

# Spanish Youth: The Despair and Dreams of 'The Lost Generation'

By Katariina Rantanen



The economic crisis and the increased cynicism towards domestic politics also shape perceptions of the European Union and the Euro. The 19-year-old Laura, Carmen and Alejandro believe that the leaders of the EU are replicating the behaviour of their own government. "I think the EU is unfair, acting in some people's interest and overriding or ignoring those of others. They mainly only work in the interest of German banks – you can really see the influence of Germany. Not enough has been done to help Spain," says Carmen. These three share the sentiment of Yanilda, to whom European integration is "a good idea that isn't working in practice".

On the other hand, the increased opportunities brought by the union are welcomed with open arms. Not surprisingly, freedom of movement and programs such as the Erasmus exchange are viewed as great benefits to students and graduates across the board. To some, the EU is seen as a counterforce to the corrupt Spanish government: "The more power we give to an outside organisation, the better," says Juanma, who is in favour of a fiscal union. "Given proper institutional frameworks and incentives, tighter integration can only be beneficial to Spain." All the other youngsters interviewed welcome European collaboration – as long as it is fair.

The economic situation has left an indelible mark on the attitudes and outlooks of Spanish youth. Their lack of future prospects is reflected in their widespread pessimism about national politics. And as trust in domestic affairs falters, European cooperation and mobility seems like the best way out of the crisis to most, whether it be on a personal, or on a national level. "Just don't leave us alone in our troubles," pleads 19-year-old Sharon.

Read the full article [here](#)

# Katariina Rantanen: Why I Write



## How would you categorise the writing?

I'd categorise this as investigative writing.

## Why did you write the piece?

Official reason: I was on an Erasmus year in Spain and got to know lots of young Spaniards, either graduates or about to graduate, with very dim employment prospects. At the same time, it seemed like everyone was looking to move abroad. The defeatist atmosphere and attitude towards both national politics and the future of these young people was strong enough to prompt me to write the article.

Unofficial reason: In a bar one night my unemployed twenty-something friends described to me their situation, calling themselves "the lost generation". I found the expression so poetic, that walking home through a dark and deserted Madrid at 4am, I decided to become the next Hemingway and to document what I'd discovered.

## What do you think makes it an effective piece of writing?

1. One point/idea/argument per paragraph, expressed in the first sentence of the paragraph, and then backed with evidence (in this case to-the-point quotes that demonstrate the dictum of the paragraph). I think this gives the text clarity.
2. Relatively short sentences add dramatic effect (although not all sentences in the text should be short, otherwise it becomes tiresome to read).
3. The last paragraph is the conclusion to the article, and briefly summarises the points made in the article. The final quote is emotionally appealing, and addresses the reader directly.