

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Progress Report 2020

# REBUILDING THE COMMON

2030 Agenda Implementation in Spain



AGENDA  
**2030**



## Rebuilding the common 2030 Agenda Implementation in Spain

The fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda approval will be taking place on the 25th of September and we barely have a decade to accomplish the transformations required for our country to make real Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) inside and outside our borders. A countdown that started long time ago for both our planet and the people who demanded a fairer and more sustainable society for a long time. There is only a decade to decide the type of future we want to have and the type of society we want to be.

The new Spanish Government, along with the cooperation from the very beginning of Autonomous regional governments, municipalities and civil society organizations, has made a renewed commitment with the goal of progressing decisively to reach the SDG's. It is a clear commitment focused on a major task: turning words into actions and statements into policies. Our country must be an international reference regarding 2030 Agenda compliance. This must be a core principle of our policies, internally and abroad, to ensure the consistency among all our actions.

Spain is experiencing one of the most difficult situations in our late history with the COVID-19 pandemic that created a significantly challenging health, economic and social crisis. This situation is showing again the limits of our system. However, the reaction from the Public Administrations to this crisis has been different to previous ones. The Government together with Autonomous regional governments and the essential collaboration from civil society and other economic and social actors, have created a social shield, unknown before, making a difference compared to 2008, to protect the people, demonstrating that a social and fair solution is possible, and public institutions can and must work for ensuring that nobody has been left behind.

The Progress Report 2020 analyses the SDG implementation in Spain, focusing on the progress accomplished during the last year, including the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the response given to face its consequences. In addition, this report addresses the debate about the required reconstruction in our country, in order to provide, using 2030 Agenda vision, guidelines to progress towards a fairest and most sustainable country.

## To understand where we come from to decide where we want to go to

The analysis of the social situation shows a real situation where the latest economic recovery has not reached everybody. Employment creation has not been translated into a significant reduction of inequalities and poverty, showing us the existing structural problems in our social and economic system, which have been revealed again during this crisis. A real situation which is explained by the lack of job security of the new employments, constraining their social integration capacity and for an undermined social protection system. Besides, the risk of leaving someone behind in Spain shows clear tendencies depending on gender, age, nationality, disability or the household type. Addressing this reality constitutes already a priority for public administrations through policies capable of tackling inequality and ensuring full social protection in our country.

Global warming and climate change fighting represent a major challenge. Current data and future projections show how not facing the climate emergency we are living, can bring catastrophic effects for both our planet and society, making inequalities and social problems worse. The average temperature in Spain has risen around 1.7°C from preindustrial levels, and during the last 20 years, the areas with semi-arid climate have increased in more than 30.000 km<sup>2</sup>, the same surface of Galicia. In addition, climatic projections show a future where droughts will be longer and more usual, and at the same time the number of extreme meteorological events will increase with high impacts in our ecosystems and our economies. Therefore, we are facing a real climatic emergency which needs a determined action by all of us.

Climate change and inequalities are also the main challenges we are currently facing at international level. Climate change threatens the livelihood of millions of people globally and together with poverty, insecurity, prosecution and armed conflicts, giving feedback among them, and creating population displacements looking for better opportunities out of their countries. Another issue to be added is regression of the democracy quality, with restrictions to the civil rights, and with legal impunity towards murders of the human rights defenders. All these situations require collaboration and solidarity of the international community in order to transform our world and to realise 2030 Agenda globally.

### Progress on the accelerating policies for the 2030 Agenda compliance

In 2018 the Spanish government published the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda including a number of priority policies, with nine lever policies, which have represented a key role to direct the efforts towards the progress on the 2030 Agenda. The compliance level of these policies is significant, at national, regional and local levels.

In the first place, important measures have been promoted to prevent and to fight against the poverty, the inequalities and the social exclusion. One of the first policies approved by the new government was increasing the minimum monthly wage up to 950 Euros, in the frame of the dialogue with the social agents. In the first months of the new government, layoffs based on sick leave reasons were dismissed, scholarships were defined based only on socioeconomic reasons, and a new education system was boosted to end up with gender segregation in schools. Besides, it is planned to keep and to improve the social discount rate on electricity and energy, one of the tools implemented to fight against energy access poverty, together with household energy efficiency improvements and the electricity self-production and the renewable energies communities. The management of these competences are at regional and local levels, which explains the major role of regional governments on deploying actions on minimizing poverty, inequalities and social exclusion.

The second lever policy seeks to guarantee equality between men and women, a field where a significant improvement has been performed during the last year in Spain, thanks to the feminist movement. The week of the 8th of March of 2020, the Government approved the preliminary project of law on the guarantee of the sexual freedom, a pioneer legislation at global level, aiming to fight against the sexual violence suffered by women. The integral protection of women from gender violence is another priority of local and regional administrations, together with the design of equal opportunities plans for reducing the gender salary gaps.

Promoting ecological transition is another remarkable policy, through measures including Circular Economy development and the actions included at the strategic frame on energy and climate. Inside this frame, the approval of the law of climate change and energetic transition represents a highlight together with the Fair transition strategy, designed to guarantee changes to more environmental friendly models will be socially inclusive, considering the opportunities of this transformation offers to create new quality jobs. In addition, a number of regional policies have developed strategic frameworks and plans to fight the climate emergency in our country. An additional field, strengthening a more sustainable urban model is the development of the Urban Agenda, through its specific Action Plan.

In addition, there are relevant strategies in phase of definition which are going to guide the governmental action and the public policies in the next years. The Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2021-2027 or the Social Economy Strategy which will probably be extended until 2027. The lever policy Open Government Plan has been already widely developed by regions and municipalities, favouring a higher transparency and participation of citizens into the public action, fostering this lever policy contributes for the SDG 16 compliance, complemented with the Justice 2030 Plan, in drafting process by the Spanish Government which seeks to align the justice sector with the 2030 Agenda.

Our country has not forgotten the international dimension, as we have shown during this latest pandemic context, where the efforts on global solidarity have been intensified through the international cooperation policy lever. In a period when the multilateralism is in question, Spain has increased its efforts to the global challenge for minimizing the COVID-19 effects. The definition of the response strategy of the Spanish International Cooperation for the COVID-19 crisis, is the actuation and support framework for partner countries, using the capacities of the Spanish cooperation mechanisms, including regional and local administrations.

### Protecting people and not leaving anyone behind. Spain facing COVID-19

Spain, in the last months has faced one of the most difficult and complex challenges of its history, an unknown health, economic and social crisis, created by the COVID-19 pandemic, added to other crucial challenges, such as climate emergency and social inequalities. Spanish government and all the public administrations have put in place a set of public policies to allow the country to recover from this situation not leaving anyone behind.

All the efforts and required resources have been used to reduce the transmission of the virus and to protect the most vulnerable population, setting the basis for a fairest and most sustainable recovery. Measures put in place has created a real social shield, providing protection consistently with the 2030 Agenda principles, showing how a crisis can be managed without leaving nobody behind and progressing on the SDG compliance. At regional and national level, the health system was reinforced by economic and professional resources, by the purchase of healthcare material, and promoting research against COVID-19. Up to 3.5 million people has been protected by temporal employment regulation subsidies (ERTES) keeping their contracts and progressively returning to their works. All these actions represent a different response model from the public administrations compared to 2008 crisis.

In addition, social protection included specific support programs have been developed for self-employed collectives, with over 1.4 million beneficiaries, representing 45% of all the self-employment in Spain. Besides, cash-flow and liquidity tools have been implemented for companies, with an especial focus on SMEs, aiming to avoid a bigger economic structural impact, favouring an economic recovery passing the worst phase of the health crisis.

Extending protection to the citizens has had as the main action the implementation of the Minimum Vital Income, a stable mechanism, guaranteeing a minimum common standard for everyone, independently of the region of residence. This means a historic decision on the efforts for eradicating poverty and inequalities in Spain, by recognizing a new social right. Besides, the evictions and the basic household supplies cuts have been forbidden, including mortgage moratoriums and guaranteeing the right of an appropriate household. In addition, contingency specific plans to protect women against gender violence and to guarantee education right of vulnerable collectives, have been designed. All this set of measures aims to not leaving anyone behind, strengthening the commitment of the public administrations with citizens and the 2030 Agenda principles.

## Putting in place the governance to make the 2030 Agenda real

Spanish government's commitment with the 2030 Agenda is represented by a governance architecture adapted to the new ministries design and the executive functions of the new Vice-presidency and the Secretariat of State for the 2030 Agenda. A design based on the path started in the previous term, reinforcing institutional cooperation tools as it is required by the 2030 Agenda. The governance sets three levels of organization, interconnecting and providing an integral vision of all the joint efforts.

The first dialogue level is the Governmental Delegated Commission for the 2030 Agenda allowing a coordination between ministries, to promote, follow up and evaluate the policies and actions required for the compliance of the 2030 Agenda, guaranteeing the consistency of the multiple policies.

The second level of coordination is focused on the regional and local governments, through the Sectorial Conference for the 2030 Agenda. The Conference will allow to create a dialogue, and vertical exchange between the three levels of the administration. The final level, the Sustainable Development Council has a relevance as the space of joint work with platforms and entities from the civil society, the companies sector, and the university. This scheme concludes with an oversight and supervision in the parliament of the governmental actions, giving a feedback to the citizens through their representatives.

## Commitment and contribution of the autonomous regions and the local entities.

Much of the achievement of the SDGs is made at the local and regional level. The involvement of the autonomous communities and local entities is essential and the progress reported by incorporating the perspective of the 2030 Agenda into their action is very significant. The report shows its commitment to the 2030 Agenda as the roadmap to articulate its government action. To perform these tasks, the regional governments have developed a number of mechanisms for collaboration, dialogue and joint work, both internal and external, with different key actors, as well as alliances and projects for their implementation. Most of them have departments at the government with executive powers and their own resources in terms of the 2030 Agenda implementation. In eight of the analysed cases are dependent on the Presidency of the Government or the Department of the Presidency and, in eight in departments with responsibilities in specific areas. In two cases the management is done through interdepartmental commissions and coordination groups. A further coordination is done through spaces for dialogue and cooperation with local entities, as well as with social, economic and academic actors.

Up to 16 autonomous regions and cities have produced and approved plans and strategies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the exercises of regulation and budget alignment are increasing, as well as the definition of statistical indicators systems adapted to their territorial reality. Finally, it highlights that the majority of regional parliaments have set up monitoring committees for the 2030 Agenda and have promoted statements and resolutions for the promotion and acceleration of the implementation, monitoring and accounting the progress of the SDG implementation.

### **Everybody and all the efforts to ensure life and planet sustainability**

Social, economic and academic entities and platforms have played a key and essential role to achieve the progress of the 2030 Agenda in Spain, inside and outside our borders. Since 2015 they have demonstrated a clear involvement and a strategic vision about the promotion and appropriation of the SDGs, which has contributed to accelerate the commitment of the governments at different levels. A key element of his work has to do with promoting initiatives and actions aimed to achieve the ownership of the 2030 Agenda both within its social base and in interpellation to public administrations to advance the SDGs. 2030 Agenda considered as a transformative tool strengthens its work of dissemination and social and political impact, promoting and creating multi-sector alliances. Alliances that have had the positive effect of promoting synergies between the different social movements, favouring joint and common initiatives to transform reality from an inter-sectorial perspective.

### **A sustainable development strategy as the roadmap for the reconstruction**

The health, economic and crisis created by COVID-19 has generated an unknown impact on the economy, leaving a social footprint, with still undetected effects. We are going to need time and a great effort from all the actors and the whole society to get out of this crisis without leaving anyone behind. In this context, the 2030 Agenda becomes even more relevant and should be the essential roadmap to tackle the social and economic reconstruction of our country.

This crisis has shown the crucial importance of protecting the public and common services, what belongs to everyone, to ensure the lives and well-being of all people. For this reason, rebuilding the common in the next period is the most important upcoming task and essential to comply with the 2030 Agenda Goals reaching the end of the decade as the country we wish. To reach these goals, we need consistent tools, among them, the Sustainable Development Strategy, boosted from September will be the core. A strategy that must collect the wide consensus and lessons learned from this crisis.



The first transversal consensus left by the COVID-19 pandemic is the requirement to strengthen our public health system, protecting its investment and the rights of its professionals, as well as the construction of a national care system, taking out from the invisibility the role of women, giving them the recognition and funding they deserve. This is an opportunity to reduce the gender gap and to generate quality employment dignifying the professional task of care, which is currently carried out in extremely precarious conditions.

Likewise, it is urgent to address the ecological transition promoting a green reindustrialization process, restoring our industrial sovereignty and generating qualified employment. For this task, the role of science and innovation will be key, considering it as a national policy and ensuring enough resources. Finally, this strategy must also address the extreme weakness and lack of security of the employment in Spain, increasing the protection and strengthening labour rights as the path to advance social justice.

To conclude, the Progress Report 2020 has demonstrated how Spain is matching words with actions, implementing the required progress for complying with the 2030 Agenda and building a fairer and more sustainable country. This is a first step to be continued by the next drafting process of the Sustainable Development Strategy, which represents the opportunity to define together for the medium and long term, the project of country and society we want to be by 2030. For this task, the contribution of each and every actor will be required, from the regional and local governments to the civil society groups, the public and private sectors, and academia. Spain and the world are facing decisive times and the future Sustainable Development Strategy must respond to this challenge by configuring itself as the plan from Spain to Spain, a framework for action that we will elaborate with the participation of everybody, to design the country we want to be in 2030. of everybody, to design the country we want to be in 2030.



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