

Spain Worried by Demographic Shift in Ceuta and Melilla

By **Morocco World News** - December 10, 2014



Rabat – ***Spanish sovereignty over Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves in northern Morocco, is threatened, says a new report from the Spanish Institute Elcano.***

The report says that the sustainability of Spanish sovereignty over the two enclaves will face three risks in the medium term: demographic, economic and the risk of identity.

The Spanish Think Tank reached the conclusion that the continuity of the established order since 1497, date when occupied Melilla, is seriously threatened, especially that the two autonomous cities are experiencing a “very serious baby boom with a structural impact that is completely out of phase with the recorded levels of economic growth.”

The conclusion of Elcano Institute confirms official statistics published on November 22, 2013 by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística warning about the potential loss of 2.6 million inhabitants by 2023 throughout Spain with the exception of the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla.

Economically, the report has found that the population in Melilla has a total dependence on smuggling to Morocco, "a business that dwarfs the other business activities in the city," says Elcano.

The report has also revealed that the gap between the indigenous Muslim inhabitants and the Spanish inhabitants is widening. According to the Spanish Think Tank, this gap is threatening the stability of the two cities and it results in record abstention during local and legislative elections, especially in the areas where the Muslim population is concentrated.

The major political parties in the two enclaves are urged to make concessions to seduce this electorate, says the report, adding that the political parties must prepare for the formalization of the Amazigh language and to devote a substantial budget for the education of native children.