

50% OF BASQUE DISTRICTS INCREASED IN POPULATION WHILE THE OTHER HALF DECREASED BETWEEN 1996 & 2001

The foreign population is close to 30,000 residents, 1.5% of the total.

According to the summary of results of the Population and Housing Censuses 2001 published by the Eustat, the evolution of the Basque population at the end of the 20th Century continued the decreasing trend that started in 1983, the year when the highest number of inhabitants was registered.

The population decrease is moderate, taking the figures to a total of 2,082,587 persons at the reference date of the census, 1 November 2001. The rate of population growth in the last five years continues to be negative (-0.74%), higher than in the preceding five years (-0.28%) but below the level that existed in the last five years of the eighties (-1.50%).

The profiles of the evolution of each province continue to be different, as while Alava presents moderate growth (1.62%), the other provinces have seen their populations fall: 0.39% in Gipuzkoa and 1.53% in Bizkaia. In this way a redistribution of the population towards a greater provincial balance is favoured, although the differences are still substantial: Alava has, with 266,387 inhabitants, 13.75% of the total population compared with 32.3% for Gipuzkoa with 673,563 residents and 53.9% for Bizkaia, with 1,122,637 persons.

On a district level the differences are sharper, divided between half the districts which have lost population (10) compared with those that gained (10) over the five year period 1996-2001. The EI ranking of most dynamic districts is headed by Etribaciones del Gorbea, with a 15% increase, followed by Plentzia-Mungia (13.5%) and Valles Alaveses (13.2%). The two Alaves districts mentioned started the study period (1986-2001) with drops in population and have seen this trend modified at the start of the nineties. At the bottom of the classification is Bajo Deba (-4.6%), Cantábrica Alavesa (-3%), Gran Bilbao (-2.5%) and Alto Deba (-2.4%), following the trend that started 15 years before.

Population continues to age

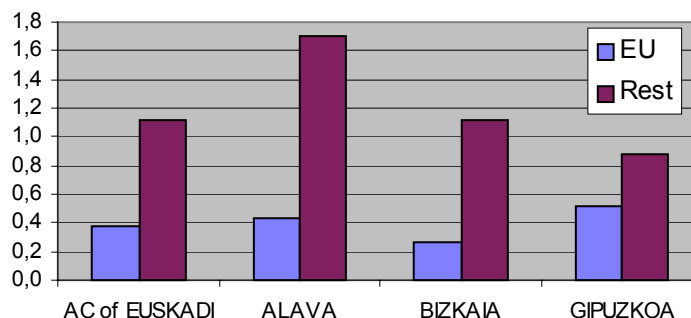
The weight of the population group aged 65 and over continues to increase and in 2001 was slightly higher than the weight of youths: 18% of the population at this time were aged 65 or over and 17% were aged under 20. Meanwhile, the potentially active population stands at 65%, close to the historic maximum.

Important provincial differences are not evident, although Bizkaia has the most aged population (18.5% are aged over 65), Gipuzkoa the youngest (17.5% are under the age of 20) and Alava presents the highest proportion of potentially active persons (66.3%).

The percentage of foreigners continues to show low values.

The figure for the foreign population was almost 30,000 at the end of 2001 and was made up of 25% European Union citizens and 75% from other countries in the rest of the world.

Graph 1: Foreign population by origin, year 2001 (%)



Source: EUSTAT

The weight of foreigners continues to be modest, as hardly 1.5% of the residents in the A.C. of the Basque Country in 2001 were foreign. Provincial variations vary from 2.1% in Alava and 1.4% in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, the latter having the highest percentage of foreigners from the rest of the European Union (0.5%).

By districts, Llanada Alavesa had the highest percentage of non-community foreigner with 1.9%, and Etribaciones del Gorbea the highest number of community foreigners with 0.9%. None of the Basque districts had a lower proportion of non-community foreigners than 0.4% or community foreigners lower than 0.2%.

With regard to municipalities, the proportion of foreigners shows sharper variations, reaching a maximum in the municipalities of Loiu (8.5% non community foreigners) and Ubidea (5.6% community foreigners). Other municipalities with an important presence of community foreigners are Laukiz, Yécora and Pasaia that are above 2% and among those with the highest proportion of non-community foreigners are Leza, Yécora, Lapuebla de Labarca, Iruña de Oca, Valdegovía and Berantevilla, with over 2.5%.

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