



REAL INSTITUTO
elcano
ROYAL INSTITUTE

25
AÑOS · YEARS

Policy Relevant Agendas

School for Thinkthankers 2026

On Think Thanks (OTT)

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1. Mission and Values

Elcano Royal Institute provides **rigorous analysis** on international and security affairs in order to:

- Develop responses to global challenges
- Assess how major transformations affect us
- We pay special attention to Spain's role in the world and the country's participation in the European project

Elcano's research and outreach are guided by its **values**:

- Independence
- Plurality
- Transparency

2. Elcano in numbers



50 Researches



10 + 5 Research priorities



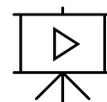
18 Working groups



306 Publications (research papers, surveys and comments)



27,200 podcast downloads



196,000 views on YouTube



33 public events + 81 private meetings + 75 working groups

3. Building a research agenda

- The research agenda is **the backbone of a think tank**
- Maximise the **research team's potential**
- **Mission, values** and **resources** as the basis for a **policy relevant agenda**:
 - To contribute to the public debate with data and innovative ideas
 - To serve public institutions, administrations, private sector, academia and civil society
 - A better-informed public polices
 - To provide a Spanish perspective on global affairs

3. Building a research agenda

- **How to build a differential research agenda?**
 - **Interdisciplinary** teams (avoiding silos)
 - **Exchange** and permanent **dialogue** (policy and decision-makers, business, academia, research centers, international organizations)
 - Balance between **coherence, flexibility, innovation** and **responsiveness**
- **A prodigious blend:**
 - Short- and long-term perspectives
 - Research questions and policy questions
 - Strategic depth and media relevance

4. Annual Action Plan

The research agenda is implemented in the **Annual Action Plan**:

- Consistency of the long-term lines of research
- Anticipate and respond to the most pressing issues

Strategically designed at the top of the organization:

- Consultations to the research team
- Survey to the Executive Committee (public and private trustees)
- Survey to Elcano Scientific Council (independent advisory body)
- Competitive projects in international consortia
- Elcano's networks

5. Strategic Plan 2026-2030



- Aligned to the **transformation and growth of the Elcano Institute** over its first 25 years
- To adapt to **global transformations** and changes in the think tank ecosystem
- Redefinition of **international norms, policies, and institutions**
- Expanding availability of **data** and new **technology**
- Proliferation of **dissemination channels** and increased circulation of knowledge
- Spread of **disinformation**

5. Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Four Strategic Pillars

EXCELLENCE
advancing the
Spanish
perspective in
global debates

TALENT
Attracting a
leading
international
research
community

TECHNOLOGY
Enhancing
research,
outreach, and
management

GOVERNANCE
strengthening a
model based on
pluralism,
transparency, and
accountability

50 improvement programmes and new projects across all research areas

6. Elcano's research priorities

Thematic areas: enables Elcano to fulfill its mission and respond to the major ongoing global transformations



Globalization, Development and Governance



Challenges to Peace and **Security**



Democracy and Citizenship



Future of **Europe**



Reshaping of the **Global Order**, the United States and China



Eastern and Southern **Neighborhood**



Latin America as a global actor



Technology and Economic Transformations



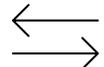
Climate and Energy



Spain: Influence and Foreign Image

6. Elcano's Research Priorities

Cross-cutting areas:

 **Migrations**

 **Cities**

 **Gender**

 **Global Health**

 **Culture**

10 + 5 Research Priorities to fulfill Elcano's mission:

- Analyzing the international reality
- Provide responses to global challenges
- Assessing how major transformations affect Spain and its partners

7. Working groups

- Implementation of the research agenda and follow-up
- Diversity of their members

- 1. Future of the EU**
- 2. Industrial Policy, Regulation and Competitiveness**
- 3. Ecosystem of Spain's presence and influence in Brussels**
- 4. Trends in Security, Defense and Space**
- 5. Cyberpolicy**
- 6. Climate and Energy**
- 7. Geoeconomics**
- 8. Technological Transformations**
- 9. Geopolitics of Mobility**
- 10. Latin America**
- 11. Brazil**
- 12. México**
- 13. The Strategic Triangle: China, the U.S. and Europe**
- 14. U.S. Domestic and Foreign Policy**
- 15. Middle East, North Africa and Sahel**
- 16. Disinformation**
- 17. Spanish Foreign Policy**
- 18. Migration and Asylum Policies**

8. International projects and networks

Competitive international projects:

- Iberian Digital Media Observatory (**Iberifier +**)
- **ReConnect China** (UE)
- Crisis and civic narratives studied through pluridisciplinarity and fieldwork, **DECRIIP** (Inalco, Sciences Po, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Sorbonne Nouvelle, IFRI)
- **European Climate Foundation**
- **Focus 2030**
- European Think Tank Group (**ETTG**)
- European Think Tank Network on China (**ETNC**)

REDElcano:

- Mobilizing the knowledge of Elcano Scientific Council
- Nurture Elcano's already extensive network of partners
- Monitoring the activity of think tanks in international affairs area and evaluate Elcano's positioning

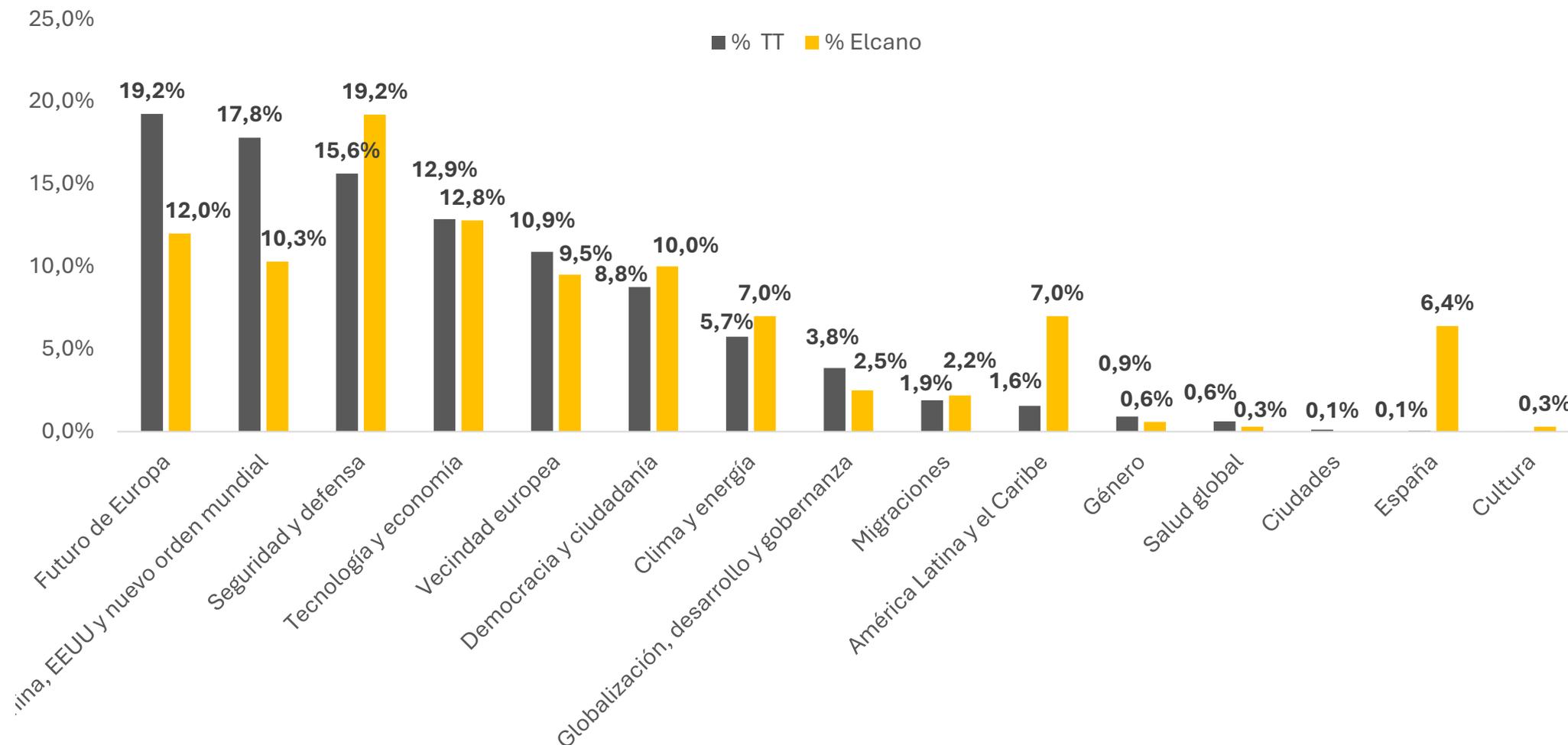
9. Featured publications

- Publications are the main format through which the research agenda is materialized.
- Flagship documents:
 - [Spain in the world in 2026](#)
 - [Elcano Global Presence Index](#)
 - Annual barometers:
 - BRIE: Spanish public opinion on international affairs
 - BIE: Spain's image abroad

10. Measure and evaluate

- Is Elcano’s research agenda contributing to the “global conversation”?
- Are we coming to similar conclusions?
- Where are synergies between think tanks occurring?
- Do we offer similar products?
- Who is leading and on what issues?
- How Elcano ranks among various international affairs think tanks?
- In which areas does Elcano concentrate its research?
- What does Elcano do that others do not?

Thematic priorities: Elcano and selected think tanks 2024



Conclusions

Sustaining a **robust and policy relevant research agenda** requires:

- Consistency over the years
- Honest and permanent dialogue with stakeholders and audiences
- Knowledge of what others are doing
- Asking new questions
- Innovation (professional profiles, topics and research methods)
- Be confident and supportive of researchers, but be willing to deal with any resistance to change

The research agenda goes beyond a set of individual projects

The research agenda is the matrix for credibility, reputation and influence



Thank you!

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