

Presentation of the City of Barcelona

Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain with a total population in June 2013 of 1,611,822 inhabitants. It is located on the Mediterranean coast, in the north-eastern part of the country, close to the French border. It is the capital of Catalonia and the headquarters for the Mediterranean Union. As a result of gradual integration over the centuries, the city is now organised in ten districts composed of several smaller neighbourhoods with a distinct personality and historical tradition. The administration of these districts is decentralised and close to citizens. Catalan is the official language of Catalonia, as is Spanish, which is the official language of Spain. Both languages coexist in Barcelona, where most people understand, write, read and speak it normally. The city, with a very diverse migrant population of 281,225 (17.4%), is an open gate to living together and dialogue between neighbours of diverse life experiences, numerous languages and cultures. Barcelona's cosmopolitan nature is, undoubtedly, one of its most outstanding features, and it receives continuous recognition as a global city of great international projection, not only because of its diverse population but also because of its cultural, financial, commercial and touristic importance. Its economy is much diversified, and stands out particularly in the business services and real estate, industry, trade and transport sectors. With a fifth of Spanish exports, Barcelona continues to be one of the richest cities of the European Union, despite the negative impact of the present crisis on Catalan economy and disturbing rates of unemployment, especially among youths and in certain neighbourhoods. The city faces new challenges at present with changes occurring on the global and local scene over the past decade. Its objectives as a leading city as far as its economy is concerned are to hold its place as a centre for mobilisation of public ventures as well as foreign investments and localization.

As regards its social development, public policies seek to build leadership for Barcelona as an intercultural community of citizens with a shared project for an integrating, unified and dynamic city through 1) acknowledgement and promotion its diversity, 2) furthering equal rights, obligations and opportunities, and 3) promoting positive interaction among culturally diverse individuals and groups.