

Homelessness among migrants in Brussels

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Topics

Impact of
'humanitarian crisis'
on homeless
services

Profile of homeless
migrants

Implications for
services

Methodology

- Homeless census
- Data collection by services
- Winter plan reports
- Activity reports
- Field interviews:
 - Day centres: Bij ons, Diogènes, Latitude Nord, Chauffoir, Jamais sans Toit, La Fontaine.
 - Health service provider: Médecins du Monde
 - Administrative support: Meeting
 - Night shelter: Pierre d'angle.

Data

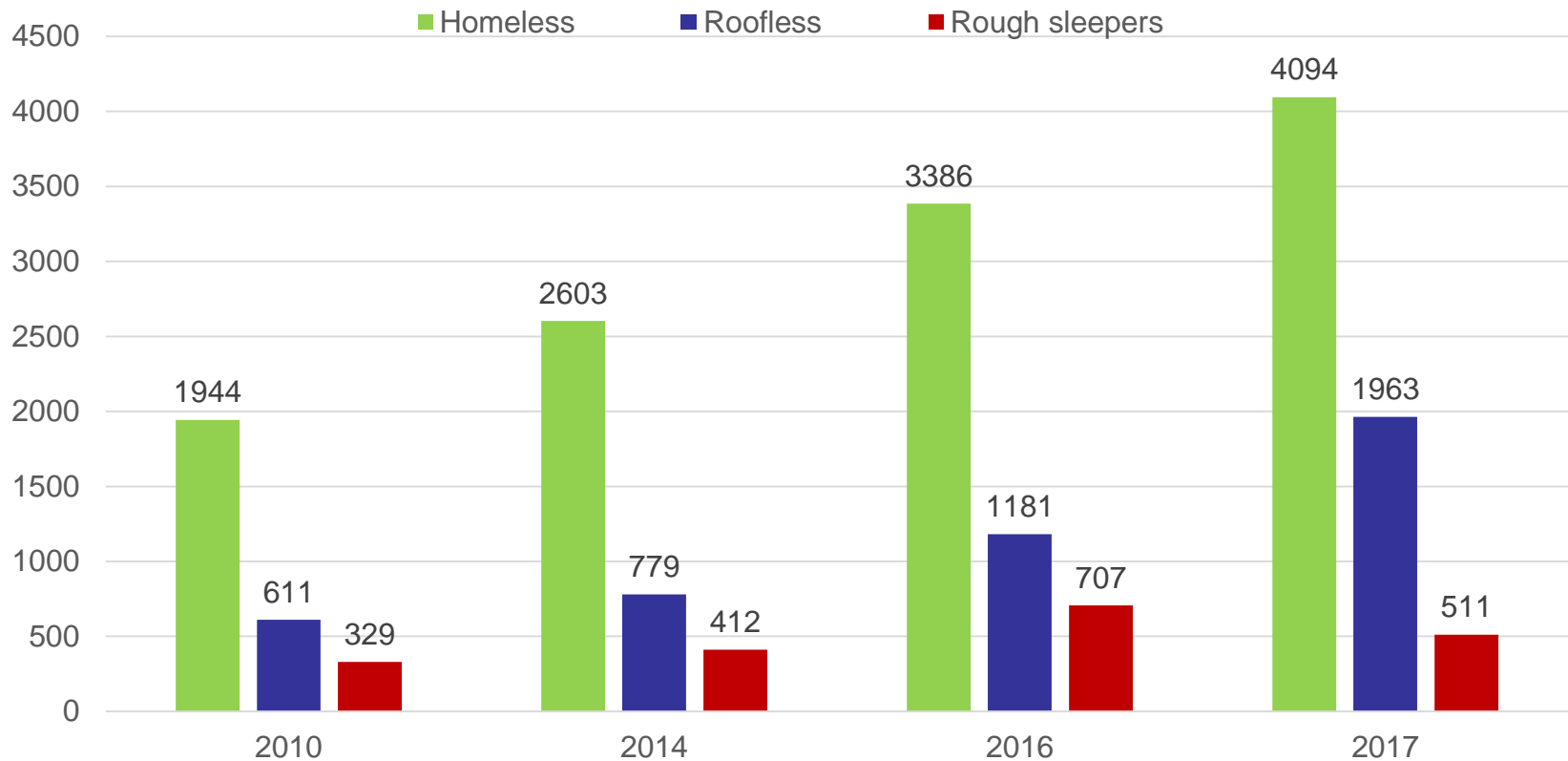
- Ethical issue concerning collection of data according to nationality
- Data not always fully reliable
- Services collect data in different ways among each other
- The same service has sometimes changed the way to collect data over the years

Homelessness in Brussels

- Census carried out by La Strada since 2008
 - Street count
 - During the first week of November, one hour from 11pm to 12pm
 - In 2016/2017 first time that two street counts (before and during the winter plan) and enquiries pre and post street count were held
 - Number of beneficiaries communicated by services

Evolution of Homelessness in Brussels

Homeless census carried out by La Strada

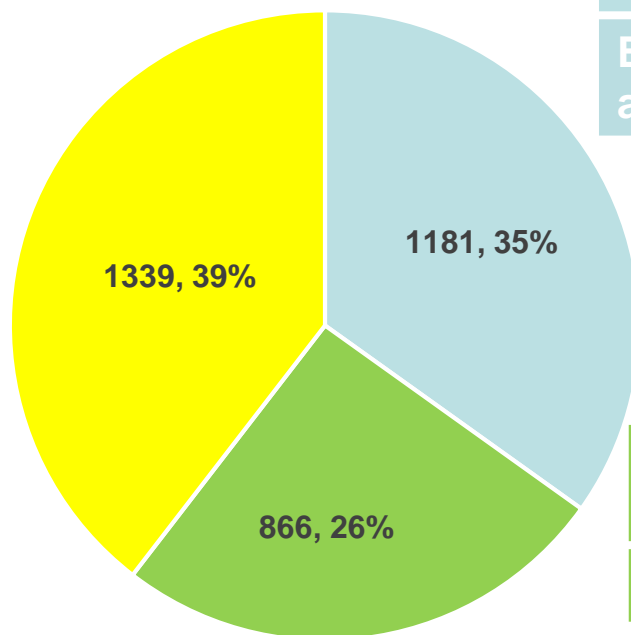


Results of 2016 homeless census

Homeless people in Brussels

Source: La Strada, 2016

Non-conventional structures	288 (8.5%)
Religious communities	189 (5.6%)
Agreed occupations	275 (8.1%)
Squats	587 (17.3%)



Rough sleepers	707 (20.9%)
Emergency accommodation	474 (14%)

Homeless accommodation	854 (25.2%)
In hospitals	12 (0.3%)

■ Roofless ■ Houseless ■ Insecure/inadequate housing

Results of 2016 homeless census

- 783 homeless people more than 2014 (+30%)
- 295 rough sleepers more than 2014 (+72%)
- 38%, 1294 individuals sleeping rough or living in squats, do not receive support
- 25% are in accommodation for homeless people (45% in 2008, 40% in 2010, 31% in 2014)

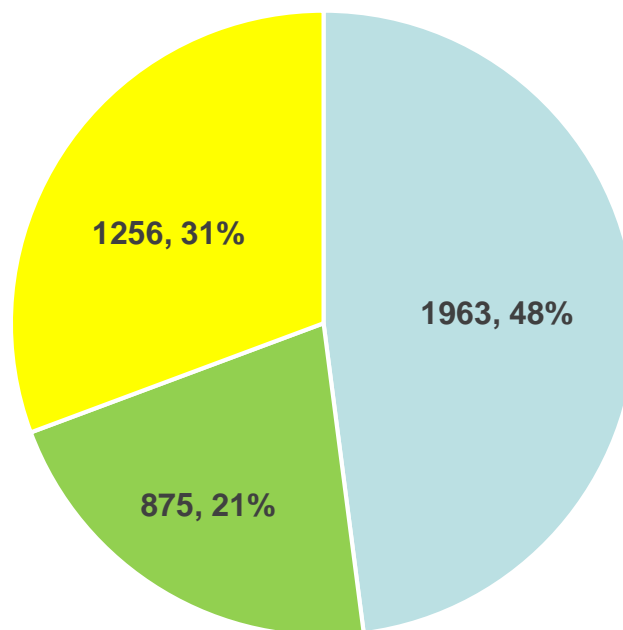
Enquiries pre and post street count 2016

- 174 people in the pre and 123 in the post were interviewed
- In the pre-street count 30 people were migrants in transit (17%)
- 40.7% (pre) and 38.2% (post) were irregularly residing migrants
- 7.6% (pre) and 4.1% (post) were asylum seekers
- Irregularly residing migrants are particularly vulnerable to lack of income and rough sleeping

Results of 2017 homeless census

Homeless people in Brussels
Source: La Strada, 2017

Non-conventional structures	287 (7%)
Religious communities	189 (4.6%)
Agreed occupations	396 (9.6%)
Squats	385 (9.4%)



Rough sleepers	511 (12.5%)
Emergency accommodation	439 (10.7%)
Winter plan	1013 (24.7%)

Homeless accommodation	864 (21.1%)
Hospitals	11 (0.3%)

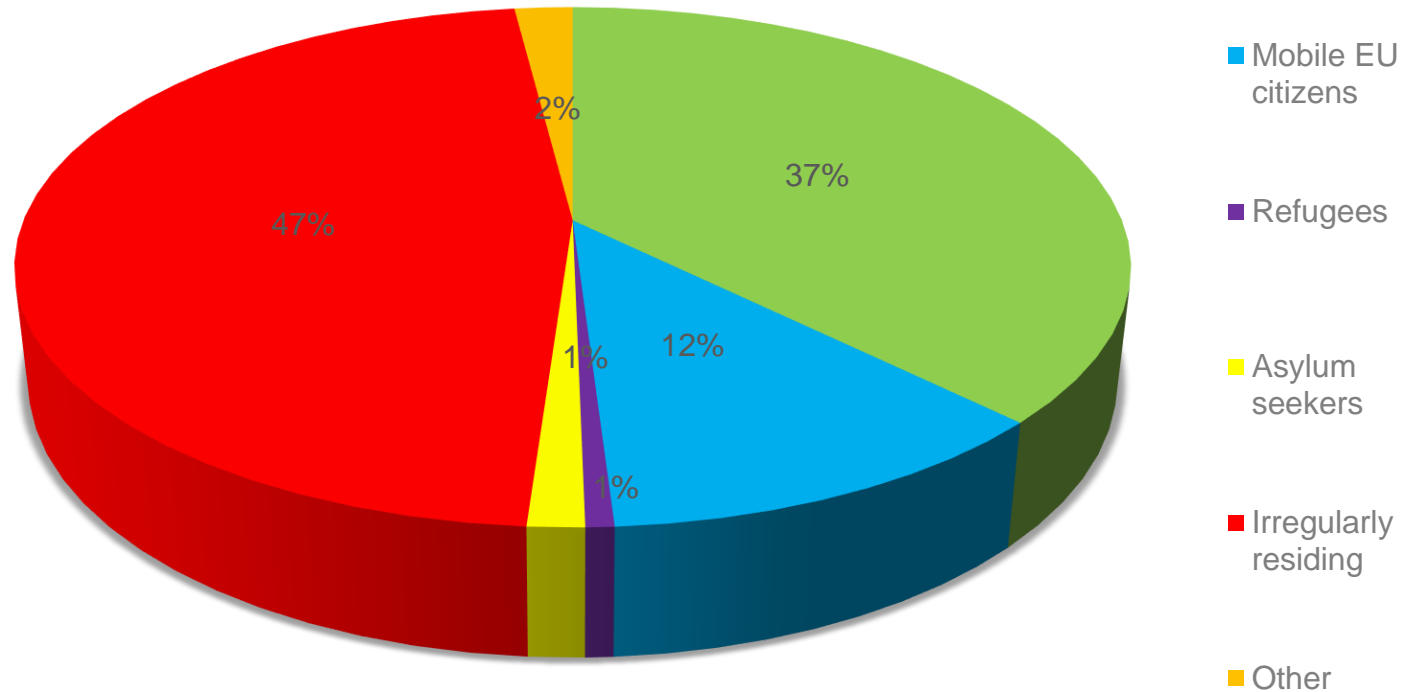
■ Roofless ■ Houseless ■ Inadequate/insecure housing

Results of 2017 homeless census

- The winter plan provides 1,350 beds in 4 shelters
 - 3 funded by the Brussels Region
 - 1 specifically for irregularly residing migrants funded by the Federal Government
- Huge number of rough sleepers (511) despite additional shelters

Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

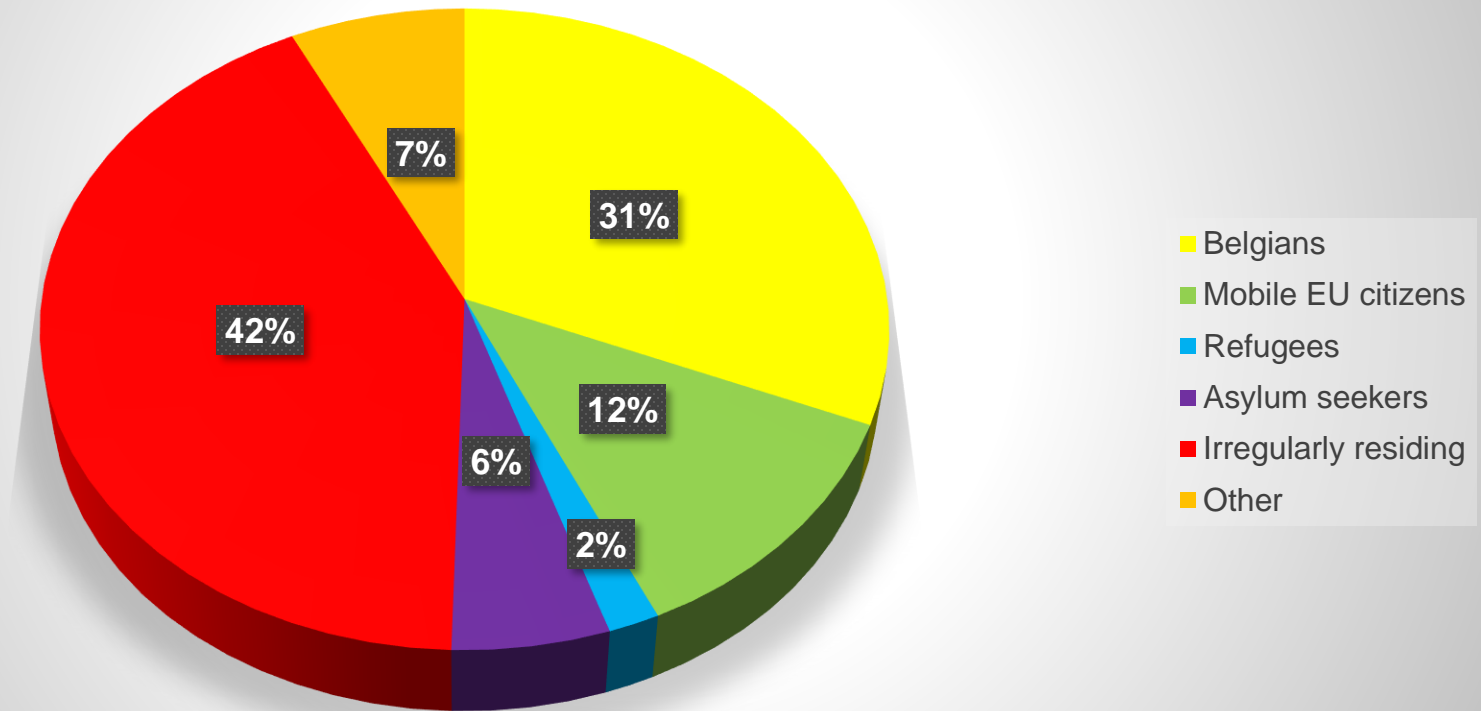
Administrative status
Source: La Strada pre-street count, 2016



Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

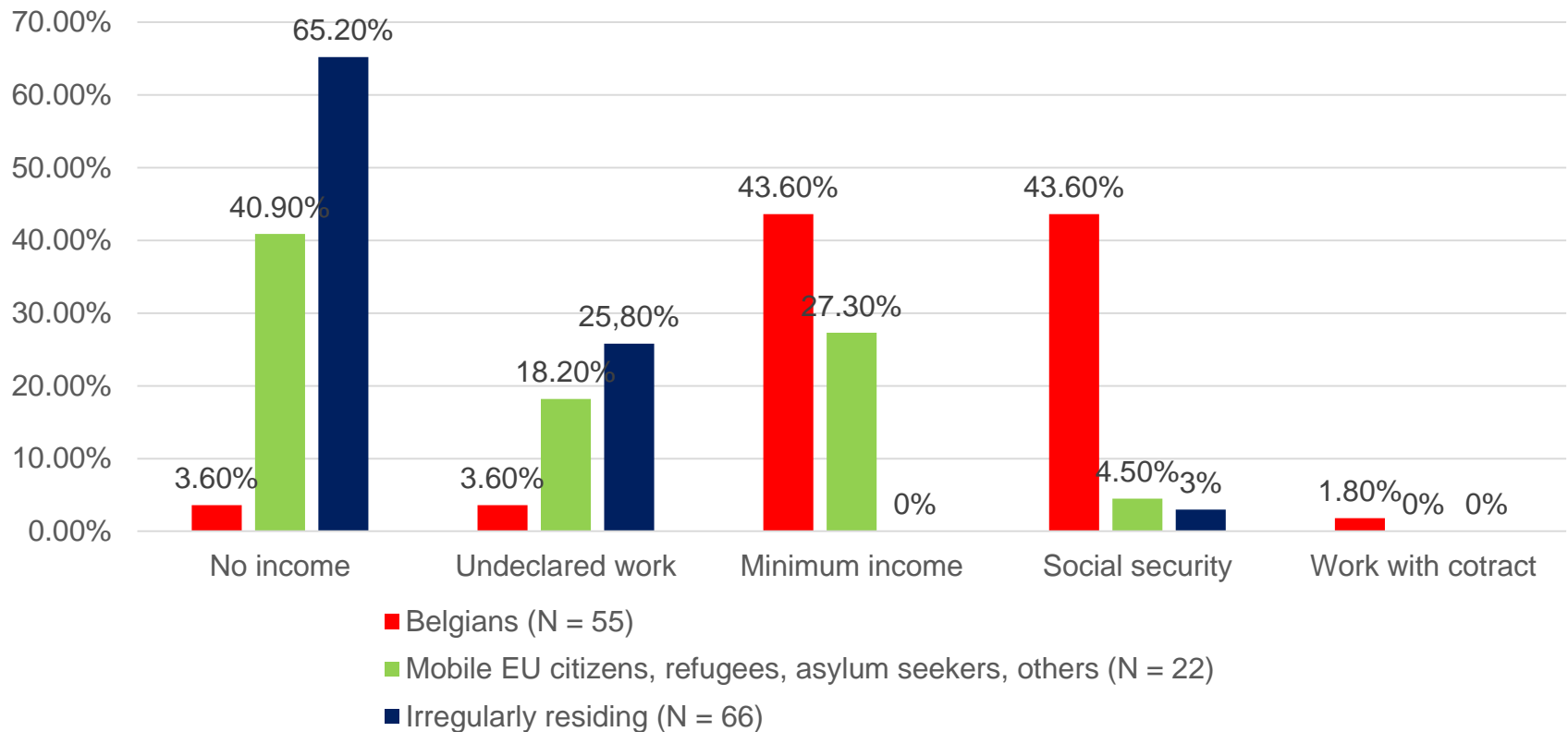
Administrative status

Source: La Strada, post street count 2017



Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

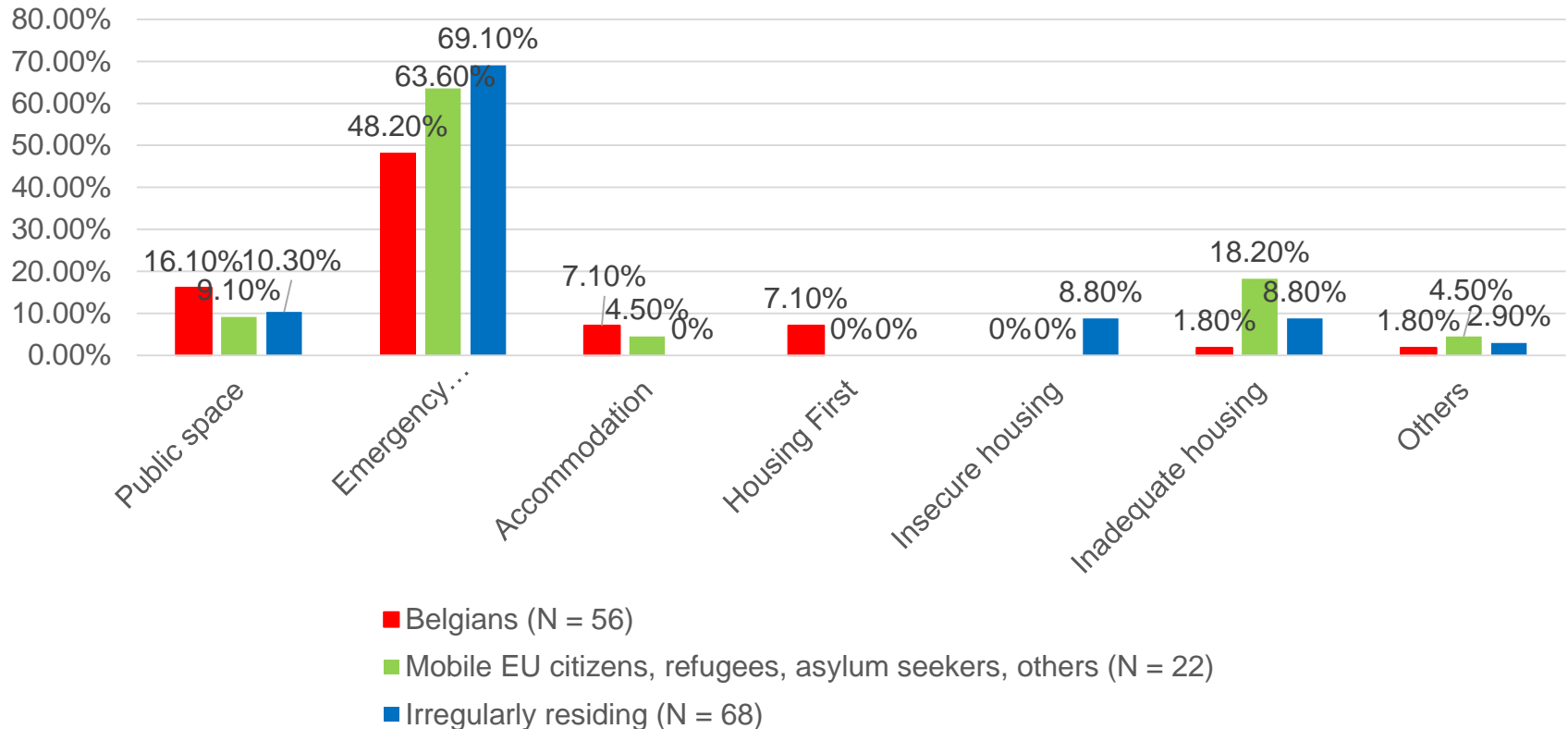
Income according to administrative status
Source: La Strada, 2017



Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

Housing situation according to administrative status

Source: La Strada, 2017



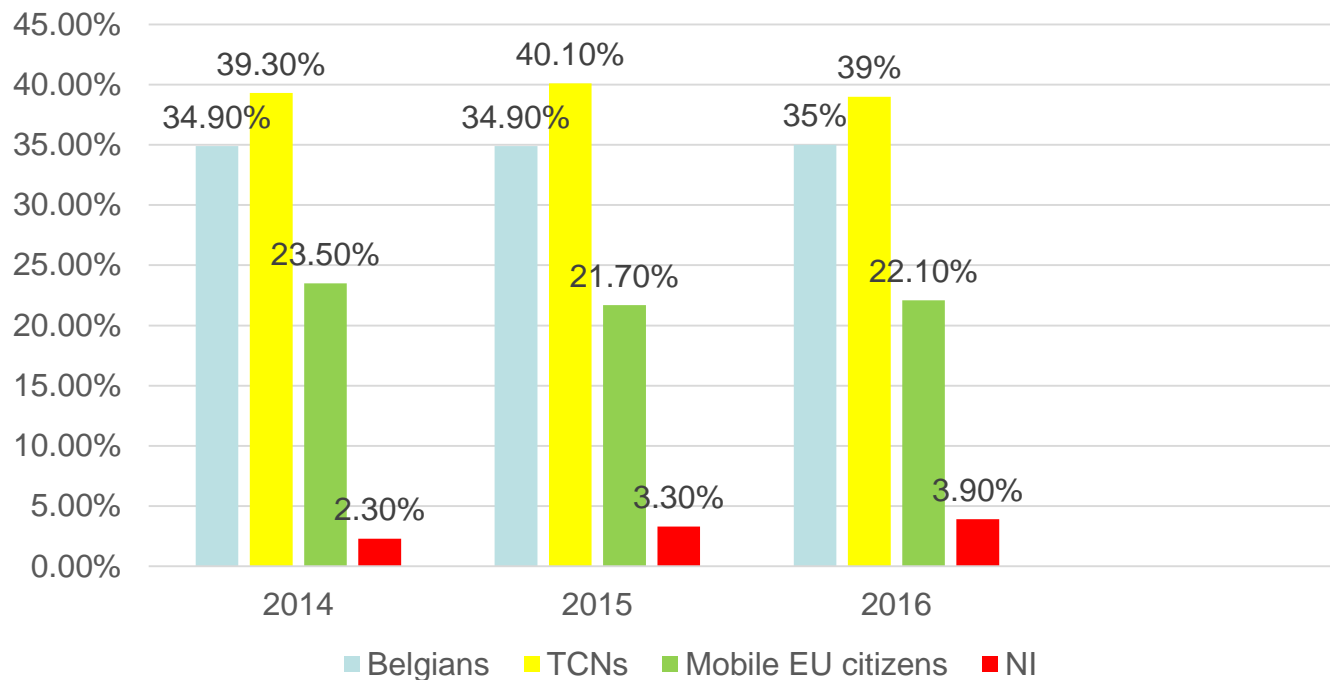
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

- 25,000 places in centres for asylum seekers
- Social rights of migrants under pressure
- Very challenging for social workers to find adequate solutions for migrants
- Homelessness among asylum seekers and irregularly residing migrants not new
- Issue not only among newcomers
 - In 2009, 20,500 migrants applied for regularisation
 - More than 100,000 irregularly residing (Migratiecoalitie)
- Homelessness among mobile EU citizens very significant too

Migrants in Emergency accommodation

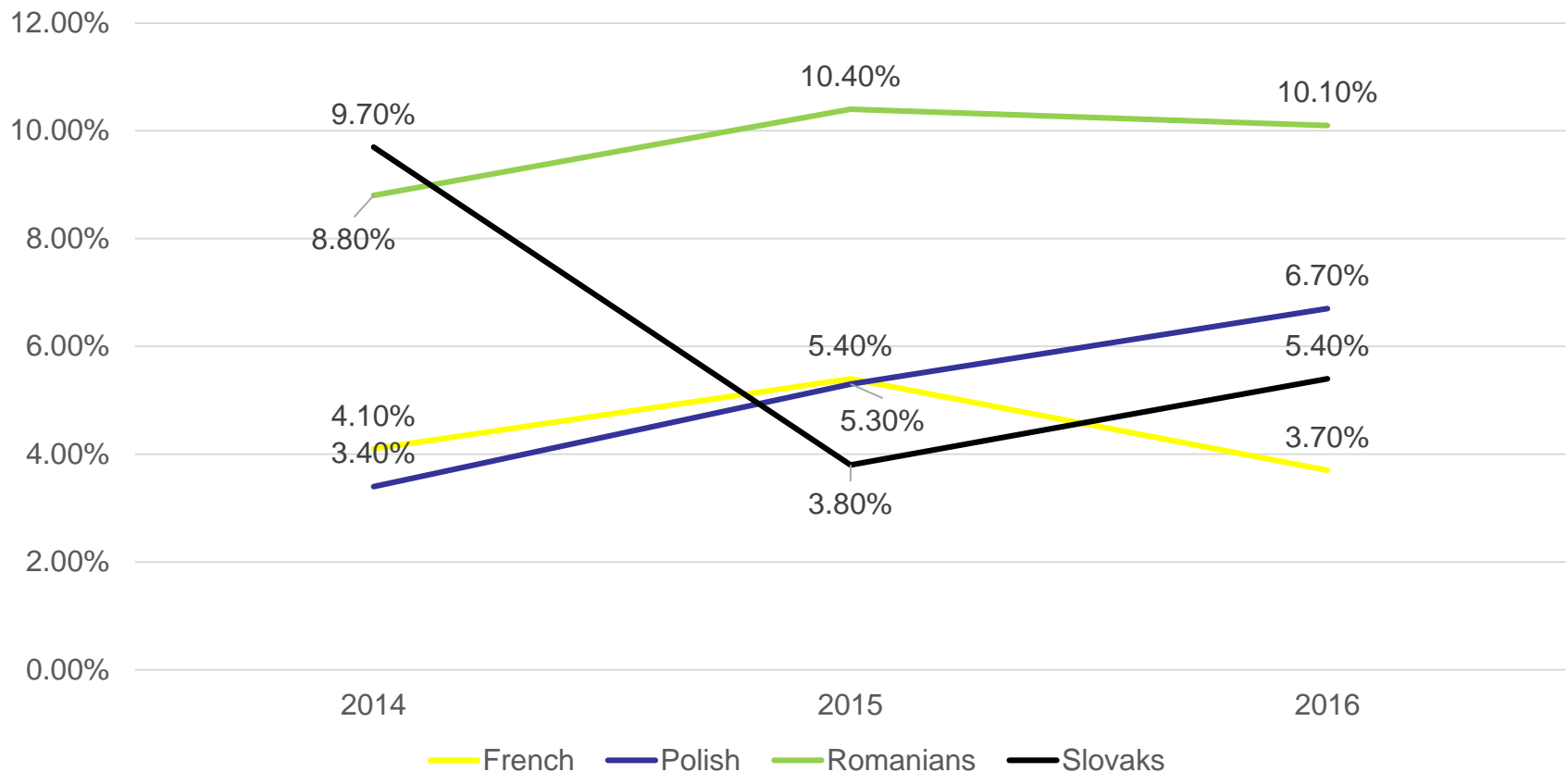
- 439 places in emergency accommodation, of which 292 in *Samusocial* and 48 in *Pierre d'Angle*

Samusocial beneficiaries (2014 – 2016)



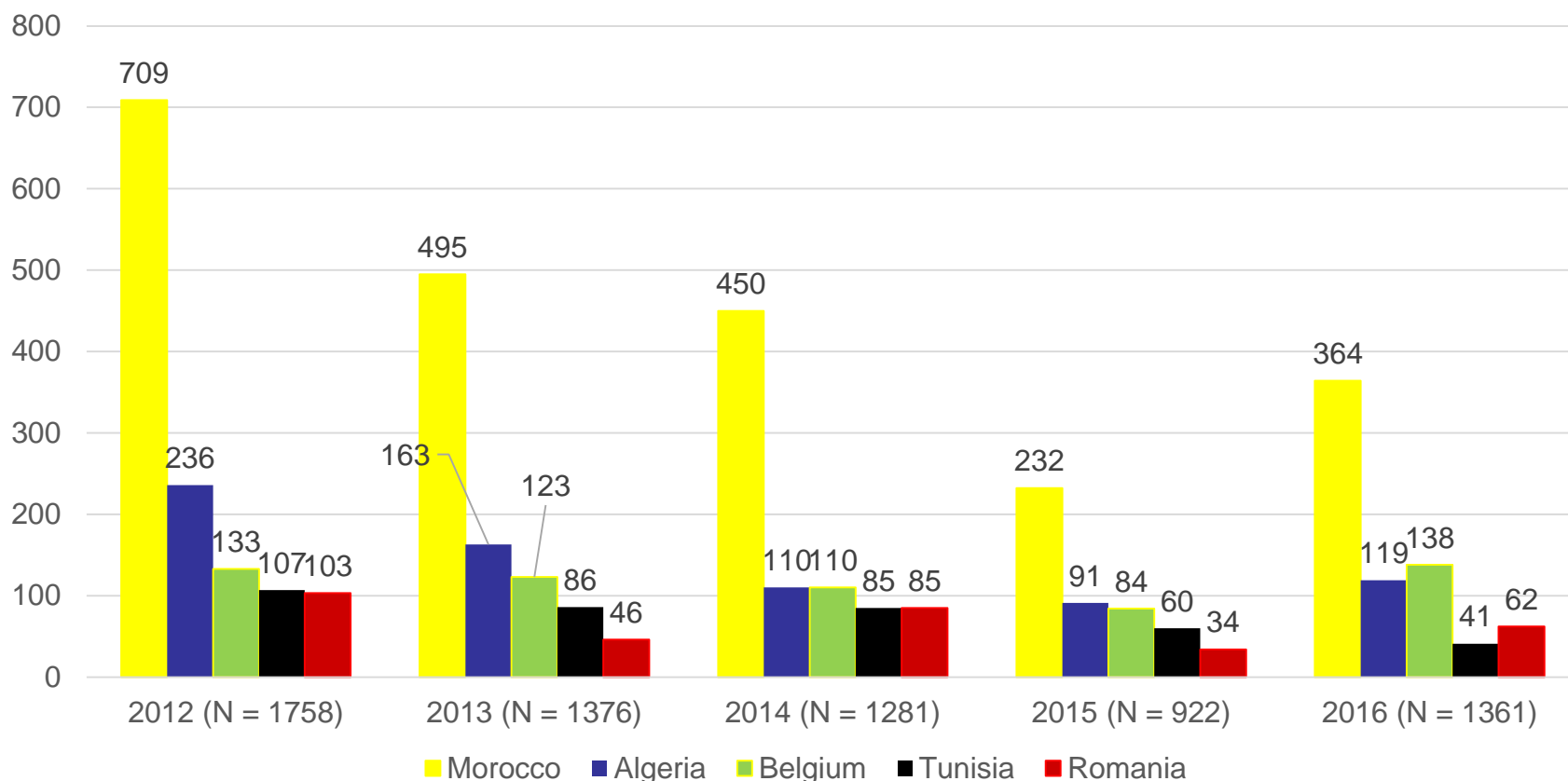
Migrants in Emergency accommodation

Focus on mobile EU citizens in Samusocial



Migrants in Emergency accommodation

New beneficiaries at *Pierre d'Angle*



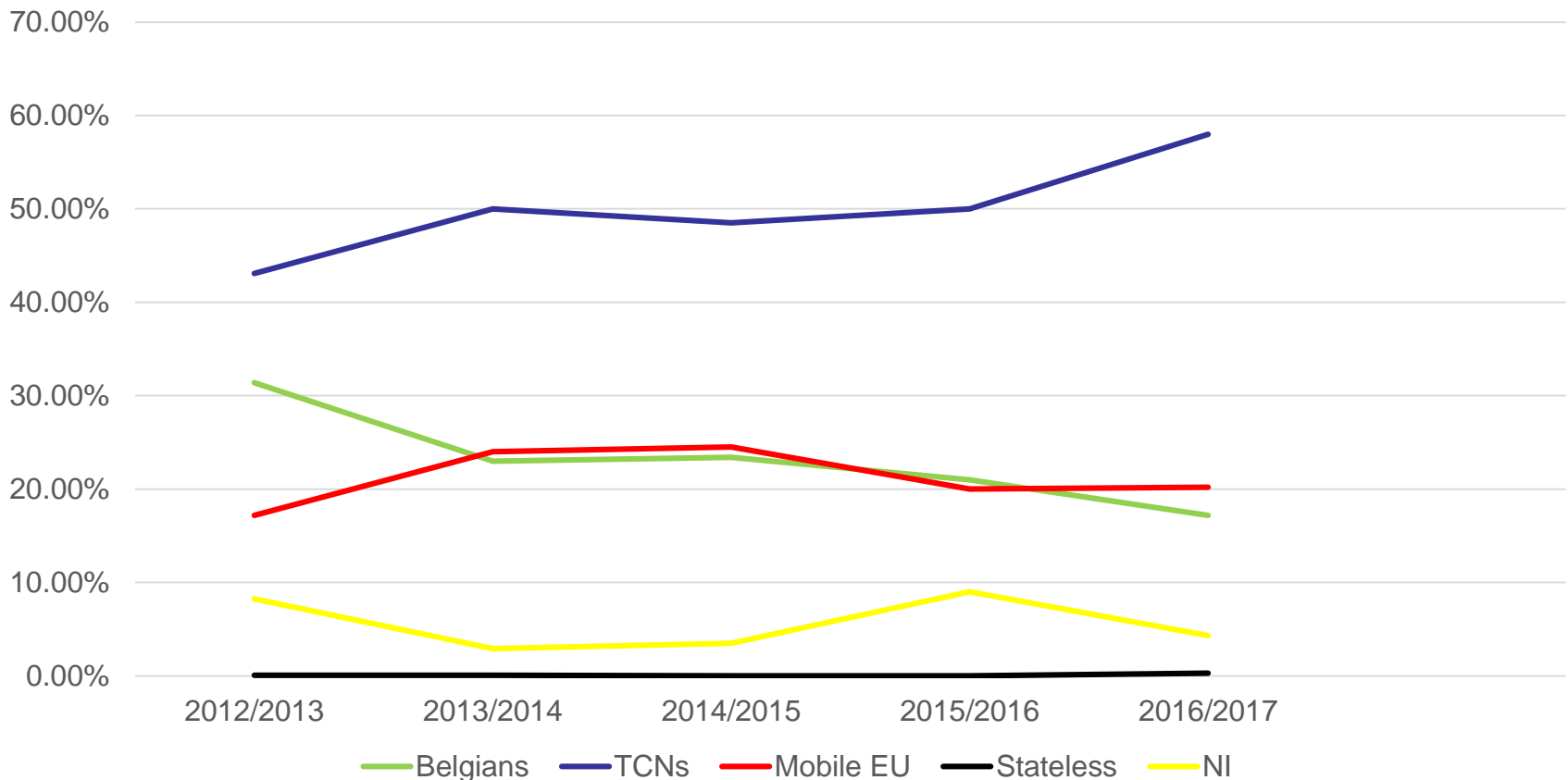
Migrants in emergency accommodation

Pierre d'Angle data about new arrivals

- No verification of information provided regarding nationality
- In 2016 Indians (70) and Syrians (42) among the 6 nationalities most represented
- Less new arrivals of Polish nationality but many beneficiaries among the old ones

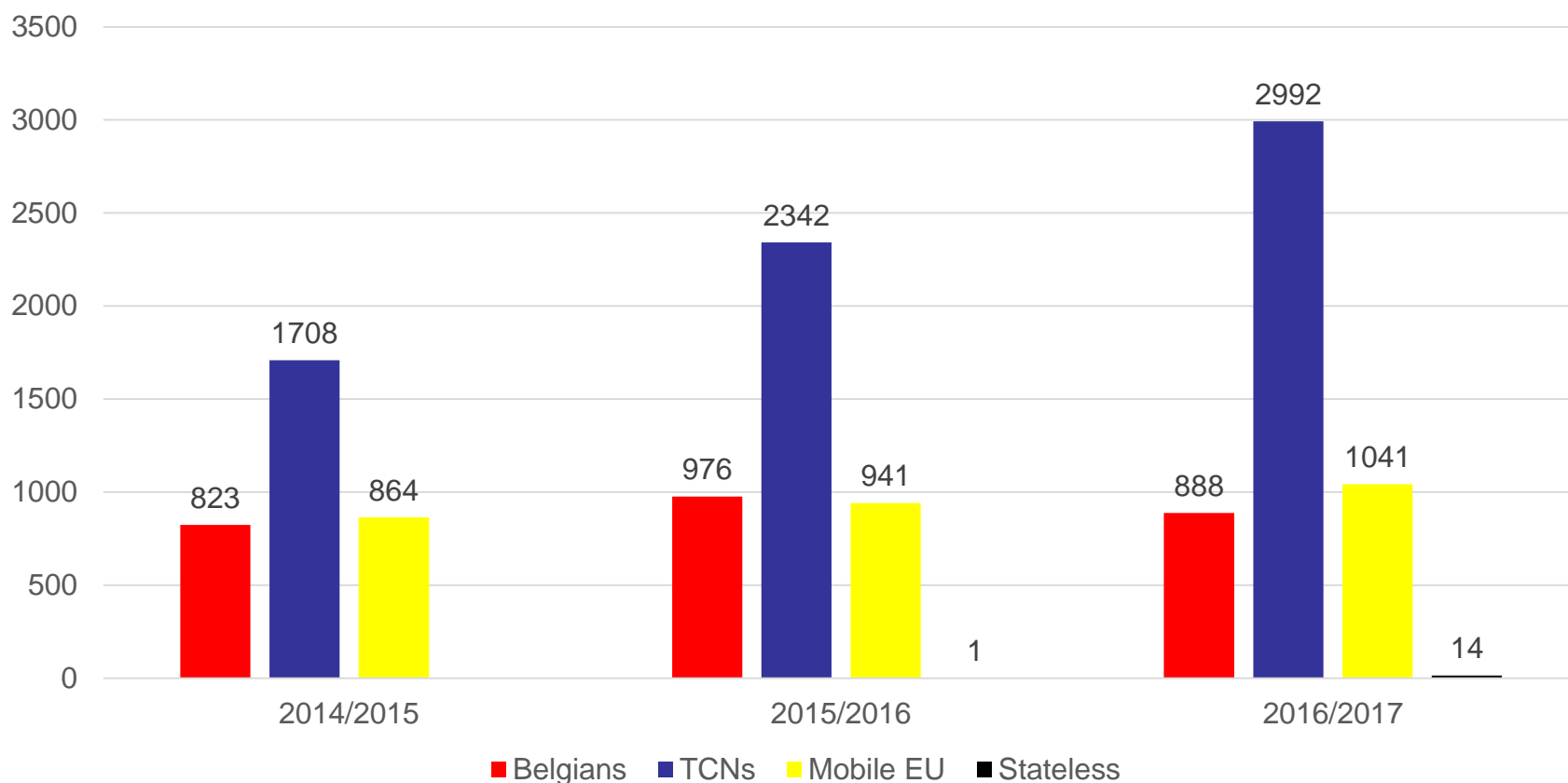
Migrants in the winter plan

Proportion of beneficiaries in Samusocial according to nationality



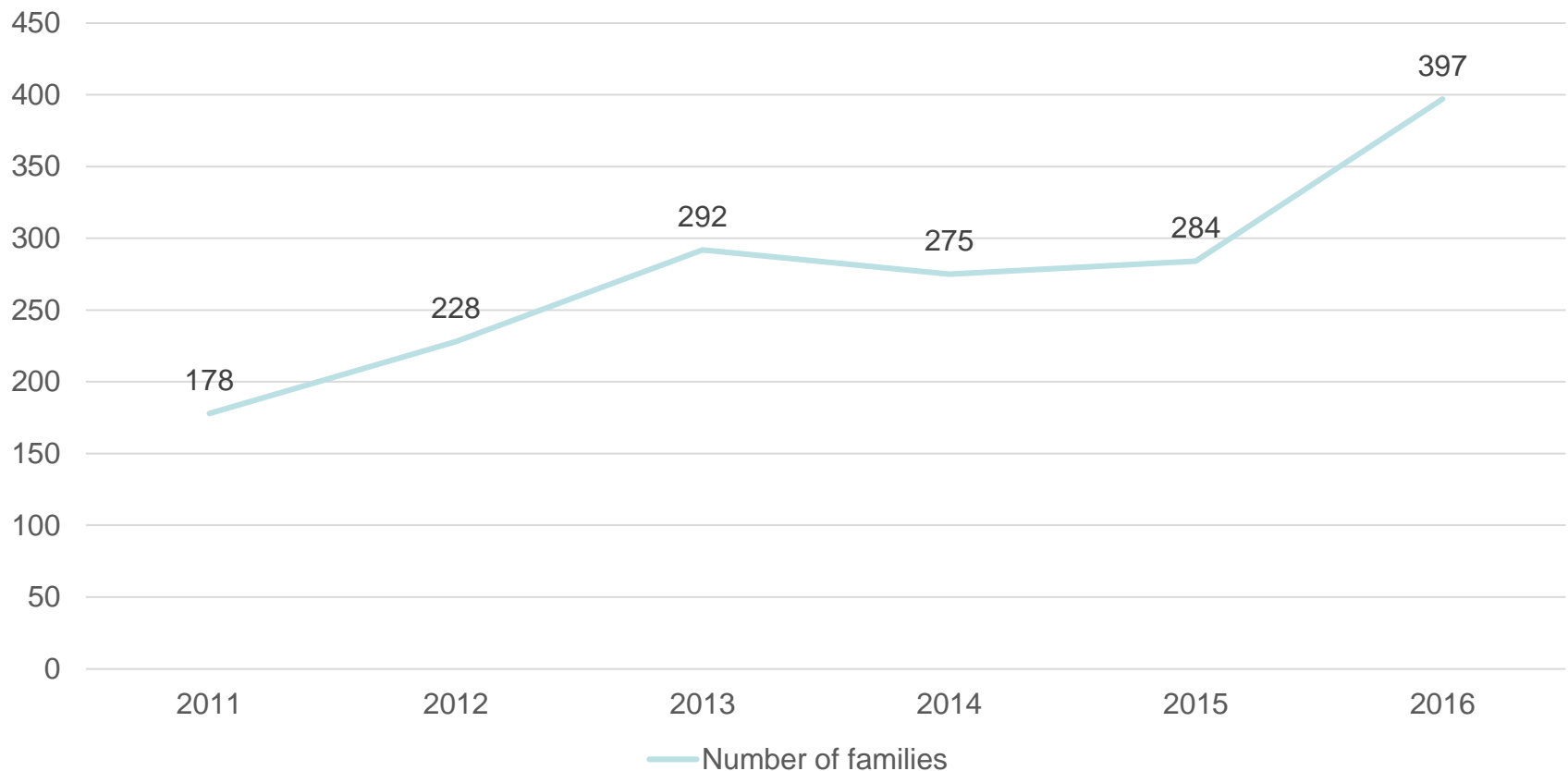
Migrants in the winter plan

Beneficiaries in Samusocial according to nationality



Families in the winter plan

Number of families hosted by Samusocial



Impact of the humanitarian crisis

- Depending on whether we include ETHOS operational category 5 (People in accommodation for immigrants)
- Asylum seekers have access to accommodation and beneficiaries of international protection access to minimum income and housing support
- Role of *Samusocial* in providing accommodation
 - Since 2010, Samusocial delegated by the Federal Agency to host asylum seekers who do not have housing solutions → accommodation centre opened in Ixelles (250 places)
 - Role of Samusocial at the end of 2015 during the peak → second accommodation centre opened (400 places)
 - Since July 2016, reduction of capacity – two centres of 250 places each, one for asylum seekers and the other of ‘transit’

Impact of the humanitarian crisis

- No evidence of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection sleeping rough
- Low number of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection using day centres
- Vulnerability to homelessness for rejected refugees
- Overall, humanitarian crisis led to significant and increasing number of migrants in transit

Profile of homeless migrants

Main groups:

- Irregularly residing migrants but also with precarious administrative status
- Migrants in transit
- Mobile EU citizens
 - Increasing number of Roma

Profile of homeless migrants

- Irregularly residing migrants
 - Increasing number sleeping rough
 - Many of them are Maghreb nationals although proportionally there is an increase of Sub-Saharan nationals
 - Their objective is to stay in Belgium
 - Often young, in working age, they normally speak one of the two national languages
 - Being undocumented and homeless for several years affect their health and likelihood to be socially included

Profile of homeless migrants

- Migrants in transit
 - Migratory movements from one country to another, in life threatening and dehumanizing conditions
 - Unable or unwilling to pay a smuggler in Calais increasingly turning to Belgium since 2016
 - Number increasing over the past months, especially since the dismantlement of Calais Camp in October 16

Profile of homeless migrants

- Migrants in transit
 - Do not intend to stay
 - Only looking for basic services:
 - Plugs to recharge smartphones
 - Water, coffee, some food, clothes
 - Showers and toilets
 - Health issues – treatment of skin infections
 - Legal advice

Profile of homeless migrants

- Mobile EU citizens
 - Lack of clarity concerning administrative status and access to social benefits
 - Precarious working conditions / in and out of job / no working contract
 - There might be alcohol abuse, violence, health issues.
 - Polish citizens often single men – Roma often in families → needs might be very different
 - 75% of families supported by Samusocial mobile teams, more than 50% arrived in 2016

Profile of homeless migrants

- Mobile EU citizens – focus on Roma:
 - Those who have been residing for several years often living in overcrowded dwellings with begging as main source of income
 - Roofless Roma, recently arrived after moving within the EU:
 - Sleeping rough in the city centre, often with children
 - Living in shanty towns, recently created
 - Using services provided through the winter plan

Implications for services

- Heterogeneity of migrant groups makes difficult to develop targeted solutions
- Social workers struggle to find durable solutions for irregularly-residing migrants
- Difficult to refer certain categories of vulnerable migrants to other services
- Difficult to engage with migrants in transit since they do not intend to stay in Belgium

Implications for services

- Competition among groups of beneficiaries that sometimes lead to open conflicts
- Difficult to handle an increasing number of beneficiaries
- Pressure from the State → new law that would jeopardise the principle of unconditionality
- Collection of useful data can put at risk the respect of the principle of unconditionality

Implication for policy makers



At national level

- legal channels to reside regularly, also as economic migrants
- Facilitate access to address of reference
- Targeted services for migrants in transit



At EU level

- Develop the legal framework on economic migration
- Coordinating internal movement of people seeking international protection
- Develop the existing legal framework on free movement

Thanks for your attention

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