India-Spain Relations

Relations between India and Spain are cordial, particularly since the establishment of democracy in Spain in 1978. Diplomatic relations between India and Spain were established in 1956 with the opening of the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi which was followed by concurrent accreditation of our High Commissioner to London as Ambassador to Spain in 1958. A Mission headed by a Cd’A opened in Madrid the same year. The first resident Ambassador of India was appointed in 1965.

High Level Visits:

In recent years India –Spain bilateral relations have gathered momentum through high level visits and regular ministerial and official level contacts. His Majesty King Juan Carlos I paid a state visit to India from 24-27 October 2012. The King was accompanied by a high level delegation, including Spanish Ministers of Foreign Affairs; Defence; Industry, Energy and Tourism; Infrastructure and Transport. The delegation also included senior government officials and CEOs of about 20 top-notch Spanish companies.

During the visit the following Agreements/MOUs were signed:

(1) Protocol for amending the Convention and Protocol between India and Spain for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital, which was signed on February 8, 1993 in New Delhi.
(2) Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation.
(3) Memorandum of Understanding on Roads and Road Transport Sector.
(4) Agreement between India and Spain in the field of Audio-visual Co-production
(5) Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Railways and RENFE-OPERADORA and ADIF of Spain on technical cooperation in the field of railway sector.

President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil paid a State Visit to Spain from 20-23 April, 2009 at the invitation of the King of Spain. This was the first-ever State visit from India to Spain. During the visit, three MoUs on cooperation in the fields of Agriculture, Renewable Energy and Tourism were signed. Seven areas viz. infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, cooperation in Latin America, renewable energy, SMEs and research and development in S&T were identified as focus areas for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

An interesting element in the bilateral relations is the special affinity that the Spanish Royal Family feels towards India. Their Majesties Majesty King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia had spent their honeymoon in India in 1962. His Majesty was also the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations in 1982. Queen Sofia and her sister,
Princess Irene are keen students of Indian philosophy and have made numerous visits to India. Their mother, the late Queen Fredericka of Greece, was strongly influenced by Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy and spent nearly 13 years in India after the overthrow of the Greek monarchy. Most recently Queen Sofia unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Madrid on 2 October, 2013.

Crown Prince Felipe accompanied by Princess Letizia paid his first official visit to India from 10-12 November 2009. He inaugurated the Spanish cultural centre, the Cervantes Institute in New Delhi. Crown Prince Felipe had earlier visited India in February 2001 as a Guest of Honour at India Engineering Trade Fair - 2001 (New Delhi) where Spain was the partner country. He had also visited India in October 1997 to inaugurate Expotenia, the Spanish industrial fair.

The Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero paid an official visit to India on July 3, 2006. PM Zapatero’s visit coincided with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Spain. PM Rajiv Gandhi visited Spain in 1988 and PM Narasimha Rao in 1992. Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez had visited India in 1993.

Visits at the level of Foreign Ministers:

EAM Shri. S.M. Krishna visited Spain from 19-23, April, 2012. He was accompanied by Minister of State, Smt Preneet Kaur. During the visit, EAM called on the Crown Prince Felipe and the Spanish Foreign Minister, Mr. Jose Manuel Garcia Margallo. EAM also held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Andorra, Mr. Gilbert Saboya Sunye and the Catalan President Mr. Artur Mas. EAM addressed the conference of the Regional Heads of Mission in Europe held in Madrid on 21st April, 2012. MOS (PK) also interacted with the HOMs. EAM Shri. Jaswant Singh had visited Spain in 2002.

Spanish FM Mr. José Manuel García -Margallo accompanied the King during his State Visit to India in October 2012. FM Gregorio Lopez Bravo visited India in 1972. FM Pedro Cortina Mauri visited India in 1974 as part of the delegation of Prince of Spain Don Juan Carlos de Borbon. FM José Pedro Perez Llorca visited India in 1982 as part of the delegation of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain. FM Francisco Fernandez Ordonez visited India in 1989 as part of the EU Troika delegation. FM Javier Solana visited India in 1993 as part of the delegation of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. FM Carlos Westendorp paid a private visit to India in 1996. FM Miguel Angel Moratinos visited India in 2006 as part of the delegation of Prime Minister Rodriguez Zapatero.

Other recent High Level Visits:

Other recent high level visits from India to Spain include: Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology, Shri Sachin Pilot (13-16, February, 2011); Shri Sam Pitroda, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Public Information
Infrastructure and Innovations (9th May, 2011); Dr. C. P. Joshi, Minister for Road Transport and Highways (26-28 May, 2011); A 42-member delegation of the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers (10-13 September, 2011); Shri. Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs and Civil Aviation (6-9 October, 2011); Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of Communications and IT (27-29 February 2012); and MOS (IC), Tourism Dr. K. Cheeranji (January 29 to February 3, 2013)

From Spain Mr. Patxi López, the then President of the Basque Country led a 80-member business delegation to India from 19-25 March 2012. Mr. Artur Mas, Chief Minister of Catalonia accompanied by a high powered official and business delegation visited India (New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru) from 23-29, November, 2013. He held meetings with Shri. Kapil Sibal, Minister for Communications and IT, Dr. Jaipal Reddy, Minister for Science and Technology and Shri. Prithviraj Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra. The visit focused on enhancing trade and investment relations between India and the region of Catalonia in Spain. During the visit, an Indian auto components manufacturing company, Samvardhana Motherson Peguform (SMP) announced a 30 million Euros investment in Catalonia in two of its plants located in Polinya and Ripollet near Barcelona. In the auto sector the Catalan firm Zannini launched a joint venture with an Indian partner; FICOSA another Catalan auto company further strengthened its ties with TATA; and the semi-public company IDIADA opened its R&D centre in Pune with the objective of turning itself into a world leader in advanced automotive services. 4 out of the 7 pharmaceutical companies that accompanied Artur Mas to India signed confidentiality agreements with Indian companies. A framework agreement for cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce of Barcelona and Mumbai was signed. An agreement between Barcelona port and the port of Mumbai was also signed.

Bilateral Agreements and Treaties:

India has the following treaties/agreements with Spain.

- Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (1972)
- Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (1982). The CEP for the period 2005-08 was signed in March 2005
- Civil Aviation Agreement (1986).
- MoU between Technology Development Board (TDB) and the Centre for Development of Industrial Technology (2006).
- MoU of cooperation in the field of S&T (2007)
- MoU on Agriculture and Allied Fields (April 2009)
- MoU on cooperation in Tourism (April 2009)
• MoU on Renewable Energy (April 2009)
• Protocol for amending the Convention and Protocol between India and Spain for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital, which was signed on February 8, 1993 in New Delhi. (October 2012)
• Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation. (October 2012)
• Memorandum of Understanding on Roads and Road Transport Sector. (October 2012)
• Agreement between India and Spain in the field of Audio-visual Co-production (October 2012)

Trade and Investment:

India-Spain bilateral trade in the year 2012 stood at USD 5.17 billion (Exports from India: USD 3.56 billion; imports from Spain: USD 1.61 billion). Bilateral Trade between India and Spain from January to November, 2013 stood at USD 4.33 billion; Spain’s exports to India during the given period stood at USD 1.36 billion and India’s exports to Spain stood at USD 2.96 billion. There has been a drop of 10.8% in the bilateral trade as compared with the same period in 2012, which stood at USD 4.86 billion. The drop in bilateral trade is mainly due to reduced imports by Spain in a time of economic downturn. Main Indian exports included organic chemicals, textile and garments, Iron and steel products, automotive components, marine products, leather goods. Indian imports consisted of machine and mechanical appliances, vehicles and automobiles, plastic manufactures, electrical appliances, rubber and rubber products and olive oil.

Spain is the 13th largest investor in India with total FDI at $820 million. The main investments are in the sectors such as infrastructure, renewable energy, auto components, water desalination/purification and single brand retail. A total of 140 Spanish companies have subsidiaries, joint ventures, projects or liaison offices and purchase offices in India. There are about 30 Indian companies in Spain in the fields of IT, automobiles, pharmaceuticals and road maintenance. The total Indian investment in Spain is at Euro 687 million. In areas of infrastructure (roads, airports, ports, railways), energy (renewable and non-renewable), agriculture, food processing, water desalination/purification, city waste management and tourism there is a huge potential for cooperation from Spain to India. Similarly, from our side there is a huge potential for cooperation in the areas of pharmaceuticals (generic medicines) and IT.

Science and Technology:

Spain was the Partner Country at the 17th edition of the Technology summit and Technology Platform organized by our Department of Science and Technology in New Delhi from 22 – 23 November, 2011. Main thematic areas for this year’s edition were biotech, renewable energy and water-related technologies. About 127 Spanish companies and 250 Indian companies participated in the Summit. About 127 MOUs
were also signed between the various Spanish and Indian participating companies. The Technology Summit was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Minister of Science & Technology. The Spanish delegation was led by Mr. Juán Tomás Hernani Burzaco, Secretary General of the Spanish Ministry of Science & Innovation. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has an on-going programme of cooperation with the Centre for the development of Industrial Technology (CDTI), Spain. A Programme of Cooperation for Technological cooperation was signed between the two bodies in November, 2011 to promote and fund innovation-driven research and technology development as well as to encourage partnerships and business led R &D collaborative projects in the field of biotechnology. Under this programme DBT and CDTI have successfully concluded one round of call for proposals and have announced second call for proposals. A 17-member delegation comprising of officials of DBT, representatives of Academia, Industry and FICCI visited Madrid and Barcelona from May 20-22, 2013. The delegations had useful interactions with their Spanish counterparts and visited state of the art Spanish bio-tech centers and facilities.

**Cultural and Academic Relations:**

Cultural exchange is an important component of India-Spain bilateral relations. Cultural performances, film shows and exhibitions are regularly organized to strengthen mutual understanding of the societies. Academic exercises like seminars and colloquia facilitating study of each other’s history and culture and the provision of scholarships play an important role in this matrix. ICCR sponsors visits of cultural troupes for performances in various parts of Spain. Further, ICCR offers five scholarships to Spanish students every year to study in India.

The Indian performing arts scene has become increasingly vibrant in Spain over the past few years. After the successful organization of ‘India en Concierto’ in 2012, the momentum was taken further up in 2013 through performances of very high quality – including those by Ms Priya Venkataraman and Group (Bharatnatyam), Pt. Ashok Pathak and Pt. Baluji Srivastava (Sitar), Dr. L Subramaniam and ensemble (Violin), Shri Astad Deboo and Group (Contemporary Dance), amongst others. Shri Deboo and Group also performed in Andorra, which was the first performance by an Indian cultural group in Andorra. The 13th Edition of the ImagineIndia Film Festival took place in Madrid, Barcelona and Bilbao. More than 50 films were screened throughout the festival, including 26 from India.

The 9th edition of Summer Courses on India was organized at the University of Complutense by Institute of Indology. The University of Valladolid will start the first Official Master’s Degree on India in 2014. The University of Valladolid hosts the ICCR Hindi Chair since 2004 and a visiting professor deputed by ICCR teaches Hindi at the basic and intermediate level. The European Hindi Conference on “Teaching Hindi as Foreign Language: Perspectives” was held in Valladolid, Spain in collaboration with the University of Valladolid on 15-17 March 2012. University of Complutense in Madrid has also started the Master’s Programme on Asian Studies and India is one of the focus
countries. University of Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid has launched a Master’s programme titled India Studies: Culture, Society and Thoughts. The Alliance of 4 Universities (A-4U) is a partnership of four leading Spanish public universities: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M), and Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona (UPF) to promote their international profile. In 2010, A-4U signed framework agreements with leading Indian institutes under which each university of the Alliance established staff and students exchange programmes in the areas of Business Management, Biosciences, Economics, and Engineering. The Indian partner institutions are: Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore; International Institute of Information Technology in Bangalore; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade of India; and Birla Institute of Management Technology. University of Deusto, Bilbao has framework agreement with the Indian universities such as University of Pune, University of Delhi, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Anand Agricultural University to facilitate student and faculty exchange. The Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University has signed an agreement with the Valladolid University to facilitate student exchange, joint research project and academic programmes. A joint programme for exploring opportunities to explore and learn best practices in the field of cultural tourism was held in Valladolid from 23rd to 28th September, 2013.

Casa de la India is a foundation established as a platform for dissemination of Indian culture in Spain. ICWA in collaboration with Casa Asia coordinates the civil society dialogue, India-Spain Tribune. The sixth Tribune was held in New Delhi on March 21-22, 2012. Select members of delegates from the Spanish side called on M.S. Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission. Patxi Lopez, Regional Premier of Basque Country was the keynote speaker for the inaugural session. Lopez visited India with a high-level business delegation. The next India-Spain Tribune is scheduled to be held in Barcelona in 2014.

**Indian Community:**

The total Indian/PIO community in Spain is estimated to be about 50000; the total Spanish population is about 46 million of which almost 5 million are immigrants mainly from European, Latin American and African countries. The Indian community forms a very small percentage of the 5 million immigrants living in Spain. Among the Asian communities, the Indian Diaspora is the third largest group, after the Chinese and the Pakistanis. The rough estimate of PIOs in Spain is about 15,000. Several Sindhi businessmen and traders migrated to the Canary Islands after WW II when the islands were declared a free port following the imposition of import and foreign exchange restrictions in Spain. Indian Nationals in Spain are estimated to be about 35000. According to Spanish statistics, the resident Indian population in Spain has gone up from 9000 in 2001 to 34000 in 2010.
For more information and latest updates please visit
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