PD CONFERENCE 2026 - PRAGUE

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MINISTERIO DE POLÍTICA TERRITORIAL Y MEMORIA DEMOCRÁTICA

Democratic memory in Spain

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Spanish Republican refugees at the entrance to France, February 1939.

Photo: Auguste Chauvin / Archives départementales des Pyrénées-Orientales / Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 4.0.

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1

Introduction to the Civil War

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Spanish Civil War, the causes…



Casas Viejas, 1933 · Campúa / Crónica BNE, via S. Gutiérrez Baena

Unequal land and development

Rural poverty and low literacy. Industry concentrated in regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country.



Arrested workers, Asturias, 1934 Illustrated Daily Courier / NAC · Public domain

Reform and social conflict

Republican reforms met opposition from landowners and established powers. Strikes and revolutionary movements suppressed by army. (Asturias prelude).



Burning of the Church of San Francisco Madrid, May 1931. Photo: José María Díaz Casariego / Municipal Newspaper Archive.

Religion and polarisation

Church links to stablished powers led to strong hostility among progressive politycal parties. Political violence weakened the Republic.

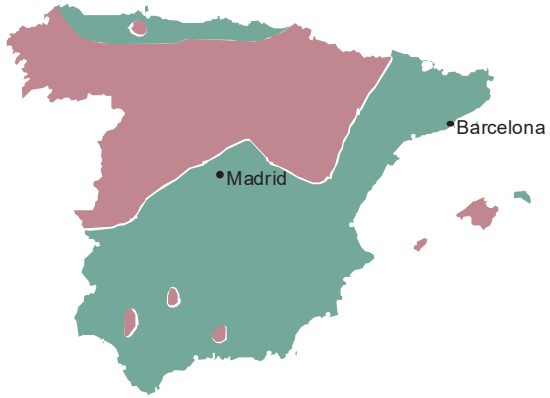
Immediate trigger The military coup of 18 July 1936 only partly succeeded, dividing the country and opening the way to war.

Sources: Julián Casanova (2012); USHMM · Archive-photo credits on cards; full links in slide notes.

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The Spanish Civil War: a changing front

July 1936



After the military uprising

October 1937



The northern front has fallen

July 1938



Republican territory is divided

February 1939



After the fall of Catalonia

Rebel control

Republican control

Approximate estimates · Sources: USHMM; Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration

Human toll

~500,000
lives lost in the war (soldiers, political killings)

~500,000
refugees to France, Mexico and LATAM, 1939

Maps adapted from Grandiose, NordNordWest & Sting · Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 3.0

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Foreign involvement in the Civil War

REPUBLICAN SIDE



Etkar André Battalion
Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-H28510
CC BY-SA 3.0 DE · resized

International Brigades

VOLUNTEER FIGHTERS

Foreign volunteers



Soviet-built T-26, Belchite, 1937
International Brigadiers shown
Unknown / Wikimedia · Public domain

Soviet Union

WEAPONS + SPECIALISTS

Advisers, pilots
and tank crews

FRANCOIST SIDE



Condor Legion He 111, 1937–38
Herzog family album / Wikimedia
Unknown · Public domain

Hitler's Germany

REGULAR ARMED FORCES

Condor Legion
Air force + army personnel



CTV troops near Tortosa, 1938
Unknown / BNE, via Wikimedia
Public domain

Mussolini's Italy

REGULAR ARMED FORCES

CTV: regular army
+ Fascist militia

Sources: USHMM; D. Kowalsky, Columbia UP; Museu d'Història de Catalunya · Photo credits on cards; links in notes.

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2

Cronology and policies to search for the disappeared victims

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From war and dictatorship to the transition

Civil War	Franco dictatorship	Transition to democracy
1936–1939	1939–1975	1975–1982

1939 — **Reburial at Paracuellos**

1975 — **Franco's death**
20 November

1978 — **Constitution**

1978–1980 — **Family-led exhumations**
Navarre, Extremadura…

1981 — **23-F coup attempt**
23 February

Schematic timeline · not to scale



Photo: Hermes Pato / EFE, via elDiario.es

The regime honoured its own dead, excluding Republican victims.



Photo: Instituto Navarro de la Memoria · CC BY-NC 4.0

Sartaguda families at Ollacarizqueta. No systematic forensic protocols.

Sources: elDiario.es; Instituto Navarro de la Memoria; Aguilar (2018); RTVE; Congreso de los Diputados. Links in notes.

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The scientific turn and renewed public policy

Scientific turn	Historical Memory Law	Renewed state policy
2000–2006	2007–2018	2019–2026

2000	2007	2019	2022	2026
Priaranza del Bierzo	**Historical Memory Law**	**Renewed policy impetus**	**Democratic Memory Law**	**Implementing the 2022 law**
First scientific exhumation	Law 52/2007	Sánchez governments	Law 20/2022	Timeline endpoint

Schematic timeline · not to scale



Photo: Emilio Silva / RTVE · October 2000 excavation

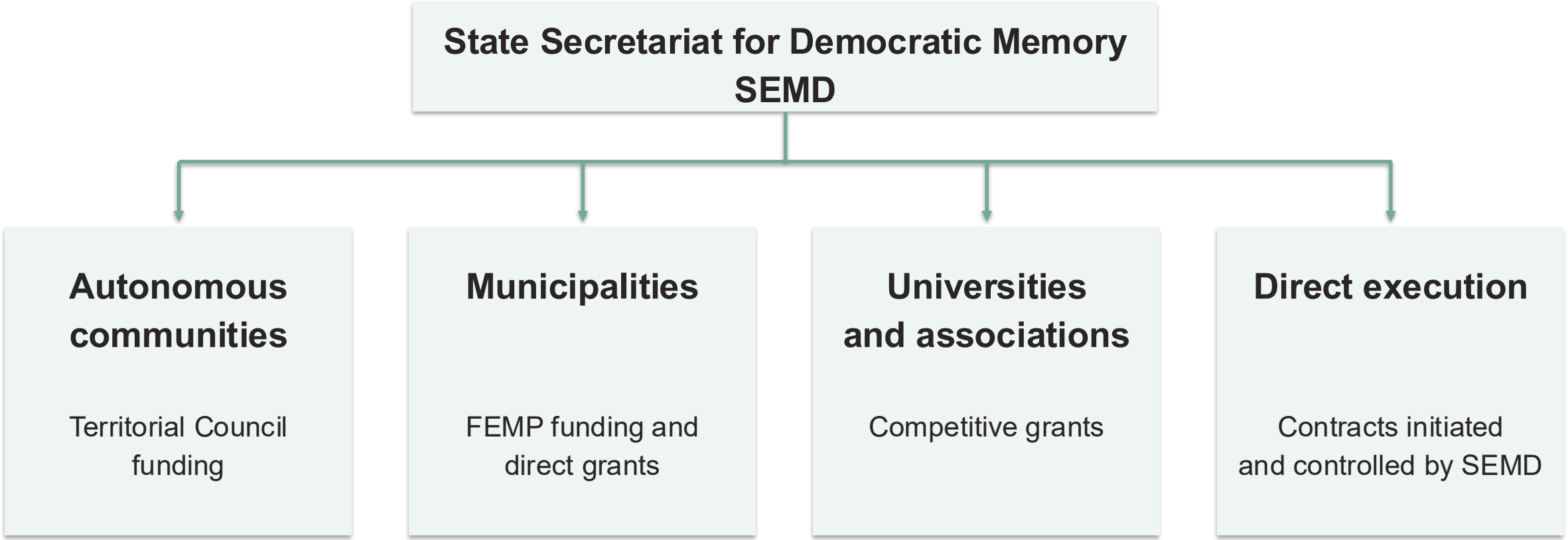
Priaranza del Bierzo: thirteen victims exhumed; ARMH founded.

2007: the state supports searches led by families.
2022: the state takes responsibility for search and identification.

Sources: ARMH; RTVE; BOE, Laws 52/2007 and 20/2022; La Moncloa, exhumation plan (2024)

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SEMD Funding Supports Missing Persons Search Projects (2019-26)

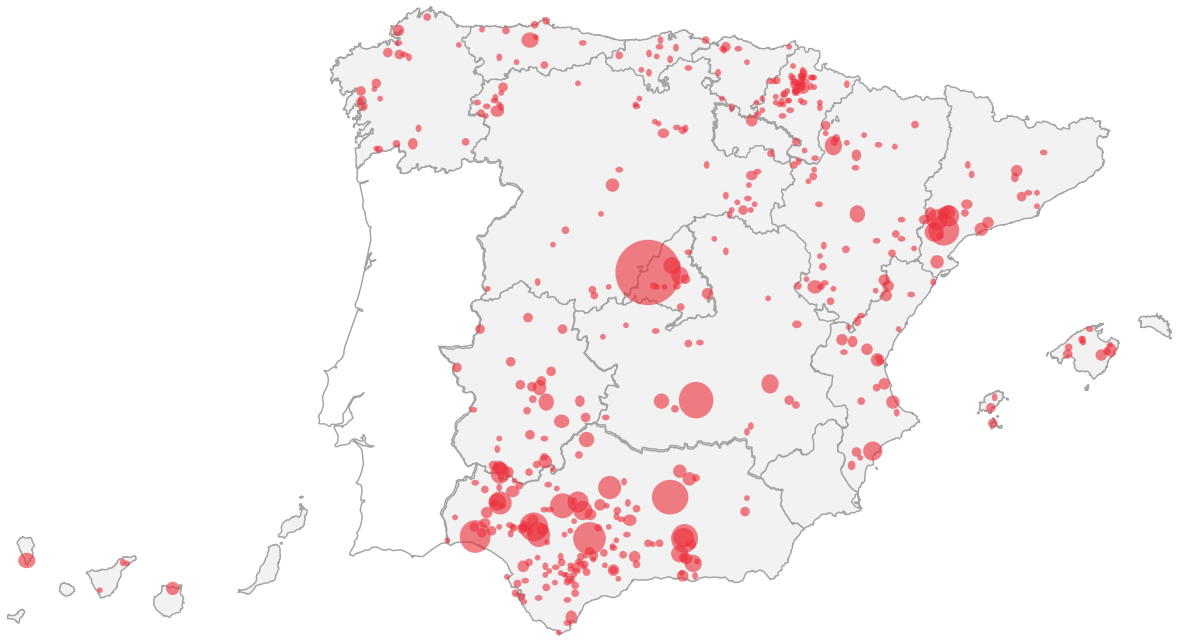


Funding routes supplied by Jaime del Rey · Schematic flow, not an organisational chart.

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SEMD- Victims Search Projects Across Spain

Cumulative amount by locality · 2019-2026



462 localities · 845 incorporated source rows

Bubble area = amount; minimum visible size for small amounts.

€10,000 €50,000 €200,000

Funding route	Amount (€)	Interventions
Direct execution by SEMD	825,699.99	20
Competitive grants (Univ&Associations)	305,943.07	16
Direct municipal grants	6,372,668.16	49
FEMP → municipalities	6,144,473.62	308
Territorial Council → regions	11,932,848.78	518
TOTAL	**25,581,633.62**	**911**

Interventions are not distinct localities; the two totals differ in scope.

Map: Obra derivada de BDLJE CC-BY 4.0 ign.es · Portugal: Natural Earth · Table: Jaime del Rey, supplied 14 Oct 2026.

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3

Map of mass graves

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Where to look for the victims? State Map of Mass graves

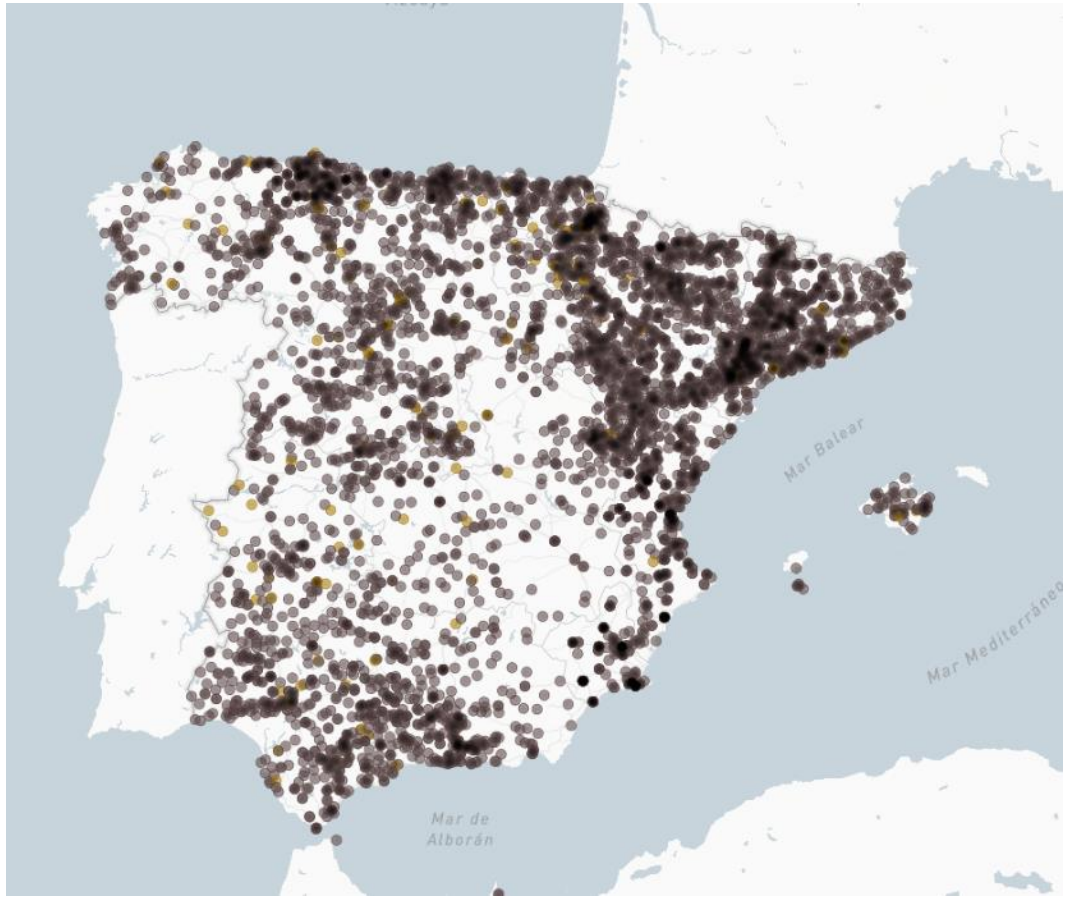


Image: “El país de las 6.000 fosas”, RTVE.es with the Ministerio de Política Territorial y Memoria Democrática (screenshot, 4 Oct 2026).

5,932

Mass graves on the State Map

62,530

victims named and linked to those mass graves

Legal basis: Article 17, Law 20/2022

The State Administration must produce an integrated map of the location of missing persons covering all of Spain, fed by data from the competent administrations. The cartography is public and updated periodically.

A living tool

Built by the Ministry with the Autonomous Communities, universities, associations and foundations. Updated gradually; the audiovisual version was made with RTVE.

Sources: Ministerio de Política Territorial y Memoria Democrática, Mapa estatal de fosas (read 4 Oct 2026); BOE, Law 20/2022, art. 17. Victim total counted from the map’s public records.

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4

Register and census of victims

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State Register and Census of Victims (restore dignity & simbolic rep)

Established by Article 9, Law 20/2022

The ministry for democratic memory keeps a register of victims, fed by archives, administrations, families, memory associations and university research groups. From it, it draws up a public census of all victims of the War and the Dictatorship.

Agreement with Santiago de Compostela University (USC)

Signed 16 February 2025 and published in the BOE on 5 March 2025. Runs February 2025 to February 2027 (project Cenomi). It covers non-combatant victims who died in 1936-1939.

Where USC looks

Especially civil registry records

and the military archives of the Ministry of Defence.



Image: example of a victim record (ficha), Mapa estatal de fosas, Ministerio de Política Territorial y Memoria Democrática (screenshot, 4 Oct 2026).

500,000* victims in the census (placeholder, to be updated)

Sources: BOE, Law 20/2022, art. 9; BOE no. 55, 5 Mar 2025 (convenio MPTMD-USC Histagra-CISPAC); Ministerio de Política Territorial y Memoria Democrática. *Placeholder figure, to be updated.

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Thank you !

Jaime del Rey

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Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory