

## Commentary on Spain's domain ranks in the 2015 Global AgeWatch Index

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### Global AgeWatch Index rank

**25**

out of 96

Spain ranks high at 25 overall. It ranks highest in the health domain (3) with life expectancy at 60 (25), healthy life expectancy at 60 (19) and relative psychological wellbeing (95%) all above the regional averages.

Spain also ranks high in the enabling environment domain (22) with satisfaction of older people with safety (68%) and public transport (71%) above the regional average.

It performs moderately in the income security domain (37), with a pension income coverage (68.2%) that is 23 percentage points below the regional average. It ranks lowest in the capability domain (78). The decrease from the 2014 ranking (56) is due to revision of educational attainment data.



### Income security

**37**

73.4/100

Spain has improved slightly in the income security domain (moving from position 41 in 2014 to 37), although this improvement can be partly explained by the change that has occurred in the way of evaluating the wealth of countries: from GDP to GNI per capita. The old age poverty rate has improved from 7.7% in 2014 to 7.1% and relative welfare has increased from 96% to 104%.

Pension income coverage is 23 percentage points below the regional average (68.2%). The stagnation of pension values in recent years has negatively influenced Spain's performance in this area. 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 their 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. 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 at 60 in Spain is 25 years, just one year behind Japan, the highest. However, the health data was collected between 2010 and 2012 and does not reflect the potential effects of the financial crisis and the cuts in health resources introduced more recently.



## Capability

78

24.0/100

Spain's ranking in the capability domain has dropped dramatically from 2014 (56 to 78). This continues the downward trend already registered in 2014. This is primarily due to a revision in the data used to evaluate the education indicator, where the education attainment level dropped from 43.4% to 29.2%. This reflects an older population that did not reach higher education. Older people are now continuing their education by, for example, participating in specific university programs.

The weak performance in this domain is also a result of the vast number of early retirements that have occurred because of the financial crisis. This has raised the level of unemployment in Spain to above the regional average. Spain's employment rate for 55-64 year olds has dropped to 43.2% (the regional average is 56.3%).



## Enabling environment

22

74.7/100

Spain's ranking on the social connectedness indicator has declined since 2013, indicating increased loneliness and fewer social resources among older people. It also declined in the indicators for public safety and access to public transport, 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 older people. There has been no revision of data since the 2014 Index.

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

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