

European Seminar: "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Tackling Homelessness at Local Level". Committee of the Regions. Brussels. 28 may 2009

Effects of the Economic Crisis on Homeless People

OBSERVATORY of Social Reality of Caritas Spain

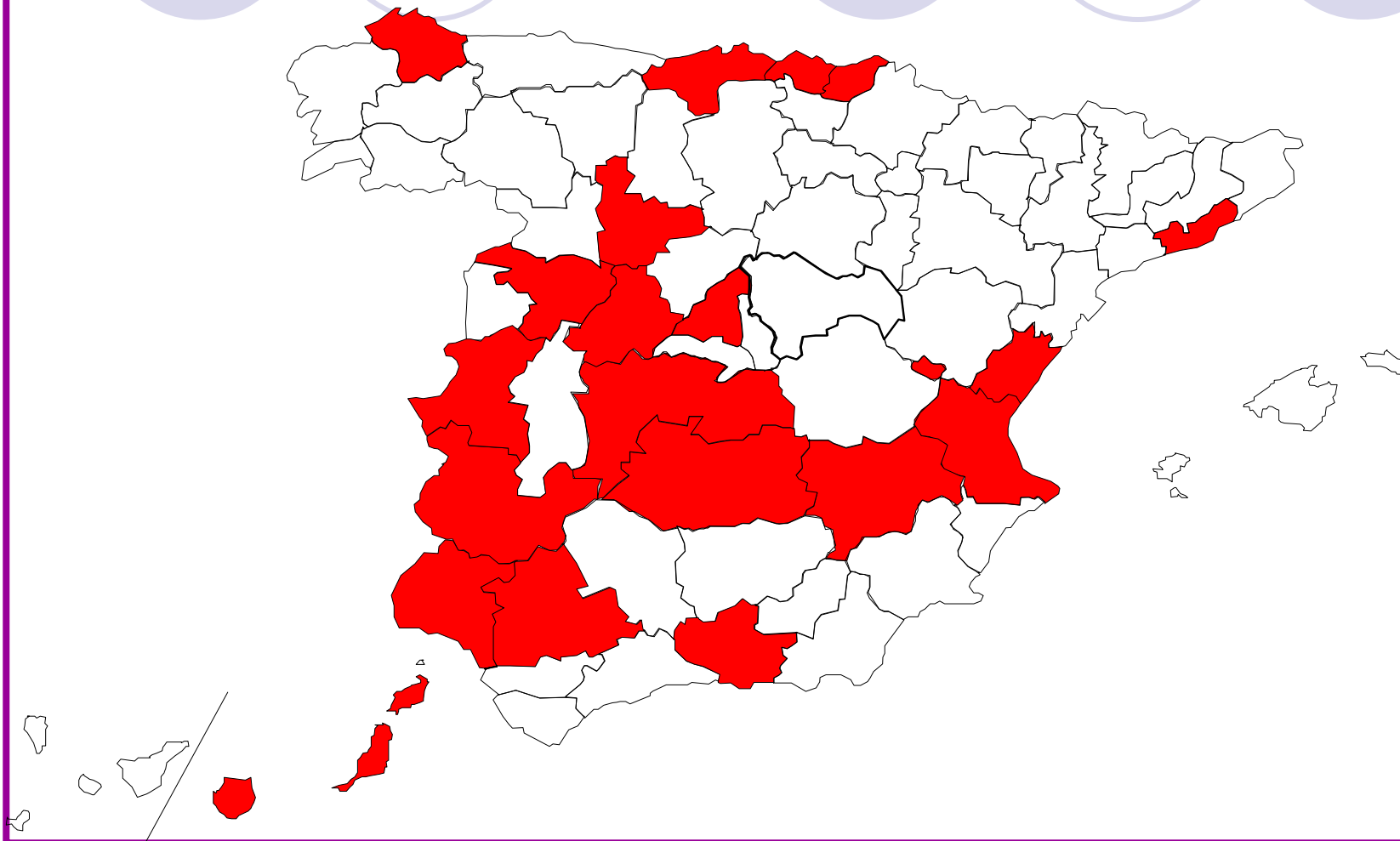
Homeless Programme
Research Team
**SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND
DEVELOPMENT AREA**
May 2009 Report

 **Caritas
Española**

PREMISES OF THE REPORT:

- ❑ The report has been made on the basis of direct work with homeless people **carried out by specialized Caritas workers.**
- ❑ It is based on the information given by a representative number of Caritas' s action with homeless people all around Spain; especially focused on **11 Autonomous Communities** and the largest cities, where homeless people usually congregate (**Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao, Sevilla and Valencia**).
- ❑ It is also a qualitative report on the main characteristics of people attended by Caritas, **specially focused on immigrant homeless people.**

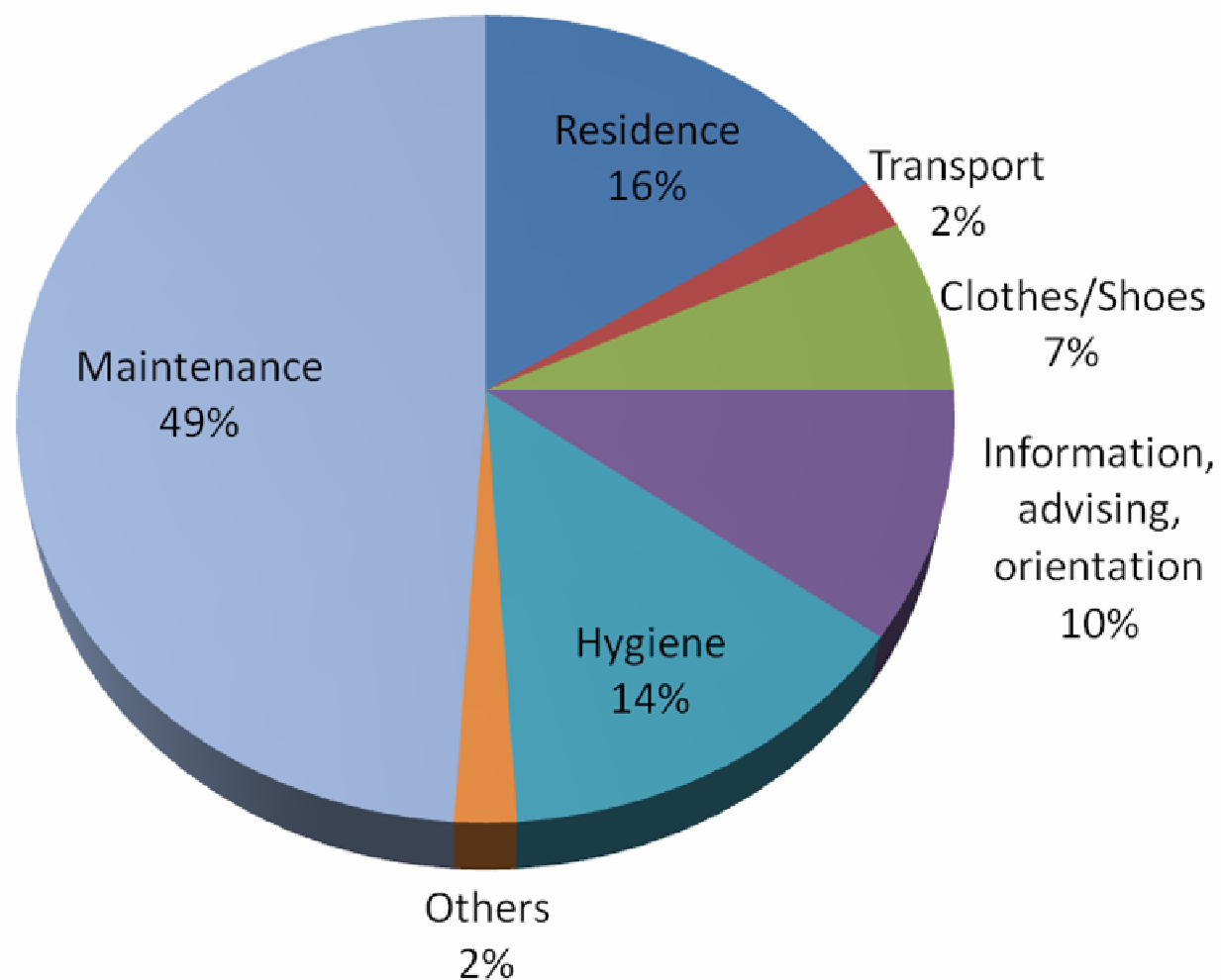
2009 SRO Questionnaire on Crisis and Homeless
Diocesan CARITAS that have offered information



PEOPLE'S REQUESTS FOR HELP FROM CARITAS:

- In 2008 there were **14% more help demands** than in 2007.
- The number of requests has grown 14%, but it is **clearly inferior** than the one detected in Caritas's reports about the **crisis effects on the general population (40%)**.
- **Maintenance, residence and hygiene** are the most demanded help requests.

Different kinds of demands in 2008



SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS:

- ❑ **Attended people:**
 - . 18.594 people in 2007
 - . **22.589 people in 2008**
 - . 7.361 people in the first quarter of 2009

- ❑ People observed in 2008 are:
 - mostly **men (90,5%)**.

 - mostly **native** homeless (**72%**) rather than **immigrant** homeless (**28%**)

 - **Mean age: 39,7 years old**
 - Immigrant homeless : **36 years old.**
 - Native homeless : **43,4 years old.**

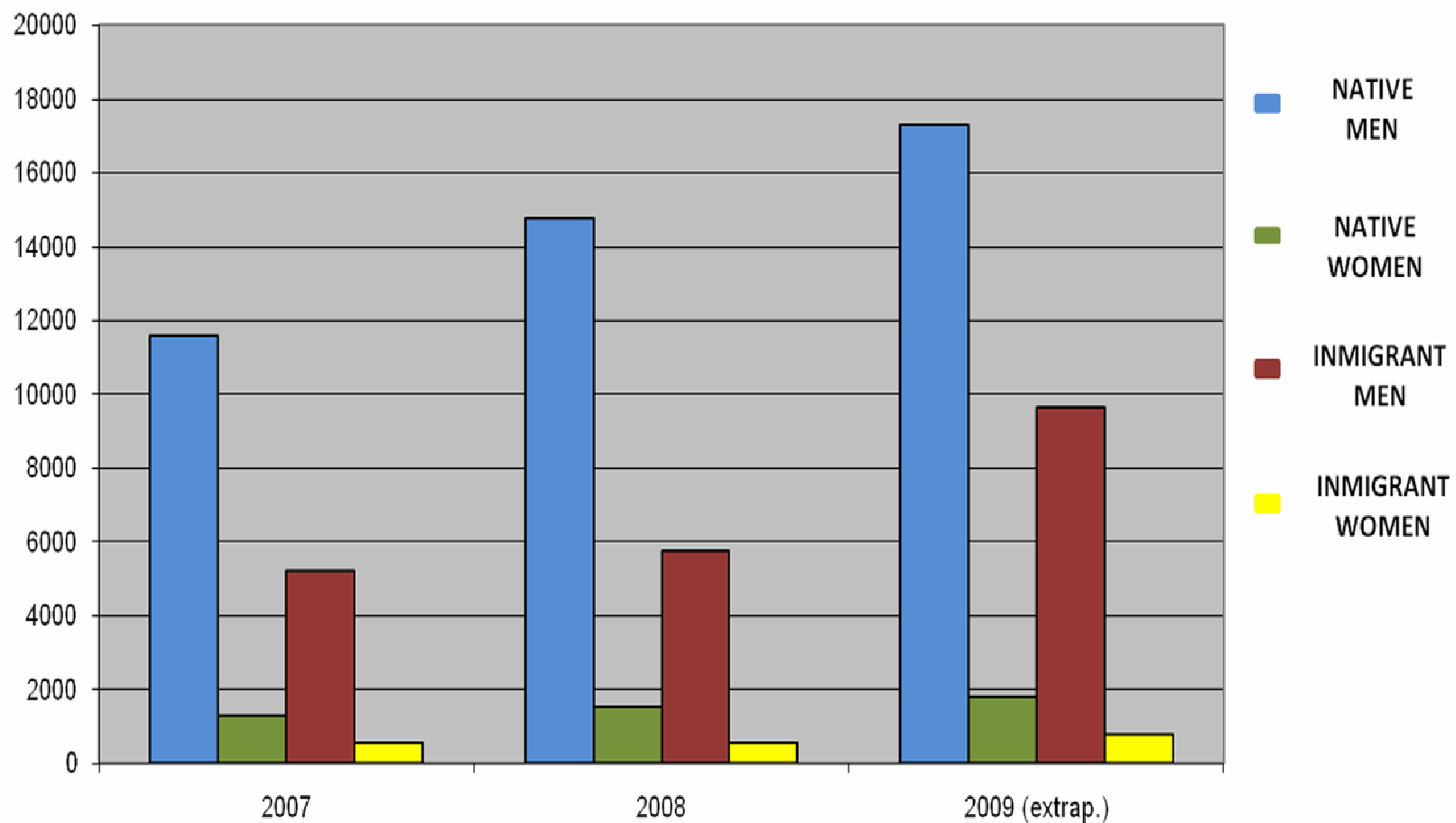


SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS:

❑ The **demand for help** has been increasing: **21,5%** from 2007 to 2008; **30,3%** from 2008 to the first quarter of 2009.

❑ The **increase of people attended** in the first quarter of 2009 is due mainly to **immigrant homeless people** . While native homeless people have just increased in 17 %, **immigrant homeless people have increased in 68%.**

HOMELESS POPULATION'S EVOLUTION ACCORDING TO GENDER AND ORIGIN





ACCESS TO HOMELESSNESS

:

□ The **two main ways to access** to homelessness in 2008 were:

- **Loss of employment**
- **Addiction to alcohol, drugs and ludopathies**

□ The next important ones are: difficulties in access to employment, loss of one's home and, finally, loss of family support



IMMIGRANTS' ACCESS TO HOMELESSNESS:

- ❑ The 86% of the questionnaires clearly show that there **are significant differences** in the main way to access to homelessness between **immigrants and natives**.
- ❑ The main reasons for immigrant homelessness are:
 - **Uneasy access to a employment** (usually due to discrimination) and **administrative irregularities**.
 - **Nonexistence of support nets**.



HOMELESS PEOPLE'S MOBILITY:

- ❑ Caritas's studies show that **63% of homeless people move** from one place to another, while **37% stay in the same place.**
- ❑ The same studies show that 71% of diocesan Cáritas observe **more frequent movements by immigrant homeless** than by native ones.



HOMELESS PEOPLE AND PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES:

- ❑ 62% of diocesan Caritas state that **very few and never more than one third of homeless people** are being attended by Public Social Services in this time of economic crisis.
- ❑ They also state that 81% of homeless people attended by Public Social Services got **no necessity at all covered or very few.**

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON HOMELESS PEOPLE:

- ❑ The number of *short period homeless people* is growing.
- ❑ There are many people who some years ago were helped to carry on an insertion process and who now, due to the economic crisis, are **again demanding help** and resources.
- ❑ It is foreseen that in **2009 and 2010**, when family and social nets will not be able to help people facing unemployment and economic difficulties, **there will be a strong increase of homelessness in Spain.**
- ❑ The economic crisis is causing detriment to homeless people – who, as diocesan Caritas states, “have already been living a very long crisis” – who find it **impossible to get a job during their insertion process and itinerary.**

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON IMMIGRANT HOMELESS PEOPLE (2008 and first quarter of 2009):

- ❑ **The difficulty of renewing their residence and/or work card**, due to their impossibility of proving economic resources as a consequence of unemployment, end of social benefits, etc., makes it **impossible for them to have access to the employment market**. This also means an obvious increase of immigrant homelessness during the last months.
- ❑ Immigrant homeless people **with regular administrative situation** are demanding help at the offices for homeless as they don't find employment because of **the increase of native demand in sectors (like construction, services, agriculture)** in the past mainly occupied by immigrants.