

POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS. MARITAL STATUS. 2021

## Most of the population of the Basque Country in 2021 was single: 44%

***The proportion of the population divorced or legally separated rose by 3 percentage points between 2001 and 2021***

44.2% of the population of the Basque Country, or 969,571 people, were single in 2021, according to Eustat data. They are followed, in numerical terms, by the married population or those in a civil partnership, numbering 945,930 people (43.1%), the widowed population of 155,419 people (7.1%), and lastly those who are divorced or legally separated: 122,279 people (5.6%).

The distribution of marital status reveals slight differences for men and women, the most significant being among the widowed population, since 11.8% of women are widows, compared with 2.1% widowers among men. However, if we consider the category of single people, the proportion of single men (47.9%) is higher than that of single women (40.7%).

### Population of the Basque Country by marital status by sex. 2001-2021

|                                      | 2021             |                  |                  | 2001             |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                      | Total            | Men              | Women            | Total            | Men              | Women            |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>2.193.199</b> | <b>1.064.041</b> | <b>1.129.158</b> | <b>2.082.587</b> | <b>1.017.883</b> | <b>1.064.704</b> |
| -Single                              | 969.571          | 509.972          | 459.599          | 905.480          | 483.984          | 421.496          |
| Married or in registered partnership | 945.930          | 477.403          | 468.527          | 981.678          | 490.088          | 491.590          |
| Widowed                              | 155.419          | 22.031           | 133.388          | 146.012          | 23.246           | 122.766          |
| Divorced or legally separated        | 122.279          | 54.635           | 67.644           | 49.417           | 20.565           | 28.852           |

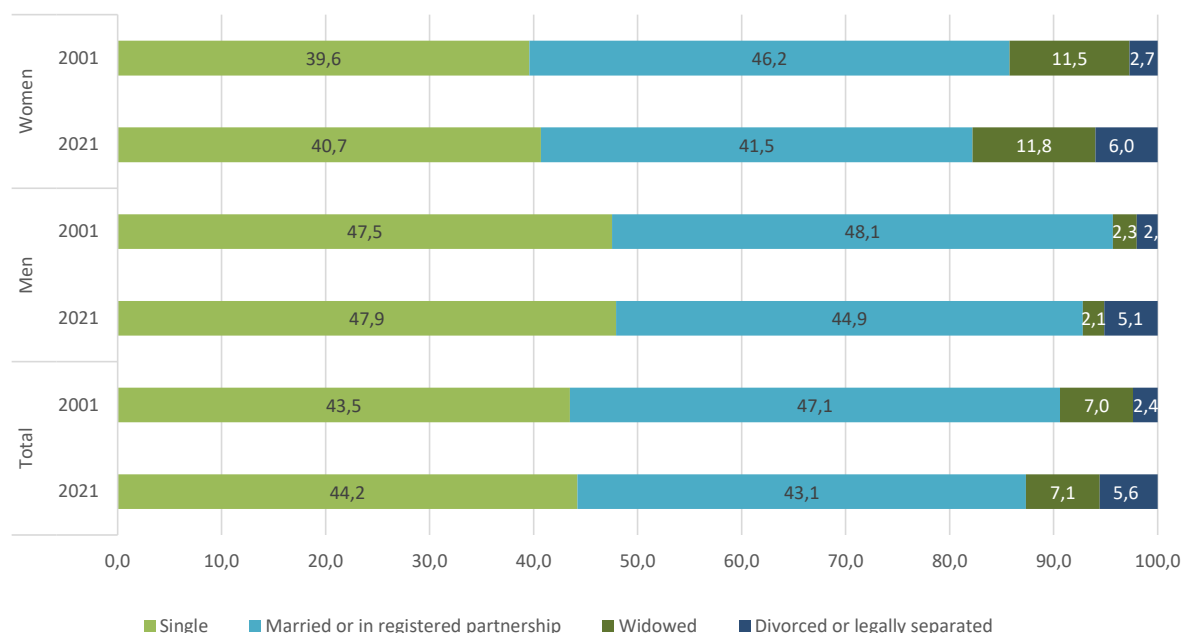
Date June 28, 2023

Source: Eustat. Population and Housing Census

In 2001 the most common status was married (47.1%), a group that has seen a relative decline in size, compared with the divorced or legally separated population, which grew by 3.2 percentage points. The single population grew slightly (+0.7 points.) while the widowed population remained practically unchanged (+0.1 points.).

This same trend may also be seen among men and women separately between 2001 and 2021, given the fall in the proportion of married men (-3.3 percentage points) and even sharper drop in the proportion of married women (-4.7 points.), as opposed to the proportion of divorced or separated men (+3.1 points.) and women (+3.3 points.), as well as the proportion of single women (+1.1 points.).

## Population of the Basque Country by marital status and sex (%). 2001 and 2021



Source: Eustat. Population and housing census

Some differences may be seen at the provincial level, with Álava having the highest proportion of single people (46.1% compared with 44.2% for the provinces as a whole); Bizkaia has the largest proportional widowed population (7.9% compared with 7.1% overall), while Gipuzkoa has the most similar proportions to the overall figures for the Basque Country. The proportion of the population who are divorced or legally separated is similar in all three provinces, ranging from 5.3% in Gipuzkoa to 5.8% in Bizkaia, with Álava at 5.6% matching the average for all three.

## Population of the Basque Country by marital status according to historical territory of residence and sex (%). 01/01/2021

|                                      | Basque Country |            |            | Araba/Álava |            |            | Bizkaia    |            |            | Gipuzkoa   |            |            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                      | Total          | Men        | Women      | Total       | Men        | Women      | Total      | Men        | Women      | Total      | Men        | Women      |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Single                               | 44,2           | 47,9       | 40,7       | 46,1        | 49,6       | 42,8       | 43,0       | 46,6       | 39,7       | 45,2       | 49,2       | 41,4       |
| Married or in registered partnership | 43,1           | 44,9       | 41,5       | 42,3        | 43,1       | 41,5       | 43,3       | 45,8       | 40,9       | 43,2       | 44,1       | 42,4       |
| Widowed                              | 7,1            | 2,1        | 11,8       | 6,0         | 2,0        | 9,8        | 7,9        | 2,3        | 13,1       | 6,3        | 1,8        | 10,6       |
| Divorced or legally separated        | 5,6            | 5,1        | 6,0        | 5,6         | 5,3        | 5,9        | 5,8        | 5,3        | 6,2        | 5,3        | 4,9        | 5,6        |

Date June 28, 2023

Source: Eustat. Population and Housing Census

At a more detailed geographical level, those regions with the largest single populations are Rioja Alavesa and Tolosaldea (47.6% in both cases), Estribaciones del Gorbea (47.1%), and Llanada Alavesa and Urola Costa (46.6% in both cases). Meanwhile, the regions with the highest numbers who are married or in a civil partnership are Cantábrica

Alavesa (45.5%), Goierri (45.1%), Alto Deba (44.8%) and Duranguesado and Encartaciones (44.4% and 44.3%, respectively). Gran Bilbao stands out for the widowed proportion of its population (8.2%).

Over the last 20 years, the proportion of married people has fallen across all regions, in particular the majority of those in Álava: Rioja Alavesa (-7.4 percentage points), Añana (-5.6 points.), Llanada Alavesa (-5.3 points.) and Montaña Alavesa (-5.1 points.). In Bizkaia, the sharpest drops are to be found in Duranguesado (-4.7 points.) and Encartaciones (-4.4 points.). The declines are less pronounced in the regions of Gipuzkoa, the notable cases being Bajo Deba (-4.2 points.) and Bajo Bidasoa (-3.6 points.). This decline typically results in an increase in the single population, in particular in the aforementioned regions of Álava, and in Bajo Deba. In Cantábrica Alavesa, Gran Bilbao and Duranguesado, the widowed and/or divorced or separated populations have also increased.

### ***The percentage of the married population fell in all three provincial capitals***

Vitoria-Gasteiz is the capital with the highest proportion of single people, at 46.6%, compared with 45.7% in San Sebastián and 44.4% in Bilbao. The proportion of married people is nonetheless more similar in the three provincial capitals: 41.7% in Vitoria-Gasteiz, 41.4% in San Sebastián and 41.2% in Bilbao. The rest of the population, whether widowed, divorced or separated, accounts for a greater proportion in Bilbao (14.4%) than in the other two capitals, the figure for San Sebastián being 12.8%, and 11.7% in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Over the last 20 years the proportion of married people has dropped in all three provincial capitals, in particular in Vitoria-Gasteiz (-5.3 percentage points), more than in Bilbao (-4.3 points.) and in San Sebastián (-2.9 points.), with a substantial relative increase in all three in the number neither single nor married, in particular in Vitoria (+3.5 points.), very similar to Bilbao (+3.1 points.), with a more moderate rise in San Sebastián (+1.9 points.).

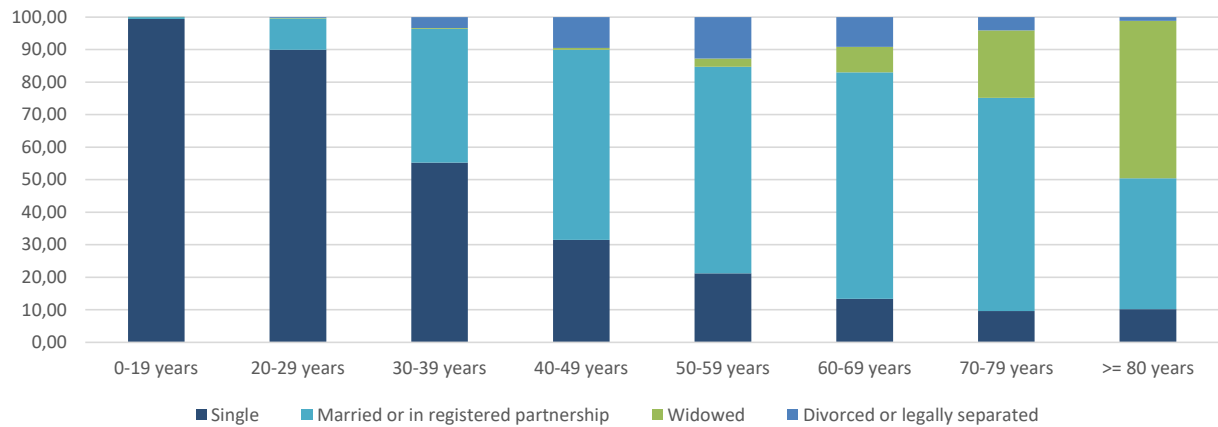
As for the other municipalities, those with the largest proportion of single people are Lanciego (55.4%, Leza (50.7%) and Urkabustaiz (51.9%) in Álava; in Gipuzkoa, Larraul (59%), Orendain (58.2%), Oresa, Gaztelu and Errezil, all the last three having a proportion of 52%; and Ubide and Fruiz in Bizkaia (50.9% in both cases).

Meanwhile, the municipalities with the highest proportion who are married or in a civil partnership are Peñacerrada (50.8%), Elburgo (50.3%) and Zigoitia (49.2%) in Álava; Hernialde (51.1%), Leintz Gatzaga (50.4%), Gabiria (49.2%) and Legazpi (47.2%) in Gipuzkoa; and lastly Garai (49.2%), Murueta (47.8%) and Mendata (47.3%) in Bizkaia.

### ***The greatest differences in marital status occur among age groups***

90% of the population between 20 and 29 years of age remain single, a proportion which drops to 55.2% among those aged between 30 and 39, with 41.1% of this population group having already married or registered a civil partnership. In the group aged from 40 to 49, almost 10% of the population are divorced or legally separated. This segment peaks in the group aged between 50 and 59 (12.8%), the age group where we start to see a widowed population (2.5%). This proportion gradually increases as the population ages, rising to 48.2% among the group aged 80 and over. The vast majority of the widowed population are women (85.8%).

Population of the Basque Country by marital status and age groups (%).  
2021



Source: Eustat. Population and housing census

**For further information:**

Eustat - Euskal Estatistika Erakundea / Basque Statistics Institute

C/ Donostia-San Sebastián, 1 01010 Vitoria-Gasteiz

Press service: [servicioprensa@eustat.es](mailto:servicioprensa@eustat.es) Tel.: 945 01 75 62