

Slight fall in employment and stable unemployment rate in the A.C. of the Basque Country in the first quarter of 2003

Gipuzkoa is the only province where employment increased and Alava the only one where unemployment increased.

There were 887,400 employees in the first quarter of 2003 in the A.C. of the Basque Country, 0.4% fewer than in the previous quarter, according to the Survey on the Population in Relation to Activity (PRA) published by the Eustat. In addition, the number of unemployed came to 88,500 and the unemployment rate came to 9.1% of the active population.

With regard to the previous quarter, the unemployed population increased by 500 persons and the unemployment rate rose point one percent. As a result of the evolution of the employed and unemployed populations, the activity rate hardly varied, reaching 54.4%.

The unemployment rate only increased in Álava, remaining stable in the other two provinces.

Álava was the only province where the unemployment rate rose, by one percent, reaching a figure of 8.9%. Bizkaia conserved a 9.6% rate, as in the fourth quarter of 2002, and Guipúzcoa continued to have the lowest rate of the three, with 8.4%.

The male unemployment rate came to 7.1%, slightly over half a percent more, and the female rate, although considerably higher (11.8%), fell by point six percent. The youth unemployment rate grew around one and a half percent, affecting over one in every five young active persons aged between 16 and 24 (22.4%).

Unemployment in the A.C. of the Basque Country continues to be very close to the Euro Zone average, with a difference of hardly point four percent. The countries in this Zone had a rate of 8.7% last February (EUROSTAT). As in other periods, the rate for the whole of the European Union (7.9%) was lower than that of the Euro Zone. Both have increased by approximately point two since November.

Female unemployment fell by 2,500 and male unemployment rose by 3,100.

Despite hardly any difference in rates, Bizkaia lost 700 unemployed, affecting unemployment among a group of 48,100 persons. In Gipuzkoa there were 27,400 persons unemployment, 200 fewer than three months before. Álava, with a total of 13,200, increased by 1,500 persons.

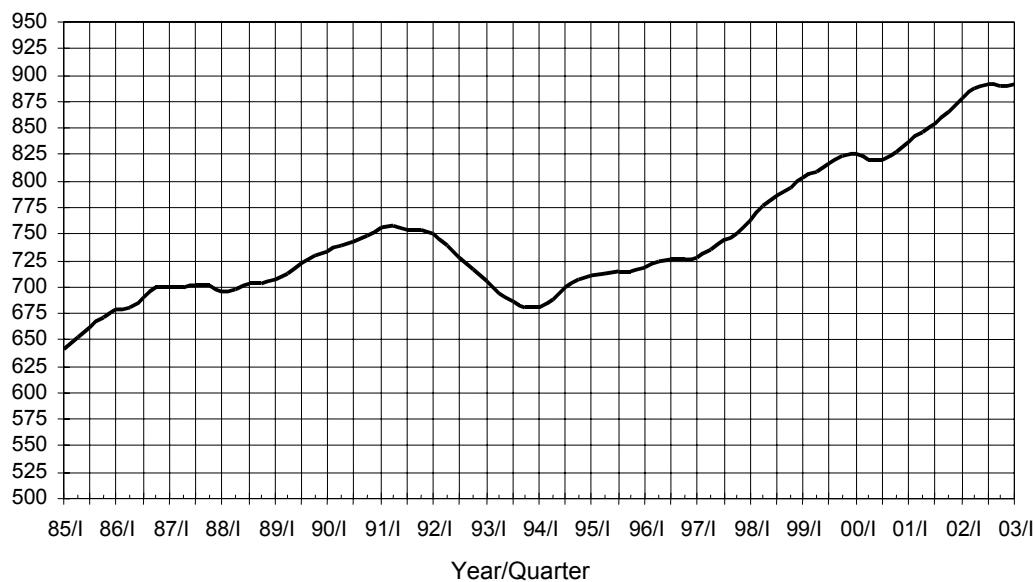
Unemployment among women, affecting 47,700 persons, fell by 2,500. There was also a fall in unemployment among persons aged 45 and over with a reduction of 1,600 persons. Among those seeking their first job, the reduction in unemployment affected 1,900 persons, although there is still a figure of 12,400 persons.

In addition, there was a rise in the number of young unemployed males (+3,100), aged between 16 and 24 (+1,500) and between 25 and 44 (+600).

Gipuzkoa gained 1,400 employees, while Álava lost 2,100 and Bizkaia 3,100 in the first quarter of 2003.

The number of employed persons came to 887,400, 3,800 persons fewer than three months before. In Álava and Bizkaia the number of employed fell by 2,100 and 3,100 persons respectively, while in Gipuzkoa there was a rise of 1,400 persons.

Graph 1: Trend in the working population since 1985 (thousand)



Source: EUSTAT

The drop in the working population in the A.C. of the Basque Country according to sex affects males exclusively, with 5,100 fewer, while females improve on their previous result with 1,400 more workers.

With regard to the fourth quarter of 2002, the most important reduction in the number of employed is concentrated in the Services sector with 7,900 fewer employees. Industry last a similar figure, 800. Construction, with 3,400 more workers, and Agriculture, with 1,600, presented more positive results.

The employment rate, percentage of employed persons in relation to the population aged from 16 to 64, came to 62.6%, point two percent lower than three months before. This rate was 74.7% for males, while for females the figure was 50.6%.

By provinces, the highest employment rate continued to be found in Álava with 66.5%, although it fell by slightly over one percent. Gipuzkoa was second, with 65.5% and a half a percent increase. Bizkaia had the lowest rate, with 59.9%, hardly varying with regard to the last quarter of 2002.

In relation to households, 4,300 more had all their active members working, with no important variation in the case of those with all active members unemployed (+300 households).

Last year, employment increased 5% among women and fell 1.5% among men.

The employed population grew by 8.500 persons with regard to the first quarter of 2002, around a 1% rise. This increase was approximately 5% for women, while in the case of men there was a 1.5% decrease. By provinces, Bizkaia y Gipuzkoa increased employment by slightly over 1% over the last 12 months, whereas in Álava there was a slight reduction.

Over the past year industry continued to lose weight, with 1.8% fewer employees, while the Construction sector increased (+5.8%) and Services remained stable (+0.6%). There was a total of 5,200 employees in the Agriculture sector over the last year. Over this period the employment rate increased almost one percent.

Unemployment rate rose 0,6% over the last year.

Unemployment increased 0.6 percent over the last 12 months; approximately one and a half percent for men, while for women there was a 0.6 percent decrease. By provinces, the increase occurred in Álava (+1.7 percentage points) and Gipuzkoa (+2.2), while in Bizkaia the rate fell by 0.7 percent.

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA)

	1st quarter 2003		Variation on the previous quarter		Variation on the same quarter the previous year	
	Thousand	%	Thousand	%	Thousand	%
POPULATION AGED 16 AND OVER	1.794,2		+0,7		-2,8	
ACTIVE POPULATION/ACTIVITY RATE	976,0	54,4	-3,2	-0,2	+16,1	+1,0
Males	570,9	65,8	-2,1	-0,2	-0,1	+0,3
Females	405,1	43,7	-1,1	-0,2	+16,2	+1,7
EMPLOYED POPULATION/EMPLOYMENT RATE	887,4	62,6	-3,8	-0,2	+8,5	+0,9
Males	530,1	74,7	-5,1	-0,5	-8,2	-0,3
Females	357,4	50,6	+1,4	+0,2	+16,8	+2,4
Álava	135,3	66,5	-2,1	-1,2	-0,6	-0,3
Bizkaia	455,3	59,9	-3,1	-0,3	+5,9	+1,1
Gipuzkoa	296,8	65,5	+1,4	+0,5	+3,1	+1,1
Agriculture	19,2		+1,6		+5,2	
Industry	247,4		-0,8		-4,5	
Construction	84,6		+3,4		+4,7	
Services	536,3		-7,9		+3,2	
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION/UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	88,5	9,1	+0,5	+0,1	+7,5	+0,6
Males	40,8	7,1	+3,1	+0,6	+8,1	+1,4
Females	47,7	11,8	-2,5	-0,6	-0,6	-0,6
16 - 24	21,0	22,4	+1,5	+1,4	+0,2	+1,0
25 - 44	56,9	10,0	+0,6	+0,3	+9,8	+1,6
45 and over	10,5	3,4	-1,6	-0,6	-2,5	-1,0
Álava	13,2	8,9	+1,5	+1,0	+2,7	+1,7
Bizkaia	48,1	9,6	-0,7	-0,1	-3,0	-0,7
Gipuzkoa	27,2	8,4	-0,2	-0,1	+7,8	+2,2
Seeking first job	12,4	14,0	-1,9		+0,4	
Seeking employment for 2 years or more	14,4	16,3	-0,9		-5,2	
INACTIVE POPULATION/INACTIVITY RATE	818,3	45,6	+4,0	+0,2	-18,8	-1,0
HOUSEHOLDS	740,6		+4,9		+17,8	
Households with 1 or more active	531,1	71,7	+1,0		+6,8	
- All employed	458,1	61,9	+4,3		+2,8	
- All unemployed	18,8	2,5	+0,3		+0,5	
Households without active members	209,6	28,3	+4,0		+11,1	

Source: EUSTAT

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