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Investigación, periodismo y migraciones

MELILLA AND THE BORDER EXCEPTIONALITY

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INDEX

SUMMARY

I. THE BORDER AS IDENTITY

From exceptionality to impunity

Melilla: Illustration and laboratory of a broken migratory model

II. THE GEOPOLITICAL EXCEPTIONALITY

III. ECONOMIC, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PARTICULARITIES

IV. THE EXCEPTIONAL RELEVANCE OF MIGRATION, SECURITY AND CONTROL

ANNEX 1 THE REPATRIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN AND SUMMARY DEPORTATIONS

ANNEX 2 THE AGREEMENT ON NON-ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

ANNEX 3 LAW-ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES PRESENT IN MELILLA

- Local Police of MelillaPort Police
- National Police
- Customs Surveillance Service (SVA)
- Civil Guard
- Army
- National Intelligence Centre (CNI)
- A future European Border and Coast Guard?

SUMMARY

Melilla is an exceptional territory. A European enclave in the African continent, a border to emphasise one of the deepest inequality gaps in the planet. This border characterizes and defines the city: it isolating Melilla geographically, defining its economy and giving Melilla an essential role in migration control policies to Europe. These three features tell the story about the exceptionality of the autonomous city, which in turn protects the impunity of its authorities before judicial, political and journalistic scrutiny. This perpetuates a broken migratory model of which Melilla is an illustrative example and a political laboratory. With this work, the porCausa Foundation seeks to contribute to an informed public debate about the characteristics and consequences of a system, and the possibility of offering alternatives.

I. THE BORDER AS IDENTITY

The Autonomous City of Melilla is a territorial and administrative space defined by its geographical position. Its isolation and its condition as a European land border with Africa –being Ceuta the only other case– determine the economic, political and social structure of a city that separates two universes of prosperity and institutional development. Only in terms of income, according to the [World Bank](#), the kilometres of fence that separate Spain from Morocco represent an inequality gap of more than 9 to 1. The particularities extend to the movement of people and goods, subject to the informality of some commercial transactions and a specific regulation that considers the relationship of neighbourhood with Morocco.

But the exceptionality of Melilla as a border city goes much further. The about 90,000 inhabitants and 12 km² that make up this space are perceived as a threatened territory which must be protected. Morocco has never recognized Spanish sovereignty over Melilla and Ceuta, but the main authorities are mostly concerned about border crime and, increasingly, irregular immigration. Over the past three decades, Melilla has been gaining relevance as a gateway for migration flows from Morocco, the sub-Saharan region and, more recently, Middle East countries.

The accumulation of these elements results in a political economy of its own, with some outstanding features:

- **The existence of a [Migration Control Industry](#) in Southern Europe:** As the investigations published by porCausa and others organisations have shown, the sophisticated immigration control policies of the European states have generated an ecosystem of companies, organisations and individuals that receives multimillion dollar amounts to manage control, reception and return of immigrants. These actors play a fundamental role in the economic, institutional and even architectural composition of the territories where they operate.

They also have a strong influence in the creation of a public narrative on migrations as a threat to security, which justifies in turn greater investments.

- **The administrative and geographical exceptionality of the autonomous city**, which excludes Melilla from the Schengen area of free mobility of persons, grants special fiscal conditions to its habitants and businesses, and feeds networks of informal trade between both sides of the border.
- Occasionally, border isolation also translates into **political isolation**, which makes Melilla and other similar territories - Ceuta, Lampedusa, Lesbos, Valletta– in bridgeheads that must face by themselves the social, administrative and humanitarian challenges of migratory flows. Territories that the rest of Europe has chosen to ignore.

From exceptionality to impunity

The real or constructed threats that Melilla suffers contribute to the self-perception of the local population and its leaders, and justify a de facto state of exception, closing the city on itself and where they ignore or distort the rules that oblige all citizens and territories of the rest of Spain. The perpetuation of the so-called automatic border returns constitutes just an example of the string of political and legal irregularities that characterizes the action of local and state authorities: the conditions of the reception centres, the lack of protection of many immigrant children, the political and economic endogamy, the complicity of some media with presence in Melilla and the disproportionate dependence on public resources.

It is not easy to break this self-absorption. Over the past decades, numerous local and external representatives of civil society, parties, religious groups, judges, journalists, ombudsman and international organizations have tried to introduce greater transparency, demand accountability and guarantee respect for fundamental rights in this territory. But his effort has hit a tangle of political and economic interests in which external authorities rarely want or can intervene.

In the [city-cage](#) of Melilla, border exceptionalism translates into impunity.

Melilla: illustration and laboratory of a broken migratory model

Each of these elements helps to perpetuate within the Autonomous City deep internal inequalities and a broken migratory model whose direct and indirect consequences go far beyond acceptable. But the political importance of Melilla escapes the limits of its territory. Similarly with other border cities inside and outside Europe, this territory is at the same time an epitome of the global migration management model and a laboratory of the policies that have been developed for three decades.

The next pages briefly develop three areas on which the exceptional character of Melilla as border city has been built: geopolitical, economic and security.

II. THE GEOPOLITIC EXCEPTIONALITY

Although it belongs to the territory of a Member State, Melilla has a special status within the EU. On the one hand, its GDP per capita is between 75 and 90% of the average EU-27, which makes it a transition region and makes it a beneficiary of the European Regional Development Fund¹ and the European Social Fund². On the other, its particular location not only leaves it on the margins of free mobility and defence agreements that reach the rest of the Spanish territory, but it also adds to the relevance of the relationship with Morocco.

- **Exclusion of the Schengen area:** According to the conditions of accession to the free mobility space of Schengen (1991), Spain would continue to apply to goods and travellers from Melilla the existing controls prior to their introduction into the customs territory of the EU. It also continues to apply the specific visa exemption regime for small border traffic between Melilla and the Moroccan province of Nador. Finally, for the nationals Moroccans not resident in the province of Nador who would like to enter exclusively in Melilla, a multiple-entry visa system limited to the city would remain in place.
- **Melilla is excluded from NATO automatic defence response mechanisms**, although the Spanish State may request an intervention under the “emerging threats” assumption.
- **The “special relationship” with Morocco:** The relationship between Spain and Morocco has always been complex and variable³. Since Morocco independence in 1956, the relations between both countries have been marked by latent conflicts (Western Sahara, claims about Spanish enclaves in North Africa and fishery resources, to name a few examples); with an intense bilateral agenda (as neighbours and national and European border, mainly due to the terrorist threat, drug trafficking, smuggling and lately the irregular immigration); and for strategic relations and regional rivalry in the Maghreb (mainly with Algeria and with France).

1 The [Melilla FEDER Operational Program 2014-2020](#) has the specific objective of promoting economic growth supporting the intelligent growth and sustainability of its resources, including accessibility, tourism promotion and cultural heritage.

2 [ESF 2014-2020](#), to support the creation, access, and improvement of employment and working conditions

3 See Haizam Amirah Fernández: Foreign Policy, [Elcano Relations Spain-Morocco Report 2015](#).

- **Melilla is a strategic point of bilateral and plurilateral relations:** The situation of this city and that of Ceuta were excluded from the [Treaty of friendship, good neighbourhood and cooperation of 1991](#), where Spain and Morocco institutionalised a bilateral framework of periodic meetings at different political and administrative levels, but no mention is made of the territories claimed by Morocco, like Melilla. Europe has tried to facilitate these relations with a Morocco-EU framework agreement that recognizes the strategic importance of this association¹.
- **The relevance of atypical trade:** The Melilla-Nador international border measures only 9.6 km and consists of a triple border fence (two belonging to Spain and one to Morocco) to avoid immigration and commercial smuggling to Spain. The geographic isolation of Melilla and the visa exemption for Moroccan neighbours have facilitated the consolidation of an informal commercial market on which many families depend on both sides of the border², but generates at the same time important fiscal and social distortions, as illustrated by [the extreme vulnerability of porters](#). According to [Spanish government data](#), the daily intensity of the atypical trade in Melilla has gone from 1,500 daily porters in early 2015 to 6,000 in 2017. After Morocco unilaterally closed the commercial custom in Beni Enzar in August 2018, this atypical trade continues to develop through the passage of “Chinatown” where, according to [Civil Guard calculations](#), 3,000 porters pass each day with duty-free merchandise.

III. ECONOMIC, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PARTICULARITIES

- **High economic and social vulnerability:** According to official data from the second quarter of 2018, unemployment in the Melilla is 28%, just ahead of Ceuta and practically doubling the Spanish average (15.3%). Its GDP per capita (17,945 euros in 2017) places it penultimate among the Spanish regions, only above Extremadura.
- **The State as an economic support:** The public sector is the largest employment contractor and stabiliser in Melilla (50.3% of the occupation, according to the [National Statistics Institute, INE](#)). The private business network consists mainly of small companies and microenterprises of the tertiary sector, oriented to the Moroccan market.
- **A special economic and fiscal regime:** Without becoming a tax haven, Melilla falls into the category of free customs territory, which places it outside of the Common Customs Union of the EU although harmonized with European regulations.

¹ [The Association Agreement](#) is in force since 2000. In 2008 it was granted an “advanced” status within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In 2013 [the Association Agreement for the EU-Morocco mobility](#) (which guarantees technical and financial support to Morocco in the area of irregular migration and promotion of circular mobility through labor migration) and a new plan for action under the ENP were signed. In addition, Morocco is the first country in the region that has entered negotiations to establish a visa facilitation regime and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU.

² See [traffic volume of people and vehicles 2016-2017](#), according to government data (23May, 2018).

The special conditions of the territory include an indirect local tax (Tax on Production, Services and Import, with the Spanish acronym of IPSI)¹ that replaces the Spanish VAT, being the main source of public financing in Melilla; exemptions and 50% deductions on both the company tax and income; various deductions bonuses on fees to Social Security; and an exemption from customs duty on exports to the EU customs territory. Melilla does not have the same competences as the main 17 Spanish regions, as is the case with education.

- **The multiple exchanges between Melilla-Nador have become the centre of development and social relations:** This southern border, at the same time permeable and impregnable, has also profited from its remoteness and distance from national main cities, Madrid, Rabat or Casablanca, which has allowed this particular melting pot, and the search for resources in the surroundings to solve the shortages experienced by both towns. The border with Morocco creates complex commercial, labour, family, services and leisure relationships. The border doesn't just set a territorial separation, but connects populations on both sides.
- **The irregularities and administrative peculiarities are numerous**, some of them with serious legal implications:
 - Absence of a career inspector – senior national civil servant responsible for overseeing public procurement, independent of political power - since at least 1996. The local administration must comply with a provisional auditor, designated by the Melilla government.
 - The Spanish Court of Auditors has expressed different complaints regarding Melilla: breach of deadlines for the submission of reports, lack of documentation on public procurement, and designation of provisional auditors whose impartiality has been questioned on several occasions.
 - Melilla has been part of numerous anti-corruption operations, including Opera, Tosca, Montecristo, Abogados, Arquitecto, Campo de Golf and Voto por Correo.
 - For 20 years, Melilla has hosted one of the most important legal events of Spain, the Legal Conference Enrique García Badillo, organised by Blas Jesús Imbroda, brother of Melilla President Juan José Imbroda.
 - Deficiencies in legal aid to migrants have been reported, some of this legal aid involving relatives of President Imbroda.
 - In Melilla, the Historical Memory Law is not applied, as reflected in its current streets, which contains numerous names figures related to the Franco era, as well as by the presence of monuments that extolling Franco in different parts of the city.
 - Melilla has the highest vote by mail rate in Spain. Both the PP and the two main opposition parties (CPM and PSOE) are charged for alleged purchase of votes.

¹ [Law 8/1991 of 25 March](#) approves the arbitration on production and importation in Ceuta and Melilla. Following Law 13/1996, of 30 December, on Fiscal Measures, Administrative and Social Order, it is called **Tax on Production, Services and Import in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla (IPSI)**.

- **The urgent reality of unaccompanied foreign children:** Melilla is the Spanish city with the highest concentration of foreign minors not accompanied (MENA), a vulnerable group whose basic rights are not being guaranteed. The centres that house these children and young people are at times at triple its maximum capacity, resulting in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions denounced by numerous organizations and the Ombudsman. Often, many of these children report being victims of aggression, sexual abuse and other ill-treatment, but most prosecuted cases end up being acquitted due to lack of evidence. There is neither a dignified welcome nor an effective strategy for the socio-laboural integration of these children and teenagers, despite the more than 15 million euros per year that Spain provides for this collective in Melilla.

IV. THE EXCEPTIONAL RELEVANCE OF SECURITY AND MIGRATORY CONTROL

- **Melilla is an exceptionally securitized city:** Both public and private security are omnipresent in Melilla's politics, society and identity. According to [government data](#), in February 2017 there were 553 national police and 648 civil guards stationed in Melilla, that is to say a police officer or civil guard for every 72 inhabitants, the highest ratio by region in the country (Murcia, for example, has one agent for each 275 inhabitants)¹. This ratio does not count the army, local police or private security.
- **The reasons for the fortification of Melilla are based mainly on the border management:** a geographical situation that turns the city into a [national strategic](#) priority; the fight against illegal business (trafficking in human beings, jihadist terrorism, smuggling, drug trafficking and organised crime); custody of border crossings; and irregular immigration control.
- **Migration control has become one of the priorities of the relations between both regions:** Morocco is not only a transit country for a mixed flow of economic and forced migration, but also of origin (the Moroccan community is the largest one of non-EU immigrants in Spain) and even of destination for migrants who are trapped in their territory in transit to Europe. Morocco not only plays tactically with this position in its relations with Europe, but has also made efforts to order the migratory flows through regularizations. The city of Marrakech welcomed recently the signing of the Global Compact for Migration and King Mohamed VI has been designated within the framework of the African Union as the thematic leader in migratory matters.

¹ <https://elfarodeceuta.es/ceuta-triplica-la-ratio-nacional-guardias-policias-habitante> <https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/02/26/media.html>

- **Due to its national and European border status, cooperation in security has been growing:** mixed Hispanic-Moroccan maritime, land and air patrols, operational in both territories; a joint analysis and research team on immigration; or the participation of the Ministry of Work, Migration and Social Security in the voluntary return program of the International Organisation for Migration for irregular Sub-Saharan immigrants who are found in Morocco. Ceuta and Melilla have received an [increase of agents](#) by the Civil Guard¹.
- **The physical and administrative structure of Melilla reflects this order of priorities:** the securitisation of public space includes the protection of [Critical infrastructure](#) (public buildings, energy, transport network, hospitals, port and airport), as well as the maintenance of public order and security. Within the political hierarchy of Melilla, the main authorities are the Delegation of Government - which represents, directs and supervises all the services of the General State Administration present in Melilla– and the Ministry of [Citizen Security](#) of the local government.
- **An army of armies:** the deployment of public security forces and private in Melilla constitutes an anomaly with respect to almost any other Spanish territory point. The range of police and military organisations includes (see Annex 3) the local Melilla police, the port police, several National Police Corps, a Civil Guard command, an operation unit of the Customs Surveillance Service, commanders of the land, air and navy armies, and personnel of the National Intelligence Centre. Additionally, an indeterminate amount of private security personnel is hired for public functions such as surveillance of reception centres. The numerous existing units in the field carry out joint or coordinated operations with the Frontex and [Europol](#) agencies, in addition to having liaison officers between Spain and Morocco.
- **Despite everything, they fall short:** Despite having the highest proportion of police and civil guards per inhabitant in Spain, its unions and associations, together with the local government, keep to demand greater staffing and even greater collaboration by the army for border security².
- **A single operational command at the border:** the accumulation of law-enforcement bodies led the Government to create in August 2018 an [unique command for operational cooperation](#) on the border and the Strait of Gibraltar. At the top there will be a General of the Civil Guard, who will lead a coordination centre responsible for coordinating and optimizing all actions related to irregular immigration in the Strait of Gibraltar, Alboran Sea and adjacent waters, including rescue and reception operations. This centre will integrate the representatives of the different institutions, may request the reinforcement of means and propose new operations or procedures as required by changes in migration flows.

1 In Melilla these are 3 Rapid Intervention Modules, about 60 agents, from the Reserve Group and Security and a helicopter of the Civil Guard Air Service

2 <http://www.europapress.es/ceuta-y-melilla/noticia-augc-pide-300-guardias-civiles-mas-melilla-toldos-ag-ua-verano-frontera.html>

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/sevilla/augc-pide-300-guardias-civiles-mas-en-melilla-y-toldos-y-ag-ua-en-verano-en-la-frontera.htm>

<https://elfarodemelilla.es/mas-agentes-en-melilla/>

APPENDIX 1

THE REPATRIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN AND THE SUMMARY DEPORTATIONS

[Agreement](#) signed in Madrid in 1992 and in force since 2012 (20 years after being signed). Main points:

- The requested State shall readmit on its territory, at the formal request of the requesting State, nationals of a third country who have entered illegally in the territory of the latter from the requested State. There is a 10-day limit for the request (with documentary justification) from the time of illegal entry (which has to be proved).
- **If the readmission is accepted:** the requested State issues a certificate stating the identity and other documents of the returned foreigner.
- **There is no readmission obligation (Art. 3):** for nationals of third-party neighbouring states of the applicant, those who were authorised to remain in the territory of the requesting State, those who have a visa or permit to stay, and those who have recognized refugee status according to the requesting State (in case that, once readmitted, it was verified that they are subject to any of these assumptions, the requesting State will readmit them).
- **Once readmitted,** foreigners a) who have the right to remain in the requested State may do so, b) those who do not have the right to remain will be returned to their home state
- **Transit of returnees** (Art. 6-8). It may be denied (Art. 8) when the foreigner: a) is prohibited from entering the requested State; b) can be charged or convicted by a Criminal Court in the requested State, for events prior to transit; c) may be charged or convicted by a Criminal Court in the State of destination; d) is at risk of abuse in the State of destination; e) when the transit is requested for the expulsion of nationals of the Maghreb countries members of the UMA / Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia).
- **A mixed Hispanic-Moroccan Committee** under the authority of the ministers of the Interior of both countries will resolve application disputes, monitor, examine and propose improvements in the application of the agreement.

Since 1992, it had only been invoked incidentally and for Moroccan citizens, until [22 August 2018](#), when they accessed through the fence of Ceuta 116 migrants and refugees and were returned to Morocco. In [20 October 2018](#), the agreement was reapplied to [55 people of sub-Saharan origin](#).

APPENDIX 2

THE AGREEMENT ON NON-ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Regarding the repatriation of unaccompanied minors (MENAS), Spain has signed three agreements (with [Romania](#), [Senegal](#) and Morocco). Within the [permanent working group of Hispanic-Moroccan on migration issues](#) created in 2003, the Interior Ministers of both countries created an ad-hoc subcommittee in 2006 of MENAS. In 2007, to strengthen this collaboration, it was signed in Rabat (effective since October 2, 2012), the [Agreement](#) on cooperation in the field of prevention of illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors (MENAS), their protection and assisted return. After the signature of this bilateral Agreement, the ad hoc Subcommittee on MENAS has met six times, the last (based on November 2017 data) on July 11, 2017.

This agreement has 3 types of measures:

- **Prevention actions (Art.3):** consisting of sensitising children, their families and society in general, about the risks that come with emigration of unaccompanied minors, as well as actions against networks of trafficking and exploitation of minors
- **Protective measures (Art.4):** The Spanish authorities will attend these minors in the same way as their nationals and will provide Moroccan authorities (no later than one month after entering Spain) all information about the child. The Moroccan authorities will proceed to the identification of the minor and family and the issuance of documentation to demonstrate his/her nationality, within three months of the delivery of documentation and/or information about the minor by the Spanish competent authorities. The last paragraph speaks of a possible agreement between the parties on the case of minors who may be subject to repatriation and also on their number, which moves away from individualization of the minor and could open the door to a quota of return agreed between the parts.
- **Actions regarding return (Art.5):** The competent Spanish authorities will decide on the assisted return of minors to their families or the guardianship institution of the country of origin, as well as their social reintegration. Both parties will cooperate in establishing a host process equipped with qualified material and human resources, both public and private, or from NGOs that work in the field of protection and repatriation of minors.

Morocco lacks a social policy for global protection of children, so it will hardly provide a reception device that guarantees the rights of the minors.

A Monitoring Committee will ensure compliance with the agreement. It will meet twice a year, alternatively in Spain and Morocco.

Within the last Migration Sector Conference and the Bureau of Interterritorial Coordination on unaccompanied foreign minors (both on 5 September 2018), the [Andalusian Government](#) together with Ceuta and Melilla asked the Central government to activate this repatriation agreement with Morocco.

APPENDIX 3

FORCES AND SECURITY BODIES PRESENT IN MELILLA

Melilla Local Police

Armed institute of civil nature, with hierarchical structure and organization, under the senior authority of the President of the City and the Security Advisor Citizen. It is regulated in the Regulation of the Local Police of Melilla, [modified in July 2017](#).

- **Functions:** Administrative Police in relation to compliance with regulations, traffic area and road safety (signaling, direction and surveillance, road education, penalties, attestations, assistance etc.), compliance with environmental regulations, surveillance of public spaces, buildings and facilities, protection and custody of assigned authorities, judicial police functions, civil protection, crime prevention, public order protection in large demonstrations in collaboration with other law-enforcement bodies, citizen security, etc. (See [Service Letter](#)).

Port Police

It is responsible for the [supervision and management of the ports](#) and they intervene in everything concerning the traffic of people and goods, citizen security and berthing at the port. It falls under on the Ministry of Development.

National Police

According to [Order INT/28/2013](#), of 18 January, as in each province of the national territory, there is a police station of the Autonomous City of Melilla (Art. 19), assuming command of the National police in its territory. In addition, the Fifth Police Intervention Unit is created, based on Granada and Málaga, with a preferential scope of action in the provinces of Granada, Málaga, Almería, Jaén and Melilla City. The Melilla Police Station is under the Superior Police Headquarters of Eastern Andalusia, based in Granada, and its basic structure is: a Provincial Operational Coordination Unit, Operational Territories Units and a General Secretariat.

In addition, as Melilla is a Border Post, it has:

- A Police Unit that performs police control functions of people entering and exiting the national territory, as well as the internal security of airports, ports and land crossings.
- Due to the non-recognition of Spanish sovereignty over Melilla, the Police Station does not have a Police Cooperation Unit, which should cooperate with neighbouring states, according to corresponding international conventions or agreements (which does exist in Tangier and Algeciras). However, it does have a Border Provincial Brigade.
- Also, for the fight against certain types of crime, Melilla could count with specific police units, organically and functionally dependent on the [General Commissariat](#) in case of need (in particular: the GEO-Special Group of Operations-, TEDAX- NRBQ – anti-terrorist unit -, UIP -Police Intervention Unit-, Mobile Brigade - Transport Police, UCRIF –Unit against Immigration Networks and Documentary Falsehoods-, BRIC -Response to Clandestine Immigration Brigade-, in addition to the General Commissariat of Information, under the Ministry of Interior).

Customs Surveillance Service (SVA)

It is a Deputy Directorate integrated in the State Tax Administration Agency (AEAT), which depends organically and functionally on the [Customs Department and Special Taxes, and belongs to the Ministry of Finance and Public Function](#). Their officials are agents of the authority (tax police and judicial police), authorised to carry arms. Their actions are aimed at repression of crimes and smuggling offenses, the fight against drug trafficking and other related crimes, money laundering, tax fraud and the underground economy. They are present on the land (border crossings), sea (ports), and in the air (airports). The SVA has an Operating Unit in Melilla, belonging to the Maritime Base of Andalusia.

Civil Guard

The [Civil Guard Command](#) in Melilla is the territorial unit in charge of carrying out in its demarcation, including territorial sea, missions entrusted to the Civil Guard. The Command is the unit of command, planning, direction, execution, management, coordination and control of services in the municipality of Melilla. They are composed of several territorial Companies and functional units or organs. The Commanders have an Operative Services Centre (COS) that coordinates 24 hours a day the of citizen security services, responding to phone requests at 062 and 112 of the Emergency Centres of the different regions.

Army

- **Land army:** [General Command of Melilla](#): (COMGEMEL) to the Command of a Division General, organically dependent on the Land Force, whose Headquarters are in Seville. The Headquarters, body to advise the Command, it is composed of a Second Headquarters of a Brigadier General that exercises the functions of Second Chief, a Secretariat, Legal Advice, Head of Economic Affairs, Office of Public Communication and a General Staff. The Command Units are located in Melilla, being its mission to prepare to establish operational organizations. They also carry out presence missions on the islands and rocks under their responsibility (Chafarinas, Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera and Peñón de Alhucemas). These units are:
 - [Battalion of the Headquarters](#) (BCG).
 - [Melilla Regulatory Group nº 52](#) (GREG 52). Infantry.
 - [Third Grand Captain I of the Legion](#) (TERLEG I). Infantry.
 - [Armoured Regiment Alcántara 10](#) (RC10). Chivalry.
 - [Mixed Artillery Regiment 32](#) (RAMIX 32). Anti-aircraft field artillery.
 - [Engineer Regiment 8](#) (RING 8). Engineers
 - [Logistics Unit 24](#) (ULOG24). Logistical support.In 2018, an operationally dependent Command of the Presence and Earth Surveillance was established. The Command that integrates a military headquarters (with a General Staff) is also integrated by the Battalion of Headquarters XVIII and the Air Force of the Army, with a Helicopter detachment.
- **Navy:** [Melilla Naval Command](#) (located in the port of Melilla), consists of two Officers-Commander and 2nd Commander-, two subofficials, one Corporal 1st / Cape and two Sailors.
- **Army of the Air:** [Air Military Command of Melilla Airport](#) (CMAA of Melilla); It has a permanent staff of military personnel that fits in a Support Squadron with two sections, one of Cars and another of Air Transportation Support (SATA).

National Intelligence Center (CNI)

The CNI is present in Melilla, as a national strategic point, on issues of jihadist terrorism, capture and return of radicalized. The exceptionality of Schengen space in the area, makes the Melilla-Nador neighbourhood especially sensitive where no visa is not required. There are no published data on the presence of the CNI in Melilla but the collaboration between the Moroccan intelligence services, Europol and Interpol is permanent. According to art 5.1 of [Law 11/2002](#) that regulates the CNI, its activities, organization and structure are secret and classified.

A future European Border and Coast Guard?

On September 12, 2018, the [European Commission](#) proposed the strengthening of the mandate of a future [European Border and Coast Guard](#) (FRONTEX) whereby, apart from giving support to Member States, a permanent body would be established with 10,000 operating agents by 2020, with its own personnel, equipment and resources, in addition to executive powers. In this case, Melilla as the southern border, even under the political authority and control of Madrid, would have the presence of agents of the permanent body of the European Guard for control tasks of identity, authorization or denial entry, interception and return of people in the external borders, among others. This new body would act only in case of emergency or at the request of the host Member State, being under the chain of command of the national authority.