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## THE BULGARIAN COMMUNITY IN SPAIN (WILL THE BULGARIANS RETURN FROM SPAIN?)

*The article presents a selection of results from a representative sample survey among the Bulgarian population residing in Spain. The sample includes 506 individuals living in 25 different settlements in this country interviewed in 2011. The data provides various opportunities for deriving social, demographic, and economic status of Bulgarians residing in Spain. The transfer behavior of Bulgarians in this country is compared to the practices revealed by return migrants studied in the framework of a representative survey conducted in Bulgaria. The article suggests evidence about the degree of knowledge of Bulgarian language by the youngest generation as well as the frequency of contacts between the Bulgarian Diaspora and the relatives left behind. The question "Will the Bulgarians return from Spain?" is discussed as well.*

JEL: F22; F24; Z13

### 1. Information Basis: Empirical Survey of Bulgarians Residing in Spain

Bulgarian community in Spain is one of the largest Bulgarian communities in Western Europe. According to the well known NGO, based in Valencia – *CeiMigra* – 16.6% of 923 000 Bulgarians living abroad reside in Spain.<sup>3</sup> This motivated the fulfillment of a representative questionnaire survey among Bulgarians in Spain in the period May-June 2011, as part of a research project entitled "*Bulgarian Diaspora in Western Europe: cross border mobility, national identity and development*".<sup>4</sup> To our knowledge this is one of the first studies concerning a broad range of issues related to the Bulgarian Diaspora in Spain, on the basis of a relatively large sample carried out in about 25 settlements in the country

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<sup>3</sup> Ciudadanos del mundo, ciudadanos de Bulgaria, Coleccion: Miradas sobre la inmigracion, ([http://www.ceimigra.net/observatorio/images/stories/mirada\\_25.bulgaria.pdf](http://www.ceimigra.net/observatorio/images/stories/mirada_25.bulgaria.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> Part of these results is presented in Kaltchev, I. and I. Zareva (2012). Socio-demographic specifics of the Bulgarian immigration in Spain. – In: Mintchev, V. (ed.), Bulgarian Emigration: Theories, Policies, Empirical Studies. Sofia: Ikopis. pp.201-219.

(planned sample size – 500 individuals; fulfilled – 506 individuals).<sup>5</sup> However, although Bulgarians are about 2-3% of the foreign population in Spain, they decreased markedly over the last few years – from 176 000 in 2012 to 151 000 in 2014.<sup>6</sup> Of these, at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014, 52% were male, 48% – female. Just the opposite trend is observed in Germany, for example, where the number of Bulgarians increased by 93 000 in 2010 to 183 000 in 2014.<sup>7</sup>

### *1.1. Sample planning*

The survey was designed as:

- representative sample survey among Bulgarian population in Spain;
- quota sample formed according to gender and age structure of the Bulgarian population in the various regions of the country.

General target set covers registered Bulgarian population (“country of origin – Bulgaria”) – according to the National Statistical Institute (INE) of Spain at 2010.<sup>8</sup> The data is taken from the electronic platform of INE, containing information on foreigners residing in a certain settlement – by country of origin, gender, age, etc.

Demographic information aggregated at “province” and “autonomous region” level was used in to form quotas by gender and age. At the time of the survey nearly 170 000 Bulgarians were registered in Spain.

To ensure representativeness of the survey, a sample design was adopted in a way similar to the “two-step cluster sample with selection proportional to the size of the clusters” (“PPS – probability proportional to size” sampling). A cumulative number of individuals registered in settlements (“municipalities” with a 5-digit administrative code) with at least 100 individuals from Bulgarian origin was formed for this purpose, obtained in descending order. The sample design provided opportunity for selecting settlements<sup>9</sup>, covering subset of 123 000 individuals from the 169 000 registered, which amounted to nearly 73% of the Bulgarian population in Spain.

The selection of clusters (settlements) was made by the standard procedure of the sampling model, using a starting number selected within the range [1; K], where “K” is the step of selection. It is defined as the ratio of the number of surveyed population and the number of settlements from which a cluster of 20 individuals is to be surveyed ( $K=122973/25=4919$ ).

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<sup>5</sup> In 2007, in Spain was conducted an extensive survey of the foreign population – with sample size of 15 500 individuals and covering also about 380 Bulgarian citizens (Recher and Requena, 2009, pp. 253-278). Part of the information from this study concerning the Bulgarians and Romanians is analyzed in Stanek, 2009, pp. 1627-1644.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t20/e245/p08/l0/&file=01005.px> (last check 14.03.2016).

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2015.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (last check 14.03.2016).

<sup>8</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística, [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es) (Municipal Register: Foreign Population).

<sup>9</sup> In 2010, more than 100 Bulgarians lived in 274 settlements in Spain.

Thus the settlements within the sample were selected. The model has the following particularity – if the “step of selection” fell more than once in the same settlement, this settlement was treated as “aggregate cluster” comprising two or more individual clusters. Then the sample size for such cluster will be two or more times the specified number of respondents (20 persons). It is understood that these are large cities with significant Bulgarian population, like Madrid, Valencia, etc. Table 2 in Appendix – contains the planned sample size distributed by settlements and provinces.

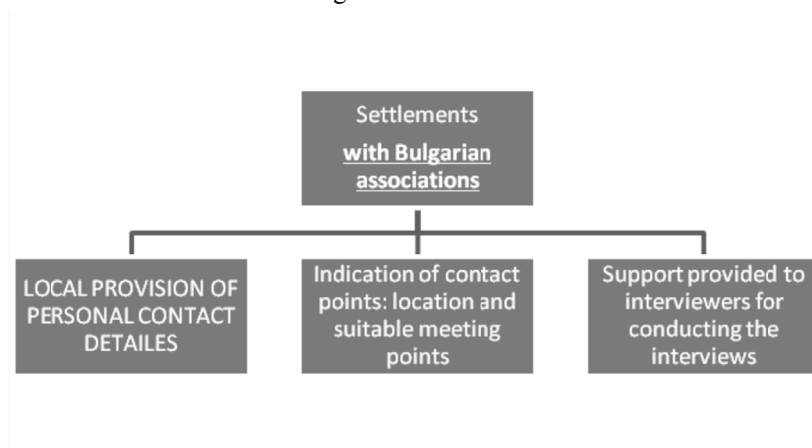
During the second stage the respondents were selected by setting quotas for surveying men and women from the relevant age groups. Quotas were set at “province” level according to the available data for gender and age structure of the Bulgarian population therein (Tables 1 and 3 in Appendix). As already mentioned, the planned number of respondents was 500 distributed in 25 clusters and the fulfilled number was 506 individuals.

### *1.2. Conducting the questionnaire sample-survey*

Fieldwork was carried out by a specialized agency for sociological and marketing research DatoBase (member of the group of companies DATOS DE OPINION SL and SALAS DATO BASE SL) based in Valencia. The agency is QMS ISO 9001 certified and applies its own control procedures. A randomly selected 40% of the questionnaires were subject to control and this share could increase if the supervisor found inaccuracies in the work of an interviewer.

Figure 1

Establishing contacts with the Bulgarian community in settlements where there are Bulgarian associations

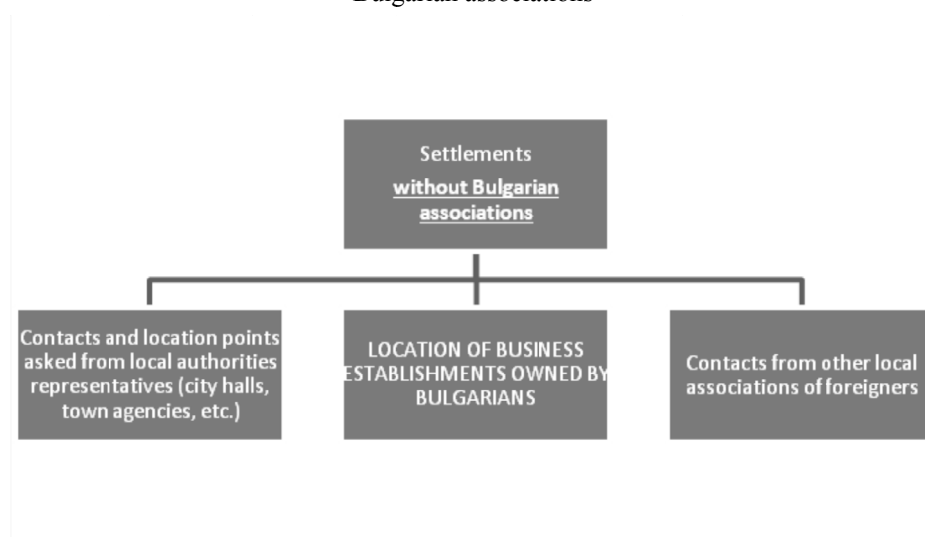


In each settlement all possible channels through which interviewers could identify the location of the Bulgarians living there were used in order to determine the individuals for taking part in the survey. The most common “reference locations” were Bulgarian retail outlets (shops, cafes, and restaurants) or, alternatively, locations of representatives of the

Bulgarian associations. Where there were difficulties in the fulfillment of quotas additional respondents were sought and interviewed in similar by size settlements in the same province. Where necessary, respondents were determined using the “snowball” principle as information about Bulgarian inhabitants was obtained from other Bulgarians with whom the interviewers had established personal contacts (e.g. in Murcia, León, Burgos, etc.). The very schematic principles of respondents’ identification are presented in the two figures herein (Figure 1 and 2). It should be emphasized that Bulgarian associations had supported the interviewers’ team.

Figure 2

Establishing contacts with the Bulgarian community in settlements where there are no Bulgarian associations



**The questionnaire** implemented in Spain included 76 questions generating 200 variables. The questions were grouped into five distinct sections:

- *Section A. Conditions in Bulgaria before leaving for Spain*

Describing the situation of the respondent before his/her departure for Spain – mainly property and employment status;

- *Section B. Arrival, employment and "remittances" from Spain*

It includes standard questions about the causes and ways of organizing the departure, activities in the country – employment sector, position held, income and expenses etc.

- *Section C. Relations with the Bulgarian community and with Bulgaria*

This section focuses on communication between Bulgarians in Spain and between them and their relatives living in Bulgaria; on assessing the attitude of the local people and

administration towards the Diaspora; and on evaluating their participation in national cultural and religious events and political elections.

- *Section D. Children*

The section accentuates on the adaptation of Bulgarian teenagers to the Spanish milieu.

- *Section E. Potential return to Bulgaria and evaluation of the impact of emigration*

The last section emphasizes on whether the plans of Bulgarians in Spain include possible return to Bulgaria; draw attention to the attitude of the Diaspora towards migration processes and policies.

Based on this information, in the paper we will consider:

- Since when and why Bulgarian citizens prefer Spain?
- Modes of departure from Bulgaria.
- Educational and employment status of Bulgarians in Spain.
- Income, expenses and “remittance” behavior.
- Language abilities, contacts with compatriots in Spain and with relatives left behind, etc.
- Will the Bulgarians return from Spain?

## **2. Why and Since When Bulgarian Citizens Prefer Spain?**

Over the last decade Spain was among the “top” destinations for potential emigration from Bulgaria. In 2007, it was the most preferred, and in 2011 and 2013 – among the first three leading destinations. This determines the increased research interest in migration from Bulgaria by many authors (Markova and Reilly, 2007; Martinez, 2008; Stanek, 2009; Gomez-Mestres and Molina, 2010; Slavkova, 2012). Nevertheless, emigration from Bulgaria to Spain is a relatively new phenomenon (a limited number of Bulgarian gardeners were documented to have settled there before the Civil War). This is evident also from data of the sample survey conducted in 2011, which we refer to in this paper. Only about 1/4 of the respondents have settled in Spain before 2000, meanwhile 60% during the period 2001-2006 and slightly over 15% – thereafter (Table 1).

In fact, it could be argued that this data follows the changes in the Spanish migration policy. Spain, like other Southern European countries – EU member states – practices periodic “regularizations” of the foreign population (Misheva, 2012, pp. 83-92). This might be one of the reasons for the high share of Bulgarian immigrants who settled there in the period 2001-2006.

In any case, one should not underestimate the fact that during the period 2000-2009, Spain was second to the US in attracting foreign population. In the same time according to various estimates in 2000-2005 at least 1/2 of the GDP growth in the country was due to the

influx of immigrants. In this sense, Spain can be perceived as an example of successful (at least for the observed period) “*Mediterranean migration model*”.

Table 1

Arrival of Bulgarians in Spain

Year of arrival in Spain	Number	%	Regularisations in Spain
Before 1995	10	1.98	1991
1996-2000	112	22.13	1996, 2000/1
2001-2006	304	60.08	2000/2001, 2002, 2005
2007-2011	80	15.81	
Total	506	100.00	

Source: The data used in tables 1-3 is from the survey among Bulgarians in Spain from May-June 2011, conducted within the project “*Bulgarian Diaspora in Western Europe: cross-border mobility, national identity and development*”.

Several motives urging Bulgarians to settle in Spain can be outlined:

Economic reasons:

- “To have a higher standard of living”
- “Higher payment”
- “To support family”

The first group of factors has precedence determined by the general long-term reason – “To have a higher standard of living” compared to the short-term looking for “higher payment”. Among return (“circular”) migrants, the reasoning is the same with the demand for “higher payment” being the most significant factor (For more details see the article about potential and return migrants in this issue). On the other hand, merely family factors are also important. More than 23% of the respondents say that either they accompany or go to their relatives in Spain. At the same time, nearly 7% of responses simply show an affinity for the lifestyle in Spain (“I just want to live in Spain”). The percentages in the Table 2 exceed 100 because respondents were asked to give more than one answer.

Table 2

Reasons for Bulgarians settling in Spain (%)

<i>To have a higher standard of living</i>	63.6
<i>Higher pay</i>	37.7
Better career opportunities	9.5
<i>To support family or other relatives in Bulgaria</i>	12.5
To provide the desired education for me and / or my children	4.7
Marriage	1.0
<i>Go to parents and / or relatives</i>	15.0
<i>To accompany husband / wife, spouse / partner, parents, children</i>	8.3
To get foreign nationality for me and my family	0.2
I just wanted to live in Spain (pleasant climate; attractive social environment)	6.9

If among the abovementioned reasons it is difficult to differentiate the so-called push from the pull factors for settling in Spain, then the milieu, the attitude of the local administration and employers is an extremely important pull factor. Over 90% of respondents (and more precisely – 94.9%) define the attitude of the Spaniards as “good” (42.7%) or “very good” (52.2%); the attitude of the administration (90%) as well as of the employers (82%) is evaluated similarly.

Table 3

Attitude towards Bulgarian community in Spain (%)

	Very good	Good	Bad	I am not sure
How do you rate the attitude of local people towards the Bulgarians in Spain?	52.2	42.7	1.8	3.3
How do you rate the attitude of the administrative authorities towards the Bulgarians in Spain?	45.1	44.9	5.3	4.7
How do you rate the attitude of employers towards the Bulgarians in Spain?	33.0	49.0	10.3	7.7

### 3. Modes of Departure

There are differences in the modes of departure between those who already settled in Spain, returnees and potential migrants. It is impressive that 1/3 of those who have settled in Spain stated that they did this rather spontaneously, based on personal preference and presumably without preparation. This correlates with data from studies of potential migration over the years – repeatedly over 1/2 of the respondents stated that they would go abroad, without having clear plans for realization there, even though, as evidenced by the recent data (in 2011 and after), potential migrants were already aware about their activities abroad.

A preferred mode of departure for all three categories of migrants is “By invitation from relatives, friends”. This applies for every second respondent of those who have settled in Spain and almost for every third of return and potential migrants, which confirms the existence of networks and contacts facilitating the migration processes (See for instance Gomez-Mestres and Molina, 2010). That is why; numbers of theories argue that the migration is a phenomenon that once started cannot be restricted and is getting deeper.<sup>10</sup>

From those who have settled in Spain – only one out of 10 persons has relied on intermediary company or individual contract – while for returnees – this applies for every third person. Whereas almost half of the potential migrants (44.9%) imagine they could go abroad in these two ways (intermediary company/individual contract).

Expectations to realize out-migration move through continuing education, applying for a green card or participating in a bilateral intergovernmental agreement persist among the

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<sup>10</sup> These views are in the context of the network theory of migration, using terms such as “cumulative causation” and associated with authors such as Myrdal; Lands and Poor; Massey; Markova, 2012, p.17.

potential migrants. In practice, however, more important are the trips supported by relatives – as evidenced by data on Bulgarians in Spain.

The “*institutionalization*” of migration through intermediary companies (initially these companies are subject to a license regulations, and actually – to a simple registration procedure), individual contracts (which are supposed to be registered within the National Employment Agency) - popular among returnees and hence among potential migrants, is in the context of migration policies of the host countries – “Welcome the skilled, Rotate the Unskilled” (Martin, 2006) – oriented towards permanent commitment of high-skilled immigrants and to maintain some kind of “circulation” of the low-skilled.

Table 4

Modes of departure of the Bulgarians settled in Spain, returnees (“circular” migrants) and of potential migrants from Bulgaria (%)

<i>How did you organize your departure abroad?</i>	Bulgarians in Spain	Returnees	Potential migrants
Through company – intermediary	4.7	26.5	27.2
On individual employment contract	4.9	15	17.7
By invitation from relatives, friends	52	38.1	28.4
By applying for/continuing education	0.6	2.7	6.9
Through bilateral convention for exchange of labor force	-	1.8	4.8
By applying for a "green card"	-	2.7	5.4
Through marriage/cohabitation	1	-	0.9
I came to Spain without prior preparation	33.2	-	-
Other	1	13.3	8.7
The trip was organized by my parents	2.6	-	-

Source: The data is from surveys of Bulgarians in Spain, and of potential and return migrants in Bulgaria, conducted within the project “*Bulgarian Diaspora in Western Europe: cross-border mobility, national identity and Development*”.

#### 4. Educational and Employment Status of the Bulgarians in Spain

According to the Observatory on Immigration Issues<sup>11</sup> (Institution at the Ministry of Labour and Immigration of Spain) immigrants with the highest education in the country are from some Latin American countries like Argentina and Venezuela; and with relatively low education are those coming from Morocco and China (among whom there is a high percentage of people without education). Bulgarians have similar educational profile as other Eastern Europeans – Romanians and Ukrainians.

The carried out sample survey allows assessing the educational status of Bulgarians in Spain; employment sectors in Bulgaria before departure and in Spain; the occupied positions – again in Bulgaria and in Spain; as well as assessment of companies where they are employed.

<sup>11</sup> [http://extranjeros.empleo.gob.es/es/ObservatorioPermanenteInmigracion/Publicaciones/archivos/OPI\\_28\\_Inmigracion\\_y\\_Mercado\\_de\\_trabajo-Informe2011.pdf](http://extranjeros.empleo.gob.es/es/ObservatorioPermanenteInmigracion/Publicaciones/archivos/OPI_28_Inmigracion_y_Mercado_de_trabajo-Informe2011.pdf).



#### 4.1. Educational status

Nearly half of the Bulgarians in Spain - about 51% (i.e. every second person) has secondary education (secondary general – 22.8% of the respondents and secondary vocational education – 28.3%); the percentage of university degrees holders is also high (14.9% bachelors and 8.1% – masters).

There is some difference in educational profile between men and women. For men – every third has secondary vocational education (compared to 24.4% for women); the proportion of men and women with secondary general education is similar (22.5% for men and 23.1% for women). Women prevail among immigrants with master's and doctor's degrees. At the same time a total of 5-6% are people with no education or only with primary education.

Table 5

Educational status of the Bulgarians in Spain

	Gender				TOTAL	
	Male		Female		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Without education	10	3.7	2	0.8	12	2.4
Primary	8	3.0	7	2.9	15	3.0
Basic	56	21.0	45	18.9	101	20.0
Secondary general	60	22.5	55	23.1	115	22.8
Secondary vocational	85	31.8	58	24.4	143	28.3
Bachelor	39	14.6	36	15.1	75	14.9
Master	9	3.4	32	13.4	41	8.1
Doctor of Science	-	-	3	1.3	3	0.6

Source: The data used in tables 5-8 is from the survey among Bulgarians in Spain.

Attention should be paid to the efforts of Bulgarian residents in Spain for validating their diplomas – 15% said that their diplomas have already been recognized; another 4% were in the process of validation, i.e. almost every one out of 5 respondents in Spain has validated documents for a level of education, which, in itself, is a positive fact (Kaltchev and Zareva, 2012, p. 203).

#### 4.2. Employment sector

Three main groups of sectors accessible for the Bulgarians in Spain can be outlined:

- Sectors with high employment opportunities for our compatriots both at home before departure and in Spain (once settled there) – these sectors are construction, trade, hotels and restaurants, etc.;
- Sectors with high employment opportunities in Bulgaria and significantly lower in Spain such as manufacturing industries, public administration and education;
- And sectors with higher employment opportunities in Spain after settling there like agriculture; activities in households, etc.

Table 6

Employment sector in Bulgaria before the departure and in Spain

Employment sector	In Bulgaria		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	23	6.1	43	12.2
Mining and quarrying	5	1.3	2	0.6
Manufacturing industry	67	17.8	21	6.0
Production and distribution of electric and heat energy, gaseous fuels and water	2	0.5	2	0.6
Construction	40	10.6	39	11.1
Trade, repair and technical services of motor vehicles, personal belongings and household goods	39	10.4	31	8.80
Hotels and restaurants	47	12.5	56	15.9
Transport, warehousing and communication	38	10.1	33	9.4
Financial brokerage	7	1.9	-	-
Real estate operations, renting and business services	1	0.3	-	-
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	15	4.0	4	1.1
Education	20	5.3	4	1.1
Healthcare and social work	22	5.9	14	4.0
Other activities for social and personal services	44	11.7	49	13.9
Activities in households / families (assistant, caregiver, cook, gardener, etc.)	5	1.3	51	14.5
Extra-territorial organizations and agencies	1	0.3	3	0.9

#### 4.3. Occupied positions and companies employing Bulgarians in Spain

It is noteworthy that a relatively high percentage of respondents said they were “managerial employees” – 5.6% in Bulgaria and 7.9% in Spain. This, to some extent, is due to the specifics of the implementation of the planned sample – the agency DatoBase, Valencia approached Bulgarian businesses, clubs, etc. in order to establish contacts with the Bulgarian community. Thus, the sample had covered number of respondents with their own business in Bulgaria or in Spain. There were also quite a lot of respondents – “high-skilled industrial workers” and “operators of machinery and equipment” prior and after the departure (See Table 7). As a whole half of the Bulgarians were “managerial employees”, “highly-qualified workers” and “operators of machinery and equipment” before they left (a total of 47.5% of the respondents). In Spain similar positions achieved just over 1/4 of the respondents (and more precisely – 25.4%).

The share of individuals employed in services (including trade, security, etc.), both in Bulgaria before departure and in Spain, is high. On the other hand, the share of respondents who had held positions of “applied specialist” in Bulgaria is much higher than their share in Spain. As for the people who identify themselves as “low-skilled workers” – in Bulgaria such were around 15% of the respondents, and in Spain – after they established there – about 1/4.

Without being exhaustive, it can be concluded that Bulgaria loses a creative part of its population, which although retreat from the “positions” occupied in Bulgaria, has managed to adapt to the Spanish labour market.

Table 7

Position held in Bulgaria before leaving and in Spain

Position	In Bulgaria		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
1. Managerial employees	21	5.6	28	7.9
2. Analytical specialists	6	1.6	3	0.8
3. Applied specialists	59	15.7	22	6.2
4. Support staff	21	5.6	8	2.3
5. Staff engaged in services for the population, security and trade	88	23.4	107	30.3
6. Producers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries	2	0.5	4	1.1
7. Skilled industrial workers	78	20.7	65	18.4
8. Operators of plant and vehicles	42	11.2	32	9.1
9. Low skilled workers	59	15.7	84	23.8

On the other hand, the high proportion of individuals employed in companies of Bulgarians is impressive (almost 22% of the respondents). Of course, this is due to the way of establishing contact with the respondents; nevertheless, it appears that there are Bulgarian businesses in Spain relying on staff coming from Bulgaria. Every fifth respondent was employed in a company owned by Bulgarians. At the same time, nearly 2/3 of males and 40% of females were employed in businesses owned by Spaniards. It is also noteworthy that every fifth Bulgarian woman in Spain is engaged in domestic work (as housemaid) (Table 8).

Table 8

Companies employing Bulgarians in Spain

Where do you work at present?	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
In a company of a person of Spanish nationality	122	67.0	71	41.5	193	54.7
In a company of a person of Bulgarian nationality	36	19.8	41	24.0	77	21.8
In a company of other national	2	1.1	10	5.8	12	3.4
In a household/ family (assistant, caregiver, cook, gardener, etc.)	-	-	43	25.1	43	12.2
In agriculture/ farm	22	12.1	6	3.5	28	7.9

## 5. Income, expenses, and “remittance” behavior

### 5.1. Income

The surveys allow an estimation of income, expenses and remittance behavior, of both the so-called return (or perhaps “circular”) migrants and of the Bulgarians in Spain (On the remittances of Bulgarians from Spain, see also Christova-Balkanska, 2012, pp. 341-354.).

On average, Bulgarians abroad earn not more than EUR 1200 a month – this applies to about 2/3 of return migrants, as well as to the Bulgarians living in Spain. About 30% of the returnees and about 27% of those residing in Spain got between EUR 400 and 800 compared to an average monthly income of almost EUR 900 (more precisely EUR 897) for returnees and EUR 878 for Bulgarians who have settled in Spain.

Table 9

Average monthly income of returnees and of those settled in Spain

What was/is your approximate average income per month?	During your stay abroad		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
Up to 400 EUR	11	8.1	42	8.3
Over 400 to 800 EUR	39	28.7	162	32.0
Over 800 to 1200 EUR	42	30.9	137	27.1
Over 1200 to 1600 EUR	17	12.5	47	9.3
Over 1600 EUR	7	5.1	35	6.9
I have not worked	14	10.3	78	15.4
Not responding	6	4.4	5	1.0
Total	136	100.0	506	100.0

Source: The data used in tables 9-12 is from two sample surveys of Bulgarians in Spain, and of potential and return migrants in Bulgaria.

Virtually, one of every three individuals had an average monthly income below EUR 800, without significant difference between the income of returnees and of those settled in Spain. On the other hand – between 17-18% of the respondents from both groups – returnees and residents in Spain, had an average monthly income exceeding EUR 1200.

### 5.2. Expenses abroad and remittance behavior

If in terms of average monthly income of returnees (during their stay abroad) and of Bulgarians residing in Spain it is difficult to outline important dissimilarities, the analysis of expenses of these two groups indicates the existence of significant differences. More than 77% of the returnees said they had spent less than half of their earnings, while 66% of those who have settled in Spain declared that they spent there almost the entire income.

There is an understandable difference in the attitudes of both groups in terms of the expenses they make. Return (“circular”) migrants limit their spending during their stay abroad, while those living in Spain – on the contrary – spend their earnings there.

Table 10

Expenses abroad of returnees and of those settled in Spain

What portion of your income do you spend...?	During your stay abroad		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
Not more than 1/4 (very small portion)	32	23.53	13	2.57
About 1/3	35	25.74	16	3.16
1/2 (About half of it)	39	28.68	38	7.51
About 2/3	5	3.68	34	6.72
About 3/4 (more than half)	3	2.21	44	8.70
Almost all the income	11	8.09	337	66.60
I have no income	-	-	23	4.55
Not responding	11	8.09	1	0.20
Total	136	100.00	506	100.00

All of this determines a different remittance behavior of the two main groups of migrants discussed in this section. One in three of returnees had sent to Bulgaria half or at least 1/3 of the earnings abroad; and one in five had not transferred any funds (probably the earnings were brought as a lump sum – upon return to the country). Regarding the Bulgarian community in Spain, we found that over 73% of the respondents transferred as much as 1/4 of their income; and another about 15% transferred up to 1/3 of their income.

Obviously the attitude of return (“circular”) migrants is to minimize the costs abroad and to save a large part of the earnings to be spent later in Bulgaria; while the attitude of Bulgarians in Spain is oriented towards a regular financial support to the relatives left behind, but with relatively limited share of the income.

Table 11

Remittance behavior

Usually what part of your income do you send to relatives in Bulgaria?	During your stay abroad		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
I did not send any	28	20.59	3	1.67
Not more than 1/4 (very small portion)	14	10.29	132	73.33
About 1/3	25	18.38	26	14.44
1/2 (About half of it)	18	13.24	12	6.67
About 2/3	6	4.41	5	2.78
About 3/4 (more than half)	3	2.21	2	1.11
Almost all of it	5	3.68	-	-
Not responding	37	27.21	-	-
Total	136	100.00	180	100.00

The information obtained from the two sample surveys used in this paper enables to estimate the whole remittances and these from Spain (in particular). The estimates presented in the table 12 below are based on the anticipated number of return and current migrants; average monthly income; length of stay abroad; share of incurred expenses and of

remittances made<sup>12</sup>; estimates of remittances from Spain were made in a similar way (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2012, pp. 131-146).

As already stated in the paper about potential and return migrants, the individuals residing abroad in the period 2006-2011 and located in Bulgaria at the time of the survey amounted to 450 000. And those currently residing abroad in 2011 were approximately 256 000. That is, about 10% of the country's working age population had commitment in a foreign country during the period concerned and another 6% were currently abroad at the time of the survey. The average monthly income of Bulgarian migrants amounted to nearly EUR 900 and the average length of stay abroad – 18.2 months. The share of funds transferred to Bulgaria amounted to 31.2% of average monthly income. Therefore, it comes out that this category of migrants has brought into the country about EUR 458 million (only in 2010). If the estimated remittances of those who at that time were residing abroad (assuming that their behavior will be similar to that of returnees) are added to this sum, it can be derived that the so-called “return” and “current” migrants have brought into the country an amount exceeding EUR 690 million (in the year preceding the survey) (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2012, pp. 131-146).

Table 12

Estimate of remittances of the returnees (during their stay abroad) and of migrants settled in Spain, 2011

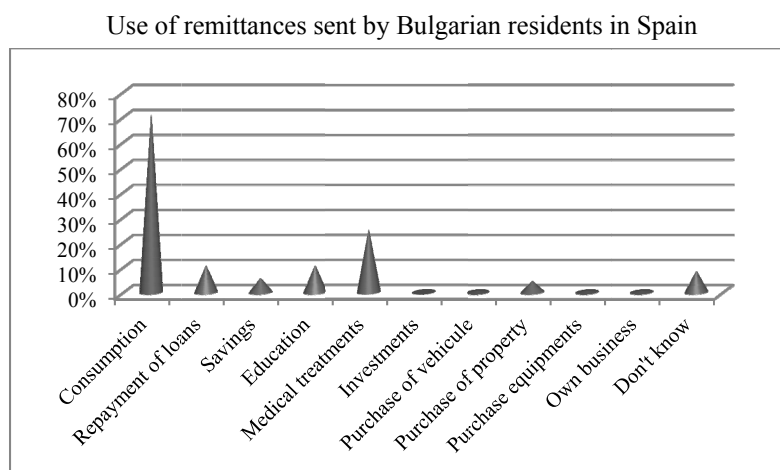
	Return and current migrants	Spain
Average monthly income, euro	897	878
Share of current expenses	42.4%	>70.0%
Share of cash remittances	31.2%	>25.0%
Average annual amount of savings, euro	586 620 923	–
Average annual amount of cash remittances, euro	694 102 266	162 229 952
Savings + remittances, euro	1 280 723 189	–

We estimate the amount of remittances sent from Spain to Bulgaria following the same algorithm. Based on the survey data from Spain, we find that 73.3% of the respondents send about 1/4 of their average monthly income to their relatives at home (Table 11). We assume that the behavior of 123 000 Bulgarians “covered” by the sample is similar to that of the respondents. Thus, we derive that in 2010, between EUR 109 and 119 million were sent to Bulgaria. Further, if we assume that the other Bulgarians in Spain have the same remittance behavior, we can estimate that the Bulgarian Diaspora, sent to Bulgaria between EUR 154 and 169 million (or EUR 162 million on average) only in 2010. Incidentally, this estimate coincides with Eurostat data for remittances from Spain to Bulgaria in that year. Indeed, amid a total of over EUR 7 billion of remittances from Spain in 2010<sup>13</sup>, the estimation of the remittances of Bulgarian migrants seems realistic representing modest share of all remittances from this country.

<sup>12</sup> See also the article “Potential and return migrants in Bulgaria – demographic and socio-economic aspects”.

<sup>13</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/2-12122011-AP/EN/2-12122011-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/2-12122011-AP/EN/2-12122011-AP-EN.PDF)

Figure 3



According to the opinion of the respondents (Figure 3) the remittances are used mainly for current consumption and healthcare, and to a lesser extent, to repay loans and education; i.e. the level of consumption in the country, health care and education, as well as the banking system, depend (in some extent) on the capabilities of migrants (including those in Spain) to support their relatives and close persons left behind.

### 5.3. Property status

The property status of Bulgarians in Spain looks more than solid. A high share - slightly over 80% of them – own (or have possessed) residential property in Bulgaria before departure; and every third (38.1%) - agricultural land. At the same time, 26.5% declared that they owned residential property in Spain; but only 0.6% possessed agricultural land in this country. The interest in financial assets, though not high, is visible enough – about 9% were interested in securities before they left and 4.7% had such interest in Spain.

Table 13

Property status of Bulgarians in Spain (in Bulgaria – before departure and in Spain)

Which of the following types of property do you own?	In Bulgaria – on departure		In Spain	
	Number	%	Number	%
Residential property	409	80.8	134	26.5
Motor vehicle	278	54.9	373	73.7
Shares / financial instruments	45	8.9	24	4.7
Agricultural land	193	38.1	3	0.6
Total	505	99.8	-	-
Not responding	1	0.2	-	-
Total	506	100.0	506	100.0

Source: The data used in table 13-22 is from the survey among Bulgarians in Spain from May-June 2011.

## 6. Language knowledge, contacts with compatriots, and contacts with close persons left behind by Bulgarian residents in Spain

### 6.1. The Bulgarian language in Spain

According to INE data, at the end of 2010, about 24 000 Bulgarian children under the age of 15 lived in Spain and nearly 5000 of whom were born there. In the period 2008-2012, about 10 000 of the Bulgarians settled in Spain were under 19 years of age. In this regard, we were curious to find out what were the language skills of Bulgarian teenagers in Spain.

It seems that teenagers have a better knowledge of the Spanish (Castilian) language than the Bulgarian. Nearly 89% of respondents said that their children knew Spanish “very well” and “well” and 82% said that with respect to the Bulgarian language. The level of knowledge of the Bulgarian language is similar to command of the language of the respective Autonomous region (Catalan, Valencian, Galician, etc.).

According to 18% of the respondents, the children’s knowledge/understanding of the Bulgarian language is relatively poor (“poor” or they just don’t know the Bulgarian) compared to 11% who consider unsatisfactory the knowledge of the Spanish by their children. Therefore, it can be expected that almost every fifth Bulgarian child in Spain struggles to communicate in Bulgarian and every one in 10 – in Spanish. This is understandable bearing in mind the attitude of Bulgarians for permanent settlement in Spain.

Table 14

Language skills of Bulgarian children in Spain

What is the knowledge of your children of....? (%)	Spanish language (Castilian)	The language of the Autonomus region	Bulgarian language
None	3.75	5.68	2.71
Poor	7.51	13.64	15.25
Good	22.87	25.00	32.88
Very good	65.87	55.68	49.15

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that almost half of those who settled in Spain before 2000, talk to their children in both languages – Bulgarian and Spanish; this is also true for 1/3 of the respondents who settled there in 2001-2006 (over 60% of all respondents interviewed) and for approximately 12-13% of those who settled after 2007 (about 15% of those covered by the sample).

Apparently, despite the evoking respect efforts of the Bulgarian authorities to maintain the native language among communities abroad (e.g. the program of Ministry of Education and Science “*Native language and culture abroad*” (Zareva, 2012, pp. 57-70)) the Bulgarian language is gradually losing “positions”. One way or another, the country is facing the challenge to develop policy addressing the “second generation” of migrants.



Table 15

Language of communication in the families of Bulgarian immigrants in Spain

	Arriving in Spain			Total
	By 2000	2001-2006	2007-2011	
Bulgarian	53.2	63.6	81.3	62.7
Spanish	2.5	2.2	-	2.0
Bulgarian and Spanish	43.0	33.2	12.5	33.6
Other language	1.3	1.1	6.3	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 6.2. The Bulgarian community: Whom do Bulgarians turn to in case of difficulties? Events of the community.

Facing difficulties, the Bulgarians in Spain turn most often to friends compatriots – almost 60% of the responses – the percentage is higher among the younger population – up to 25 years of age (78%) and those aged between 26 and 35 years (61%). At the same time, the respondents also turn to friends – Spaniards (just over 21% of all respondents), where the share of responses of those aged between 36 to 45 years reaches 1/4.

The proportion of people who tend to turn to the Spanish authorities reached 7%; while – to the Bulgarian official representations and clubs – exceeded 3% (this percentage is higher among individuals older than 45 years).

Table 16

Demand for assistance in case of problems

When you experience difficulties, usually whom do you turn to?	Age				Total
	Up to 25	26-35	36-45	over 45	
Friends – Bulgarians	78.21	61.38	52.73	55.93	59.88
Friends – foreigners	19.23	20.69	24.24	18.64	21.15
Bulgarian clubs/associations	1.28	2.07	1.21	8.47	3.16
Bulgarian official representations	0.00	0.69	1.21	1.69	0.99
Authorities in the country	1.28	8.28	8.48	5.93	6.72
Civil/non-governmental organizations in the country	0.00	2.07	2.42	3.39	2.17
I never had any difficulties	14.10	24.83	31.52	27.97	26.09

It is noteworthy that almost every one out of 3 respondents demonstrates good self-esteem – these are those respondents who declare that they had no problems or that they solve their problems without any need of help.

If this question is viewed through the prism of the actual debate on “Diaspora – transnationalism” matters (Faist, 2010), one could judge about formation/differentiation of Bulgarian community, on the one hand, and about active communication with the local people facilitating the integration of Bulgarian immigrants in Spanish society, on the other.

Table 17

## Participation in events of/for the Bulgarian community

Do you attend any events organized by / for the Bulgarian community? (%)	Age				Total
	Up to 25	26-35	36-45	over 45	
Yes, I visit Bulgarian cultural events (concerts, theaters, etc.) with artists from Bulgaria	20.51	17.24	30.3	24.58	23.7
Yes, informal meetings in Bulgarian restaurants	16.67	28.97	25.45	32.2	26.7
Yes, at courses organized by the local administration	3.85	5.52	6.06	9.32	6.3
Yes, at sports events	8.97	12.41	8.48	7.63	9.5
Yes, at religious celebrations	1.28	6.9	9.7	11.02	7.9
Yes, in fora organized by official representations of Bulgaria	0.00	4.83	6.06	6.78	4.9
Yes, in fora organized by local Bulgarian clubs/associations	1.28	7.59	9.7	11.86	8.3
No, I don't participate	66.67	54.48	52.12	50.85	54.7

Arguments in favor of sociability and integration of the Bulgarian community in Spain can be searched for also in the data presented in the table 17 (the percentages exceed 100 because more than one answer was given). Virtually every second of respondents would refrain from participating in Bulgarian events. Of course, this may be due to the size of Spain, both in terms of territory and population. Moreover, Bulgarians are dispersed in several thousand settlements (although, as already mentioned, 2/3 of them live in settlements where there are at least 100 Bulgarians).

Among those participating in various events related to the Bulgarian Diaspora, prevail responses outlining affinity for informal ("*fellow-villager*") meetings and interest in cultural events – in both cases – about 1/4 of the respondents. Such gatherings are more popular among the older respondents (aged over 35 and over 45 years). Furthermore, both religious and sports events prove to be attractive (almost every 10-th of the respondents visits such activities).

### 6.3. *Contacts with Bulgaria (news from the country - ways of keeping informed and frequency of contacts with relatives who remained in the country; trips to Bulgaria)*

Despite the modest re-migration potential (Table 21) and the losing position of Bulgarian language (Table 14), the contacts that the respondents have with Bulgaria evoke interest:

Firstly – in relation to the way they keep track of what is happening in the country,

Secondly – regarding the frequency of contacts with their relatives and close persons,

And finally – concerning their travels to Bulgaria.

Only about 10% of the responses received indicate indifference and lack of interest in what is happening in the country. People are informed primarily from the Bulgarian electronic media (about 2/3 of respondents) as well as from Internet publications of the Bulgarian

press (more than 1/3). About 12% of the respondents rely on the Spanish media, and also on Bulgarian media published in Spain.<sup>14</sup>

Table 18

Interest in the events in Bulgaria (information channels)

Are you interested in the events in Bulgaria? (%)	Age				Total
	Up to 25	26-35	36-45	over 45	
Yes, from the Spanish mass media	5.13	9.66	12.73	20.34	12.45
Yes, from the Internet editions of the Bulgarian press	30.77	42.07	38.79	31.36	36.76
Yes, from Bulgarian electronic media - television, radio, etc.	74.36	68.97	67.27	63.56	67.98
Yes, from newspapers and magazines distributed by the official Bulgarian representations	2.56	4.14	7.27	5.93	5.34
Yes, from newspapers and magazines distributed by Bulgarian clubs and associations	0.00	2.76	2.42	8.47	3.56
Yes, from Bulgarian newspapers and magazines published abroad	3.85	9.66	14.55	18.64	12.45
No, I am not interested	14.10	9.66	10.30	9.32	10.47

Vis-à-vis the frequency of contacts with relatives in Bulgaria – over 40% of the respondents communicate with them on a weekly basis; and over 20% – daily (i.e. nearly 2/3 of the Bulgarians in Spain are in contact with their relatives at least once a week), and another about 22% – monthly. Slightly above 8% of respondents either already have no relatives in the country or do not keep contact with them (Table 19).

Table 19

Frequency of contacts with relatives left behind in Bulgaria

	Number	%
Daily	104	20.55
Weekly	214	42.29
Monthly	110	21.74
Once in 3 months	18	3.56
Once in 6 months	6	1.19
Once a year	7	1.38
Less than once a year	5	0.99
Do not keep in contact	12	3.75
I have relatives living in Bulgaria	30	4.55
Total	506	100.00

And finally, regarding the trips to Bulgaria – practically one in every ten of our compatriots in Spain has not traveled to Bulgaria since he got there. Nearly 1/3 of the “non-travelling” have settled in Spain after 2007. The majority – 34.8% – have traveled to their homeland

<sup>14</sup> For example, the published in Madrid Bulgarian newspaper "Nova Duma" (<http://www.novaduma.com/>) is distributed in more than 300 points on the territory of Spain.

only 1-2 times; and another 31% – from 3 to 5 times. Only about 6% of the respondents have traveled more than 10 times (Table 20).

Table 20

## Travel to Bulgaria

How many times have you traveled to Bulgaria? (%)	Year of arrival in Spain				Total
	By 1995	1996-2000	2001-2006	2007-2011	
I have not	-	2.7	8.2	28.8	10.1
1-2 times	10	15.2	39.1	48.8	34.8
3-5 times	20	38.4	32.2	17.5	31.0
6-10 times	40	27.7	17.8	2.5	18.0
More than 10 times	30	16.1	2.6	2.5	6.1
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 7. Will the Bulgarians return from Spain?

Apparently even in the crisis year of 2011, the Bulgarians settled in Spain were reluctant to return to Bulgaria or resettle in another country. Over 2/3 of the respondents said they would stay in Spain over the next five years (2012-2017) and just over 5% expressed willingness to return to Bulgaria. In absolute figures, this makes about 6 to 8 thousand people (actually it can be expected that only 10% of them would have carried out their intention to return). The percentage of those who hesitate was also high – almost 19%, i.e. virtually every one in five had faced the question whether “*to come back, to stay or to go to another country*”. If we compare this data with similar data on the attitudes of the Bulgarians from the monitoring of the foreign population, conducted by INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística) and GEPS (Grupo de Estudios de Población y Sociedad) in 2007 (Recher and Requena, 2009, pp. 253-278) (the survey covered 15 500 people, including about 380 Bulgarian citizens) we could find that in 2007 about 85% of the Bulgarians declared that they would remain in Spain over the next 5 years (2008-2013) and those hesitating were considerably less. Obviously the crisis and the problems in the Spanish labour market (characterized by one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe) 5 years later made part of Bulgarian migrants to lose confidence in determining their future plans.

Table 21

## Migration attitudes of the Bulgarians in Spain

What are your intentions for the next five years?	Number	%
To stay in Spain	371	73.32
To return to Bulgaria	26	5.14
To go to another country	14	2.77
I do not know / Cannot say	94	18.58
Total	505	99.80
Nonresponding	1	0.20
Total	506	100.00

Individuals who said they would move to another country are quite few in 2011 – less than 3% of the respondents (Table 21). This looks somewhat strange having in mind the negative migration balance of Spain in recent years.

Table 22

Encouraging the children of Bulgarian immigrants in Spain to return to Bulgaria

Would you encourage your children to return to Bulgaria?	To study		To work		To settle	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	97	19.2	77	15.2	84	16.6
I am not sure	81	16.0	1105	20.8	111	21.9
No	328	64.8	323	64.0	311	61.5

The modest re-migration potential of Bulgarians living in Spain is confirmed also by the pessimistic fact that people who would encourage their children to return to Bulgaria are under 20% and about the same percentage are hesitant. Those who would not advise their children to return to Bulgaria (to study, work or settle) were over 60%. Moreover, this percentage is higher among women than among men.

## 8. Conclusion

Spain is an attractive destination for Bulgarian emigration. The fact that part of the respondents in the sample survey explored above declared spontaneously that they wanted just to live in Spain, places the analysis beyond the standard neoclassical “push-pull” perspective (Lee, 1966, pp. 47-57).

In terms of education, employment, and property status the Bulgarian community in Spain reveals the following socio-economic characteristics:

- Adequate education of the Bulgarian Diaspora and desire to validate it (at least compared to immigrants from Morocco or China).
- Despite the retreat from positions (employment sector or work positions) held in Bulgaria before departure, the Bulgarians “manage relatively well” on the Spanish labor market (of course, we are talking about the time before the crisis that gave some Southern European countries the unkind name “PIGS” – Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain).
- There is an obvious difference in the attitudes of return (“circular”) migrants and those settled in Spain – returnees used to reduce their expenses to a minimum during their stay abroad – on the contrary, those settled in Spain spend there most of their earnings.
- The above mentioned determines a different remittance behavior of returnees and those settled in Spain. The attitude of return migrants is towards cost minimization abroad and targeted saving (the earnings to be spent later in Bulgaria), while the Bulgarian immigrants in Spain provide regular financial support to their relatives who remained home, but do this with a relatively limited share of their income.

In this regard, the question *Will the Bulgarians return from Spain* is rhetorical – moreover, Bulgarians (and Bulgarian women in particular) are reluctant to advise their children to return back to their homeland. Therefore, re-migration potential remains very modest (especially during a favourable state of affairs in Spain or in any other host country). Nevertheless, Bulgarians keep their interest in what is happening in the home country. Although most people maintain weekly and even daily contact with their relatives, the Bulgarian language begins to “lose positions” – one in three Bulgarian children living in Spain has difficulties to communicate in mother tongue. This leads us to believe that Bulgaria is facing the need to develop incorporative policies aimed at the second generation of Bulgarians abroad.

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## Appendix

Table 1  
Structure of the Bulgarian population in Spain by gender and age (% , 2010)

Age group	Total	Male	Female
0-4	4.50	4.40	4.70
05-09	4.40	4.20	4.60
10-14	4.30	4.20	4.60
15-19	5.40	5.10	5.80
20-24	9.40	8.90	10.00
25-29	12.90	12.60	13.20
30-34	14.90	15.80	13.90
35-39	12.50	13.20	11.60
40-44	10.20	10.60	9.60
45-49	8.70	9.20	8.20
50-54	6.30	6.20	6.30
55-59	3.80	3.60	4.10
60-64	1.70	1.40	2.10
65-69	0.60	0.40	0.80
70-74	0.20	0.10	0.40
75-79	0.10	0.10	0.20
80-84	0.10	0.00	0.10
85 and older	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
By gender:	54.20	45.80	100.00

Source: INE, Municipal Register, 2010 (www.ine.es).

Table 2

Planned sample size by settlements and provinces (number)

Province	City	Number
28. Madrid	28079-Madrid	20
28. Madrid	28079-Madrid	20
07. Balears (Illes)	07040 Palma de Mallorca	20
46. Valencia	46131-Gandia	20
46. Valencia	46250-Valencia	20
47. Valladolid	47186 Valladolid	20
30. Murcia	30030-Murcia	20
28. Madrid	28005-Alcala de Henares	20
28. Madrid	28047-Collado Villalba	20
09. Burgos	09059 Burgos	20
29. Malaga	29067 Malaga	20
28. Madrid	28092-Mostoles	20
50. Zaragoza	50095-Ejea de los Caballeros	20
09. Burgos	09018 Aranda de Duero	20
04. Almeria	04013 Almeria	20
24. Leon	24089 Leon	20
46. Valencia	46020-Alcádia de Crespins (l')	20
46. Valencia	46179-Navarras	20
49. Zamora	49021 Benavente	20
40. Segovia	40043 Carbonero el Mayor	20
45. Toledo	45168 Toledo	20
40. Segovia	40906 San Cristóbal de Segovia	20
43. Tarragona	43171 Vila-seca	20
28. Madrid	28038-Cercedilla	20
19. Guadalajara	19279 Torre del Burgo	20
Total:		500
Planned size in total by provinces:		20
04. Almeria		20
07. Balears (Illes)		40
09. Burgos		20
19. Guadalajara		20
24. Leon		120
28. Madrid		20
29. Malaga		20
30. Murcia		40
40. Segovia		20
43. Tarragona		20
45. Toledo		80
46. Valencia		20
47. Valladolid		20
49. Zamora		20
50. Zaragoza		
Total:		500



Table 3

Quotas covered in the selected provinces (number)

Province	Male	16-44	45-64	Female	16-44	45-64
04. Almeria	11	8	3	9	7	2
07. Balears (Illes)	10	8	2	10	7	3
09. Burgos	21	16	5	19	14	5
19. Guadalajara	11	8	3	9	7	2
24. Leon	11	8	3	9	7	2
28. Madrid	63	46	17	57	40	17
29. Malaga	10	7	3	10	7	3
30. Murcia	11	8	3	9	7	2
40. Segovia	21	16	5	19	14	5
43. Tarragona	11	8	3	9	7	2
45. Toledo	11	8	3	9	7	2
46. Valencia	45	34	11	35	26	9
47. Valladolid	11	8	3	9	7	2
49. Zamora	10	8	2	10	8	2
50. Zaragoza	11	8	3	9	7	2
Total	268	199	69	232	172	60

