



**Learn Your World: Spain**

**Skills and Professional Development**



To support your global practice, *ACC Docket* offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



**Economy**  
**Population**  
**Corruption**

GDP (2013)  
46,815,916 (2011 Census)  
According to Transparency International's "2014 Corruption Perception Index," Spain is the 37th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) country out of the 175 that were scored.

**Economic Forecast**

The recovery is projected to strengthen over the next two years. The improving labor market and stronger confidence will aid private consumption. Investment will pick up as prospects improve. Export performance will keep improving boosted by competitiveness gains. The unemployment rate should decline gradually as growth picks up, but will remain high through the projection period. Spare capacity will keep wage growth down and price inflation very low, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

**Additional Resources**

[El País](#), leading Spanish newspaper in English

Lawyers in Spain were once perceived as local specialists who rarely had international exposure. In the early 2000s, the Spanish legal market experienced a big flow of firms from abroad (primarily British and American) attracted by the then-buoyant Spanish economy. While the crisis hit hard, the majority of the firms did not leave the country. Spain remains a very attractive business and legal spot. The in-house legal role is no exception to the internationalization trend either.

There are no major differences in engaging legal services in Madrid, Barcelona or Bilbao compared with in-house or outside counsel in Frankfurt, Milan or Stockholm. However, there are a few social clues that may help a lawyer who is doing business in Spain. You cannot be surprised the first time you meet your Spanish colleague and are introduced with a kiss on both cheeks (for female counterparts) and a warm hand-shake (between men). Talking general politics is not a big taboo, and before traveling to Spain, you should brush up on your knowledge about soccer — the national pastime.

Endless business luncheons topped with Rioja or Ribera del Duero wine, barely seeing a woman in high-level meetings, and a culture of not taking punctuality seriously are examples of clichés that have long since disappeared. And taking a siesta after lunch before going back to work is a pipe dream — working days are long and restless for lawyers in Spain. However, what will always remain true is that Spaniards will want to spend time getting to know you and establish chemistry before doing business. It is embedded in our culture. Having dinner will be a very common way to establish a connection — but never before 9:30 pm.

Willing to come to Spain for business, and perhaps spend a weekend for pleasure? You're most welcome, except for mid-July and August when you are likely to find the "sorry we are closed" sign due to summer vacation.

[Margarita Fernandez Alvarez-Labrador](#)



Senior Litigation and Competition Counsel for EMEA

Hewlett Packard, Inc