

## Report publication:

# The Spanish example for rethinking immigration in Europe

*"Spain has adopted a unique migration policy based on work and inclusion. Its current government is promoting a humanist discourse in an increasingly polarised European context marked by policies of closure and rejection towards immigration."*

The Terra Nova think tank has published a new study written by Tania Racho, a researcher in European law, and Antoine de Clerck, an independent consultant. The two authors examine Spanish migration policy, highlighting the economic and demographic choices made by Madrid. Faced with an ageing population and labour needs, Spain has opted for inclusion through work and social dialogue, positions that are widely supported by Spanish public opinion. Two concrete proposals for France are inspired by this approach.



The full report is published on [tnova.fr](https://tnova.fr)

Following on from its recent work on labour migration in France, Terra Nova wanted to continue its analysis by examining the different migration policies of European Union countries, starting with Spain. Conducted by Tania Racho and Antoine de Clerck, this in-depth study shows how a country on Europe's border has managed to transform immigration into a lever for economic growth and demographic vitality.

At the heart of this work is a European singularity. Far from suffering from immigration, Spain has made it a strategic choice. While the country is experiencing a significant ageing population, immigration is fuelling its demographics and economic growth, which is the strongest in Europe. Access to employment, large-scale regularisation of undocumented workers – one example is the 2025 programme, which aims **to regularise 300,000 undocumented workers per year by 2027** – integration management by a dedicated ministry in conjunction with regional communities, and the involvement of social partners in migration policy are all levers of a pragmatic, stable model that is widely supported by public opinion. The results are clear: rising GDP, a dynamic economy, tolerant public opinion and a controlled level of polarisation in public debate.

Admittedly, Spain's migration policy has its limitations. Located on the front line of migration routes, Spain is experiencing tensions at the borders of the Schengen area, with criticised outsourced control practices, inadequate asylum rights and saturated reception capacities. The adoption of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2024 does nothing to ease this pressure. This paradox between economic inclusion on the one hand and border security on the other highlights the impasse in which solidarity lacking and fragmented European policies currently find themselves.

The study inspires two proposals for France that could initiate a change of course in its migration policy:

- **Refocus migration policy on integration through work**, entrusting its management to the Ministry of Labour. Against a backdrop of labour shortages in certain sectors, this refocusing would make it possible to streamline regularisation, set clear criteria and link immigration to economic needs.
- **Create a permanent social dialogue body on immigration**, modelled on the Spanish Tripartite Commission. Trade unions, employers and the State could work together to build a concerted and realistic migration policy that can be understood and supported by public opinion.

Beyond the economic issues, this approach could offer a way out of the ongoing crisis in public debate on immigration. By affirming that migration can be beneficial to both the economy and society, this approach helps to move away from ideological posturing and paves the way for a more peaceful debate. This is evidenced by the results of the CREDOC study conducted for Terra Nova: a majority of French people are in favour of labour immigration when it is regulated.

Spain is not a model to be copied, but an experience to be considered. It shows that migration policy can be regulated, inclusive and effective at the same time.

## The authors

**Tania RACHO** is a researcher in European law, associated with the IEDP at the University of Paris-Saclay, an independent consultant, coordinator of the association Désinfox-Migrations and an assessor at the National Court of Asylum.

**Antoine DE CLERCK** is an independent consultant in strategy and advocacy for the societal impact of organisations. He has been supporting associations working on migration issues for several years. In particular, he co-created and led the citizen campaign *Pour un débat apaisé*, advocating for a Citizens' Convention on Migration in France in 2023.

## Who are we?

Terra Nova is an independent progressive think tank founded in 2008. It produces analyses and proposes innovative policy solutions for France and Europe, promoting informed public debate.  
<https://tnova.fr>

## Study conducted in partnership with and with the support of:



FONDATION ASL



### Press contacts

Justin Dérobert, Communications Manager, Terra Nova  
+33 6 70 40 24 76 - [justin.derobert@tnova.fr](mailto:justin.derobert@tnova.fr)