



Spanish Woman becomes Oldest European

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NIGERIA: -

A Spaniard, Ana Vela, has emerged as Europe's oldest woman and the fourth oldest living person in the world at the age of 116 years.

The Barcelona resident, Vela, who was born on October 29, 1901 close to the city of Cordoba in southern Spain, is now the oldest person in Europe.

The Gerontology Research Group (GRS) has confirmed that Ana now has the honour following the death on Saturday of 117-year-old Italian, Emma Morano, who had previously been the oldest European.

Morano's death means Ana is not just the oldest European, she is now the fourth oldest person alive in the world, all of whom are women.

Ana Vela currently lives in a care home in Barcelona and has an 89-year-old daughter, also called Ana, as well as a 65-year-old grandson.

Although her health is now fragile, Ana's daughter in 2016 said there was no secret to her mother's longevity.

“She liked a glass of semi-sweet wine with her food but didn’t drink that much. She liked to eat everything: meat, fish, vegetables and followed a very ordinary diet,” she said in an interview with the El Pais newspaper.

More than anything Ana’s status as the oldest person in Europe shows how life expectancy has risen in Spain, a country now famous for its healthy “Mediterranean diet” based around olive oil, fresh vegetables, pulses and fish.

When she was born in 1901, the average life expectancy for a woman in Spain was 35.7 years.

The average life expectancy in the country now, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, is 83.2 years.

The Spanish National Institute of Statistics says there are over 15,000 people in Spain (80 per cent of whom are women) who are over 100 years old.

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