

# SPAIN



## KEY STATISTICS

National systems for data collection on homelessness are in place in Spain but there are some significant gaps<sup>i</sup>. The estimated homeless population according to NGO service providers is between 23,000 and 35,000 people<sup>ii</sup>. However, in Spain it is impossible to determine the extent of residential exclusion.

### National Statistics

Since 2004, the [Spanish National Statistics Institute](#) (INE)<sup>iii</sup> has carried out two surveys on homelessness:

- Survey of homeless people (EPSH-Personas Survey)
- Survey of homeless services (EPSH-Centros Survey)

Coverage is limited to municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants. The definition of homelessness used by the national statistics institute covers:

- People sleeping rough (ETHOS 1.1)
- People living in emergency accommodation provided by the local authority or an NGO (ETHOS 2.1)
- People staying in long-stay group accommodation provided by the local authority or an NGO (non-emergency centres, shelters for victims of domestic violence, centres for asylum seekers or irregular migrants) (ETHOS 3.1 – 5.2)
- People living in buildings that would commonly be considered unsuitable for human habitation (ETHOS 12)
- People living in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs or guest houses
- People living in squats (ETHOS 8.2 and 8.3)

In 2018, INE conducted another survey on homeless services: 18,001 people were housed on a daily basis in homeless care centers, 9.5% more than in 2016. Of those 18,001 people, 4,566 were women. The profiles most frequently met in these centers were immigrants/asylum seekers (39,5%), people with non alcoholic-addictions (19,8%), people with mental health issues (15,5%)<sup>iv</sup>.

### KEY PULL-OUT STATISTICS

Estimated homeless population: 23,000-35,000

Homeless shelters received an average of **18,001 people daily during the year 2018**. This figure is **9.5%** higher than in 2016.

Locally speaking, Barcelona carried out a one-night count of homeless people in May 2018 that was led by the council and the XAPSL (acronym for the care network of homeless people in Barcelona)<sup>v</sup>. In 2019, a detailed diagnosis for Catalunya and Barcelona has been published by the XAPSL, showing a 86% increase in homelessness<sup>vi</sup>.

In Madrid, on December 12th 2018, 650 homeless people were detected sleeping rough in the city. Unlike the data obtained in the 2009 and 2016 editions, where there was a decrease in the number of homeless people, this year there has been an increase of 126 more homeless people compared to the previous edition of the count. 73% were men, 11,2% were women and the rest unknown. The average age in both groups is very similar: 47 years old amongst men and 48 years old amongst women. As for nationality, more than half of the homeless in Madrid have foreign nationality (61.1%) (majority of Romanian).

In Cartagena, according to the last counting in 2018, there were 578 people experiencing homelessness: 23 people sleeping rough, 213 people in shelters or transitional housing, 342 people in inadequate and insecure housing. 55,7% were men, 44,3% were women. 50,7% were Spaniards, 49,3% were immigrants.

In the Basque Country in October 2018, 435 homeless rough sleepers were counted in Euskadi (according to the counting in 26 different municipalities). 390 were men, 26 were women, the rest unknown. 211 rough sleepers were counted in Bilbao, 106 people in Donostia, 24 people in

Vitoria, 30 people in Barakaldo, the rest in different smaller municipalities<sup>vii</sup>.

Counts are also available in Galicia<sup>viii</sup> and Mallorca where 207 people sleeping rough were counted in 2017 (compared to 135 people in 2015)<sup>ix</sup>.

## INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

There has been a rapid increase in the number of people in inadequate and insecure housing in the context of the economic and financial crisis. Growing unemployment and income falls have increased vulnerability to homelessness as more people are unable to meet housing costs. Austerity measures and cuts are having an impact on service capacity.

According to INE 2018 data<sup>x</sup>, the daily average of people who stayed in homelessness services **increased by 9,5% in 2018 compared to 2016**. Homeless shelters in Spain received an average of **18,001 people daily during the year 2018**. This figure is 9,5% higher than the registered in the previous homelessness services survey carried out in 2016.

Caritas and other NGO service providers consider that the real number of homeless people is much greater than the results of the INE survey indicate. Caritas reports that an estimated **6,000 to 10,000** people slept on the streets in Spain in 2011<sup>xi</sup>. Caritas' figures also show an increase in the number of homeless people using their services from **24,463** in 2007 to **30,415** in 2011.

## CHANGE IN PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

**Homelessness Amongst Immigrants:** There are indications that the proportion of migrants may have decreased slightly in 2013, as undocumented migrants were excluded from some legal social provisions and more than 1,000,000 migrants returned to their countries of origin. Numerous asylum seekers who have been denied asylum become homeless<sup>xii</sup>.

**"New Entrants" to Homelessness resulting from the crisis:** There is evidence of a broadening of the socio-economic

profile of the homeless population. An increasing number of homeowners are confronted with homelessness. There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of mortgage foreclosures since the beginning of the financial and economic crisis.

According to the report "*El estado de la pobreza*" ("The state of poverty") of EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network), in 2015 there were **1,788,358** more poor people than in 2009. The AROPE Index (which measures poverty, joblessness and material deprivation) indicates that in Spain, **28,6%** of the population live at risk of social exclusion. In 2009 the percentage was **24,7%**.

Again, according to EAPN and the Living Conditions Survey of 2015, the percentage of workers at risk of poverty and social exclusion increased since 2014, rising from 17.6 % to 18.1 %. There has also been a general impoverishment of the population.

**Working poor:** In Barcelona, a new profile of homeless people has been observed: people that have unstable and precarious jobs who cannot afford to rent (due to high prices) and are forced to live in shelters. In 2016, **12,76%** of the people that used Barcelona's services for homeless people had a job (in 2012 it was **4,10%**)<sup>xiii</sup>.

### Homelessness Amongst Women:

Women in Spain are the invisible face of homelessness. Due to the highest vulnerability they face we find more women in other ETHOS categories rather than sleeping rough.

**Age of the Homeless Population:** According to the National Statistics Agency, the average age of a homeless person was **42.7** in 2012 (compared **37.9** in the 2005 Survey). There is, however, consensus that youth homelessness may be hidden, as young people do not wish to be considered homeless and are reluctant to access traditional homeless services. In Barcelona in 2019, **18%** of homeless people were between 18 and 30 years old<sup>xiv</sup>.

**Renting crisis:** The price of renting in cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Mallorca, Ibiza, Valencia, Sevilla, etc increases every year. People are forced to leave their homes because of this and some of them end up sleeping in squats, sharing rooms or going somewhere else. Those are seen in Spain as "invisible evictions." On the other hand, is impossible for the homeless to access to a house or a room due to the high prices. The renting crisis and the low salaries are making more people homeless.

[documents/plan\\_lucha\\_sinhogarismo\\_barcelona\\_2016-2020.pdf](#)

## POLICIES & STRATEGIES

In April 2014, the Parliament approved the first Spanish National Homelessness Strategy and the Ministry is beginning to work with different NGOs to define and develop this Strategy. There have also been strategic developments at the level of different autonomous regions. Catalonia has produced a document known as the “Model for Attention to Homeless People 2010”. It sets out the legal framework for tackling homelessness within the region.

This is seen by stakeholders as a prerequisite for a strategy with clear targets, responsible stakeholders, set budgets, and so on. But until now, no budget and no concrete implementation have been set up.

National strategy

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/docs/ENIPSH.pdf> (without a lot of money to be implemented).

Catalan Strategy:

[https://www.acm.cat/sites/default/files/manual\\_uploads/comissions/sectorials/01\\_04\\_presentacio\\_plenari\\_13\\_07.pdf](https://www.acm.cat/sites/default/files/manual_uploads/comissions/sectorials/01_04_presentacio_plenari_13_07.pdf) (is written but no one is doing anything with it. So, it's like it doesn't exist)

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain) created a strategy to fight homelessness 2017-2021:

<https://www.laspalmasgc.es/export/sites/laspalmasgc/galerias/documentos-noticias/170224-PLAN-ESTRATEGICO.pdf>

Basque Country has developed a strategy for homeless people 2018-2021:

[http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/documentacion/doc\\_sosa\\_acuerdo\\_sinhogar/es\\_def/adjuntos/ESTRATEGIA%20VASCA%20PARA%20PERSONAS%20SIN%20HOGAR%202018-2021%20castellano.pdf](http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/documentacion/doc_sosa_acuerdo_sinhogar/es_def/adjuntos/ESTRATEGIA%20VASCA%20PARA%20PERSONAS%20SIN%20HOGAR%202018-2021%20castellano.pdf)

Zaragoza has a strategy as well:

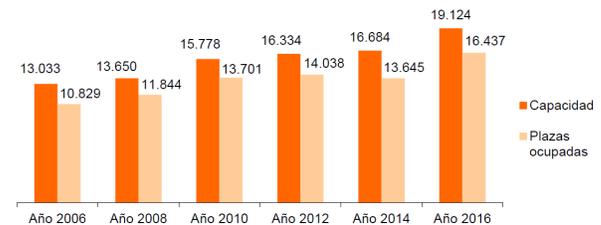
<http://www.centrosanblasparalossintecho.es/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Documento-Base-SinHogar-ZGZ.pdf>

Barcelona has a strategy to fight against homelessness:

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu->

In the context of the crisis, funding cuts at the level of local and regional authorities are having a huge impact on social services.

Evolución de la capacidad y ocupación de la red de alojamiento



## REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

- Positive

The Spanish Government adopted the first “Comprehensive National Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020” on 6 November 2015 – but it is still not being implemented.

An official pilot experience on Housing First was launched by Barcelona’s City Council, with 50 housing units, involving an impact study and qualitative research. The project will last for 3 years and is generating a lot of expectation in public and private homelessness service providers all around Spain.

Sant Joan de Déu has Housing First in Lleida and Jesus Abandonado in Murcia.

RAIS (now named HOGAR SI) also runs Housing First projects, in Malaga, Barcelona, Madrid<sup>xv</sup>, A Coruna, Avilés, Donosti (RAIS Euskadi), Zaragoza, Valencia, Alicante, Granada, Cordoba, Sevilla, Mostoles, Coslada, Alcobendas.

The City Council in Barcelona, together with the XAPSL, have designed a Homelessness Plan that will try to respond to all aspects of homelessness in Barcelona. An English version of this plan is available [online](#)<sup>xvi</sup>. The Catalan government (Generalitat de Catalunya) is also working on a Plan to fight homelessness in Catalunya, but it’s not available/implemented yet.

The local strategies against homelessness in some cities in Spain.

- **Negative**

Cuts to both welfare and homeless services are a major challenge in the current context, especially when combined with rising homelessness. In several Autonomous Communities, subsistence benefits to people in vulnerable situations or experiencing social exclusion have decreased and/or become more difficult to access due to tougher eligibility requirements.

Life on the streets in Spain is about to get much harder. The former government approved a bill on public security designed to control and punish behaviour on the street, including sanctions targeting the homeless. Individuals who damage public property or lead to its vaguely-defined “degradation” (“deslucimiento”) could be fined up to €600. Nongovernmental organisations in Spain are worried that this could lead to homeless people being fined for sleeping on a park bench or sitting on a street corner.

The national Government is refusing several local, regional and national measures proposed by other public authority levels and political parties to avoid evictions and its consequences. The Spanish strategy to fight homelessness has no budget and the plan is not being implemented yet.

Still no progress on the horizon in terms of increasing the affordable proportion of social housing within the housing stock. There is a threat to cut back on the already minimal social benefits, and housing remains to be defined as a personal problem, with no official support. Local authorities can offer a housing subsidy, which normally does not exceed 10 euros/month.

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>i</sup> See SALES A. (2015), "How Many Homeless People Live in Spain? Incomplete Sources and Impossible Predictions", *European Journal of Homelessness* Vol. 9, No. 2, December 2015 <http://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/salesejh2-2015article96043744236334400007.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> This is based on adding 6,000 to 10,000 rough sleepers that Caritas estimates to the 22,938 people INE surveyed in homeless services in 2012.
- <sup>iii</sup> [http://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/categoria.htm?c=Estadistica\\_P&cid=1254735976608](http://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/categoria.htm?c=Estadistica_P&cid=1254735976608).
- <sup>iv</sup> [https://www.ine.es/prensa/ecapsh\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/prensa/ecapsh_2018.pdf). The survey captures the reality of the homeless who have had contact with social services and service providers but does not capture the reality of the homeless who are not traditionally users of resources for homeless people.
- <sup>v</sup> [http://recompte.barcelona/?page\\_id=8](http://recompte.barcelona/?page_id=8). A diagnosis of the situation in Barcelona in 2015 and 2017 can be read here: [https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu\\_documents/qui-dorm-al-carrer-bcn-en.pdf](https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu_documents/qui-dorm-al-carrer-bcn-en.pdf).
- <sup>vi</sup> [https://img.arrelsfundacio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019\\_Diagnosi\\_XAPSL.pdf](https://img.arrelsfundacio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019_Diagnosi_XAPSL.pdf)
- <sup>vii</sup> [http://opendata.euskadi.eus/catalogo/contenidos/noticia/2018\\_10\\_23\\_49371/es\\_49371/49371.html](http://opendata.euskadi.eus/catalogo/contenidos/noticia/2018_10_23_49371/es_49371/49371.html)
- <sup>viii</sup> [https://www.abc.es/espana/galicia/abci-casi-350-personas-duermen-cada-noche-calle-o-albergues-galicia-201704061012\\_noticia.html](https://www.abc.es/espana/galicia/abci-casi-350-personas-duermen-cada-noche-calle-o-albergues-galicia-201704061012_noticia.html)
- <sup>ix</sup> <https://www.diariodemallorca.es/palma/2019/06/09/numero-personas-techo-palma-aumentado/1424067.html>
- <sup>x</sup> [http://www.ine.es/prensa/ecapsh\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ine.es/prensa/ecapsh_2016.pdf)
- <sup>xi</sup> Caritas (2011) *Cáritas ante la crisis. VI Informe sobre las demandas atendidas a través de la red confederal de Acogida y Atención primaria*. Cáritas Española. Madrid.
- <sup>xii</sup> <https://www.sjdservissocials-bcn.org/es/refugiados-personas-sin-hogar-complejidad-del-acceso-vivienda-solicitantes-proteccion-internacional>
- (p. 48) <http://www.bcn.cat/barcelonainclusiva/ca/2017/12/Diagnosi2017.pdf>
- <sup>xiii</sup> [https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu\\_documents/qui-dorm-al-carrer-bcn-en.pdf](https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu_documents/qui-dorm-al-carrer-bcn-en.pdf)
- <sup>xiv</sup> [https://img.arrelsfundacio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019\\_Diagnosi\\_XAPSL.pdf](https://img.arrelsfundacio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019_Diagnosi_XAPSL.pdf)
- <sup>xv</sup> [https://www.raisfundacion.org/en/what\\_we\\_do/habitat](https://www.raisfundacion.org/en/what_we_do/habitat)
- <sup>xvi</sup> [http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu\\_documents/barcelona\\_plan\\_fighting\\_homelessness\\_2016-2020.pdf](http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu_documents/barcelona_plan_fighting_homelessness_2016-2020.pdf)