



In Spain, images of emigrants with cardboard suitcases who emigrated to America and Europe in the 1960s in search of a job and a better life are well known.

This phenomenon was called the “Spanish Diaspora” and ended with the oil crisis in 1973 and as a result of Spain joining the European Union. Spanish emigrants became a thing of the past.

Spain became a country with an enviable standard of living that no longer produced emigrants, but welcomed them.

Although Spain has never been known for having a low unemployment rate, no one imagined that the current crisis would result in 5,273,600 unemployed and that so many of them would be young people. Youth unemployment now is around 50%, despite the large number of young people who have emigrated in the last few years.

According to the Spanish press, around 300,000 trained Spanish youth left the country between 2008 and 2011, discouraged by the lack of jobs. Furthermore, recent labour reforms approved by the new Government, allow small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to fire workers without compensation or cause during the first year of employment. The consequence of these reforms is even more precarious and temporary employment. Young people under 25, because of their lack of experience, may be doomed to work for a very low salary or be trapped in a cycle of unpaid internships. Because of cuts in the research field, researchers have been forced to look for employment abroad and Spain faces a real 'brain drain' that will undoubtedly have a long-term impact in the country, socially and economically.

Although this phenomenon has been happening for many years, it has only recently been talked

about and considered a problem. This may be because young Spanish people no longer migrate only to Northern European countries, known for their high standard of living, but are also beginning to migrate to Eastern European countries. The Czech newspaper Lidové Noviny, in a recent article, talks of the large increase in the number of young immigrants from Southern Europe to Eastern Europe.

The question is how long it will last? Most young people see it as a temporary situation. They are thinking about working abroad for a few years until “the crisis is over”, or at least until the worst of it is over, and then to come home and find work. However, what awaits them? Some theories claim that the crisis will be followed for a long period of depression that will last for years, during which there will be no significant changes to the unemployment rate, and even then, things will never be good as before. Many of these young people have grown up in families with a standard of living that they themselves will not be able to attain.

Meanwhile, in Spain the Government continues making cuts and young people are leaving in large numbers. Are young Spanish people doomed to unemployment? Time will tell.