

The population of the Basque Country grew by 16,622 between 2016 and 2021

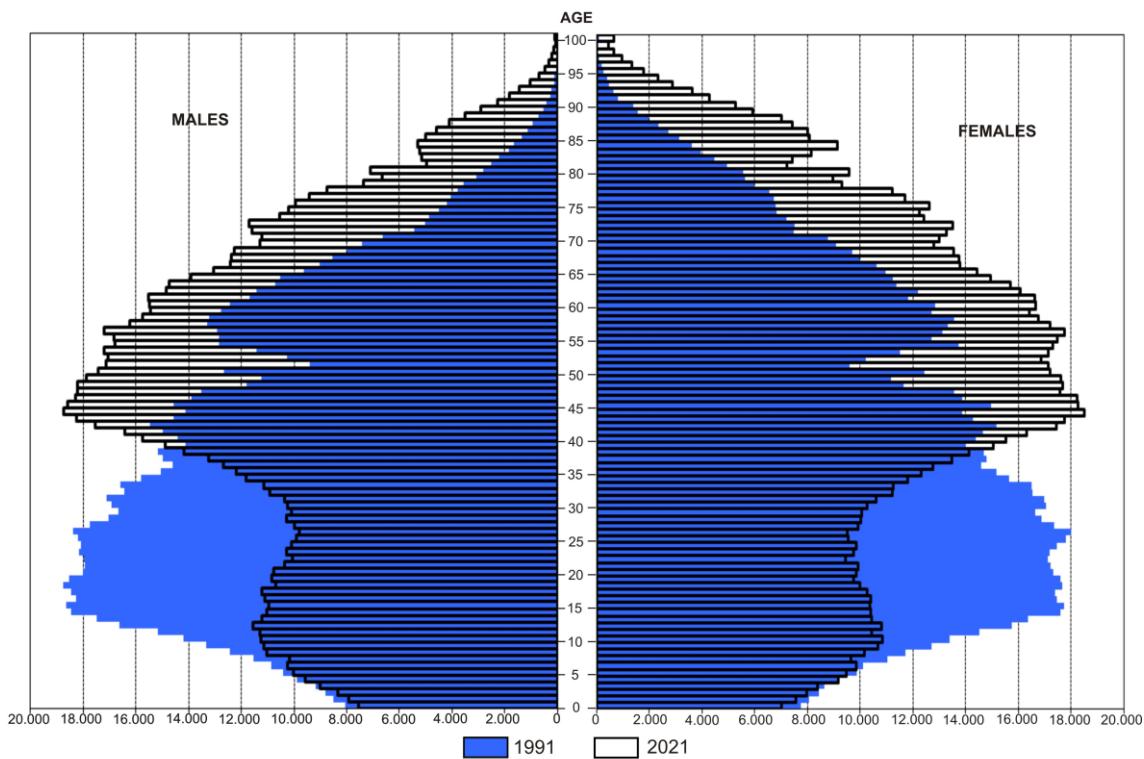
The growth was concentrated among those aged 65 and over, 33,000 more people, whereas there was a slight increase in those aged under 20 (+749) and the bulk of the working population fell by 17,000

The resident population of the Basque Country on 1 January 2021 stood at 2,193,199 people, according to Eustat data. This was 16,622 more people than in 2016.

This figure is below that posted on 1 January 2020, 6,512 fewer people, breaking the upward trend that began in 2016.

All three provinces experienced population growth between 2016 and 2021, but the increases were uneven. Gipuzkoa gained the most population, with 6,768 more residents, followed by Álava with 6,300 more, while Bizkaia grew by 3,554 inhabitants. Although in absolute numbers there was a greater increase in Gipuzkoa than in Álava, in relative terms the increase was 2.4% in Álava compared to 1.2% in Gipuzkoa.

Population pyramids. 1991 and 2021.



Source: Eustat. Population and housing statistics, 1991 and 2021

Over these 5 years Bilbao was the only capital where the population decreased, specifically 410 fewer people. Vitoria experienced the highest increase, with 4,963 more people, while San Sebastián saw its population increase by 1,430 new residents.

The evolution by region over these five years reflects that three regions in Álava and one in Bizkaia had growth over 3%: Montaña Alavesa (6.4%), Añana (5.5%), Plentzia-Mungia (4%) and Esteribaciones del Gorbea (3.1%).

Plentzia-Mungia had almost 59,000 residents and there were three municipalities that saw growth in excess of 5%; of particular note was Urduliz, with 17.7%; followed by Gorliz, with 6.5% and Bakio, with 5.9%. The population fell in four regions, although in both absolute and relative terms the drop was limited. These regions, in order of highest to lowest decreases, were: Alto Deba (-0.24%), Bajo Deba (-0.14%), Cantábrica Alavesa (-0.12%) and Gran Bilbao (-0.07%).

The population aged 65 and over represented almost a quarter of the Basque Country population

The age distribution of the Basque population changed over the course of these five years, leading to an increase in the number of people at the very top of the population pyramid.

The number of residents aged 65 and over accounted for 23% of the population, which was nearly 3 percentage points higher than the figure for Spain. This age group is 7% larger than it was in 2016, and it is significant that within this group the number of people reaching 85 was 15.3% higher than in 2016. Finally, if we consider the population aged 100 and over, we see that it has grown by 20.1% since 2016.

If we take gender into account, the proportion of women who are 65 or over was 25.6% compared to 20.2% of men. These differences continue into the older population; thus, women who were 85 or over in the Basque Country represented 5.4% of the total, whereas in the case of men, the percentage dropped to 2.7%.

Regionally, there was a notably high proportion of people aged over 64 in Montaña Alavesa, reaching 26.2% of the total, while the next regions with higher percentages were Markina-Ondarroa (24.4%) and Cantábrica Alavesa (23.4%), with proportions similar to those in Alto Deba and Gran Bilbao (24.1% in both cases). The lowest values are those of Plentzia-Mungia (18%) and Esteribaciones del Gorbea (19.4%).

There was quite a lot of disparity between the Basque municipalities regarding the age of the resident population and, more specifically, the percentage of people 65 and over, which varied between 10.2% in Irura and 38.1% in Harana/Valle de Arana. In addition to Irura, there were another six municipalities that had a percentage below 13%: Larraul, Astigarraga, Biliarrain, Iruña Oka/Iruña de Oca, Alegria-Dulantzi and Arakaldo.

In the Basque Country, there were 1.6 people aged 65 and over for every minor aged under 16, exceeding the figure for Spain as a whole, which was 1.2, but still far from that for Asturias, which is 2.2.

There are 74 municipalities which exceed this figure, with extreme cases such as Harana/Valle de Arana, Añana and Lagrán with a figure of around 5 to 1. Conversely, municipalities such as Irura and Biliarrain, had more than 2 young people aged 0 to 15 for each person aged 65 and over.

Population distribution by age is most extreme in small municipalities, due above all to their small size and the fact that any demographic phenomena, particularly migration, modifies this distribution.

**Population of the Basque Country by province, according to main age groups.
01/01/2021**

	Total	0 - 19		20 - 64		>= 65	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Basque Country	2.193.199	399.734	18,2	1.289.412	58,8	504.053	23,0
Historic territories							
Araba/Álava	330.189	63.732	19,3	195.089	59,1	71.368	21,6
Bizkaia	1.144.123	199.653	17,5	676.689	59,1	267.781	23,4
Gipuzkoa	718.887	136.349	19,0	417.634	58,1	164.904	22,9
Capitals							
Bilbao	342.662	54.791	16,0	204.165	59,6	83.706	24,4
Donostia / San Sebastián	182.088	30.664	16,8	105.719	58,1	45.705	25,1
Vitoria-Gasteiz	247.833	47.853	19,3	146.020	58,9	53.960	21,8
Districts							
Añana	6.267	1.031	16,5	3.840	61,3	1.396	22,3
Arabako Errioxa / Rioja Alavesa	11.697	2.380	20,3	6.886	58,9	2.431	20,8
Arabako Kantaurialdea / Cantábrica Alavesa	34.454	6.402	18,6	19.976	58,0	8.076	23,4
Arabako Lautada / Llanada Alavesa	265.498	51.657	19,5	156.975	59,1	56.866	21,4
Arabako Mendialdea / Montaña Alavesa	3.180	490	15,4	1.857	58,4	833	26,2
Arratia-Nerbioi / Arratia-Nervión	24.136	4.766	19,7	14.302	59,3	5.068	21,0
Bidasoa Beherea / Bajo Bidasoa	77.536	14.428	18,6	45.281	58,4	17.827	23,0
Bilbo Handia / Gran Bilbao	857.176	144.311	16,8	506.516	59,1	206.349	24,1
Debabarrena / Bajo Deba	62.642	11.792	18,8	35.760	57,1	15.090	24,1
Debagoina / Alto Deba	55.170	10.557	19,1	31.405	56,9	13.208	23,9
Donostialdea	328.961	58.703	17,8	192.467	58,5	77.791	23,6
Durangaldea / Duranguesado	99.559	19.317	19,4	59.068	59,3	21.174	21,3
Enkartazioak / Encartaciones	32.110	5.760	17,9	19.123	59,6	7.227	22,5
Gernika-Bermeo	46.172	8.498	18,4	26.680	57,8	10.994	23,8
Goierrí	68.284	14.133	20,7	39.087	57,2	15.064	22,1
Gorbeialdea / Eribaciones del Gorbea	9.093	1.772	19,5	5.555	61,1	1.766	19,4
Markina-Ondarroa	26.048	4.626	17,8	15.058	57,8	6.364	24,4
Plentzia-Mungia	58.922	12.375	21,0	35.942	61,0	10.605	18,0
Tolosaldea	49.543	10.472	21,1	28.650	57,8	10.421	21,0
Urola Kosta	76.751	16.264	21,2	44.984	58,6	15.503	20,2

Source: Eustat. Population and housing census

The population aged under 20 has increased by just 0.2% over the past five years, below the total population increase (0.8%), proportionately standing at 18.2% of the total population of the Basque Country, one tenth less than in 2016. There was no significant variation in the provinces either, although there were differences between them, in Álava and Gipuzkoa the population aged under 20 reached around 19%, whereas in Bizkaia it fell by 17.5%. By regions, Montaña Alavesa and Cantábrica Alavesa saw the greatest increase in the young population over the last five years, with increases of 12.1% and 3.5%, respectively. The regions with the highest proportion of the population under the age of 20 were Urola Kosta, Tolosaldea and Plentzia-Mungia, all around 21%.

The proportion of residents aged between 20 and 64, the bulk of the working population, fell between 2016 and 2021, going from 60% to 58.8%. By province, Bilbao lost the most population, down 1.8%, followed by Gipuzkoa and Álava with decreases of 0.9% and 0.6%, respectively. In 2021, the percentage of the working population was the same in Álava and Bizkaia (59.1%) followed by Gipuzkoa with 58.1%.

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