

## SPAIN

### **1. State Council of Older Persons**

The Council participates in the political decision-making process according to its role as a consultative body within the framework of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. It was created in 1994, its main aim being to raise with the Administration the issues and concerns of older people. The Council also advises and informs on questions raised by different Ministries and institutions about matters concerning the conditions and the quality of life of older people.

Among its specific functions, are the following:

- to represent older people within national and international institutions and organizations.
- to launch proposals on streamlining and prioritizing policies towards older persons in the State framework.
- to collaborate in the development of associationism, promoting its participation in society.
- to propose studies and research concerning the living standards of older people.

The State Council of Older Persons is made up of 61 counselors, among them:

• *Representatives of the Administration*

- the Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality
- the State Secretary of Social Services and Equality and the General Director of IMSERSO (Institute for Older Persons and Social Services)
- representatives of the State: representatives of the Regions and representatives of Local Entities (Municipalities and Provinces)

• *Representatives of Civil Society:*

- associations and federations of older people,
- representatives of Regional Councils of Older Persons,
- one representative from the General Council of Spanish People Abroad.

Its composition is representative at all levels: national, regional and local, with both Administrations and civil society represented. On its highest level, the State Council comprises a president (the Minister) and three vice-presidents, one of whom is the representative of the older persons.

### **2. Website *EnclaveRural***

Website promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality throughout the IMSERSO, in cooperation with the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Environment, throughout the General Directory for Rural Development. This social initiative started in 2009 and tries to make good practices more visible and improve older and disabled persons' quality of life.

The aim of the website is to provide a public space to better see the effort of the associative movement and of any entity, private or public, to improve the life of those persons' life who, due to their age or different disabilities, don't encounter the same opportunities that the rest of the population in a rural environment. With this view, we try to contribute to the standardization of actions, to sustainable rural development and to avoid territorial discrimination.

The most important goals to be highlighted would be:

- To emphasize good practices concerning both older and disabled persons in a rural environment that could be used as a guide to those who work for the improvement of their quality of life and their families.

- To show a set of innovative measures that makes easier the exchange of knowledge and experiences in relation to proximity services in the rural environment.
- To promote the creation of good quality proximity services in the rural environment taken good practices as a model.
- To acknowledge social and publicly the good practices already existing and their protagonists.
- To make it easier the contact with good practices that could be seen as a referent to promote their generalization, to start other experiences of intervention and to other experiences already existing.
- To contribute to the creation of proximity services, to sustainable development of the rural area, creating new jobs which make it easier to the population to continue living in the rural area.
- To contribute to stop territorial discrimination of especially vulnerable persons.

### **3. Social tourism for older persons**

This programme is organised by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, through Imsero, the Institute for Older Persons and Social Services. It is included in the active ageing programmes run by Imsero with two main lines of activities:

*Social Holiday program.* It is partially funded by Imsero, what allows older people to enjoy holidays at a price that is very attractive and affordable for them during the low season from October to June. It offers variety in terms of trip types and lengths: Holidays in coastal areas, trips can last 15, 10 or 8 days; Cultural tours, six-day routes; Nature Tourism, 5 days.

*Social Hydrotherapy Scheme.* Basic treatments under medical report with reduced prices for older people through Imsero. With this program many Health Resorts are open all the year, increasing employment rates in low season. Usually the length of program is 12 days.

#### ***The beneficiaries:***

*Social Holiday program* is addressed to people over 65, people receiving retirement pensions from the Public Pensions System, and other pensioners who are 60 or older. This includes people with Spanish nationality living in other countries. They can be accompanied by their spouse, and the spouse does not need to meet the age or pension requirements. In the case of “Holiday for older persons”, they can also be accompanied by their disabled son or daughter who is handicapped to a degree of 45% or more.

*Social Hydrotherapy Scheme* is addressed to Spanish citizens and the nationals of other countries may benefit from a place in the Social Hydrotherapy Scheme If they are the recipients of Social Security System retirement or invalidity pensions, in all cases, or widower / widow or other pensions, only if the beneficiary has reached the age of sixty years. Spaniards residing abroad may also benefit from the places, as long as they are receiving a public pension, if they are over the age of 60 years and meet the rest of the requirements. The applicant may be accompanied by their spouse or partner, for whom there is no obligation regarding receipt of a Social Security pension.

The number of applicants is much higher than the number of places offered. Selection is made by Imsero, using criteria that evaluate, first and foremost, the age of the applicants, their incomes and whether or not they have participated in previous years.

#### ***Services available:***

Beneficiaries of the Holidays program have the following: Round trip travel; Full board and lodging in a double room, (or in a single room with an additional charge in the case of Holidays); A special diet, if

needed; Complementary healthcare in addition to Social Security healthcare; Leisure and free time activities; Learning about new technologies; Group insurance policy.

The Hydrotherapy program services are the same 3,4,5,6 and 7. Differences: apart of deliver therapeutic treatments (rheumatology, respiratory, digestive, renal and urinary track, dermatological, nerves), they must travel to the spa resorts on their own.

The holiday programme for the elderly has been awarded the “Jean Foucher” prize in Canada and the tourism merit plaque awarded by the Spanish government.

With regard to this programme, Imserso belongs to the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) as part of the Board of Directors.

This programme is considered a good practice example due to the results achieved:

***Regarding the elderly:***

- It improves quality of life and promotes their personal development.
- It encourages participation in cultural activities and provides new knowledge.
- It fosters self-determination and the establishment of new friendships.
- It encourages personal hobbies and improves emotional well-being.
- It promotes elderly people’s image in society..
- In terms of health, preventive and rehabilitative

According to the latest surveys taken of its participants, the degree of satisfaction with the programme is over 90%, with 96% of these participants expressing their intention of repeating

***Regarding the creation and upkeep of employment:***

The 2007-2008 season’s impact on direct employment was 13.343 people. Indirect--- Total employment created during the months of the programme is estimated at 80,000 positions. During the 2010-2011 season, total employment is over 105,000 employees.

***Regarding the promotion of economic activity:***

- It has been growing in line with a philosophy of sustainable tourism, better distributing groups of people throughout the year, while respecting the culture of the destinations.
- An experience of 27 and 24 years in both lines of the Social Tourism Program for older persons have led to optimal use of transport and accommodation places, achieving high quality standards and reduced costs for Imserso and for participants.
- It is an economically profitable programme. For every euro invested by Imserso, €1.50 is recovered.

The following are significant examples in terms of this programme’s evolution and growth that show its importance: the 19 hotels that participated in the programme in 1985 has increased to 307 today; the 100 travel agencies has increased to 9,300 Spas

In the case of spa resorts an added value is that they are mostly located in rural areas and , consequently there is a dynamization of economy

After 27 years of experience, the program is still working with great social and economic impact with a growing demand from the older persons and geographical extension

*Access Link:*

[http://www.imserso.es/imserso\\_01/envejecimiento\\_activo/vacaciones/index.htm](http://www.imserso.es/imserso_01/envejecimiento_activo/vacaciones/index.htm)

[http://www.imserso.es/imserso\\_01/envejecimiento\\_activo/termalismo/index.htm](http://www.imserso.es/imserso_01/envejecimiento_activo/termalismo/index.htm)