

**SUMMARY OF THE PRESS RELEASE**

# **Immigration and the School System in Catalonia**

*An analysis based on PISA 2015 results*

## **PISA reveals a worrying high academic failure rate among immigrant children in Catalonia**

**Barcelona, Spain**  
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- Analysis of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in Catalonia has revealed a worrying high academic failure rate among immigrant children, which triples the ratio among their native fellow classmates.
- Specifically, in the latest edition of PISA in 2015, 32% of immigrant students could not surpass the lowest PISA level (level 1) whereas only 11% of native pupils were in that situation.
- Difference in failure rate between immigrant and native children in Catalonia is significantly higher than in the rest of Spain and specifically than other Spanish regions with similar per capita income, social development level and urban population ratio like Madrid.
- Gap in academic results between immigrant and native pupils affects boys and girls and public and private schools.
- It should be noted that PISA 2015 has not only monitored the extent to which students near the end of compulsory schooling have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society but also asked them for their opinions, attitudes and perceptions regarding the educational system and, in particular, their sense of belonging to school.
- PISA results indicate that Catalonia is the autonomous community of Spain where immigrant students feel less integrated in their school. 26% of immigrant children in Catalonia recognize that they do not feel integrated, a percentage that almost doubles that of immigrants pupils in other regions.

- The poor performance of immigrant students (most of them Spanish-speaking) in Catalonia seems related to the peculiar educational system imposed by the Catalan regional Government that denies Spanish-speaking children their right to education in their mother tongue whereas makes compulsory the so-called language immersion system, that is, the obligatory use of Catalan as the sole medium of instruction.
- In education it is widely accepted that students learn faster and better when they receive education in their own mother tongue. This has been demonstrated by numerous studies from prestigious international organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF. However, Catalan Government has never accepted international pedagogical recommendations.
- PISA results show that the current monolingual immersion-education system in Catalonia is not a factor of social cohesion. On the contrary, creates a major fracture and educational inequality between immigrant and native populations.

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*Convivencia Cívica Catalana is a non-governmental organization created in 1998 which defends citizens' rights and gives insight into Catalan reality from an independent point of view.*