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Spaniards Starting Families Later as Economy Worsens

By Sharon Smyth - Jul 11, 2012

Young Spaniards are leaving home later and putting off starting families longer than their European neighbors as the recession worsens and the youth jobless rate surpasses 50 percent, according to a study by research firm [La Caixa](#).

Seven in 10 Spaniards aged 20 to 29 live with their parents and 60 percent of Spanish newborns have mothers and fathers over 30-years old, the highest average among the 15 original European Union nations, according to the study published today.

“Young Spaniards no longer have the option to move out of the family home as high unemployment and precarious contracts for those that do work means they can’t emancipate themselves,” said Almudena Moreno, coordinator of the study. “Their chances of forming a couple and a family have been cut and many of them are thinking of leaving the country.”

[Spain](#)’s unemployment rate is 24.6 percent, the highest in the 27-nation EU, with 52.1 percent of under 25 year-olds unable to find jobs. The Spanish economy, the euro area’s fourth-largest, is in its second recession since 2009 after the collapse of a decade-long boom in the [property market](#), which at its peak accounted for about 18 percent of gross domestic product.

Spanish home sales fell for the fifteenth straight month in June, down 11.6 percent from a year ago, the National Statistics Institute said today. Spanish home sales in the first quarter were 72 percent below their peak in the second quarter of 2006, according to separate data from the [Ministry of Public Works](#).

‘Locked Out’

“Young people constitute a large part of future demand for homes and the suppression of this group will put further pressure on [home prices](#) as they are completely locked out of the mortgage market,” said Fernando Rodriguez de Acuna Martinez, a partner at Madrid-based property consultant R.R. de Acuna & Asociados. “We’ve never seen it on such a scale.”

Spanish home prices posted the biggest annual decline on record in the first quarter, falling 12.6 percent from the year-earlier period, the most since the measurement began in 2008, the National Statistics Institute in [Madrid](#) said on June 14. Home prices have fallen [30.4](#) percent since the highpoint in December 2007, according to Tasaciones Inmobiliarias SA, the country’s biggest home-appraisal company.

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