Spain to legalise about 300,000 undocumented immigrants per year

MADRID, Nov 19 (Reuters) - Spain will legalise about 300,000 undocumented immigrants per year over the next three years as it seeks to expand its labour force in the face of an ageing population, Migration Minister Elma Saiz told reporters on Tuesday.

Spain, led by a leftist minority coalition government, has been largely receptive to migrants even as other European countries such as Italy and Germany seek to tighten border controls.

"Spain has to opt between being an open, prosperous country or being a closed and poor one, and we have chosen the former," Saiz said, adding that the nation needs around 250,000 to 300,000 tax-paying foreign workers a year to sustain its welfare state.

The reform shortens and simplifies legal and administrative procedures for work and residence permits, allowing migrants to register either as self-employed or salaried workers, and provides them with additional labour rights guarantees.

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