

## Commentary on Spain's domain ranks in the 2014 Global AgeWatch Index

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### Global AgeWatch Index rank

**21**

out of 96

Spain ranks high on the Index at 21 overall. It performs best in the health domain at rank 3, which is a significant increase from its 2013 ranking caused by revision of psychological wellbeing data.

Spain also ranks relatively high in the enabling environment domain (22), ranking above the regional average on three out of four indicators; social connectedness (86%), safety (68%) and satisfaction with public transport (71%).

It performs moderately in the income security domain (41), with a pension income coverage that is 23 percentage points below the regional average (68.2%). It ranks lowest in the capability domain (56), a significant decrease from its 2013 ranking due to a fall in employment rate which stands at 43.9% this year.



### Income security

**41**

71.3/100

Spain's ranking on this domain fell from its position in 2013 (31) due to stagnation of pension values in recent years. In Spain there is a universal pension system, however since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, pensions have been frozen. This has had a negative impact on older people who have suffered a setback due to reduced purchasing power.

Despite the modest pensions, older people are helping their families by substantially caring for grandchildren and dependent persons. Many older people in Spain also financially support their adult children who live at home. This has been instrumental in maintaining social stability amid high unemployment rates in Spain. However, the support older people provide for their families adversely affects their own welfare due to the strain on their already limited resources.



### Health status

**3**

80.5/100

Spain is one of the highest ranking countries in this domain. The data highlights the strength of the universal and accessible public health system, which has contributed to increased life expectancy. Life expectancy in Spain is second highest on the index after Japan. However, the health data was collected between 2010 and 2012 and does not reflect the potential effects of the crisis and the cuts in health resources introduced in recent years.



### Capability

**56**

29.2/100

Spain's ranking in the capability domain indicates a slight decline from 2013 (50), which is likely a result of the vast number of early retirements that have occurred

because of the crisis. This has raised the level of unemployment in Spain to above the regional average, although many people over 60 years have a higher than secondary educational level. Older people are continuing their education by, for example, participating in specific programmes at universities.



### Enabling environment

22

74.7/100

Regarding the last domain on the index, Spain's ranking on the social connectedness indicator has declined since 2013, indicating increased loneliness and fewer social resources among the elderly. It also declined in its ranking on the public safety and access to public transport indicators, which are essential for the mobility of older people. This ranking is based on data from 2013 and is probably an accurate indicator of the deterioration of the social environment of the elderly.

**The Global AgeWatch Index ranks countries by how well their older populations are faring.**

For general enquiries please contact HelpAge International's Media Manager, Sarah Gillam (sarah.gillam@helpage.org).

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