

7% fall in weddings in the A.C. of the Basque Country in 2001

The average age of spouses is on the increase: newly wed husbands are four years older since 1986 and wives are four and a half years older.

10,592 weddings were held in 2001 between residents of the A.C. of the Basque Country, 792 fewer than the previous year, according to Eustat data. In 2000 the figure was higher than normal, which might indicate that some weddings were made to coincide with the end of the century.

The Basque marriage rate (4.7 weddings per thousand inhabitants) is lower than that of the whole of the countries in the European Union (5.1‰ in 2000) and that of the Spanish State (5.2‰).

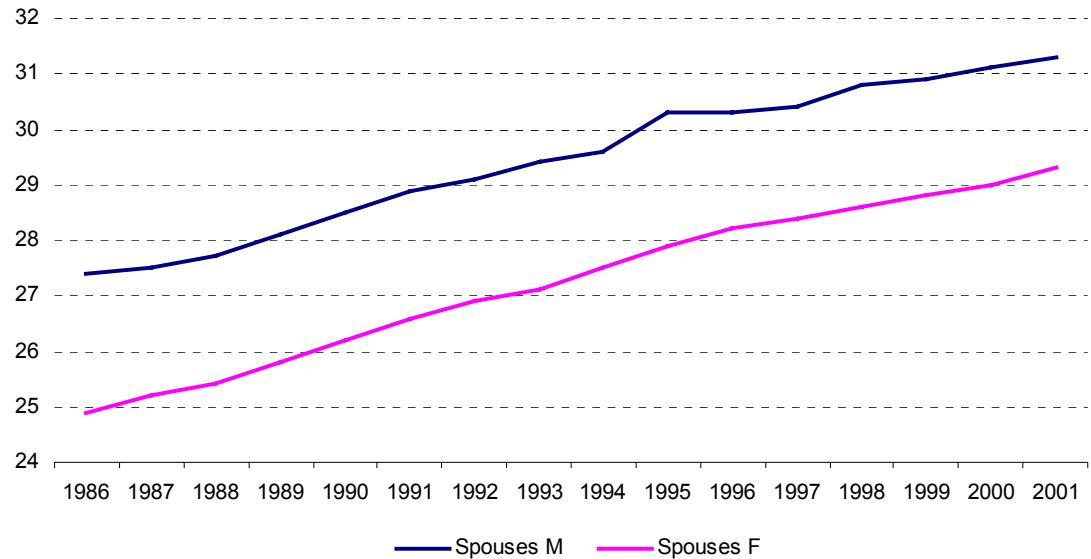
September, with 1,755 weddings, became for the first time the favourite month for marrying, followed by July, traditionally the most popular, with 1,567 and June with 1,553.

With regard to the type of ceremony, 7,157 were catholic weddings, 3,427 exclusively civil and 8 corresponded to other religious confessions. Over the last fifteen years there has been a rising trend in the number of civil weddings, rising from 20.6 % in 1986 to 32.4% at present.

By provinces, more weight in civil weddings was found in Gipuzkoa (35%), followed by Alava (32.7%) and Bizkaia (32.3%). The percentage of civil weddings fell to 21.7% when they were held outside the Community.

Taking into consideration civil status prior to marriage, single males accounted for 94.1%, compared with 94.7% of single females.

Parallel to the increase in the maternity age, there has been an increase in the age of spouses. In 2001 the average age of single men who married was 31.3 years and 29.3 for single women. Since 1986 the average age of spouses has increased by four years and four and a half in the case of wives.

Graph 1: Average age of spouses

Source: Eustat

The favourite destination of the 743 couples who set up residence outside the A.C. of the Basque Country after marrying was Cantabria, followed by Madrid and Castile and León. There were differences with regard to destination between marriages held in the three provinces: those in Alava preferred to move to Castile and León, Madrid and La Rioja; those in Bizkaia to Cantabria, Madrid and abroad and those in Gipuzkoa went abroad first, followed by Navarre and Madrid.

With regard to the geographic origin of spouses, 64.6% of marriages were held between residents of the same municipality in the Community and 10.1% lived in neighbouring towns.

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