



Flag of Spain



Flag of Madrid



Some Information for the R8 Committee meeting in Madrid

Madrid became capital city of Spain in 1561, before which the capital was Toledo. At that time, it was known as “Madrid of the Austrians”, because of the ruling Hapsburg family. The current population is about 3 million, making it the third largest city in Europe. However the historic centre of interest to tourists is compact, and many key locations and buildings can be seen by walking.

It was the king *Felipe* (Philip) II (1527–1598) who decided to make Madrid the capital.

The Madrid flag incorporates a bear and a strawberry tree (*madroño*). The bear is indicative of the large number which once inhabited the surrounding countryside, and the name of the city could once have been “Ursa”. It is supposed that the bears were attracted to the *madroño* tree by the mistaken belief that its fruit would taste sweet (which it does not). Madrid is on the River Manzanares (actually more a stream rather than a river!) which was called al-Magrit ("source of water") by the Moors who referred to the area as Mayrit (from which the name Magerit, then Madrid, may have evolved).

The Spanish National Anthem (*Marcha Real*) is claimed to be one of the oldest in the world, and is unusual in that the music has no official accompanying words.

The city has an extensive Metro system, which extends to the Airport (Barajas) on Line L8. The airport is outside the central fare zone and so a supplement must be paid for travel to and from the airport.



The nearest Metro station to the R8 Committee hotel (*Scala Melia Castilla*) is *Cuzco*, on Line L10: there are two airport metro stations, one at Terminal 4 and one at the Terminal 1,2,3 complex. Note that Terminal 4 has separate domestic and international flights parts. A change is required at the station *Nuevos Ministerios* when travelling between the airport and *Cuzco*.



The hotel is to the north of the city centre, in a modern, mainly-commercial area. Address is:

Calle del Capitán Haya, 43, Madrid 28020

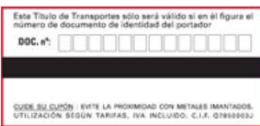
Tel: (34) 91 5675000 Fax: (34) 91 5675051

e-mail: melia.castilla@melia.com

www.meliacastilla.com

Melia Castilla hotel

Buses are blue in colour, with plenty of routes around the city, operated by the Municipal Bus Company (EMT). The same ticket types are used on metro or bus, and it is possible to buy either a single journey ticket (1.50 to 2.00 Euros according to number of stations) or a somewhat more economical ‘*metrobus*’ which is a ticket valid for 10 journeys, costing 12.20 Euros. This ticket must be ‘validated’ at the start of each journey. Additionally, there are tourist passes, which are tickets for one, two, three, five or seven days of unlimited travel.



The tourist passes can be acquired at all stations in the Metro network and the Passenger Assistance Centre at the Sol station, and can be obtained at the Office of tourism of the city of Madrid (*Plaza Mayor, 27*), in

the office of information *Neoturismo Aeropuerto* at the T1, T2, T3 station, at certain tobacconist's and newspaper stands, places of tourist interest, and at some hotels. (Note: purchase by internet is possible but then **only** if a Madrid Tourist Card is also purchased!)

A new non-contact re-chargeable card is coming into use on the system for local residents.

RENFE is the name of the Spanish railways (*Red Nacional de Ferrocarriles Españoles*): the AVE (*Alta Velocidad Española*) high-speed trains mostly use *Estacion de Atocha*, to the south east of the City Centre, and provide a very fast link to Cordoba and Sevilla and, now, also to Barcelona, Zaragoza and Malaga. TALGO are long distance express trains and there are various other train services for local travel. The rail station Chamartin, to the north, serves places to the east and north including France. The two main rail stations (*Atocha* and *Chamartin*) are linked by a rail tunnel.

Because of the transfer of the capital city from Toledo to Madrid, there is no large historic cathedral in Madrid: the Toledo cathedral retained its position as the centre of the Spanish church. Building of the Madrid cathedral (*Catedral de la Almudena*) was not started until 1879 and not finished until 1993. It is unusual for its incorporation of various forms of modern art in the interior.



Museums of Madrid are varied and plentiful: the *Museo Nacional del Prado*, well known as one of the world's most famous art galleries, and the *Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza*, a private art collection until 1993, are among the most outstanding. Open spaces in the city include the large *Parque del Retiro* with the *Real Jardin Botanico* alongside and the park alongside the *Palacio Real*, *Plaza de Armas* and *Catedral de la Almudena*. The opera house (*Teatro Real*) is of classical appearance, originating in 1850 and located not far from the *Palacio Real*.

Notable locations to visit in the City Centre include the *Puerta del Sol*, the *Plaza Mayor*, the *Plaza de Cibeles*, The *Puerta de Acala* (at *Plaza de la Independencia*) and the *Plaza de Colon*. A statue of the bear and strawberry tree (*El oso y el madroño*) is located at the *Puerta del Sol*.

Madrid's classical-music concert hall (*Auditorio Nacional de Musica*) is rather modern (opened 1988) and away from the City Centre to the north east on *Calle del Príncipe de Vergara*.



The main university of Madrid is UCM (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*), founded in 1499 in the town of Complutum (from which the name is taken). It moved to Madrid in 1836.



Another is UPM (*Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*), founded in 1971 as the result of merging various much older schools of engineering and architecture, and now one of the foremost technical universities in Spain.

Previous R8 Committee meetings held in the Spain Section were Barcelona in 1995 and Sevilla in 2001.

Prof Tony Davies, 2013 April 4th