

Linked to Exports from Latin American and Caribbean Countries, Spain, and the European Union

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Using the input–output matrices of six Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru), employment associated with exports of goods and services destined for Spain, the European Union, and a selected group of main partners was estimated. The analysis provides evidence of the interrelationships between productive structure, foreign trade, and employment, particularly employment driven by Spain’s and the EU’s imports from these six countries. The study also includes employment estimates by gender and by skill level, distinguishing three categories: low, medium, and high skill. In addition, the results help fill an important gap in the literature by allowing for an assessment of the human capital content embodied in exports. These findings complement ECLAC’s work on the technological intensity of exports— especially primary products and resource-based manufactures—both of which contain, to some extent, shares of high-skill employment. Another noteworthy contribution is the inclusion of employment estimates for the commercial services sectors of each of the selected countries.

The European Union is, for Latin America, one of its main trading and investment partners, with interests in a wide range of sectors such as infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, agriculture and agribusiness, medium- and high-technology manufacturing, as well as financial services.

To date, several studies have been conducted on the subject, addressing, among other aspects, the analysis of employment multipliers—such as those developed for the cases of Colombia and Argentina (DANE, 2017; Pizano, Arana, and Berzano, 2022, respectively)—the effects of employment on trade (Villanueva, 2014), or the estimation of employment linked to exports in selected sectors or for the economy as a whole (CNI, 2023; Durán and Castresana, 2016). However, the estimation of employment associated with exports at the level of trading partners for a group of countries, considering on the one hand the export structure and on the other the geographical distribution, is far less common.

Exports of goods and services from the six selected Latin American countries to the European Union support approximately 4.3 million jobs (11.4% of total export-related employment). Of this total, 15% corresponds to trade with Spain from the selected countries (around 636,000 jobs).

On average, 11 out of every 100 jobs in the selected countries are directly linked to exports, and at least 2 out of every 10 of these export-related jobs are directly connected to Spain.

Regarding the gender gap in export-sector employment in the selected countries—considering the European Union as the destination—the share of men (65.4%) is higher than that of women (34.6%). Although the gap is significant, it is similar to the average for export-related employment across the six countries, and somewhat narrower than the gap observed in export-related employment with China, where 70.7% of employment linked to exports corresponds to men.

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