

Ceuta is not far from Italy: with a permit from Madrid, one can travel throughout the EU. Here's why our government considers the crisis a security risk.

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Many (not very attentive) observers argue that the massive influx of migrants in Ceuta cannot pose a problem for Italy. The Spanish enclave is indeed located on the African coast, thousands of kilometers from our country, separated from the Iberian Peninsula by the Strait of Gibraltar.

However, this is a geographical reading that does not take into account the functioning of the Schengen area and the consequences that decisions made by a single European government can have on all other member states.

Is Ceuta outside Schengen? No, but it enjoys a special regime

Ceuta is geographically in Africa, but it is Spanish territory and part of the European Union.

It is therefore incorrect to say that it is excluded from Schengen. The European Commission has expressly confirmed that the Schengen acquis applies to the entire Spanish territory, including Ceuta and Melilla, although both are subject to a particular regime, with border controls with Morocco and connections with mainland Spain.

This specificity does not prevent those who obtain a valid Spanish residence permit from traveling to other Schengen countries for short stays, respecting the limit of 90 days every 180.

What would happen after regularization

The real point concerns precisely what could happen subsequently.

Spain has already adopted extraordinary regularization procedures for foreigners present irregularly on its territory in the past, and again in 2026.

The Spanish Royal Decree 316/2026 which Madrid calls textually *“decree on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration”*, provided for the possibility of obtaining residence permits for exceptional circumstances, requiring, among other conditions, proof of continuous stay in Spain in the months preceding the application.

The measure demonstrates that Madrid can autonomously decide to regularize a significant portion of foreigners already present in the country.

Once a valid Spanish residence permit is obtained, a non-EU citizen can travel to other Schengen area states for short stays, generally up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

This means they could legally reach Italy without having to apply for a new Italian visa for a simple visit. The Spanish permit would not automatically allow them to settle permanently or work in our country, but it would still allow them to circulate within the common area according to the rules provided for short stays.

It is therefore wrong to claim that the migration policies adopted by Spain cannot have any consequences on other European countries.

Schengen shares the benefits, but also the risks

Schengen is based on the elimination of systematic controls at internal borders. It is one of the most important achievements of European integration: it allows millions of citizens and workers to move quickly, facilitates tourism, and supports economic exchanges.

But precisely because internal borders are normally open, each state is called upon to effectively protect the common external border.

When a country allows entry, grants a visa, or issues a residence permit, its decision does not produce effects only within its borders. Under certain conditions, that person can subsequently move within the rest of the Schengen area.

This principle makes the thesis that Ceuta is an exclusively Spanish problem unsustainable. Ceuta is Spanish territory, represents an external border of the European Union, and the consequences of its management can extend, directly or indirectly, to the entire continent.

A prudent and legitimate decision

Italy has ordered the **temporary reintroduction of controls** at Italian ports and airports on connections from the Iberian country, focusing especially on non-EU citizens.

A choice that appears prudent and justified.

Temporarily reintroducing controls does not mean accusing all foreigners of being a danger, nor breaking relations with Madrid. It means verifying the identity, legal status, and documents of people reaching the national territory during an exceptional migration crisis.

Control does not coincide with the closure of borders. It is a prevention tool.

Faced with the entry of tens of thousands of people in a few hours through a European external border, waiting passively would have been irresponsible. Even if the majority of migrants were quickly returned to Morocco, the scale of the event justified a precautionary response.

Italy has the right and duty to know who enters its territory, especially when there is not yet a fully verifiable framework on the identities, origins, and destinations of the people involved.