

## China and its influence in Spain through politics

**Every communist system requires censorship, propaganda, and violence to sustain itself.** The People's Republic of China, founded in 1949 after a bloody civil war, is no exception. The Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the Tiananmen Square massacre mark key moments in the combination of repression, indoctrination, and media control that persists to this day.

In recent years, the Chinese Communist Party has developed a systematic pattern of violations against human dignity and freedom, placing it in direct conflict with the values of the West — the civilization founded on the notion of the intrinsic dignity of the human being. Let us highlight several cases of repression in the political, social, religious, cultural, and economic spheres.

China is a one-party state with no free elections or legal opposition. The Chinese Communist Party considers pluralist democracy a threat, as made clear in Document No. 9 (2013), which rejects multiparty systems, the separation of powers, and universal human rights.

### **More than 100 opposition leaders and journalists were arrested in 2021.**

In 2018, Xi Jinping eliminated presidential term limits, consolidating indefinite personal power. Under his leadership, dissidents, lawyers, and activists are arbitrarily detained for "subversion."

In Hong Kong, where the Communist Party broke its promise to maintain the freedoms of the British period, more than 100 opposition leaders and journalists were arrested in 2021 following the National Security Law imposed in 2020. The parliamentary opposition was dissolved, independent media were shut down, and historical symbols such as the Tiananmen memorial were removed.

Hong Kong is not the only case. In the rest of China, any attempt at opposition or democratic reform is punished with imprisonment or harassment. One example is Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, sentenced in 2009 and who died in custody in 2017.

### **Chinese platforms such as WeChat and Weibo delete "inappropriate" content and cooperate with the regime.**

Repression is accompanied by censorship in the media and on social networks. For example, during the pandemic, criticism of the extreme lockdowns was erased from social media, and ordinary users were punished for sharing news. During the 2022 protests, videos, hashtags, and posts were censored, and there was police repression and arrests.

Social media censorship is practiced systematically and automatically. Chinese platforms such as WeChat and Weibo delete "inappropriate" content and cooperate with the regime. Independent press is practically extinguished, and reporters who document abuses face prison sentences. Only the official version of events is tolerated.

**In 2018, a campaign began to demolish crosses and religious symbols.**

Ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities suffer specific forms of persecution. Since 2017, the Chinese government has detained more than one million Muslim Uyghurs in “reeducation” camps.

The Chinese government imposes forced cultural assimilation on Tibetans, prohibits the teaching of the Tibetan language, and imposes Mandarin. Tibetan Buddhism loyal to the Dalai Lama, who remains in exile since 1959, is restricted, and ideological reeducation programs are applied under strict surveillance.

As for Christianity, only churches controlled by the Communist Party are allowed. In 2018, a campaign began to demolish crosses and religious symbols. Religious leaders such as Pastor Wang Yi have been imprisoned — he was sentenced to nine years for leading an independent church.

**Clandestine Catholic churches also suffer persecution if they do not submit to official regime associations.**

As for sexual minorities, although homosexuality was decriminalized in 1997, censorship and persecution have increased under Xi Jinping’s leadership. For example, in 2021, WeChat deleted accounts of university groups that supported their sexual orientation, erasing their content and silencing administrators.

All these abuses demonstrate that, in the People’s Republic of China, there is a complete absence of judicial independence and, more generally, of the rule of law.

Indeed, in China there is no judicial independence: the courts are under the control of the Chinese Communist Party. Document No. 9 (2013) explicitly rejects the idea of an autonomous judiciary, labeling it “dangerous” and Western. Judges receive political instructions, especially in sensitive cases, which prevents fair trials. This results in a criminal conviction rate of over 99%, indicating an almost complete absence of acquittals.

**Repressive practices such as arbitrary detentions or prolonged pretrial detention without clear charges are common.**

Political trials against dissidents and activists are held behind closed doors, without legal safeguards. They frequently involve vague charges such as “subversion” or “state secrets.” Repressive practices such as arbitrary detentions, prolonged pretrial detention without clear charges, or the use of the extrajudicial RSDL system (“residential surveillance at a designated location”) to keep activists incommunicado are common. Among the most well-known cases is the 709 crackdown (2015), in which more than 200 lawyers and activists were detained, many of whom disappeared temporarily under RSDL. Another significant case is that of Chang Weiping, a lawyer detained in 2020, tried without guarantees, and secretly sentenced in 2023 for “subversion of state power.”

**The communist regime is sustained through mass surveillance and technological social control.**

China is the most surveilled country in the world. In 2023, it was estimated that there were over 700 million cameras. In addition, many of these cameras have advanced facial recognition. The most common social control practices using technology include:

1. Scanning pedestrians and displaying their face and name on screens if they break rules.

2. Identifying protesters at demonstrations.
3. Controlling bank withdrawals and daily movements.

A key instrument in China's control apparatus is the state "social credit" system, designed to evaluate the "trustworthiness" of citizens and companies based on their behavior. People with low scores may face severe consequences without a transparent judicial process or the possibility of appeal. For example, in 2018, more than 17.5 million airline ticket purchases and 5.5 million high-speed train trips were blocked for "discredited" citizens. The reasons for sanctions are broad and ambiguous: from failing to pay fines or debts, to committing minor infractions or expressing criticism against the government. Sanctions are not limited to mobility: those who fall onto these blacklists may also be denied access to public jobs, bank loans, or even housing.

### **China's influence on Spanish politics**

In Spanish politics, both the PSOE and the PP have been complacent with the Chinese Communist Party. In the last three years, Pedro Sánchez has traveled to the People's Republic of China three times (2023, 2024, and 2025), in addition to a previous trip in 2018. Sánchez's trusted figure in relations with the PRC is José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, co-founder of the Gate Center in 2022 together with Chinese businessman Du Fangyong, with the aim of analyzing trends in emerging regions and fostering cooperation between Spain and China. However, Fangyong has been investigated for alleged ties to espionage activities.

The influence of the People's Republic of China on the PP is also very strong. In fact, in 2013, the PP signed a Memorandum of Understanding, Exchange, and Cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This agreement, composed of six articles, establishes that both organizations commit to maintaining regular contact, organizing periodic meetings, and promoting cooperation in areas such as the economy and culture.

As part of this special relationship between the PP and the CCP, Alberto Núñez Feijóo made an official visit to China in 2017 as president of the Xunta de Galicia — the first time a Galician president made an official visit to the country.

### **Communist influence extends to personal relationships.**

Former president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has acted as an intermediary to improve the image of Chinese company Huawei in Spain. The partner of Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares was vice president of Huawei Spain, and González Pons, deputy secretary general of the PP, supported its participation in European technological development.

González Pons went so far as to state that "Cooperation between China and the EU is essential for global stability."

Esteban González Pons is not the only PP politician who has maintained favorable positions toward communist China. In 2021, PP MEP Gabriel Mato supported the EU-China Investment Agreement, highlighting its potential to open the Chinese economy to European investors and promote fairer conditions.

In 2024, the president of the Regional Government of Andalusia, Juanma Moreno, also made an official visit to China.

The combination of propaganda, violence, and censorship, together with the extensive use of social control technologies, makes the People's Republic of China a totalitarian state incompatible with the founding principles of Western civilization and, in particular, with human rights. Therefore, the relationship maintained with the Chinese Communist Party and the complicit silence in the face of its policies only serves to strengthen the oppression of the Chinese people while harming the interests of Spain and the rest of the EU.