

**Social Innovation and Engagement: Social Challenges, Policy Practice, and
Professional Training of Social Workers.**
Center for Social Work Development, Washington University in St. Louis, April 6-8,
2014

Policy practice among Spanish social workers

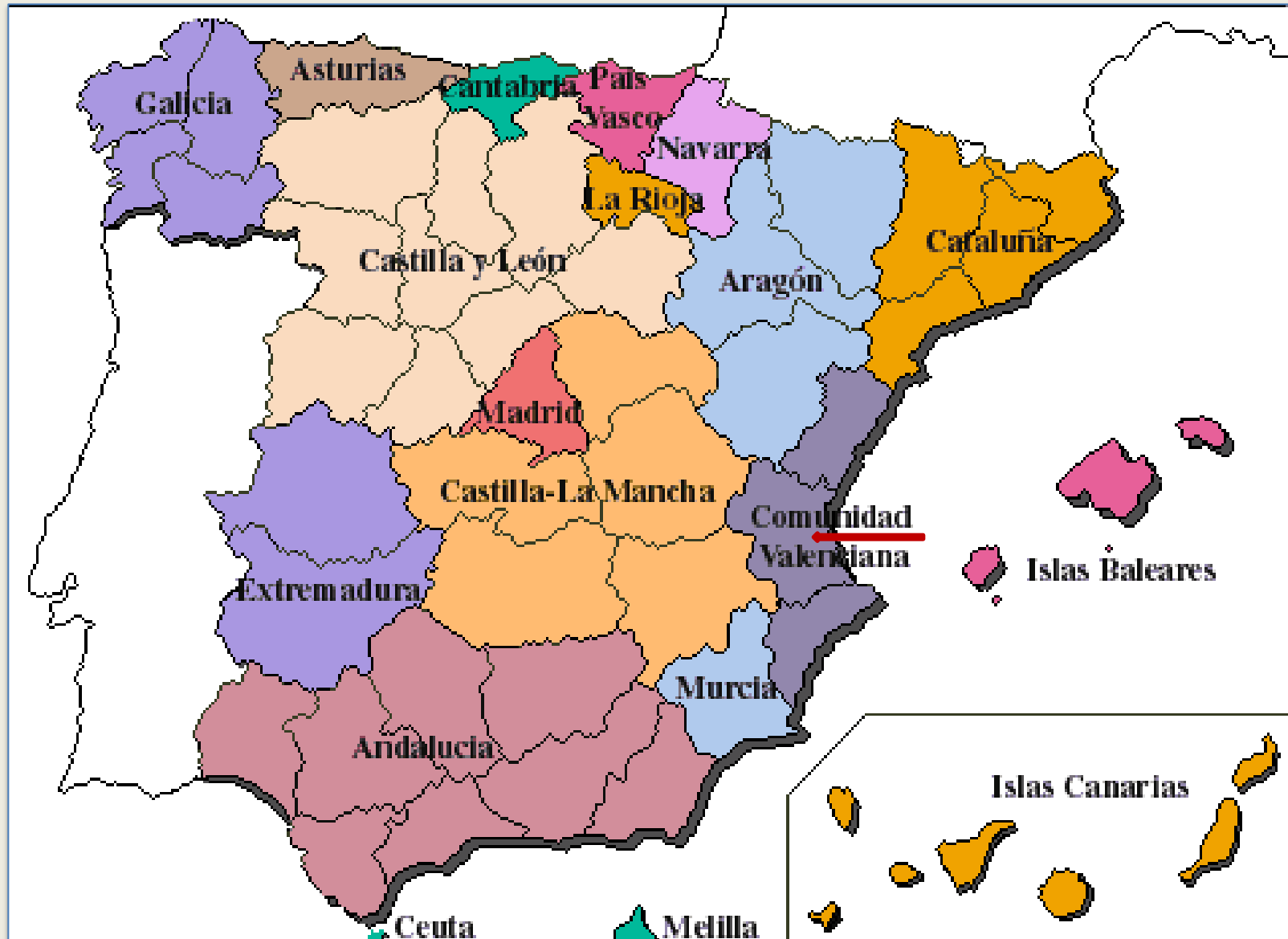
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Summary

- 1. Organization of Public administration. Social Assistance education and policy practice**
- 2. Social and political context in Spain**
- 3. How do social workers engage in policy?**
- 4. Policy practice in Social Work education**

Autonomous Communities



DECENTRALIZATION: 3 levels Public Administration

1978 Constitution

Central Administration	Autonomous Communities	Local Administration
Central government Parliament Senate	17 Autonomous Comm. Parliament Senate	Municipality: Province City Council
Ministries and general Acts of: Education, Health, Employment, Social Security, Economy, Justice, Housing, Migration, Equality... But not General Social Services Act	Education, Health, Employment, Social Security, Economy, Justice, Housing, Migration, Equality... 17 Social Services Act different in terms of rights, services and expenditure. Common basic benefits and discretionary minimum income Specialistic social services	Employment, Housing, local development, public health, Equality... General social services

The Start of Social Work Education

Socioeconomic and political context

- **1930**
- **1936 -1939** Civil War

- **1939-1975** Franco regime
- **End 50'-60'** International pressure for social policy and qualified social assistants. American Social Aid
Residual system, charity
- **1964**
- **1967**
- **1970-75** Last time of Franco's era.
- **Development Plans**
- **1978** Constitution. Autonomous Communities.
- **1979** Elections in Municipalities
- **1981** University level recognition

Milestones of Social Work

- **First school of social assistance**

- **Assistance care from Catholic Church**

- **Cáritas Social Action Section:** many SW schools, jobs in services of Church and non-profit organizations

- **Recognition in schools**
- **Professional Federation Asistentes Sociales**
- **Firsts jobs in public administration**

- **New public social services**

Policy practice

60-70 context of under-development

sociopolitical activity in neighborhood associations

After Franco: Social workers, political party members with responsibilities to design the new social services

social workers developed a new model of general social services

80' New social services model. Costs: it tended to emphasize more individual work or work centered on the creation of new services or better jobs to the detriment of policy practice

1982-1996 Socialist government began to introduce neoliberal policies which were enhanced under the conservative administration of Partido Popular (1996-2004; 2011-)

2. Current Social and Political Context

Adjustment policies in Spain

Current Social problems

Economical crisis

**Ideological shift from collective to individual/familial responsibility,
more personal and social needs and less resources**

Social inequality and poverty

Precarious Labor market, economy underground

Unemployment, low quality employment (poor workers)

School failure and insufficient training

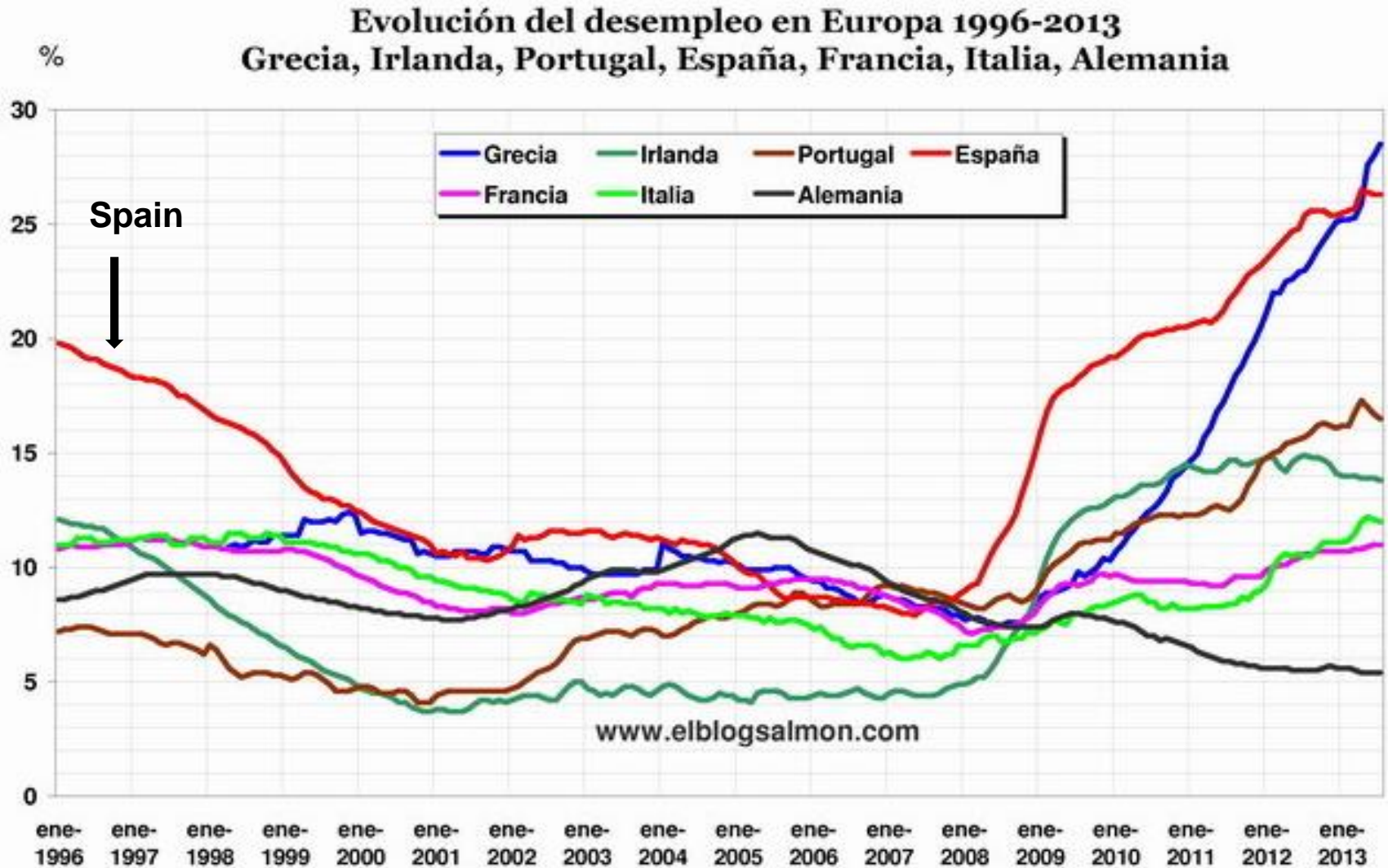
**Housing: Indebtedness: Mortgage, big housing problem (Parents' house
and overcrowded)**

Ageing, Migration (in-out)

Weak Welfare State: **FAMILIES ARE SPANISH WELFARE STATE**

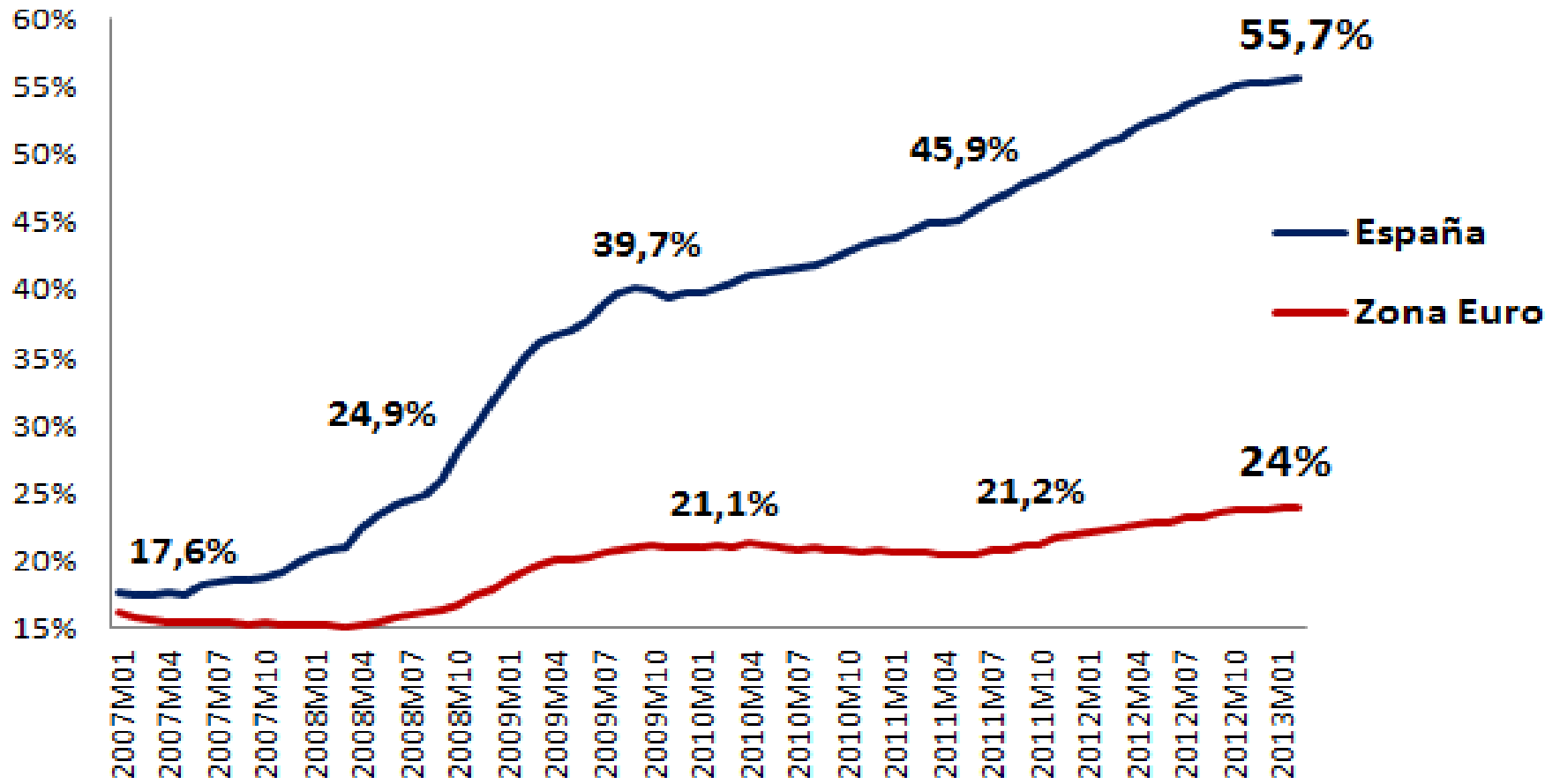
How to sustain Pensions System?

Evolution of unemployment in Europe 1996-2013



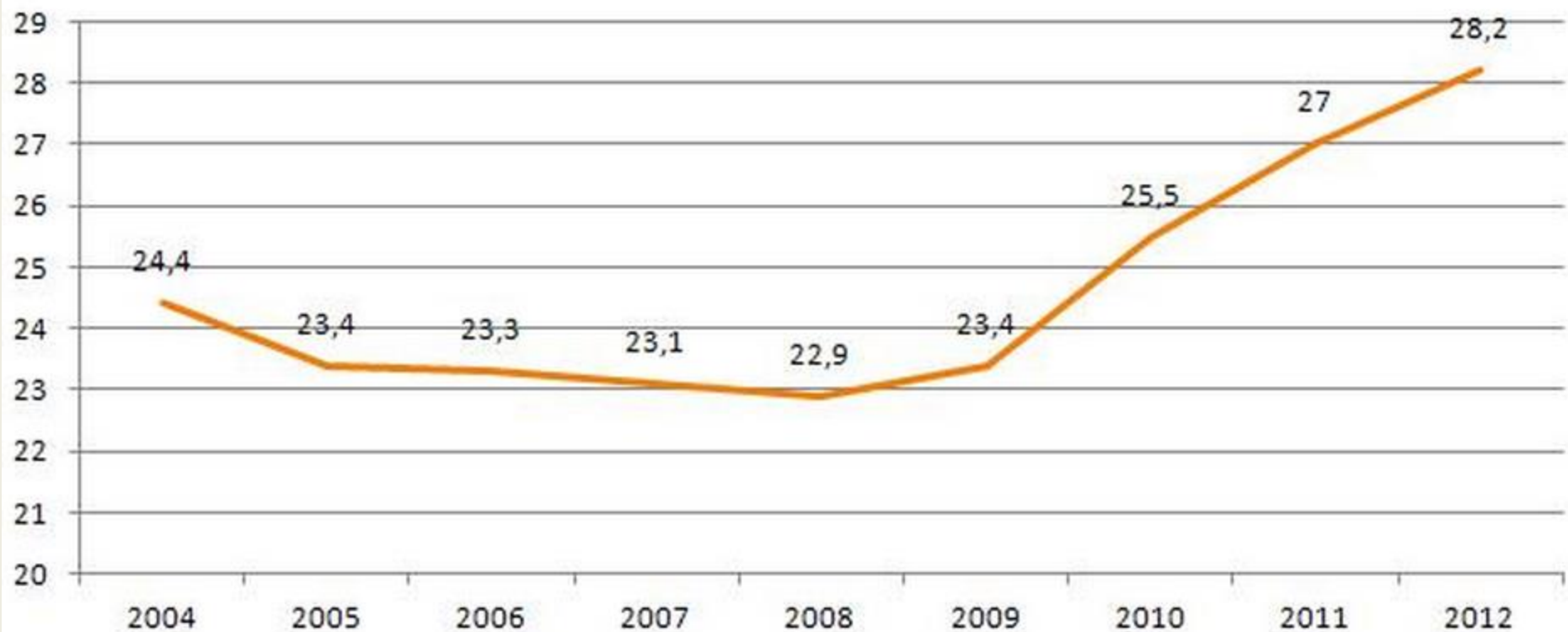
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Tasa de desempleo juvenil
España y Zona euro. Años 2007-2013



Poverty and social exclusion (AROPE)

**% Personas en pobreza y exclusión social (AROPE)
España. 2004 a 2012**



We are in a dramatic policy change

Austerity policy with cutting by lowering spending by reduction in the amount of benefits and public services provided (health, education, pensions, housing, social services...)

Collapse of a reckless housing bubble in the private sector, artificially cheap credit: mortgage debtors

Public Administration in economic collapse /The government gives money to banks/greater labor flexibility/not promoting employment

No public responsibility more centralization..

- **Legal changes: less rights in Education, Health, Social Services, Pensions,..**
- **The Responsibility is personal and is the family it was as 30 years ago**

3. How do social workers engage in policy ?

Social workers in the current crisis

- Social Workers are one of the participants in the drama and promote the struggle for social change and social justice
- Strategy: join forces with all workers convened following campaigns and demonstrations by the General Council SW
- General Council of SW join forces with civil society

General elections November 2011. Alliance Defense Public Social Services System



ALIANZA para la DEFENSA del
SISTEMA PÚBLICO de SERVICIOS SOCIALES

ALLIANCE for the DEFENSE of the SOCIAL SERVICES PUBLIC SYSTEM

- General Council of Social Work
- Universities
- Social organizations
- Trade Unions
- Citizens

SW DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDING RIGHTS

MAREA NARANJA

Orange Wave



Social Services for All



**No more cuts
¡ Do not be silent!**



Evictions and mortgage debts

Offices of Mortgage Mediation

General Council of Social Work
and
General Council of Lawyers

General Council of Social Work

Examples of actions 2013

- **“Social” Debate of the Nation** with the **Parliamentary Social Group** on the eve of the beginning of the **Debate on the State of the Nation**, 19 February 2013
- Meeting in Brussels with the **European Union Commissioner, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Lászlo Andor**. The Social Workers of the European countries most affected by the crisis handed to Commissioner Andor a declaration which rejected the austerity policies and demanded a new economic framework 19 March 2013
- Participation in the **European Social Summit, Alter Summit**, Athens, 4 June 2013

General Council of Social Work

Examples 2013 (2) MEDIA

The Government is carrying out a campaign to substitute social rights for public charity, Thursday 4 July 2013.

The General Proposals dismantle social services, Monday 30 September 2013.

Increase the demand for emergency social help whilst cutting the funding, Thursday 21 November 2013

Some 40% of social services will disappear with the Local Administration Reform, 4 December 2013

Obstacles to engaging in policy practice

Lack of opportunities for effective social participation

Employment problems

Choose to study social work without commitment

Personal attitudes

Inadequate training

Social policy training

**Manifesto of the Board of Directors of Schools and
Departments of Social Work**

Since 2010, new undergraduate studies

- **Curricula recognize the interplay of social policy-social work
and policy practice.**

But, each university has freedom: differences

The crisis is an opportunity

Professional social workers have a key role

Social workers and academics must join forces

University of Alicante

