### Polity IV Country Report 2010: Spain

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#### Polity IV Component Variables

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#### Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)

End Date | 22 November 1975 | Begin Date | 30 December 1978

#### Polity Fragmentation: No

### Constitution

1978

### Executive(s)

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriquez Zapatero (PSOE); initially elected by National Assembly 14 March 2004; reelected 9 and 11 April 2008, 46.9%

### Legislature

Bicameral:
- Congress of Deputies (350 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 9 March 2008)
  - Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE): 169
  - Popular Party (PP): 154
  - Other parties: 27

- Senate (264 seats; 208 members are directly elected; 56 appointed by regional legislatures; most recent elections, 9 March 2008; note – number of appointed members increased to 56 as of 2008.)
  - PP: 101
  - PSOE: 88
  - Other parties: 19
  - Appointed members: 56

### Judiciary

General Council of the Judicial Power
Narrative Description: ¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)
The prime minister of Spain is recruited through a competitive multiparty electoral system. The majority party (or majority coalition) in the National Assembly selects the chief executive. Members of the National Assembly are popularly elected. In parliamentary elections held on 9 March 2008, Prime Minister José Luís Rodriguez Zapatero’s party, the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), won 169 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies, falling just short of a majority. The main opposition party, the Popular Party (PP), won 153 seats and the remaining seats were scattered among small regional parties. Zapatero’s re-election failed on the first ballot marking the first time the leader of the largest party failed to win on the first ballot since the electoral system was established in 1975. Zapatero’s minority government must seek support from smaller parties on an issue-by-issue basis in order to pass its initiatives into policy.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)
The parliamentary structure of governance found in Spain places significant constraints on the autonomy of the chief executive. The prime minister is elected by, and is directly accountable to, the national legislature. The judiciary is independent from executive influence.

Political Participation: Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)
Spain has a competitive multiparty political system. Freedom of speech and assembly are constitutionally protected and the civil rights of citizens are generally respected. However, conflict between the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) separatist movement (the largest terrorist group in Europe) and the central government continues to threaten democratic practices in this country. ETA violence, which has claimed over eight hundred lives since the 1960s, resulted in the formation of government-sponsored anti-terrorist death squads in the 1980s. After a temporary cease-fire in 1998-99, the ETA resumed its terrorist activities.

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors’ alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.