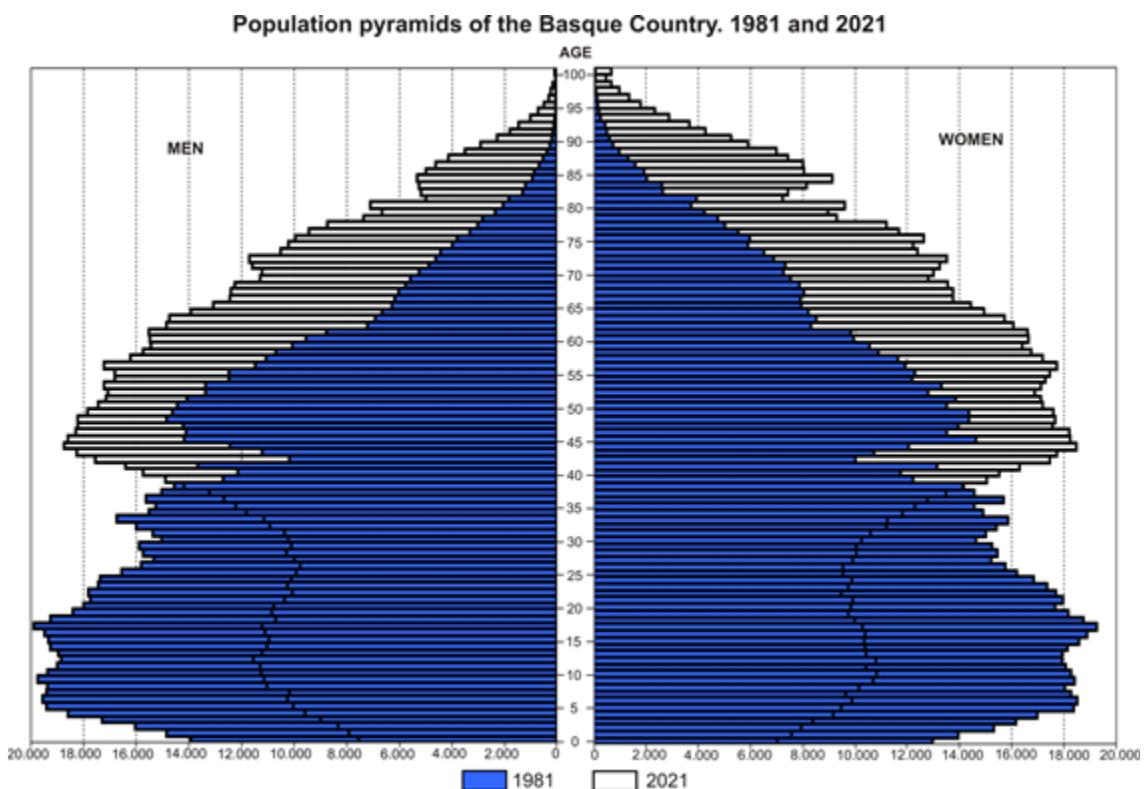


The population aged 65 and over in the Basque Country increased by a factor of 2.5 between 1981 and 2021, accounting for 23% of the total

The population of the Basque Country in 2021 exceeded that of 1981 by 51,390 people

The population of the Basque Country between 1981 and 2021 grew by more than 51,000 people, though with positive and negative variations throughout the period, as demonstrated by the analysis of demographic phenomena performed by Eustat and synthesized in the 2022 Demographic Outlook.



During the first period, from 1981 to 2001, the population fell by just over 59,000, mostly during the 90s, when negative migratory balances were combined with negative growth rates (the difference between births and deaths). Between 2001 and 2011 the population increased by 91,000 people, due to extremely positive migratory balances together with positive population growth rates, which meant that over these ten years it easily recovered the loss of the previous 20 years.

In 2012 and 2013, the population decreased as a result of the negative migratory balances, but from 2014 onwards it grew once again and by 2020 the number of residents in the Basque Country reached an all-time high of almost 2,200,000, due solely

to the migratory balance, as the population growth balance became increasingly negative. Over the course of 2020, the size of the population fell once more, specifically by 9,508 inhabitants compared to 2019, as a consequence of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on demographic phenomena, which caused a strongly negative population growth balance. However, this was not balanced by a migratory balance which, although positive, was a quarter of what it had been a year earlier.

With respect to the structure of the population of the Basque Country, the evolution of the distribution by main age groups showed a sharp and continuous decrease in the population in the youngest age brackets, while there was an increase among the oldest age groups. Between 1981 and 2021, the population aged 65 and over rose by a factor of 2.5, going from 9% to 23%. The young age brackets also decreased in number at this rate: one out of every three people in 1981 was under 20 years old compared to 18% in 2021. Much more striking was the increase in the oldest age bracket, those aged 85 and over, as their number had multiplied by 5.3 over these 40 years, accounting for 4.1% of the total.

The gross birth rate stood at 6.7 births per 1000 people in 2020

The gross birth rate has dropped considerably over the last ten years, falling from 9.7 per thousand in 2011 to 6.7 in 2020, the lowest rate since 1976, when it was almost 20 per thousand and higher than the Spanish rate. Translated into number of births, this represents a decrease of 64% in this period, i.e. 26,361 fewer births. The birth rate in 2020 was only down 4.4% on the previous year, a smaller drop than in other years, which suggests that the behaviour of this demographic phenomenon was not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, except in the last two months of the year.

The average age of mothers at childbirth increased by 4.4 years from 1981 to reach 33 in 2020, a figure higher than in Spain (32.3 years) and other countries such as Italy (32.2 years), Portugal (31.6 years) and Germany (31.3 years), which also had low fecundity rates.

The average age at death increased by 15 years

The number of deaths has risen by 70.1% since 1980, but the excess mortality caused by COVID-19 in 2020 must be taken into account; if it had not occurred, the increase would have been 48.4%. Since 1976, life expectancies for men and women in the Basque Country have steadily increased, reaching their highest levels in 2019: 80.8 years for men and 86.6 for women. In 2020, life expectancy for men fell by one tenth compared to 2019, while for women it decreased by 3 tenths.

This drop was due to the excess mortality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. If there had not been any deaths from this, life expectancy would have reached 81.3 years for men and 86.8 years for women, i.e. 5 tenths more for men and 2 tenths more for women than in 2019. This decrease in life expectancy between 2019 and 2020 was far from that seen in Spain as a whole, where it was down by 1.5 years for both sexes, this being among the steepest declines in the countries of the European Union, which as a whole saw a drop of 0.8 years for men and 1 year for women.

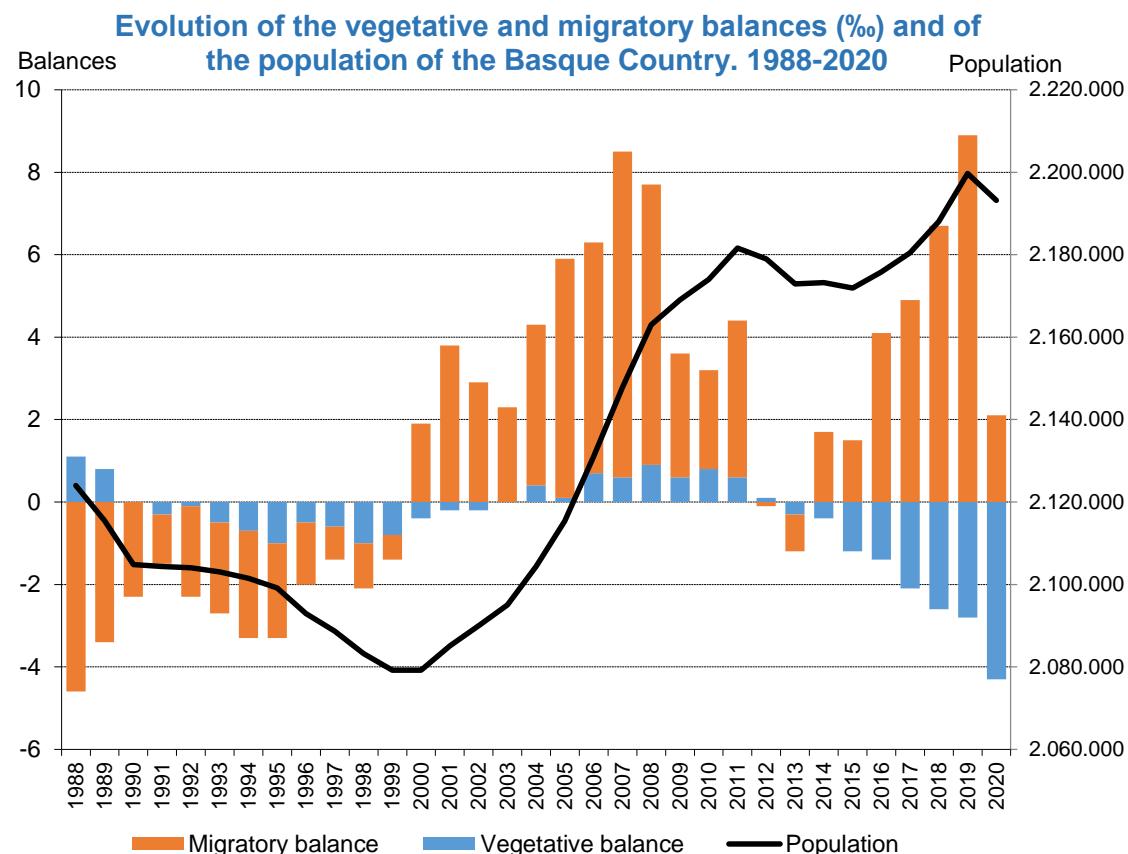
The main causes of death (aside from those due to COVID-19) have changed over the last 30 years, particularly with regard to tumours and circulatory system diseases. In 1990, the latter accounted for nearly 36% of deaths, while tumours were the cause of

27%. The evolution of these two groups of causes meant that in 2020 tumours had a greater weight (29.4%) than circulatory system diseases (26.5%).

The number of deaths from external causes fell in this period, going from nearly 6% in 1990 to 3.5% in 2020, due to the significant reduction in traffic accidents. However, it was diseases affecting the nervous system and mental disorders that showed greater growth, as they rose from 4.3% in 1990 to 15.3% in 2020 due, above all, to the increase in Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Since 2000, the main, and sometimes only, cause of population growth has been the migratory balance

Between 1988 and 1999, the Basque Country lost 52,638 people due to migration, but since 2000 it has gained 169,425, mostly due to the increased immigration of foreign people. In the first twenty years of this century, 787,321 people immigrated compared to 617,896 who emigrated, reversing the trend of the last 11 years of the 20th century, when the ratio was 136,159 immigrants to 188,797 emigrants.



Between 2014 and 2019, the positive migratory balance went up each year, reaching the highest level since 1988 in 2019. The balance in 2020, although still positive, fell by 77% compared to the previous year, due to the travel restrictions decreed to combat the pandemic.

From 1988 to 2020, the migratory balances from outside the Basque Country performed differently depending on the geographical area analysed. The balances from abroad were always positive, except in 2012, 2013 and 2014 with 12,851 fewer people, but they were trifling until 1997 as there were no more than 2000 people in total. In 2019, it reached 18,133 people, but dropped by 71% in 2020.

The balances with the rest of Spain, however, were negative throughout the period 1988-2008. The highest negative balance was in 1988 with more than 21,000 people and in the other years it stabilised at around 4,000. With 49 people, 2008 was the first year, since Eustat started publishing these statistics, in which there was more immigration to the Basque Country from other Autonomous Communities than emigration from it. In subsequent years this balance increased to 6,638 people in 2011, although in 2019 it stood at 1,335. The pandemic further affected the migratory balance with other Autonomous Communities, as it turned negative and the population fell by 733 inhabitants.

Ever fewer marriages and at a later age

The travel restrictions decreed to combat COVID-19 caused a sharp decline in the number of marriages in 2020, which fell from 6,912 the previous year to 3,750, i.e. down 45.7%, resulting in a gross marriage rate of 1.7‰ compared to 3.2‰ the previous year, almost 59% lower than in 1978. The Basque marriage rate has always been lower than that of surrounding countries, but the gap widened in 2020; the gross marriage rate for the European Union as a whole stood at 3.2‰.

Apart from the drop in the number of marriages, the most important characteristic of the marriage trends among the Basque population is the increase in age of the single bride or groom. From 1988 onwards, the average age of the grooms increased by 9 years and 10 years in the case of the brides. In 2020, the average age of single men when marrying was 38 years old, while that of single women was 36.2.

For further information:

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