

## 7: Article excerpt, Kiku Adatto's "Spain's Attempt to Atone for a 500-Year-Old Sin," 2019.

### **Spain's Attempt to Atone for a 500-Year-Old Sin [excerpts]**

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In 2015, the Spanish Parliament sought to make amends. Without a dissenting vote, it enacted a law inviting the Sephardim—Jews who trace their roots to Spain—to return. (Sepharad is the Hebrew word for the Iberian Peninsula) The law declared that after “centuries of estrangement,” Spain now welcomed “Sephardic communities to reencounter their origins, opening forever the doors of their homeland of old.” Spain’s offer of citizenship to Sephardic Jews is a powerful gesture of atonement...

When the 2015 law was approved, Spain’s justice minister, Rafael Catalá, declared, “Today we have approved a law that reopens the door for all descendants of those who were unjustly expelled. This law says much about who we were in the past, who we are today, and what we want to be in the future: a Spain that is open, diverse, and tolerant.”...

But... A yawning gap exists between the spirit of the Spanish citizenship law and its bureaucratic and civil administration. The application process is daunting and difficult. The law does not require the Sephardim to give up their existing citizenship or reside in Spain. However, requirements include proof of Sephardic lineage (one need not be a practicing Jew); a rigorous, four-hour Spanish-language test; and a citizenship test. Every document—from birth certificates to criminal-background checks—must be translated, notarized, and certified with an apostille seal. Applicants are required to travel to Spain to sign with a Spanish notary, and many people, including our family, hire a Spanish lawyer to help navigate the citizenship process.

These hurdles did not go unnoticed when the citizenship law was being debated in the Spanish Parliament. Jordi Jané i Guasch, a representative from Catalonia, observed that as a form of historical reparations, the law had “grave deficiencies” and was an “obstacle course” that discouraged people from applying. Jon Iñárritu García, a lawmaker from the Basque Country, noted, “This law does not right a wrong.” It is “more of a symbol, a first step.”