February 2024, approximately 5,500 migrant children were reportedly awaiting either age assessment procedures or decisions on their cases.¹⁵⁶ While this number had decreased by January 2025, an estimated 400–500 children were still waiting for the outcome of age assessments.¹⁵⁷ According to the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, age assessment procedures may take up to two months for newly arrived children, delaying their transfer to mainland Spain, while procedures can take even longer for those already present in the Canary Islands. Among the challenges identified, was the absence of legal assistance in many cases despite this being a recognised right, the frequent use of medical tests even where minority appears evident inconsistencies between different medical examinations - such as wrist and dental assessments – and the assessment of documentation from certain countries.¹⁵⁸ Age assessment has reportedly generated issues in particular in the context of CATEs processes, where NGOs have in some cases reported the presence of minors. The initial age assessment has often been carried out by Red Cross volunteers, which created problems as their assessments were not recognised by the National Police. The State Prosecutor General has intervened to harmonise practices across the islands.¹⁵⁹

Some examples were cited illustrating the practical consequences of these shortcomings. One case involved a child from Senegal whose birth certificate was not transmitted to the Prosecutor's Office and who underwent unnecessary medical examinations producing contradictory results. Although the prosecutor ultimately considered him a minor, the age assigned by the court was significantly higher than his actual age. Consequently, he was considered an adult earlier than he should have been and subsequently left without protection or accommodation.¹⁶⁰ The Delegated Prosecutor for Minors also referred to cases involving alleged boat drivers who were initially treated as adults, detained, and only later recognised as minors following judicial review.¹⁶¹

Concerns were also raised regarding information provision and legal representation. Information is often provided by non-specialised staff, and Spain currently lacks a dedicated guardianship model combining legal and educational functions similar to those existing in some other European countries. Especially regarding the age assessment process, while the children are accompanied during interviews by educators or centre staff and interpreters, these representatives are often insufficiently trained or lack detailed knowledge of the child's circumstances.¹⁶²

Access to international protection for unaccompanied minors

Challenges regarding access to international protection for children (both accompanied and unaccompanied) are reported throughout Spain.¹⁶³ The low numbers of child asylum applicants in the country could be partially explained by the lack of information on the right to access to asylum and gaps in the identification of their international protection needs carried out by the authorities. The fact that children reaching the country are

153. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026. To note: the Prosecutor's Office in Spain is organised through delegated prosecutors with autonomous-community-level coordination in areas including immigration, trafficking in human beings and minors. The Immigration Prosecutor's Office combines criminal and administrative functions, dealing with irregular migration, trafficking, detention in immigration detention centres, and litigation involving the fundamental rights of foreign nationals. However, it does not intervene in asylum procedures concerning adults. Although the Prosecutor's Office is generally organised at the provincial level (for example, in Gran Canaria), these areas are coordinated at the autonomous level. Within this framework, in the Canary Islands there are case coordinators in Gran Canaria and Tenerife.

154. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

155. Defensor del Pueblo, 'Informe anual 2022 – Volumen I', March 2023, available [here](#), 166.

156. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

157. Radio Televisión Canaria, 'Sandra Rodríguez: «Unos 400-500 menores migrantes esperan por pruebas de edad»', 13 January 2025, available [here](#).

158. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026 and by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

159. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

160. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026; El Diario, 'El juez ordena la inmediata puesta en libertad de un migrante senegalés tras dos meses en prisión al acreditarse que es menor', 16 February 2024, available [here](#).

161. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

162. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026 and by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

163. Defensor del Pueblo, 'Niñas y niños extranjeros en España solos o acompañados', May 2025, available [here](#).

protected under the national Law on Child Protection might actually be a contributing factor, as in some cases the same operators of child protection authorities might not be well informed regarding international protection, or consider the child protection system offers, in itself, sufficient guarantees.¹⁶⁴

A report published in December 2024 denounced the limited access to asylum granted to unaccompanied minors arriving to the Canary Islands, despite the high number of arrivals, underlining the lack of training and information of the professionals working with migrant children.¹⁶⁵ UNHCR warned that a significant number of unaccompanied minors arriving in Spain are fleeing armed conflict, violence or persecution in their countries of origin and reported that challenges also persisted in the interpretation of the refugee definition by the asylum authorities, particularly in relation to situations of violence affecting children and other child-specific forms of persecution.¹⁶⁶

In the context of visits to child protection centres, the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors for Gran Canaria noted an absence of consistent information provided to minors regarding access to the asylum procedure. As a result, the Prosecutor proposed that the island councils prepare a common information leaflet to be distributed across all centres. In practice, the provision of information largely depends on the staff of each centre, in particular on the director and the level of training of the team. This difference also applies to the process of obtaining documentation: in some centres, procedures are fast and efficient, while in others they present delays or difficulties. In this context, it is considered necessary to standardise the provision of information and to develop common materials, translated into the most widely spoken languages. Currently, there is no formal obligation to provide information nor any specific protocol for providing it to minors. In some cases, minors are told that they will have easier access to documentation if they do not apply for international protection. Likewise, many staff members consider that the protection provided by the child protection system is sufficient, without the need to promote access to the asylum procedure.¹⁶⁷

The EUAA also noted that, at the time of the initial deployment of the Agency in the Canary Islands, there was a general lack of awareness among operators regarding the right of minors to apply for international protection. There was a perception that child protection systems were sufficient, without the need to access the asylum procedure. However, training activities conducted were noted to have significantly improved the situation, contributing to an increase in asylum applications by minors in recent years.¹⁶⁸

Lack of legal assistance for unaccompanied minors has also been identified as one of the shortcomings in the Spanish protection system on the mainland. There are no centres for unaccompanied minors that systematically provide legal assistance. Although organizations such as Save the Children or Bar Associations offer support, they do not have direct access to the centres. Legal advice and support are frequently provided by non-legal professionals, specifically the social workers at the centres. Legal assistance is only partially guaranteed in the asylum system, when UNHCR intervenes. In age determination procedures, although some NGOs provide legal support to centres in these cases, there is no guaranteed right to legal assistance.¹⁶⁹ As a result, many minors reach adulthood without documentation and end up in situations of exclusion.

To strengthen the system regarding access to protection for children, UNHCR continued to work closely with the child protection authorities to strengthen their capacity for identification and referrals of children in need of international protection. Since 2023, UNHCR conducted 74 visits to child reception centres across the Canary Islands and Andalusia, providing international protection information sessions to 2,000 children (1,900 boys and 100 girls) using UNHCR guidelines, child-friendly materials and the checklist for identifying children in need of international protection. Additionally, 572 professionals received training through 27 sessions on children's international protection. These efforts led to improvements in the identification and assistance of unaccompanied children in need of international protection, leading to their access to the asylum procedure, resulting in an increase in asylum applications from children (over 751 unaccompanied children registered as asylum seekers in 2024, including 606 in the Canary Islands). Despite these steps forward, the lack of specialized legal aid in most cases affects children's needs identification, procedural safeguards, and

164. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025 and information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

165. Irídia, Novact, 'Vulneración de Derechos Humanos en Canarias 2024. Infancia Migrante y Criminalización', december 2024, available [here](#).

166. Information provided by UNHCR in March 2026 - AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025; ACNUR, 'La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados (ACNUR) alerta de que un número importante de los niños y niñas no acompañados que llegan a España lo hacen tras huir de conflictos armados, violencia o persecución en sus países de origen', 5 November 2025, available [here](#); Cuatro de cada cinco menores solicitantes de asilo trasladados desde Canarias son chicas', 17 November 2025, available [here](#).

167. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

168. Information provided by the EUAA, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

169. Information provided by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, online interview, 3 March 2026.

consequently the quality of asylum applications and the protection granted by competent authorities. During the last quarter of 2024, a joint project between Save the Children, UNHCR and child protection authorities was developed to create a needs assessment tool for unaccompanied children arriving in the Canary Islands. This tool, named ETNNA, supports professionals in minors' protection system in the early identification of protection needs and risks, to ensure timely referrals to the asylum procedure, relocation within Spain, and tailored protection interventions, such as family reunification.¹⁷⁰

Most children applying in the Canary Islands are referred to mainland Spain, as there is a lack of dedicated resources for minor applicants (responsibility of the Ministry of Inclusion) within the archipelago. In Gran Canaria, there is a transit centre (Canarias 50) and two centres for unaccompanied minors seeking asylum: Casa del Mar and Colegio León (although Colegio León appears to function in practice as a transit centre). In Tenerife, no facility dedicated to minor applicants has yet been opened by the Ministry of Inclusion, which creates issues regarding risks of children being uprooted in case they present an asylum application (see Chapter III - Reception of unaccompanied minors).¹⁷¹

Reflections on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

In the system introduced by the Pact, an initial vulnerability assessment will be conducted in the context of the screening process by screening authorities. Specific adaptations will also be necessary to manage cases of unaccompanied children, to ensure specialised personnel is present in this context. Age assessments will have to be adapted to ensure that – as mandated by Article 25 of the Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR) - that an age assessment is conducted by multi-disciplinary teams.

Additionally, the role of the representative for unaccompanied children is fundamental in ensuring the protection of children's rights throughout the asylum process. Article 26 of the Reception Conditions Directive establishes that Member States are required to provide the necessary representation of the unaccompanied child applying for international protection to ensure that his or her needs are duly met. The representative has to be appointed as soon as possible and no later than 15 days from the making of the application.¹⁷² Member States are also required to ensure that children will not be left without representation at any point. In this context, Member States must ensure that a person provisionally acting as a representative is designated, until a representative is appointed. Already from the screening process, if a representative has not yet been appointed, the child will have to be accompanied and assisted in a child-friendly and age-appropriate manner by a person trained to safeguard their best interests and general wellbeing.¹⁷³ It will be thus be key that national authorities in charge of the screening process are sufficiently trained on how to address the needs of unaccompanied migrant children, and that guardianship services are sufficiently staffed to respect these obligations.

Recommendations

- » Screening authorities should ensure that unaccompanied minors are promptly identified upon arrival and systematically channelled into the appropriate child protection or asylum reception system, in line with the best interests of the child.
- » The Spanish authorities should ensure that all unaccompanied minors, including those seeking international protection, have access to timely, specialised legal assistance, interpretation, and information throughout all procedures.

170. Information provided by Save the Children in March 2026 - AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

171. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026 and by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

172. Article 26 Reception Conditions Directive and Article 23(2)(b) Asylum Procedure Regulation.

173. Article 13(3) of the Screening Regulation.

CHAPTER III: RECEPTION OF MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

1. Functioning of the reception model

While CATEs are managed by the national police (see Entry checks – CATEs), the coordination and management of the reception of migrants and asylum applicants after entry checks are conducted falls under the responsibility of the State Secretary for Migration (*Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones*, SEM) of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. The SEM also supervises and coordinates the Directorate General of Migration (*Dirección General de Migraciones*), the Directorate General for Humanitarian Assistance and for the Reception System of International Protection (*Dirección General de Atención Humanitaria y del Sistema de Acogida de Protección Internacional*) and the Directorate General for Migration Management (*Dirección General de Gestión Migratoria*).¹⁷⁴ The Spanish reception system goes beyond asylum reception: on one hand, there is the International Protection Reception System, destined to registered asylum applicants. On the other, the Humanitarian Assistance Programme, designed to address the basic needs of vulnerable immigrants who arrive on Spanish shores or enter the country by land through the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. The program also includes the provision of emergency social and healthcare services, reception, supplies to meet basic needs, basic financial assistance, and transportation.¹⁷⁵

According to data from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, in 2025 the reception system (both the asylum system and the humanitarian assistance one) accommodated a total of 124,170 people. The system counted a total of 56,053 places, distributed between the International Protection Reception System (with 33,936 places), and the Humanitarian Assistance Program (with 22,117 places).¹⁷⁶ These numbers do not include places for unaccompanied minors (unless they applied for international protection), which are instead under the responsibility of Autonomous Communities (see below).

The reception system is centralised, with the State responsible for distributing individuals across different Autonomous Communities. This contrasts with the reception system for unaccompanied minors, which falls under regional competence. After entry checks conducted in CATEs, the Ministry of the Interior coordinates with the Ministry of Inclusion to refer individuals to different reception facilities. At the time of the visit, occupancy levels in the Canary Islands were around 40–50% of capacity.¹⁷⁷

Since 2021, the EUAA started to support Spanish asylum authorities, after having agreed upon an operational plan mainly focused on support to reception. This includes providing enhanced capacity to reception services in the Canary Islands. In January 2021, the EUAA carried out a needs' assessment mission at six sites in the Canary Islands, which have received a high number of persons with international protection needs in recent months. The mission was carried out in order to enable the Agency to tailor its support to the specific needs in the region, and the results were discussed with the State Secretary for Migration of Spain.¹⁷⁸ The Operation Plan on Special Support to reception agreed between the EUAA and Spain foresees a set of areas where the EU agency could support the Spanish Government, including assessing 'the need for actions in support of emergency reception facilities with a specific focus on the Canary Islands'.¹⁷⁹ A new operational plan covering 2023-2026 was signed afterwards (also foreseeing measures also aimed at strengthening the reception system in the archipelago).¹⁸⁰

1.1. Humanitarian assistance programme (*Programa de Atención Humanitaria*)

The Humanitarian Assistance Programme (*Programa de Atención Humanitaria*) of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration aims to provide accommodation, basic subsistence and essential assistance to migrants in situations of vulnerability who arrive in Spain by sea or land via Ceuta and Melilla.¹⁸¹

Since 2021, the Humanitarian Assistance Programme has gained significantly greater importance within the

174. Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, 'Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones', available [here](#).

175. Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, 'Atención Humanitaria', available [here](#).

176. Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, 'El Gobierno atiende a más de 124.000 personas en el Sistema de Acogida Estatal durante 2025, consolidando así una red de protección sin precedentes', 5 february 2026, available [here](#).

177. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

178. EASO, 'Spanish State Secretary for Migration visits EASO following launch of new operation in the country', 1 February 2021, available [here](#).

179. EASO, 'Operating plan. Special support on reception agreed by EASO and Spain', 2021, available [here](#).

180. EUAA, 'Operational Plan 2023-2026 agreed by the European Union Agency for Asylum and Spain', 12 June 2023, available [here](#).

181. Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, 'Atención Humanitaria', available [here](#)

reception framework, partly in response to the increase in sea arrivals. In previous years, the system included a larger number of reception resources specifically linked to asylum applicants, while the humanitarian programme has progressively expanded to respond to situations of mass arrivals. In principle, the Humanitarian Assistance Programme has a standard maximum duration of six months (which can be extended in specific cases). In practice the programme has been adapted to the operational context and needs. In some cases, particularly where vulnerabilities exist, stays may be extended significantly, in certain cases up to two years. The Humanitarian Assistance Programme is not designed to cover all needs until a person obtains regular status, but rather to provide an initial response in terms of reception and basic assistance.¹⁸²

In the Canary Islands, most persons are transferred to the Humanitarian Assistance Programme after the procedure in CATEs, as most do not have yet had access to the asylum procedure at this stage.¹⁸³

At the national level, it is estimated that between 70% and 80% of persons hosted under the humanitarian assistance programme eventually apply for international protection. In the Canary Islands, however, this proportion is lower, standing at approximately 50% to 60%. According to the NGO CEAR, one factor that may explain this difference is the fact that in the Canary Islands there is a significant number of young people leaving the child protection system who access reception resources but who do not necessarily have an asylum claim and therefore do not apply for asylum. Also, some individuals initiate the asylum procedure directly without necessarily passing through all stages of the humanitarian assistance system.¹⁸⁴

Within the humanitarian assistance system in the Canary Islands, different types of facilities can be distinguished. Newly arrived individuals are usually first accommodated in first-arrival centres. In these centres, there is no formally established maximum length of stay. In practice, the duration depends mainly on operational factors such as the number of arrivals and the availability of places in other facilities. Stays in these centres are usually very short, as individuals are quickly transferred to other facilities. The usual pathway within the system involves an initial stay in first-arrival centres, followed by a possible transfer to an Emergency and Referral Reception Centre (CAED). It is only from the moment of admission to a CAED that the time spent within the Humanitarian Assistance Programme begins to be formally counted.¹⁸⁵

First-arrival centres

These are large-scale centres with high turnover, designed to accommodate people immediately after their arrival in the Canary Islands.

Examples of this type of centre include:

- » Las Raíces (Tenerife)
- » Las Canteras (Gran Canaria)
- » Canarias 50 (Tenerife)
- » El Matorral (Fuerteventura)

In El Hierro, the Red Cross manages a reception facility, and the Ministry of Inclusion also operates an emergency centre (sports hall), where stays are generally under 48 hours before transfer, usually to Tenerife. In Tenerife, single men are often accommodated initially in facilities such as sports halls, while families and other vulnerable profiles are referred directly to specific reception resources.¹⁸⁶

First reception centres are required to maintain a certain level of available capacity in order to adapt to potential peaks in arrivals. In these centres, stays are usually relatively short, as individuals are subsequently transferred to other facilities either in the Canary Islands or on mainland Spain.

Emergency and Referral Reception Centres (CAED)

182. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

183. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

184. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

185. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

186. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

Emergency and Referral Centres (CAED), are open centres managed by NGOs (e.g. Red Cross, Accem, Cruz Blanca) under the coordination of the Directorate-General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Assistance (*Dirección General de Inclusión y Atención Humanitaria*, DGI AH) Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, and are usually large centres where certain assistance services are provided, including information, social and legal assistance.¹⁸⁷ Both in the Canary Islands and on the mainland, officials from the Ministry of Inclusion - including the centres' directors - are present in CAEDs and work alongside staff from the managing organisation. Residents of CAEDs generally stay for longer periods in these centres, compared to first arrival centres. They are integrated into the Humanitarian Assistance Programme and constitute a structural reception service within the national programme.

In the Canary Islands there are approximately 6,000 places within the humanitarian assistance programme. At the time of the visit, occupancy did not exceed approximately 60% of the total capacity.¹⁸⁸

While the humanitarian assistance programme has a standard duration of six months, in the Canary Islands the average stay is slightly longer, between six and seven months. In the case of single women, the duration is significantly shorter, around one month. Assistance in the centres is comprehensive and multidisciplinary, including legal, healthcare, social and psychological support. Spanish language classes, leisure activities and training programmes are also provided. There is a common national information management system accessible from all centres, where users' case files are recorded.¹⁸⁹

Funding and management

The centres within the Humanitarian Assistance Programme are funded through the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration.

In publicly owned centres, the management structure usually has two components:

1. Managing organisation (NGO), responsible for the overall management of the centre and social services.
2. The TRAGSA Group (public company) is responsible for subcontracting services such as security, cleaning, catering, construction and maintenance.

In privately owned centres (such as Montaña Mina in Lanzarote), the managing NGO directly contracts the necessary service providers.

The system has recently shifted from a grant-based model to a system of concerted action, under which the Ministry directly assigns the management of facilities to specific organisations. Reference prices for reception places are defined by the Ministry.¹⁹⁰

1.2. Reception of asylum applicants

The Spanish system distinguishes between the Humanitarian Assistance Programme, primarily aimed at newly arrived migrants in situations of vulnerability, and the reception system for applicants for international protection.¹⁹¹

The duration of reception conditions (accommodation, assistance and financial support) should last 18 months, and may reach a maximum of 24 for vulnerable cases, following the exceptional authorisation by the competent authority. The reception system is currently divided into three phases: 1) initial assessment and referral; 2) reception; 3) autonomy.

187. Europa Press, 'El centro para la acogida temporal de migrantes en Mérida atiende a 196 personas en su primera semana en servicio', 3 August 2018, available [here](#).

188. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

189. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

190. Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, Resolución de 29 de septiembre de 2023, de la Dirección General de Atención Humanitaria e Inclusión Social de la Inmigración, por la que se modifica la de 14 de noviembre de 2022, por la que se establece la planificación de prestaciones, actuaciones y servicios que deben atenderse dentro del programa de atención humanitaria mediante acción concertada para los ejercicios 2023-2026, available [here](#) and Resolución de 8 de febrero de 2023, de la Dirección General de Atención Humanitaria e Inclusión Social de la Inmigración, por la que se modifica la de 14 de noviembre de 2022, por la que se establece la planificación de prestaciones, actuaciones y servicios que deben atenderse dentro del programa de atención humanitaria mediante acción concertada para los ejercicios 2023-2026, available [here](#).

191. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

1. “Initial assessment and referral phase” (*Fase de valoración inicial y derivación*): the aim of this phase is to assess the person’s profile and their needs, to refer them to a suitable facility in the shortest time possible. The stay in such facilities should last the time necessary for carrying out the needs’ assessment and the referral to another facility and should not exceed 1 month. This phase does not count for the calculation of the duration of reception conditions;
2. “Reception phase” (*Fase de acogida*): applicants are provided with accommodation within: (a) an International Protection Reception Centre (*Centro de Acogida de Protección Internacional, CAPI*); (b) or NGO-run reception facilities located all over the Spanish territory. During these months of temporary reception, applicants receive basic cultural orientation, language and job training which aim to facilitate their integration within the Spanish society. The stay in such facilities should last until the end of the international protection or statelessness’ procedure (that according to the Asylum Law is 6 months). For vulnerable asylum seekers, such timeframe can be extended for another 6 months;
3. “Autonomy phase” (*Fase de autonomía*): applicants move out of reception centres and receive financial support and coverage of basic expenses to start their autonomous life. Intensive language courses and access to employability programmes are offered at this stage. It is also possible to offer the person financial support for certain expenses (*ayudas puntuales*) such as health, education, training, birth. The duration of this phase is 6 months that can be extended for another 6 in case of vulnerable applicants.¹⁹²

In the Canary Islands, there are no dedicated centres for asylum applicants. Instead, they are hosted in specific places reserved for international protection in mixed CAED centres that, as seen above, are also destined to hosting persons under the Humanitarian Assistance Programme.

1.3. Other forms of reception

In addition to these facilities, there are also some smaller ones, managed by different actors. In some cases, those are outside of the reception system managed by the Ministry of Inclusion.

For example, the Cruz Blanca Fundación in Tenerife and Gran Canaria manage social (day-care) centres that provide services such as socio-labour guidance, emergency social assistance, health and legal support, Spanish language classes and other projects, including voluntary return. These centres assist both men and women, including trafficking victims, people living with HIV and other vulnerable profiles. There is also a flat for women (7–8 places) within the regional protection network against trafficking (depending on the Local Council of Tenerife), particularly focused on victims of sexual exploitation and prostitution, many of whom come from Latin America. Another centre managed by the Fundación in Gran Canaria is aimed at hosting persons in vulnerable situations, including women engaged in sex work and survivors of trafficking, offering psychosocial support, prevention, access to the labour market and assistance with rent payments.¹⁹³

The reception system managed by the Red Cross includes various types of facilities, mostly small-scale (between 8 and 12 places), specialised in assisting vulnerable individuals. All centres, except for the facility known as “Casa de Madres”, are the Red Cross’ property, although funded by the Ministry of Inclusion. Casa de Madres, with approximately 165 places (currently with low occupancy), is instead publicly owned (Ministry of Inclusion). Facilities include apartments, houses and hotels. There are several resources across the province (mainly in Tenerife, as well as La Gomera and La Palma), all with a focus on vulnerability. Casa de Madres accommodates different types of family units, including extended families and single mothers. In such cases, and except in exceptional circumstances, children are not separated during DNA testing.¹⁹⁴

Accem also manages approximately 18 places distributed across four apartments. These are intended for more vulnerable profiles, such as single women, single men with vulnerabilities and family units with dependent children.¹⁹⁵

2. Reception conditions

The increase in arrivals registered in 2023 led the Spanish Government to declare a status of ‘migration emergency’, to allow opening different kinds of emergency shelters.¹⁹⁶ In addition, the Ministry of Inclusion adopted different measures and plans to face such increase in arrivals, especially to the Canary Islands, such

192. AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025.

193. Information provided by the Cruz Blanca Fundación, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026 and visit to the centre.

194. Information provided by the Spanish Red Cross, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

195. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

196. Canarias 7, ‘El repunte migratorio obliga a Madrid a dejar abiertos centros que quería cerrar’, 21 June 2023, available [here](#).

as shortening the maximum length stay at the reception places within the humanitarian assistance program; extending the stay for vulnerable migrants; through the allocation of more economic resources for creating new reception places within the humanitarian assistance program and the creation of new reception places.¹⁹⁷ In January 2024, the declaration on the migration emergency was extended, and the Council of Ministers approved the allocation of EUR 60.6 million.¹⁹⁸ In September 2025, the Council of Ministers approved an additional allocation of EUR 190.7 million to the Ministry of Inclusion, Social security and Migration for the humanitarian assistance and the international protection programme. These funds were intended to guarantee the functioning of the existing 53,500 reception places until the end of June 2026, as well as to strengthen the services to transfer migrants and asylum seekers from the Canary Islands to mainland. Thus, from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 a total budget of €1,035 million was allocated to the reception system.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, since 2021, the Government adopted plans and increased the budget for expanding the reception system for migrants and asylum seekers in the Canary Islands, as well as to increase transfers of people to reception facilities on the mainland. Initially, only a limited number of transfers to the mainland were carried out,²⁰⁰ but since 2023, they increased consistently, even if not to a sufficient level considering the numbers of arrivals.²⁰¹

Despite these measures, significant challenges in ensuring adequate reception conditions for migrants and asylum seekers have been reported in the Canary Islands in recent years, in particular regarding overcrowding and difficulties for external actors to access the centres. These shortcomings have been largely attributed to the sharp increase in arrivals and the limited availability of suitable reception facilities on the islands when migratory pressures began to intensify.²⁰² The UN Committee on Human Rights expressed concern for the reports it has received concerning inadequate conditions and insufficient places at certain reception centres for migrants in Spain, including those in the Canary Islands, while acknowledging the efforts made by the State to address this problem.²⁰³ According to the Ministry of Inclusion, the decrease in arrivals in the Canary Islands has made it possible to improve reception conditions and facilitate the management of transfers to the mainland in 2025.²⁰⁴

In the context of the visit, the Ministry of Inclusion did not provide authorisation to access reception facilities in the Canary Islands, with the stated objective of guaranteeing privacy to the residents. Interviews were conducted with some actors operating centres in the Islands.

According to Accem, the managing entity of the centre of Las Raíces, the centre has 5,000 accommodation places both in the context of the Humanitarian Attention Programme and for international protection applicants. The services provided within the centre include social work, legal assistance, psychological support, healthcare, social integration support, leisure and sports activities and Spanish language classes. Each team providing a specific service has a coordinator. The management structure includes a centre director, two Accem deputy directors, and a director appointed by the Ministry of Inclusion. While many teams operate during morning and afternoon shifts, the social integration team is present 24 hours a day, organising activities, identifying needs and channelling information to other teams. Las Raíces is largely composed of large tents. Each tent can accommodate approximately 72 people, with bunk beds and lockers between beds for storing personal belongings. Residents are allocated according to order of arrival rather than nationality, except in occasional cases where conflicts require separation. In cases of large numbers of arrivals, the number of sanitary facilities is increased by adding chemical toilets. The centre also includes common areas, sports facilities and activity spaces.

During the day the centre remains open, with freedom of movement between approximately 06:00 and 22:00.

197. Information provided by Accem in February 2024.

198. RTVE, 'El Gobierno aprueba la declaración de emergencia migratoria en Baleares con una inversión de 6,75 millones de euros', 16 September 2025, available [here](#).

199. Europa Press, 'El Gobierno aprueba transferir 190,7 millones de euros para programas de atención humanitaria', 2 September 2025, available [here](#).

200. El Diario, 'Un gran campamento de migrantes llamado Canarias: "Quieren convertir las islas en Lesbos"', 21 November 2020, available [here](#); El Día, 'José Antonio Moreno Díaz: "Canarias es una válvula del Estado para medir el acceso de migrantes"', 14 November 2020, available [here](#); El Día, '"Están utilizando todas las herramientas para que nadie salga del Archipiélago"', 19 January 2021, available [here](#).

201. Information provided by Accem in April 2024; CEAR, 'INFORME 2024. Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa', June 2024, p. 97, available [here](#).

202. CEAR, 'INFORME 2024. Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa', June 2024, p. 98, available [here](#); Information provided by the UNHCR, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

203. La Vanguardia, 'Comité de la ONU lamenta condiciones en puntos de recepción de inmigrantes en España', 18 July 2025, available [here](#).

204. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

The Montaña Mina centre in Lanzarote – also managed by Accem - has 200 places in tents and 120 places in rooms despite being a CAED for longer stays. Women are accommodated in rooms.

In first-arrival centres, direct financial assistance is usually not provided, as stays are generally very short, while in CAEDs monthly financial assistance may be provided through prepaid cards.

Centres also provide hygiene kits, clothing and other basic items. In smaller reception apartments, purchases may be made in supermarkets under supervision. In general, no serious security problems have been reported in centres for adults. However, there have been attacks on managing organisations on social media and some isolated incidents of assaults against migrants in public spaces. Language and literacy classes are offered both within and outside the centre, as well as group activities related to leisure and preparation for adult life, adapted to the needs of the minors.²⁰⁵

The Cruz Blanca Fundación also manages several reception places in the Canary Islands. The network of resources includes several types of centres, among them a social centre, a centre dedicated to women engaging in sex work and survivors of trafficking, a reception centre in Tenerife and a social centre specifically for women. In total, approximately 140 professionals work across these services, covering around 400 users in residential centres, not including those attended daily in day centres. One of the main facilities managed by the Fundación in coordination with the Ministry of Inclusion is the León centre in Gran Canaria. It is a large-scale centre with significant capacity: it currently counts 234 places for families and women, as well as a separate area with capacity for 120 unaccompanied children. However, the facility could accommodate up to approximately 700 people in total. The centre is located in a relatively remote area of the island. In contrast, centres located in the city have a more limited capacity, usually between 30 and 40 users. At the León centre, both extended family units and unaccompanied minors are accommodated, although the two groups are physically separated through differentiated spaces (for example, by a fence).²⁰⁶

The duration of stay in reception centres depends on the status of the person within the system. In the case of former asylum applicants whose application has been rejected, individuals are required to leave the centre within approximately 15 days. However, if they lodge an appeal and the appeal is admitted, they may re-enter a reception facility for the duration of the appeal procedure. For persons hosted under the humanitarian assistance programme, the maximum duration of stay is six months.²⁰⁷

As previously mentioned, the EUAA has also been deployed mainly to support improvements in the reception system in the Canary Islands. Key areas of intervention include support to first reception centres and CAEDs through the development of protocols, the improvement of procedures and the training of operators. In this regard, the EUAA has delivered a significant number of training sessions, particularly on issues related to minors, contributing to improved understanding of access to asylum as a right. Training activities were structured around three main pillars: (i) fundamentals of asylum, (ii) identification of vulnerabilities and (iii) conflict management. These sessions were delivered both in centres for minors and in adult reception centres, with the aim of ensuring access to basic training modules for all operators. During these sessions, significant gaps in prior knowledge were identified. In addition, the EUAA promoted training-of-trainers initiatives aimed at strengthening local capacities in the long term, involving various institutional actors, including the Ministry of Inclusion, the Prosecutor's Office for Foreigners, the National Police and UNHCR.²⁰⁸

Reflections on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Several stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the Pact on the Canary Islands. As noted above, the Asylum Procedure Regulation introduces mandatory grounds for the use of border procedures, which is likely to result in a significant increase in the number of such procedures carried out in Spain. Given the position of the Canary Islands as a primary point of arrival, a substantial proportion of these procedures may need to be conducted on the islands, raising questions about reception capacity and the ability of the existing system to accommodate the new requirements.

In this context, stakeholders highlighted the importance of the Humanitarian Assistance Programme, which constitutes a distinctive feature of the Spanish reception system by providing initial reception to persons arriving by sea irrespective of whether they apply for international protection. Some interlocutors suggested that one possible way to increase capacity within the asylum reception system would be to convert places

205. Information provided by ACCEM, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

206. Information provided by the Cruz Blanca Fundación, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026 and visit to the centre.

207. Information provided by CEAR, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

208. Information provided by the EUAA, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

currently used for humanitarian reception into places reserved for applicants for international protection, including those subject to border procedures. However, concerns were raised regarding such an approach. While emergency reception structures were established to respond to situations of exceptional migratory pressure, reliance on emergency-type facilities as a long-term solution may not be appropriate. Certain characteristics of these centres, including their remote locations and, in some cases, camp-like settings, have prompted questions regarding their suitability for prolonged accommodation and their compliance with the standards envisaged under the Reception Conditions Directive.

More broadly, some stakeholders expressed concerns that, if not accompanied by sufficient reception capacity on the mainland and effective return mechanisms, the expanded use of border procedures could contribute to a situation in which increasing numbers of rejected asylum applicants remain stranded on the islands without a realistic prospect of return. This could place additional pressure on local reception systems and increase the risk of social exclusion. Such concerns could be mitigated by making full use of the possibility, foreseen under the Pact, to carry out border procedures in designated facilities located elsewhere on the territory rather than concentrating them exclusively in border regions. In addition, several interlocutors highlighted the importance of developing solutions for persons who cannot be returned in practice, including consideration of residence permits under national law, in order to avoid situations of prolonged irregularity that may have negative consequences both for the individuals concerned and for the communities hosting them.

Recommendations

- » The Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration should ensure sufficient reception capacity in the Canary Islands is maintained to a reasonable level regardless of the reduction in the number of arrivals, in view of possible future fluctuations in the number of arrivals.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should progressively reduce reliance on large-scale, emergency-type facilities and ensure that reception conditions are provided in smaller, adequately equipped and decentralised centres that are better suited to longer stays and integration needs.
- » State authorities should continue transfers from the islands to the mainland, ensuring that reception pressure does not disproportionately accumulate in border regions and that individuals are not left in prolonged situations of uncertainty or limbo.
- » Spanish authorities should ensure that reception planning takes into account the expected increase in border procedures under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, including by adapting capacity in advance and avoiding the concentration of persons in large, camp-like emergency structures.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should ensure that reception conditions across all types of facilities guarantee adequate standards of privacy, dignity, and access to services, including in first-arrival centres and CAEDs, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable applicants.

3. Reception of unaccompanied minors

Responsibility for the reception of unaccompanied minors reaching the Canary Islands lies with the island councils (*'cabildos'*), with an ordinary capacity set at a maximum of 737 places. Above this threshold, responsibility falls to the Government of the Canary Islands, which manages emergency centres. As previously mentioned, for asylum-seeking children, responsibility for reception shifts to the Ministry of Inclusion.

3.1. 'Migratory contingency' measures and transfers to mainland Spain

The situation of unaccompanied children in the Canary Islands has been concerning since 2020, when more than 2,000 children were reportedly not receiving adequate assistance and protection.²⁰⁹ From September 2023 onwards, a significant increase in the arrival of unaccompanied children in the Canary Islands was registered. This situation particularly affected islands such as El Hierro and Lanzarote. In August 2023, the Ministry of Youth and Children declared a situation of extraordinary migratory contingency in the Canary Islands, thus allowing the local government to expand up to three times their ordinary reception capacity for unaccompanied minors.²¹⁰ Consequently, the number of centres hosting minors increased from 39 to 86, including through the opening of macro-centres (with over 100 places), some of which accommodated up to

209. Info Migrants, "A child needs more than food and shelter": The fate of unaccompanied minors on the Canary Islands', 1 January 2021, available [here](#).

210. Gobierno de Canarias, Canarias amplía la declaración de emergencia en materia de menores migrantes con el fin de garantizar su protección, 24 February 2026, available [here](#).

400 minors²¹¹ This resulted in the child protection system in the Canary Islands accommodating more than 4,400 unaccompanied minors in November 2023, and the accommodation of many of them in facilities for adults because they were not identified as minors. Following the challenges that arose because of the substantial increase, different organisations expressed concerns about the situation and asked different institutions to take effective measures to guarantee children's rights.²¹²

At the time, the transfer of minors from an Autonomous Community to another could only take place on a voluntary basis, as provided by Article 35 of the national Immigration law. In October 2023, all Spanish Autonomous Communities reached an agreement to share the reception of 450 children from the Canary Islands. By February 2024, just four Autonomous Communities had indicated to be available for the transfer of a total of 112 children.²¹³ During 2024, the Government of the Canary Islands reiterated its calls to the central Government to provide for responsibility-sharing with the other Autonomous Communities in the reception of and assistance to UAMs who have arrived in the archipelago.²¹⁴ In March 2025, the Government adopted the Royal-Decree 2/2025 providing urgent measures to guarantee the best interests of children and adolescents in situations of extraordinary migratory contingencies and amending article 35 of the Immigration Law. It introduced modifications to different dispositions related to migrant children, for example by introducing the mechanism for the distribution of unaccompanied children among Autonomous Communities, by establishing the criteria for the plan for solidarity sharing among Communities.²¹⁵ On 22 July 2025, the Council of Ministers adopted Royal Decree 658/2025 establishing the rules, procedure and measures to relocate unaccompanied minors from places declared to be in a state of extraordinary migratory contingency (currently, Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands) to other Autonomous Communities. At the end of August, the government adopted the Royal Decree foreseeing the compulsory relocation of UAMs from border territories (such as the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla) to other Autonomous Communities, which was opposed by several Autonomous Communities that did not wish to contribute to the transfers.²¹⁶ By the end of January 2026, a total of 877 minors under the responsibility of the Canary Islands had been relocated.²¹⁷

Among the children reaching the islands, there were also several who applied for international protection. In general, there is a lack of specialised centres in the Canary Islands destined to unaccompanied children seeking asylum, who are then hosted in specialised sections of centres for adults or hosted in mixed centres with other minors. In December 2024, the Government of the Canary Islands urged the central Government to solve the situation regarding unaccompanied children in need of international protection present in the islands.²¹⁸

An order of the Spanish Supreme Court of 25 March 2025²¹⁹ required the State to assume responsibility for the number of unaccompanied minors exceeding the capacity that the Canary Islands were expected to manage. At the beginning of June 2025, the central government and the government of the Canary Islands started to

211. Information provided by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

212. El SaltoDiario, 'Urge garantizar los derechos de la infancia migrante que llega a Canarias, apuntan las organizaciones', 6 November 2023, available [here](#); Amnistía Internacional, 'AI: Canarias/ Nueva investigación: Niños y niñas que viajan solos detenidos junto a adultos y con sus pertenencias confiscadas', 3 November 2023, available [here](#).

213. EFE, 'Canarias inicia el proceso para intentar el reparto obligatorio de los menores migrantes', 11 February 2024, available [here](#).

214. El Diario, 'Canarias pide al Gobierno de España que interceda en la atención a la población migrante', 21 December 2024, available [here](#); E-noticies, 'El Gobierno quiere obligar a las comunidades autónomas a acoger menores inmigrantes', 3 January 2024, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Qué hacer con los menores que llegan a Canarias', 2 February 2024, available [here](#).

215. Boletín Oficial del Estado, 'Real Decreto-ley 2/2025, de 18 de marzo, por el que se aprueban medidas urgentes para la garantía del interés superior de la infancia y la adolescencia ante situaciones de contingencias migratorias extraordinarias', 18 March 2025, available [here](#).

216. Iustel, 'Aragón recurrirá el "reparto forzoso de menores", pero cumplirá la ley y trabajará en su llegada', 27 August 2025, available [here](#); El Periódico, 'El Gobierno impondrá la ley a las autonomías del PP rebeldes al reparto de menores', 27 August 2025, available [here](#); Crónica Digital, 'El Govern se ofrece a acoger en Cataluña a 31 jóvenes migrantes no acompañados', 13 September 2025, available [here](#). RTVE, 'Balears solicita al Supremo suspender cautelarmente los traslados de menores migrantes no acompañados', 6 October 2025, available [here](#); La Vanguardia, 'El Gobierno del PP recurre las resoluciones para trasladar otros dos menores migrantes a Cantabria', 27 November 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Canarias recuerda al Estado que el hacinamiento de los menores no se soluciona con más centros en las islas', 17 November 2025, available [here](#); Ifomo, 'El Gobierno de Cantabria recurre otra resolución para trasladar a un menor migrante desde Canarias', 30 December 2025, available [here](#).

217. El Pueblo de Ceuta, 'Ceuta ha distribuido entre otras autonomías a 242 menores migrantes', 26 January 2026, available [here](#); El País, 'La reubicación en la Península de menores migrantes llegados a Canarias apenas alcanzó el 30% el año pasado', 23 January 2026, available [here](#); Diario de Avisos, 'Torres certifica el traslado de 877 menores y urge a Canarias a entregar los expedientes de reubicación', 23 January 2026, available [here](#).

218. El País, 'El PP bloquea la negociación sobre los menores migrantes y la condiciona a un cambio de política migratoria', 5 December 2024, available [here](#); Gobierno de Canarias, 'Canarias urge al Estado a resolver la situación de los menores solicitantes de asilo', 4 December 2024, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Vuelven las negociaciones sobre la acogida obligatoria de menores migrantes sin que el PP garantice su apoyo', 4 December 2024, available [here](#); Euractiv, 'Sánchez, centre-right, failed to reach a deal on "solidarity sharing" of migrant minors', 6 December 2024, available [here](#).

219. ATS, 25 de Marzo de 2025, available [here](#).

organise the reception and assistance of child asylum applicants in the Canary Islands.²²⁰ The Government planned to open 800 reception places – all of them in the archipelago - specifically for unaccompanied children seeking asylum, thus it agreed with the government of the Canary Islands to assume their reception within the asylum reception system.²²¹ In addition, it offered 400 reception places in the Autonomous Community of Madrid.²²²

Between the end of July and beginning of August, a group of 250 child asylum applicants started to be accommodated within the asylum reception system at the facility *Canarias 50* located in the Canary Islands, while 10 were transferred to a facility on the mainland.²²³ At the end of October, following the complaint lodged by the government of the Canary Islands, the Supreme Court ordered the central government to take over the reception of unaccompanied children seeking asylum within 15 days.²²⁴ Close to the end of November, the central government informed to have complied with the Supreme Court's decision, with a total of 679 unaccompanied children seeking asylum transferred to the mainland after an additional 817 new places were created within the asylum reception system.²²⁵

To summarise, at the time of the visit two parallel transfer systems for unaccompanied minors were in place: one derived from the Spanish Supreme Court order,²²⁶ the second relying on a system of re-distribution among Autonomous Communities derived from the framework provided by the national Immigration Law.²²⁷ In this context, it is foreseen that all newly arrived minors should be all relocated to mainland Spain, while for minors who are already present in the islands relocation is possible but should be carried out after a prior assessment of existing vulnerabilities and ties of the minor with the territory.

According to stakeholders interviewed, various practical and legal challenges have so far affected the implementation of both transfer mechanisms. UNICEF's Spanish Committee²²⁸ noted that the coexistence of the mandatory system derived from the Supreme Court order and the redistribution mechanism has generated a relevant management burden on competent authorities and institutions (at national and regional level) and problems of coordination. In addition, there have been problems regarding best interest assessments due to

220. El Día, 'Migraciones contacta con Canarias para iniciar el proceso de asumir a los menores que piden asilo', 10 June 2025, available [here](#); Canarias 7, 'El Estado asumirá a los menores migrantes asilados', 23 June 2025, available [here](#); Público, 'El Gobierno y Canarias acuerdan la acogida de menores refugiados para cumplir la orden del Supremo', 23 June 2025, available [here](#).
221. Cadena Ser, 'El plan del Gobierno para la acogida de menores migrantes: 800 plazas nuevas, pero todas en Canarias', 22 June 2025, available [here](#); Demócrata, 'Acuerdo entre el Gobierno y Canarias para registrar a 827 menores migrantes en protección internacional', 25 June 2025, available [here](#); Europa Press, 'El Gobierno pacta con Canarias dar de alta a 827 menores migrantes en el sistema de protección internacional', 25 June 2025, available [here](#); Canarias 7, 'El Estado asumirá «de inmediato» a 827 menores asilados abriendo plazas de acogida en Gran Canaria', 26 June 2025, available [here](#).
222. RTVE, 'El Gobierno ofrece a Canarias 400 plazas en Madrid para los menores migrantes', 1 July 2025, available [here](#).
223. Noticias de Gipuzkoa, 'El Gobierno acogerá a finales de julio en Canarias a los primeros 250 menores migrantes solicitantes de asilo', 9 July 2025, available [here](#); RTVE, 'El Gobierno de España anuncia que acogerá en julio en su red estatal de asilo a los primeros 250 menores migrantes', 9 July 2025, available [here](#); Canarias 7, 'El Estado obvia Pozuelo y deja solo el Canarias 50 para los menores asilados: «Es un paso atrás»', 8 July 2025, available [here](#); Diario de Avisos, 'El Estado asume desde mañana la acogida de los 100 primeros menores solicitantes de asilo desde Canarias', 22 July 2025, available [here](#); Canal 4 Tenerife, 'Cincuenta chicos mayores de 16 años, primeros solicitantes de asilo transferidos al Estado', 23 July 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Migraciones empezará a derivar a la Península a menores solicitantes de asilo en 2 semanas', 29 July 2025, available [here](#); Conflegal, 'El Supremo insta al Gobierno a dar «una pronta y completa integración» a los menores migrantes de Canarias', 30 July 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Más Madrid carga contra PP por "usar la infancia migrante" como "arma arrojada" y afea el cierre del CREADE de Pozuelo', 31 July 2025, available [here](#); Europa Press, 'El Gobierno empezará el lunes el traslado de menores migrantes con ocho derivaciones a la Península', 5 July 2025, available [here](#); Cadena Ser, 'Comienzan las derivaciones de menores solicitantes de asilo desde Canarias a la Península', 11 August 2025, available [here](#).
224. Canarias 7, 'El Supremo da la razón a Canarias y da al Estado 15 días para asumir a los menores asilados', 23 October 2025, available [here](#); Gobierno de Canarias, 'Canarias valora la reacción del Estado tras el auto del Tribunal Supremo para el traslado de menores asilados', 29 October 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'El Estado ultima esta semana la acogida de 567 menores que pidieron asilo en Canarias desde que se iniciaron los traslados', 4 November 2025, available [here](#); El Diario de Santiago, 'El Gobierno acelera para garantizar plaza de acogida a todos los menores solicitantes de asilo antes del día 21', 7 November 2025, available [here](#).
225. El Periódico, 'El Gobierno espera incorporar a 88 menores migrantes al sistema de acogida antes del viernes para cumplir con el Tribunal Supremo', 19 November 2025, available [here](#); Diario de Avisos, 'El Gobierno asegura que cumplirá con Canarias: confía en que 780 menores estén en acogida antes del viernes', 18 November 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'El Estado da por cumplida la orden del Supremo sobre los menores solicitantes de asilo', 21 November 2025, available [here](#); Canarias 7, 'El Estado ha creado 817 plazas para menores con asilo: «Se ha cumplido el auto» del Supremo', 22 November 2025, available [here](#); Info Migrants, 'Spain: Authorities transfer 679 unaccompanied migrant minors to mainland', 24 November 2025, available [here](#).
226. ATS, 25 de Marzo de 2025, available [here](#).
227. Reform of Article 35 Immigration Law, amendment entered into force in March 2025.
228. To note: The role of UNICEF in Spain, and particularly in the Canary Islands, focuses on advocacy, awareness raising, and research activities. This includes the preparation of reports on the southern border, migrant children, and specific situations such as the arrival of people from Ukraine. The Spanish Committee for UNICEF does not have a mandate for direct intervention or operational assistance to the government, although it can issue recommendations. In the Canary Islands, since 2021, UNICEF has identified mental health as one of its main areas of work, following a report on sea arrivals that highlighted significant gaps in this area. Currently, UNICEF has only two staff members deployed in the Canary Islands. UNICEF's priorities have evolved over time. In 2016, a clear migration strategy was developed. In 2018, the organization began to focus primarily on unaccompanied minors and the management of migration contingencies.

the lack of a common tool and specialization as well as short delays. Political debate might have also interfered in the process. Finally, the Prosecutor office played an important role assessing best interest during both coexisting transfer processes.²²⁹

Regarding the transfer of children to other Autonomous Communities, problems emerge such as the lack of places in destination territories, children not wishing to be transferred because they are rooted in the territory, the prioritisation for transfers of certain profiles (e.g. children over 16 years old) for practical or economic reasons. In practice, according to the Delegate Prosecutor for Immigration, minors over 16 tend to be prioritised. The fact that they are considered to be more difficult to take care of than younger children and the fact that they will reach adulthood sooner, and thus no longer be under the responsibility of the Canary Islands authorities, might be among the reasons for prioritisation. However, from an integration perspective, younger children are often able to better adapt to a new environment, a reason that would justify prioritising their transfer to the mainland. This creates tension with economic considerations for Canary Island authorities, as funding linked to the reception of minors increases with longer stays, incentivising the retention of younger children. There are also issues in terms of social ties: older children tend to have stronger links in the Canary Islands, while younger ones may integrate more easily in the mainland. In case of conflict, the Prosecutor's Office may appoint a legal guardian (*defensor judicial*).²³⁰

Representatives of the Government of the Canary Islands emphasised the delays in activating transfers and the insufficient assumption of responsibility by the central government. According to the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Canary Islands' Government, at the time of the visit, approximately 3,000 minors were reportedly awaiting transfer to mainland Spain. While newly arrived children should in principle be transferred within 15 days, transfers were in practice taking around one month. From this perspective, the principal problem is the gap between the legal framework and its practical implementation, which leaves the Canary Islands responsible for a population of minors significantly exceeding its reception capacity.²³¹

Other stakeholders pointed to operational obstacles linked to documentation and case management. UNICEF's Spanish Committee highlighted, regarding the transfers of children according to the Immigration Law as well as to the Supreme Court's decision, that the limited time frame could have impacted on decisions about who to transfer and other consequences leading to some transfers not aligned with the best interest of the child.²³²

The Ministry of the Interior also identified a number of practical challenges in the processing and transfer of unaccompanied minors seeking international protection. In particular, officials reported that, at one stage, more than half of the case files submitted by regional authorities required requests for additional information before an assessment or transfer could proceed. According to the Ministry, such requests were necessary to ensure a thorough assessment of the child's best interests and protection needs, but they could also contribute to delays in the processing of cases. At the same time, the Ministry indicated that cooperation between the various administrations involved had improved considerably. The Directorate-General for International Protection currently provides the Government of the Canary Islands with weekly updates on individual case files, including information on registration dates, reference numbers and the stage of the procedure. These exchanges are complemented by regular coordination meetings involving the Ministry of Inclusion, the Ministry of the Interior, representatives of Territorial Policy, the State Legal Service and the Directorate-General for Child Protection of the Canary Islands. According to the Ministry, these mechanisms have contributed to smoother cooperation and better-quality case files. As a result, the number of requests for additional information had reportedly decreased by the time of the visit, also reflecting a reduction in the overall number of applications.²³³

The Directorate-General for Child Protection of the Canary Islands explained that transfer decisions are based on a range of factors, including vulnerability, family links in other Autonomous Communities, the child's wishes, and specific needs such as mental health concerns. The Public Prosecutor's Office plays a role in assessing cases where minors oppose transfer, particularly where they have developed meaningful ties (*arraigo*) to the Canary Islands through education, social integration or employment. In practice, a significant number of minors have refused transfer.²³⁴ Similar figures were reported by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare, who referred to around 100 cases in which minors resisted transfer due to their established links to the Canary Islands.

229. Information provided by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, online interview, 3 March 2026.

230. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

231. Information provided by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026.

232. Information provided by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, online interview, 3 March 2026.

233. Information provided by the Ministry of Interior – Directorate General for International Protection, online interview, 26 February 2026.

234. Information provided by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

According to the Immigration Prosecutor's Office, regarding transfers for minor asylum-seeking children, the procedure consists of the Government of the Canary Islands sending lists of minors who have applied for asylum to the Ministry of Inclusion, which then decides who is transferred. For this purpose, reports on social ties/meaningful links (*arraigo*), vulnerability and the asylum application should be available. However, the Prosecutor's Office only has access to the vulnerability report, but not to that on meaningful links for the minor, which is at times not considered sufficient to evaluate the minors' situation.²³⁵

Due to the decrease in arrivals registered throughout 2025 and the fact that it was considered that a sufficient number of transfers have been carried out, in June 2026 the central government announced its intention to avoid further extending declaration of migratory contingency, which would thus stop the relocations of unaccompanied minors who are not asylum seekers to other Autonomous Communities.²³⁶ The Government of the Canary Islands argued that the decision announced by the Minister for Youth and Children does not adequately reflect the current situation in the archipelago, where approximately 2,700 unaccompanied migrant children and young people remain under the care of the child protection system. This number substantially exceeds the ordinary reception capacity established for the Canary Islands, resulting in occupancy levels of more than three times the designated capacity.²³⁷

3.2. Reception conditions

The reception system for unaccompanied minors (who have not applied for asylum) reaching the Canary Islands consists of two main types of facilities:

- » Ordinary reception centres, managed by island councils (*cabildos*).
- » Emergency facilities, under the Directorate General for Children, created from 2020 to respond to increased arrivals. In 2025, there were around 86 such facilities.

These emergency centres have no defined time limits for stay, do not require specific staff-to-child ratios, rely instead solely on capacity criteria, and were conceived as temporary. They have in practice become permanent structures. The allocation of minors to centres is based on availability of places.

In recent months, new first reception centres have been opened, including a 230-place centre mainly for adolescents close to adulthood and a smaller centre (of around 30 places) for minors wishing to remain in the Canary Islands. There is no consolidated public registry on the number of centres, minors hosted or managing entities.²³⁸

Funding for the reception and protection of unaccompanied minors in the Canary Islands has increased in recent years in response to sustained migratory pressure. In 2024, the system was supported by EUR 86 million from the Autonomous Community and EUR 57 million from the State. In 2025, the State contribution increased to EUR 63 million, bringing total State and regional funding to approximately EUR 156 million, including an additional EUR 91 million provided by the Autonomous Community. In October 2025, the Ministry of Youth and Childhood further allocated EUR 13 million to Autonomous Communities receiving the highest number of unaccompanied minors, of which EUR 5 million was granted to the Canary Islands.²³⁹ Nevertheless, according to the Canary Islands Government, additional resources - including European funding - remain necessary to ensure the sustainability of the reception system. In particular, the authorities highlighted that arrivals fluctuate considerably over time and that, despite the recent decrease in arrivals, future increases in migratory pressure cannot be ruled out. In this context, they stressed the need for stable and predictable funding mechanisms rather than relying primarily on ad hoc emergency allocations.²⁴⁰

While interviewees generally considered the ordinary child protection system in the Canary Islands - comprising residential centres managed by the island councils (*cabildos*) and accommodating both Spanish and foreign children - to be well-functioning, significant concerns were raised regarding the parallel emergency reception

235. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

236. El Día, Más de 2.000 menores migrantes han salido ya de Canarias, 17 June 2026, available [here](#).

237. El Día, Queja formal de Canarias y Euskadi contra España ante Bruselas por la gestión del pacto migratorio, 22 June 2026, available [here](#).

238. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

239. Canarias 7, 'Infancia destina 13 millones a los territorios en contingencia migratoria, 5 a Canarias', 10 October 2025, available [here](#); Diario Palmero, 'Canarias recibe 5 millones de euros para reforzar la atención a la infancia migrante', 28 October 2025, available [here](#).

240. Information provided by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026.

system that has developed in response to the sustained increase in arrivals of unaccompanied children.²⁴¹ According to stakeholders, the emergency system has often prioritised the rapid creation of reception places over the establishment of adequate protection standards. As a result, some centres reportedly operate without a sufficiently individualised care model, with limited attention to children's participation in decisions affecting them, inadequate complaint and monitoring mechanisms, and insufficient external oversight. The large size of some facilities has been a particular source of concern, with certain centres reportedly accommodating more than 300 children, far exceeding what could be considered appropriate for ensuring effective care and protection, and the fact that many are located outside urban areas led to challenges in terms of the minors' integration. Additionally, in the context of the emergency management of the migratory situation some centres were opened with limited preparation and staffed by personnel lacking specialised training in child protection. Cases of violence against minors in centres were also reported.²⁴²

The situation of some centres - such as La Fortaleza 1 and José García I – was so significantly below adequate standards that it led to their closure. In the case of La Fortaleza 1, several minors reported inappropriate treatment by staff, including the use of physical punishment, which led to an ongoing judicial investigation. Problems have also been reported in other centres relating to poor living conditions, which varies depending on occupancy levels, as well as complaints of aggression by educators – it should be noted that, in many cases, persons employed as educators lack specialised training -, insufficient or poor-quality food, inadequate clothing, very low financial allowances (for example, 3 euros per week), and poor material conditions (such as cold buildings). At certain times, centres have been severely overcrowded. In general, the situation of centres has depended largely on the context and the volume of arrivals, which tend to increase during certain periods (for example, from November–December, when sea conditions are more favourable). Staff in the centres largely consist of administrative or educational technical assistants, with a limited presence of trained educators. According to the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, this situation is partly attributed to economic considerations and the difficulty of finding qualified staff willing to work in these centres. The Prosecutor also noted that, although funding is provided by the Government of the Canary Islands, some centres have reported receiving approximately EUR 100 per day per minor, in addition to additional periodic allocations, these resources do not always appear to translate into effective improvements in staffing or reception conditions. In some cases, concerns regarding the use of available resources have reportedly been referred to the anti-corruption prosecutor.²⁴³

Reported challenges also extend beyond reception conditions. Delays in access to education and vocational training remain common due to administrative bottlenecks, and there is limited availability of specialised psychosocial support despite the high prevalence of trauma and violence experienced by many children during migration journeys or in their countries of origin. Where psychological support was available, it often lacks a transcultural approach adapted to the specific experiences of migrant children.²⁴⁴ A report published by the Economic and Social Council of Spain (*Consejo Económico y Social de España*) in December 2025 highlighted the need to strengthen the child protection system and the resources for the assistance, transition into adulthood and labour market integration when reaching the age of majority, which are essential for preventing situations of vulnerability and marginalisation. It also called on the necessity to strengthen the policies for the protection of children, provide greater resources to the child protection system, facilitate access to regularisation, support the transition to adulthood for young people, especially the most vulnerable, with specific programmes and resources, and commit to inclusive education and intercultural coexistence in schools.²⁴⁵

According to the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors in the Canary Islands, progress has been identified in the management of migration emergencies, especially compared to previous crises (such as that of 2006), whose lessons were not adequately capitalized on at the time. Among the recent improvements are faster transfers to the mainland, the capacity to rapidly open centres, and the development of more specific resources for families. However, significant shortcomings remain, such as the low level of training of centre staff and interventions that are not always appropriate. The work of prosecutors' offices in the Canary Islands has improved in some areas, particularly in age determination processes and in publicly highlighting shortcomings in the system. However, there are still limitations in the supervision of reception conditions in the centres.²⁴⁶

241. It should be noted that the two systems operate under different legal standards.

242. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026. Information provided by Accem, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, online interview, 3 March 2026.

243. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

244. Information provided by Save the Children in February 2026, AIDA Country Report on Spain – Update on 2025 and by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

245. Consejo Económico y Social de España, 'informe la realidad migratoria en España: prioridades para las políticas públicas. 01/2025', December 2025, available [here](#); RTVE, 'Tres millones de niños en España son hijos de madre o padre de origen migrante, según un informe', 12 November 2025, available [here](#).

246. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

Several organisations and media outlets also reported on existing issues, including on cases of mistreatment of children from staff of the reception centres.

A thematic report published by Amnesty International in March 2025 expressed concern about the system of macro-centres for unaccompanied minors created in the Canary Islands in recent years and highlighted the lack of coordination between the different administrations, law enforcements agencies and the judiciary, as well as between provinces.²⁴⁷ Amnesty also denounced disproportionate punishments, violence and lack of inspections in the centres for unaccompanied minors in the Canary Islands.²⁴⁸ In March 2025, three former workers of a reception centre for migrant children in Tenerife were taken into custody for the alleged mistreatment and abuse of children accommodated in the facility.²⁴⁹ In May 2025, the director and other nine employees of a shelter for unaccompanied minors on the island of Gran Canaria were arrested on charges of alleged injuries, abuse and threats against the children.²⁵⁰ A report published by Save the Children in June 2025 warned that the lack of professionals responsible for child protection during the initial 72 hours, which means that children and adolescents are in some cases not recognised as such and thus referred to the protection system or specialised resources and without psychological support or interpreters.²⁵¹ In October 2025, four directors of reception centres for unaccompanied minors in Gran Canaria and Lanzarote were been indicted for the alleged misappropriation of European funds addressed to the reception and assistance of unaccompanied children.²⁵² In December 2025, the Justice Supreme Court of the Canary Islands upheld the conviction of a local police officer who humiliated a migrant in Tenerife, also using racist insults, by confirming the sentence of six months in prison and two years of disqualification.²⁵³ In its 2025 annual report, Human Rights Watch reported evidences of abuses facing unaccompanied migrant children in the Canary Islands, including overcrowded accommodation, failures in age determination processes, a general lack of individualized assessment of protection needs, difficulties accessing education, and a lack of follow-up care after turning 18.²⁵⁴

The Public Prosecutor's Office plays an important role in monitoring reception centres for unaccompanied minors. According to the Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, the specialised juvenile unit conducts inspections in accordance with an established protocol, including visits to centres, interviews with minors who wish to participate, reviews of individual case files and assessments of living conditions and facilities. Inspections may be carried out on a regular basis or in response to information concerning possible deficiencies or violations. Where shortcomings are identified, the Prosecutor's Office opens a file and refers the matter to the Directorate-General for Child Protection. In serious cases, such as inadequate material conditions, corrective measures have generally been implemented within a relatively short period, while centres are normally given an opportunity to address deficiencies before more severe measures are considered. In exceptional situations involving particularly serious concerns, judicial intervention has taken place.²⁵⁵

Several stakeholders considered that prosecutorial and judicial oversight has been an important driver of improvements in reception conditions. UNICEF's Spanish Committee noted that a number of improvements in centres, as well as some centre closures, have followed interventions by prosecutors and judges. At the same time, UNICEF observed that certain areas fall outside the scope of prosecutorial supervision, particularly decisions relating to transfer policies and redistribution criteria, which are generally regarded as matters of public policy rather than child protection oversight. The importance of coordination between the Directorate-General for Childhood and external actors involved in child protection was also highlighted. While some channels of communication remain in place, stakeholders noted that coordination platforms previously used for information-sharing and collaboration are no longer regularly convened, which may limit opportunities for systematic exchanges of good practices and the consideration of proposals put forward by organisations and

247. Demócrata, 'Amnistía Internacional critica los macrocentros de menores en Canarias y señala la descoordinación', 11 July 2025, available [here](#); Amnistía Internacional, 'A día de hoy no tengo nada. El fracaso del sistema para proteger a los y las menores llegados a Canarias', 18 March 2025, available [here](#).

248. Amnistía Internacional, 'Menores migrantes en Canarias: documentamos denuncias de violencia y castigos excesivos contra niños en centros de acogida saturados', 18 March 2025, available [here](#); Huffington Post, 'Amnistía Internacional documenta violencia, excesos y descoordinación en la gestión de la infancia migrante', 18 March 2025, available [here](#); El Diario, 'Amnistía Internacional denuncia "castigos excesivos" y falta de inspecciones en los centros de menores migrantes de Canarias', 18 March 2025, available [here](#).

249. Info Migrants, 'Spain: Three former employees of center for migrant minors arrested on allegations of child abuse', 5 March 2026, available [here](#).

250. Info Migrants, 'Migrant minors center in the Canary Islands seized, ten arrested', 21 May 2025, available [here](#).

251. Save the Children, 'Cruzando fronteras', 18 June 2025, available [here](#).

252. Diario de Avisos, 'Fraude millonario en Canarias: desvían más de 2,4 millones de fondos europeos destinados a centros de menores extranjeros', 25 October 2025, available [here](#).

253. Canarias7, 'El TSJC ratifica la condena a un policía que humilló a una persona migrante en Tenerife', 23 December 2025, available [here](#).

254. Human Rights Watch, 'World report 2026. Spain. Events of 2025', February 2026, available [here](#).

255. Information provided by the former Delegated Prosecutor for Minors, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026 and by ACCEM, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

international agencies.²⁵⁶

Another challenge related to the reception of unaccompanied minors in the Canary Islands relates to the social tensions originating from the creation of new centres for minors. These appear greater – in comparison with the management of centres for adults – in relation to centres for unaccompanied minors, as the local population perceives them as more permanent. In some cases, social media accounts have been identified that disseminate information about the location of centres for unaccompanied minors, which has generated concern among organisations.²⁵⁷

According to the Directorate General for Childhood, most of the issues regarding reception conditions for minors in the islands are attributable to the significant numbers of arrivals over the past years that put the system under strain and led to the necessity to open emergency facilities in a short amount of time. During the crisis, in 2023, the Directorate General for Childhood contacted entities that had already been involved in the 2006 crisis, requesting that they make as many places available as possible. Government-owned properties were also used. Despite these efforts, suitable reception places remain limited, also taking into account the difficulties identified in securing new reception resources, particularly due to the shortage of available properties. At the peak of the crisis, the Canary Islands operated around ten large-scale facilities hosting up to 400 minors each, particularly in Tenerife and El Hierro. Currently, thanks to the decrease in arrivals, several macro-centres are expected to close. The authorities indicated that the reception model is gradually shifting towards smaller-scale centres. For example, a facility that previously accommodated up to 400 minors currently hosts between 60 and 90, making its closure foreseeable. Some emergency facilities have already been dismantled, including the tent camp in Lanzarote, following the implementation of transfers to mainland Spain.²⁵⁸

In the context of the visit, it was possible to visit one of the newer facilities for unaccompanied minors under the responsibility of the Directorate-General for Childhood of the Autonomous Community, located in central Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Samu San Telmo). The centre was small in scale, well equipped and appeared to provide more suitable conditions than the large emergency facilities established during the peak of arrivals. However, according to the authorities, this centre – similarly to several other recently opened small-scale facilities – is intended primarily as a place of transit, from which minors are expected to be transferred to other Autonomous Communities within a relatively short period of time.²⁵⁹

At the beginning of the emergency, there was no common criterion for managing the centres. From April 2024, a common protocol was established on reception conditions and the identification of vulnerabilities. A guide of good practices was also developed by the Government of the Canary Islands, in collaboration with EUAA, is already in use since 2024. Training activities have been carried out for centre staff, with the participation of EUAA, UNHCR and UNICEF.²⁶⁰

Reception conditions for child asylum applicants

Regarding reception for children who apply for international protection, the representative of the Immigration Prosecutor's office noted that there is a need to create more specific international protection centres for minors. In practice, only one exists: Casa del Mar (in Gran Canaria), managed by the Ministry of Inclusion. There is no equivalent centre in Tenerife, which implies that minors seeking asylum have to be transferred to another island or to mainland Spain to be accommodated, which leads to challenges regarding uprooting the transferred minors from the context in which they had developed links (e.g. by going to school, following extra-curricular activities). Colegio León is a family protection centre managed by Fundación Cruz Blanca, which was initially established to accommodate family units arriving by sea. Subsequently, in the context of the saturation of the reception system in the Canary Islands – particularly after the 'Canarias 50' centre reached maximum capacity – part of its facilities was converted into a centre for unaccompanied minors seeking international protection.²⁶¹ During a visit, the Prosecutor's Office observed that access to the centre is conditional upon having expressed a wish to apply for international protection and that minors are informed that their asylum procedure will be processed following transfer to the mainland, and observed that the facility functions in practice more as a referral centre than as an international protection centre intended for long-term stays of children.²⁶²

256. Information provided by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, online interview, 3 March 2026.

257. Information provided by ACCEM, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

258. Information provided by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026 and by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026.

259. Visit to the shelter for unaccompanied minors "Samu San Telmo", Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

260. Information provided by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

261. Information provided by the Cruz Blanca Fundación, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

262. Information provided by the Delegated Prosecutor for Immigration, Gran Canaria, 24 February 2026.

In January 2026, 99 unaccompanied minors withdrew their asylum application due to the lack of proper conditions in the centres managed by the central government, such as the centre of *Canarias 50*, where they are transferred in view of their asylum interview and their transfer to mainland.²⁶³ In addition, some of them withdrew the asylum application as they were already integrated in the archipelago and did not wish to be transferred to centres for asylum applicants in mainland Spain.²⁶⁴ As underlined by Save the Children,²⁶⁵ no specialized centre for unaccompanied children seeking asylum was created after the Supreme Court cautionary measures. Initial screening centers were created to host children while arrangements of the transfers to specialised centers in Peninsula are made. As of today, the Canary Islands lack specialised asylum reception centers for unaccompanied children with the adequate child centered standards, protocols, staff and procedures. Additionally, the tight time limits set by the Supreme Court for the transfers have caused unintended situations, such as children not willing to be transferred to other centres or provinces and in worst situation to children renouncing their asylum application to avoid being moved to other centres and provinces.

Reflections on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Different actors indicated that the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum is likely to have important implications for the reception and protection of unaccompanied minors in the Canary Islands, although significant uncertainties remain regarding the practical arrangements that will be put in place.

Some viewed the Pact as an opportunity to strengthen existing child protection safeguards and improve coordination between the different actors involved in the reception system.

A key issue identified concerns the early identification of vulnerabilities and, in particular, the prompt identification of unaccompanied minors. The Ministry of Inclusion stressed that children should be identified as early as possible, ideally before their transfer to reception facilities, in order to ensure that they are channelled into the appropriate protection system from the outset. In this context, the Ministry for Children is expected to play a central role. While some vulnerabilities may be immediately apparent during the screening process, authorities acknowledged that others are often identified only at a later stage, particularly after placement in reception centres. As previously mentioned (see Chapter II), some challenges regarding age assessment present in the current system will have to be addressed in line with relevant Pact provisions.²⁶⁶ Similarly, the Directorate-General for Childhood highlighted that the Pact could strengthen guardianship arrangements from the moment of arrival, thereby reinforcing procedural safeguards for children throughout the migration process.²⁶⁷

At the same time, other stakeholders pointed to operational challenges linked to implementation. Save the Children indicated that, although the exact arrangements remain unclear, Temporary Reception Centres for Foreigners (CATEs) are expected to play a central role in the future screening process. Concerns were expressed regarding the capacity of the existing infrastructure and the preparedness of staff to assume new responsibilities under the Pact. In particular, questions were raised about the feasibility of effectively identifying vulnerabilities and protection needs within the short timeframes foreseen by the new procedures, especially given the volume of arrivals experienced in the Canary Islands.²⁶⁸

A number of protection-related concerns can also be identified. For example, the expansion of the use of asylum border procedures may increase the risk of children (both unaccompanied in specific situations or with their families) spending longer periods in facilities with restrictive characteristics while their cases are processed. Concerns were also expressed regarding accelerated asylum and return procedures, which may create challenges in ensuring that children receive a full and individualised assessment of their protection needs, especially in cases involving vulnerabilities that are not immediately apparent upon arrival. Finally, uncertainty remains regarding the interaction between the new procedures and existing mechanisms applicable to minors, including age assessment procedures, access to asylum and the situation of children whose applications for international protection are ultimately rejected.²⁶⁹

More broadly, stakeholders emphasised the need to move beyond emergency responses and develop a stable and sustainable reception system capable of responding to future cases of migratory pressure. Both

263. 'Un centenar de menores rechaza el asilo por las carencias en los centros estatales', 9 January 2026, available [here](#).

264. El Diario, 'Casi cien menores migrantes han renunciado a la protección internacional para no salir de Canarias', 14 January 2026, available [here](#).

265. Information provided by Save the Children in February 2026 – AIDA Country Report on Spain.

266. Information provided by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Madrid, 23 February 2026.

267. Information provided by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

268. Information provided by Save the Children, Gran Canaria, 25 February 2026.

269. Information provided by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026 and by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

the Directorate-General for Childhood and representatives of the Government of the Canary Islands stressed that migration movements towards the archipelago are likely to continue due to structural factors, including demographic trends in neighbouring regions, and that the Pact should be implemented in a manner that strengthens preparedness for future situations of migratory pressure.²⁷⁰ In this regard, the importance of enhanced cooperation between the European Union, Spanish authorities and the Autonomous Communities in the management of reception systems and future crises was highlighted.²⁷¹ The Pact also foresees specific measures of support that Member States can provide to those that are deemed to be in a situation of crisis²⁷² that could be activated in case further increases in the number of arrivals were registered in coming years. Beyond crisis-specific measures, Spain has been recognised by the European Commission as one of the Member States facing migratory pressure in 2025 under the rules introduced by the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation,²⁷³ and is therefore eligible to benefit from solidarity measures under the EU Solidarity Pool from mid-2026. Among solidarity measures there are both relocations and financial contributions, that could both contribute to improving reception conditions on the Canary Islands.

Recommendations

- » Spanish authorities should ensure full and timely implementation of relocation mechanisms for unaccompanied minors, including those derived from Supreme Court rulings and national legislation, and guarantee adequate reception capacity across Autonomous Communities through effective responsibility-sharing.
- » The Government of the Canary Islands should progressively replace large-scale emergency facilities with smaller, specialised reception centres for minors, ensuring appropriate living conditions, staff-to-child ratios, and child protection standards.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion and the Government of the Canary Islands should further improve cooperation to ensure coherent case management for minors seeking asylum, including through improved data-sharing and case tracking systems.
- » The Government of the Canary Islands should ensure that emergency reception centres comply with minimum child protection standards, including adequate training of staff, appropriate safeguarding procedures, and access to education, psychosocial support, and healthcare.
- » Competent authorities should ensure that transfer decisions for minors are based primarily on individual assessments of vulnerability and best interests, rather than administrative or logistical considerations, and that children's views and social ties are systematically taken into account.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should expand reception capacity for unaccompanied minors seeking international protection in the Canary Islands.

270. Information provided by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026 and by the Director General for Childhood in the Canary Islands, Tenerife, 27 February 2026.

271. Information provided by the Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Government of the Canary Islands, online interview, 26 February 2026.

272. Regulation (EU) 2024/1359 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 addressing situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1147.

273. European Commission, Commission launches first Annual Migration Management Cycle under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, 12 November 2025, available [here](#).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Spain's asylum and reception system benefits from a rather well-developed institutional architecture, sustained financial investment, and significant involvement of civil society organisations and international agencies. Coordination between key actors has improved in recent years, and important efforts have been made to expand reception capacity, strengthen procedural safeguards, and respond to fluctuating migratory pressures, particularly in the Canary Islands. However, the visit also identified a series of structural challenges affecting both access to the asylum procedure and the functioning of reception and child protection systems. Late access to information on the asylum procedure and persistent bottlenecks in lodging asylum applications risk undermining timely and effective access to international protection. Additionally, some challenges are also reported regarding the quality and availability of interpretation services, the quality of asylum interviews and limited systematic quality control mechanisms.

Support to the reception network has been significantly strengthened in past years through increased funding and the expansion of both the international protection reception system and the Humanitarian Assistance Programme. Nevertheless, disparities remain between the mainland and the Canary Islands, where pressure on the system has led to the use of large-scale and often emergency-type facilities. While these arrangements have enabled the system to absorb high numbers of arrivals, they raise concerns regarding adequacy of standards, sustainability, and the suitability of accommodation for long-term stays.

The situation of unaccompanied minors remains one of the most critical areas. Despite substantial efforts by the authorities, the system continues to be characterised by emergency-driven responses, uneven reception conditions, and significant challenges in ensuring timely transfers, adequate staffing, and consistent child protection standards. The coexistence of multiple transfer mechanisms, combined with administrative delays and capacity constraints regarding transfers to other Autonomous Communities, has contributed to prolonged stays in emergency facilities and increased pressure on the Canary Islands' child protection system.

The implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is expected to particularly impact the Spanish system at its external borders. While it offers some opportunities in terms of faster access to asylum procedures, vulnerability assessments and treatment of applicants with special needs, in particular children, it also raises important concerns regarding capacity, particularly in relation to conducting border procedures and the necessary reception infrastructure in border regions such as the Canary Islands. Ensuring that the expansion of accelerated and border procedures does not undermine procedural safeguards, particularly for vulnerable applicants and minors, will be a key challenge. It will also be important to ensure that the CEAS reform is used as an opportunity to strengthen support for persons in need of international protection from the moment they arrive on Spanish territory, with particular emphasis on interpretation services, legal counselling, improving access to asylum for unaccompanied minors, and strengthening guardianship services.

The experience of recent years shows that, while Spanish and Canary Islands authorities have been successful in ensuring initial reception for large numbers of newly arrived migrants, several challenges remain. Among these: ensuring timely access to international protection, the quality of interpretation, preparation of staff, sufficient reception capacity and adequate conditions within the asylum and child-protection systems. Addressing these existing gaps will be essential to ensure that the system remains compliant with international and EU protection standards in the context of the implementation of the new asylum and migration rules. Based on the findings of this report, ECRE makes the following recommendations:

Access to the territory and to the asylum procedure

Spanish authorities should:

- » Ensure that cooperation with neighbouring countries on migration management is accompanied by regular assessments of the human rights situation of migrants and asylum seekers, including access to international protection and compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.
- » Ensure that all persons arriving by sea receive comprehensive information on their right to seek international protection from the earliest stage of arrival and establish a formal mechanism to register expressions of intent to apply for asylum in CATEs/screening centres.
- » Strengthen access to legal assistance and qualified interpretation in CATEs, ensuring that individuals receive effective legal advice before return procedures are initiated.
- » Facilitate regular access to CATEs for UNHCR and relevant civil society organisations in order to

strengthen the identification of protection needs and access to asylum.

- » Ensure that CATEs comply with the safeguards applicable to places of deprivation of liberty, including adequate material conditions, access to communication, and effective complaints mechanisms.
- » Allocate sufficient financial resources, staffing and specialised expertise to enable the effective implementation of the Screening Regulation, particularly regarding vulnerability assessments and the provision of information during screening.
- » Ensure that access to the asylum procedure is guaranteed from the moment an individual expresses the intention to seek international protection, in line with the case law of the Spanish Supreme Court and the requirements of EU law.

Asylum procedures

Spanish authorities should:

- » Strengthen the availability and quality of interpretation in the asylum procedure by ensuring sufficient numbers of qualified interpreters, including for less common languages, and limiting reliance on remote interpretation.
- » Ensure that all applicants have timely access to free legal counselling and legal assistance throughout the asylum procedure, including during screening and border procedures, and strengthen the capacity of Bar Associations and specialised legal aid providers in view of the implementation of the Pact.
- » Introduce a structured quality assurance mechanism for asylum decision-making within the Directorate-General for International Protection, including regular quality reviews, training and feedback, while ensuring that all applications continue to receive an individual assessment.
- » Ensure that police officers involved in asylum interviews receive specialised and continuous training on international protection, vulnerability assessment and interviewing techniques, and progressively strengthen the role of the asylum authority in conducting personal interviews.
- » Ensure sufficient staffing and resources for the implementation of the Pact, particularly in relation to the increased use of border procedures, while preserving procedural safeguards and the quality of decision-making.

Reception conditions

- » The Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration should ensure sufficient reception capacity in the Canary Islands is maintained to a reasonable level regardless of the reduction in the number of arrivals, in view of possible future fluctuations in the number of arrivals.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should progressively reduce reliance on large-scale, emergency-type facilities and ensure that reception conditions are provided in smaller, adequately equipped and decentralised centres that are better suited to longer stays and integration needs.
- » State authorities should continue transfers from the islands to the mainland, ensuring that reception pressure does not disproportionately accumulate in border regions and that individuals are not left in prolonged situations of uncertainty or limbo.
- » Spanish authorities should ensure that reception planning takes into account the expected increase in border procedures under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, including by adapting capacity in advance and avoiding the concentration of persons in large, camp-like emergency structures.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should ensure that reception conditions across all types of facilities guarantee adequate standards of privacy, dignity, and access to services, including in first-arrival centres and CAEDs, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable applicants.

Guarantees for vulnerable groups

- » Screening authorities should ensure that unaccompanied minors are promptly identified upon arrival and systematically channelled into the appropriate child protection or asylum reception system, in line with the best interests of the child.
- » The Spanish authorities should ensure that all unaccompanied minors, including those seeking international protection, have access to timely, specialised legal assistance, interpretation, and information throughout all procedures.
- » Spanish authorities should ensure full and timely implementation of relocation mechanisms for

unaccompanied minors, including those derived from Supreme Court rulings and national legislation, and guarantee adequate reception capacity across Autonomous Communities through effective responsibility-sharing.

- » The Government of the Canary Islands should progressively replace large-scale emergency facilities with smaller, specialised reception centres for minors, ensuring appropriate living conditions, staff-to-child ratios, and child protection standards.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion and the Government of the Canary Islands should further improve cooperation to ensure coherent case management for minors seeking asylum, including through improved data-sharing and case tracking systems.
- » The Government of the Canary Islands should ensure that emergency reception centres comply with minimum child protection standards, including adequate training of staff, appropriate safeguarding procedures, and access to education, psychosocial support, and healthcare.
- » Competent authorities should ensure that transfer decisions for minors are based primarily on individual assessments of vulnerability and best interests, rather than administrative or logistical considerations, and that children's views and social ties are systematically taken into account.
- » The Ministry of Inclusion should expand reception capacity for unaccompanied minors seeking international protection in the Canary Islands.

ANNEX I – LIST OF INTERLOCUTORS

Organisation	Date	Location
<i>National and regional authorities</i>		
Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration	23 February 2026	Madrid
Public Prosecutor's Office for Immigration	24 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Public Prosecutor's Office for Minors	25 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Ministry of the Interior, Directorate-General for International Protection	26 February 2026	Online
National Police	26 February 2026	Tenerife
Maritime Rescue	26 February 2026	Tenerife
Vice-Minister for Social Welfare of the Canary Islands	26 February 2026	Online
Directorate-General for Childhood of the Canary Islands	26 February 2026	Tenerife
<i>Other stakeholders</i>		
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	23 February 2026	Madrid
European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)	24 February 2026	Gran Canaria
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	24 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Tenerife Bar Association	27 February 2026	Tenerife
UNICEF's Spanish Committee	3 March 2026	Online
<i>Civil society organisations</i>		
Cepaim Fundación	23 February 2026	Madrid
CEAR	24 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Save the Children	25 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Cruz Blanca Fundación	25 February 2026	Gran Canaria
Spanish Red Cross	27 February 2026	Tenerife
Accem	27 February 2026	Tenerife



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