

Captions:

END OF EUROPE IN CEUTA

Photography report by

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Photo 01 -

Ceuta, Free Zone. Thousands of women cross this border every day, loaded with huge bundles: diapers, demijohns of honey, toasts, hi-fi equipment... Customs officials are ignoring this daily traffic of an army of ants because it alleviates somewhat poverty in Northern Morocco. As for Ceuta, it lives on it and all its business depends on it.



Photo 02 -

Ceuta City seen from the San Antonio Mirador viewpoint. With its 74 000 inhabitants, Ceuta is a Spanish Trust since 1580. This is a southern city, pleasantly banal, with an hourglass figure where the harbor facing the Atlantic side of Spain is separated by only 300 meters from the Mediterranean beach with panoramic views of the Moroccan coast. The small territory of 19 km² which forms the city of Ceuta is an integral part of Spanish territory : this is what the Spanish Constitution of 1978 tells although, for over a century, the city has enjoyed a special status.



Photo 03 -

Ceuta, surrounding wall. On September 29, 2005, at about three o'clock in the morning, «500 sub-Saharan immigrants stormed the fences» (according to the prefecture) in an attempt to cross the security fences that are also the border between Morocco and this Spanish enclave. Six people died. Since then, the border and its check points have been reinforced mostly everywhere around the enclave.



Photo 04 -

Ana, a young Spanish student in Seville, with his parents in the center of Ceuta. Ceuta only has a very small college, most young people are forced to go on the peninsula to get tuition ... and often stay there.



Photo 05 -

Two young residents of the Arab neighborhood of Sarchal. There are four neighborhoods inhabited almost exclusively by the Moroccan community. This is the oldest and closest to the downtown. The North African community living in Ceuta, is the most affected by unemployment and casualization; but it is also the one with the fastest growth, now approaching 50% of the population. In schools, over 65% of students which have enrolled in primary education use ceutien Arabic named Dariya as their mother tongue and not Castilian.



Photo 06 -

Ceuta, near the border post. To maintain the close relationships that Ceuta has with its Moroccan hinterland, a waiver has been granted to Moroccans living in the region of Tetouan (a town located 40 km from Ceuta), they do not have to present a visa to travel to Ceuta for small-scale cross-border trade purpose.



Photo 07 -

Ceuta, neighborhood of Benuz. The European Union has installed along the 8.5 km of land border and along the Strait of Gibraltar a sophisticated surveillance system to curb illegal immigration. This has resulted in moving the would-be immigrants to less controlled areas and more dangerous crossings.



Photo 08 -

Spanish bar downtown. Is Ceuta Spanish ? Four communities coexist peacefully in the city of Ceuta. The Christian community, which is in a dominant position, The Muslim community (the largest in population), a small Jewish community arrived in the late 19th century and a small Hindu community. The Convivencia concept of harmonious coexistence appeared in the 80s as a goal. However, it appears that nowadays cohabitation is not as smooth as the authorities state ..."



Photo 09 -

On the road from Tétouan to Ceuta. Ceuta is located a few tens of kilometers from Tangier, forming, on the African continent, the other cape of the Strait of Gibraltar. Ceuta is also a dead end, crossed by the Moroccans from Europe who took the ferry from Algeciras to reach the region of Tetouan by the most direct route.



Photo 10 -

Border between Morocco and Ceuta. Only one border post allows to enter Ceuta. It is located on the east coast of the city, facing Tetouan, a city with which the most important exchanges happen. Security fence, the border is 16kms long and is only opened at one point through which freight and passenger transit.



Photo 11 -

Free Zone, Ceutan business park "Polygon Tarajal". While an integral part of the EU, Ceuta is excluded from the customs union, it is also excluded from the Common Agricultural Policy, finally, it is exempt from the application of VAT. Ceuta lives on its border trade. The 20 km² of the enclave have no agriculture or industry and the harbor keeps declining, facing competition from Gibraltar, and, increasingly, from Tangier. So Ceuta cannot close its border completely at the risk of "closing shop". Every morning is the same ritual: some 10,000 Moroccans cross the Spanish border and rush into the maze of the gigantic business park "Polygon Tarajal" of Ceuta. Patient, they move forward step by step in a queue a mile long where thousands of women, but as well blind and elderly, share the same lot. These are the portadoras (carriers), also known as mujeres mulas (mules women).



Photo 12 -

Neighborhood of Principe. Located close to the border, it is the most predominantly working-class district of Ceuta. Largely populated by the Muslim community, it is also the where immigration is the highest. What immediately shows up is the difference between a modern and rather European downtown and poorer suburbs mainly inhabited by members of the "Muslim" community.



Photo 13 -

Thousands of women every day carry on their backs loads of up to 150 pounds to fuel the trade between the Spanish enclave of Ceuta and Morocco. Under the blankets that cover these giant parcels, there are all sorts of products: T-shirts, shoes, diapers, shampoo or household products. Sometimes also slip liquor bottles or electronic products (stereos, mobiles ...). Madrid has strengthened the police contingent in order to prevent accidents. "We try to institute rules in a chaotic and inhuman trading system", admits a police officer. The new rules are basic: obligation to walk in a corridor bounded by a security cordon, no wearing of packets too prominent, no running, and obligation to always have one hand free to hold onto in a fall.



Photo 14 -

Family meal on a beach on November 1. For Christians, this is the day of All Saints (All Saints' day); in Ceuta, the tradition is to spend a day in the country taking a backpack with sandwiches, dried fruit and seasonal fruits: chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, etc. ... This originates in the old custom of visiting the cemetery to bring flowers to the dead and stay all day with them.



Photo 15 -

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Photo 16 -

Harbour of Ceuta. Formerly important, it is now widely challenged by Tanger Med, the very modern Moroccan port platform in commission since 2007.



Photo 17 -
View of the Strait of Gibraltar.



Photo 18 -
Enrique, an English teacher in the high school. Officials agreeing to come and work in Ceuta have a substantial premium to motivate their vocation; they are an important part of the Spanish community. Often passing through, they are few to settle permanently in a city that does not attract the crowds ...



Photo 19 -
Inhabitant of Benzu. Benzu is the oldest Muslim neighborhood of Ceuta. Very remote from city center, it is located along the security fence. As of today, it is one of the poorest neighborhoods of the city.



Photo 20 -
Crossing the Strait of Gibraltar. Many round trips take place each day between Algeciras and Ceuta. This crossing is heavily used by Moroccans from the region of Tetouan living in Europe, and even more by European tourists traveling to Morocco. The formalities are often shorter than in the port of Tangier, and it is also an opportunity to benefit from the free zone and its duty-free products. Crossing the Strait of Gibraltar is the world's most expensive (relative to the cost per km). Ceuta inhabitants benefit from preferential rates to reach the peninsula, as long as the ferry is, with the helicopter, the only link with the rest of Spain.



Photo 21 -
Border post on the Spanish side. It remains the only land border between Europe and Africa. At the border, a sign proudly displays "City of Europe"; nevertheless must recognize that Ceuta has a somewhat special status within the European Union.



Photo 22 -
Ceuta, viewed from the ship en route to Algeciras (the Spanish port near Gibraltar).