

WORK

You are going to read a series of articles about work in Spain. Underline any words related to this topic. Try to use them when discussing the questions after each piece of news.

The job vacancies that Spain constantly struggles to fill

In a country with persistently high unemployment, there is a dire need for digital experts but also for mechanics, crane operators and ham carvers

The Spanish labor market is ill-equipped to cover all its bases. While the unemployment rate is at 13.8%, there are also vacancies that go unfilled due to a lack of qualified professionals

“We need specialists in artificial intelligence, application developers, customer management experts, and people who have gone through vocational training, who are currently as hard to come by as technological staff,” says Javier Blasco, director of the Adecco Group Institute, which is part of the human resources and temporary staffing firm Adecco Group. “It happens with warehouse workers, forklift operators and ham carvers. There are a lot of jobs with a high demand but very low supply. “

The construction sector is short on specialists in wall masonry and ironworks, as well as crane and other machine operators. And in the industrial sector there is demand for forklift drivers, welders and specialists in electromechanics. “These are well-paid workers because their position requires great physical effort and subjects them to thermal stress,” explains Blasco.

According to the experts, anyone specializing in these fields will have no trouble finding employment. In general, workers emerging from vocational training can expect an annual gross salary of between €25,000 and €35,000, although those with the most sought-after skills will be on €40,000.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which professions are very well-paid these days? Why does society value those workers highly?
- Are there any jobs you think are not paid enough? Why doesn't society value those workers highly enough?
- If every job paid the same amount of money, which job would you prefer to do?
- What's the worst job you've ever had, and what did you learn from it?
- Who has influenced you most when it comes to how you approach your work?
- Have you ever been unemployed? How long for?
- Have you ever been fired from a job? When? Why?
- Is unemployment a great problem where you live now?
- If you had to choose between a satisfying job and a well-paid one, which would you choose?
- Who among the people you know has the most interesting job? What is it?

Spain has most inflexible working conditions in the European Union

The stereotype often involves starting work late, taking two-hour-long lunches and having an afternoon siesta, but Spaniards actually work some of the longest and most inflexible hours in Europe, something which is having a serious impact on work-life balance, according to a new study released on Tuesday.

And while companies in many northern European countries, such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, allow their employees to work remotely when they need to, the concept of working from home is alien in Spain: 92 percent of Spaniards "never work from home" says the study.

"There is a clear lack of remote working culture in Spain which leaves us lagging behind in Europe, way behind countries such as Sweden, Luxembourg, the UK, Austria, France and Portugal," said Eduardo Hertfelder, president of IFP.

In the report, the IFP calls for Spain to take measures to improve work flexibility, including promoting flexible working hours, increasing parental leave and getting rid of the culture of "presenteeism" (staying late at the office for fear of not being seen to be working).

It is not just for the sake of employees' work-life balance that companies should become more flexible; it could also be good for business.

- Work from home is better than work in the office. Do you agree?
- How have working conditions changed in recent years? Have they improved? If so, in what ways?
- How many vacation days do workers in your country usually get per year? Is it enough?
- What is the usual retirement age in your country? Should it change? What would be a more appropriate retirement age?

Gender gap: Spanish women do twice as much unpaid work as men

Given Spain's gender pay gap of women earning 19.3 percent less than men, female employees will effectively start working for free on October 21st, according to a report by London-based Expert Market

Spain is still suffering the effects of a deep economic crisis and unemployment currently stands at 20 percent, the second highest in the European Union after Greece. The number of women in Spain searching for work rises to 22.3 percent.

"Generally, more men are in work than women in Spain, so this limiting of opportunities can impact the amount women earn," explains Watts, who adds that the secondary educations for women in Spain fall far below the EU average. "Without higher education qualifications it can be hard for women to progress into higher-paying, more senior roles," he said.

Spanish women are also "over-represented" in certain sectors in Spain compared to the EU average, such as retail and food service activities.

"These are traditionally lower paying jobs so have an impact on the overall gender gap".

In Spain management and supervisory positions are overwhelmingly held by men, according to a report by the European Commission published in 2015.

"Within each sector men are more often promoted than women and paid better as a consequence. This trend culminates at the very top, where amongst CEOs less than 4 percent are women," the report said.

Spanish women also take on the majority of the household chores and spend much more time on unpaid tasks such as childcare or caring for elderly relatives, even if they too hold down a job.

- We should have a quota for women on Corporate boards
- Are there jobs that men do better than women do? How about vice versa?
- Some jobs, like president of a country, are powerful, but come with a lot of responsibility. How do you handle responsibility? Do you want more?

More general questions

- Recipients of unemployment benefits should be recruitable by municipalities for work
- Self-employment is better than working for an employer
- Unpaid internships should be banned
- The minimum wage should be higher
- Retirement age: higher or lower?