

The population of the Basque Country grew by 93,000 between 2001 and 2014

Those aged over 64 represented 20.7% of the population in 2014, nearly three percentage points more than in 2001

The population of the Basque Country increased by 93,667 people between 2001 and 2014, according to data prepared by EUSTAT, which was an increase of 4.5%. In 2012 the population reached a historical record at 2,181,590 inhabitants, 102,380 more than in 2001.

Gipuzkoa was the only province to have gained population every year between 2001 and 2014, with a balance of 36,197 more inhabitants, representing an increase of 5.4%. Álava saw a similar population increase over that period, 35,453 to be precise, although its relative increase was higher, reaching 12.5%. The population of Bizkaia also rose over these 13 years, but with rather modest figures given its population size: the additional 22,034 people represented 2%. The growth rate was different in Gipuzkoa, where it has still not slowed, to Bizkaia and Álava where the population began to fall as from 2012.

The populations of Vitoria-Gasteiz and San Sebastián rose between 2001 and 2014, although the growth of the former was 10 times greater than that of the latter. Bilbao recorded 3,009 fewer inhabitants in this period. The growth rate varied a great deal between the three capitals: Vitoria-Gasteiz reached its maximum population in 2012, whilst San Sebastián and Bilbao reached it in 2009; the subsequent population loss in San Sebastián was not enough for it to fall below the 2001 level, whereas the drop in Bilbao was such that there were fewer inhabitants in 2014 than in 2011.

The municipalities that lost the greatest population between 2001 and 2014 include Getxo, Portugalete, Sestao and Basauri, which belong to the region of Gran Bilbao, registering 7,168 fewer people between them. The municipalities with the highest population density in the Basque Country, above 6,000 inhabitants per km², are concentrated in this region, with the highest density occurring in Portugalete, with 14,642 inhabitants per km² in 2014.

On the other hand, municipalities such as Kuartango, Valle de Arana, Lagrán and Añana, belonging to Álava and with fewer than 7 inhabitants per km², also lost population between 2001 and 2014.

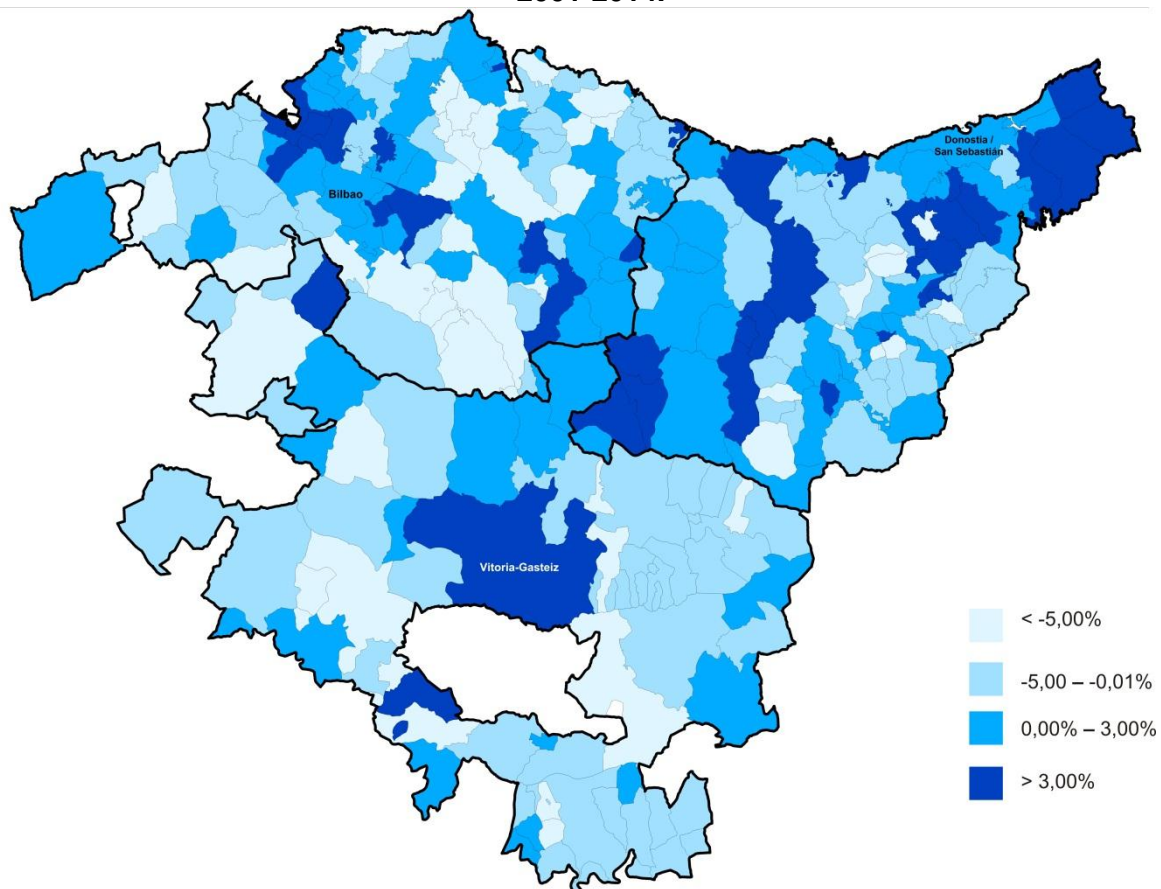
The number of municipalities of the Basque Country with over 25% of the population aged 65 and over fell from 54 in 2001 to 20 in 2014

In 2001, 18% of the population of the Basque Country was aged 65 or over; this percentage reached 20.7% in 2014. And yet, paradoxically, the number of municipalities in 2001 that exceeded the average percentage of that year was 163, whereas in 2014 the number fell to 91. This is explained by the fact that those

municipalities in 2001 represented 52.1% of the population, whereas those in 2014 represented 57.4%.

Moreover, between those two dates the proportion of people aged over 65 dropped in 137 municipalities, although they only accounted for 8.8% of the overall population; in other words, the increase in the number of elderly people tends to be concentrated in the largest municipalities. Hence, Vitoria-Gasteiz, San Sebastián, Bilbao and Barakaldo accounted for 36.2% of the 76,212 increase in the number of elderly people between 2001 and 2014.

Variation rates of the percentage of people aged 65 and over by municipality. 2001-2014.



Only two regions in Bizkaia (Encartaciones and Arratia-Nervión) and four in Álava (Estribaciones del Gorbea, Montaña Alavesa, Rioja Alavesa and Valles Alaveses) saw their proportion of elderly people fall over this period. Despite this, in Montaña Alavesa there was a notably high proportion of elderly people in all of its municipalities, producing an average proportion of 27% in 2014 compared to 29.2% in 2001.

In 2001, seven Autonomous Regions exceeded the percentage of elderly people in the Basque Country, whereas in 2014 there were only three; this indicates that the growth rate of this population group is higher in our Autonomous Region. A comparison with European countries reveals that in 2001 only Italy exceeded the percentage of the Basque Country, but in 2014 Germany did as well, having risen from 16.6% to 20.8% in this period.

In the Basque Country between 2001 and 2014 the ratio of people aged over 65 to those under 16 remained 1.4. This figure is similar to what occurred in Spain overall during these years, although to a lesser degree: 1.1. However, this ratio fell in 184 municipalities between these two years, which only account for a quarter of the total population.

The municipality of Lagrán is an extreme case, as in 2001 it had more than 10 elderly people for every person under 16, although in 2014 this dropped to slightly over 8 to 1. The following municipalities with a higher ratio in 2001 were Valle de Arana and Añana, with 7 and 6 to 1, respectively. In 2014 these two municipalities maintained their position but with lower values. On the other hand, in 2001 there were three municipalities which had more than 1.5 young people up to the age of 15 for each person aged 65 or over: Urnieta, Sopelana and Anoeta. The three had a combined population of 17,869 inhabitants. In 2014 the highest ratio of young to elderly people was above 2 and was recorded in Larrraul, Irura and Alegría-Dulantzi, although the three combined did not even reach 5,000 inhabitants.

Population distribution by age is most extreme in the municipalities of Álava, due above all to its small size and the fact that any demographic phenomena, such as migration, may modify its demographic structure.

Methodological note: Eustat completes the Municipal Statistics on Inhabitants with the dissemination of the 2001-2014 series, and now has information on the demographic structure of all Basque municipalities for the period 2001-2014.

For further information:

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Further press releases on Municipal Statistics on Inhabitants for the Basque Country

Databank on Municipal Statistics on Inhabitants for the Basque Country