

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA) 1st quarter 2004

Employment remained stable and there were 2,000 less people out of work in the first quarter of 2004 in the A.C. of the Basque Country

The unemployment rate stood at 8.6%, point two per cent lower than the fourth quarter of 2003.

The labour market figures for the first quarter of 2004 in the A.C. of the Basque Country show the number of people in employment to be 897,300, the same as it was three months earlier, according to the Survey on the Population in Relation to Activity (PRA) published by Eustat. Elsewhere, the unemployment rate fell from 8.8% in the previous quarter to 8.6%.

Compared to the fourth quarter of 2003, the number of jobless fell by 2,000 and the unemployment rate by 0.2 per cent. As a result of the evolution of the number of people in or out of work, the employment rate stood at 54.9%.

The male unemployment rate came to 7%, four points up, and the female one, despite being much higher (10.9%), showed a fall of one per cent. The youth unemployment rate fell by nearly 2 points, affecting a little over one in five active young people aged between 16 and 24 (20.9 %).

The unemployment rate in the A.C. of the Basque Country for the first quarter of 2004 was point two per cent lower than that of the Euro Zone countries. According to EUROSTAT- the Statistical Office of the European Union- in February 2004, the unemployment rate in the Zone was 8.8%. As has been the case at other times, the rate for the European Union as a whole (8%) was slightly less than that of the Euro Zone.

The drop in unemployment was mainly due to the decrease in the number of women in this situation

The number of unemployed men, totalling 39,300, increased by 1,800. In the case of women, 3,800 left the ranks of the jobless in the last quarter, leaving 45,500 women unemployed. There was also a notable fall in the number of young people aged between 16 and 24 out of work (-1,400) and also those aged 25 to 44, with 1,500 less unemployed.

The unemployment rate in Bizkaia fell one per cent, while in Álava and Gipuzkoa it rose point seven per cent in both provinces

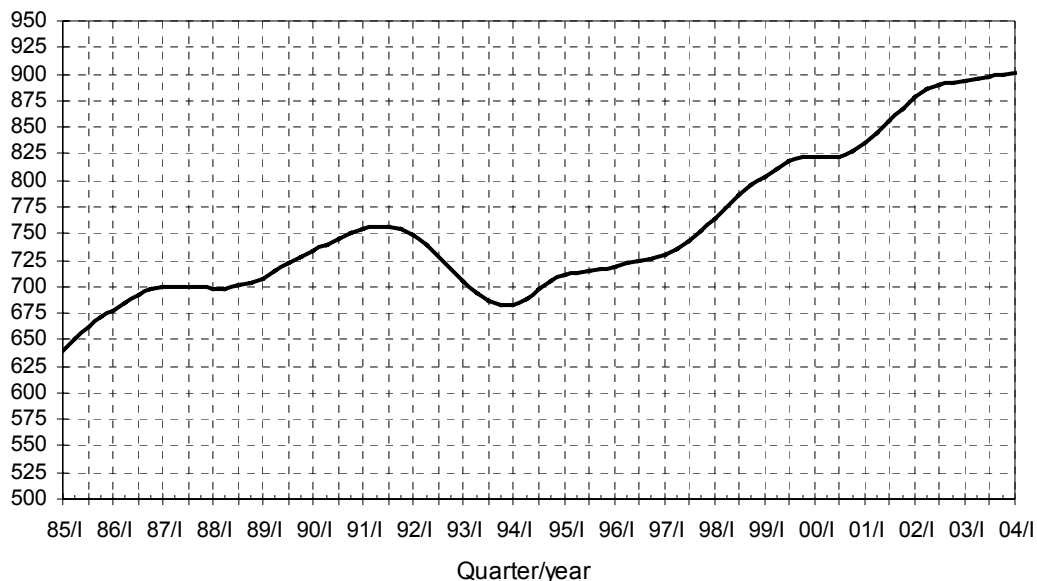
The number of unemployed, which came to 84,800 in the first quarter, fell in Bizkaia and rose in Álava and Gipuzkoa. In Bizkaia, there were 47,600 people out of work, 5,000 less than three months earlier, although its rate of 9.3% continues to be the highest of the three provinces. In Gipuzkoa, with a total of 25,700, there was an increase of 2,100 people, pushing the rate up to 7.9%. Álava increased its

unemployment figure by 800, meaning that unemployment affected a total of 11,400 people – an unemployment rate of 7.8%.

In Bizkaia, 7,000 jobs were created, while 3,400 were lost in Álava and 3,500 in Gipuzkoa during the first quarter of 2004

The number of people in work came to 897,300, the same figure as that registered for the fourth quarter of 2003. By province, only in Bizkaia, where there were 7,000 more jobs, did employment grow. Gipuzkoa lost 3,500, a figure very much like that for Álava (3,400 less jobs).

**Trend in the working population since 1985. A.C. of the Basque Country.
(in thousands)**



Source: EUSTAT

The creation of 9,600 jobs in Services compensated for the losses in other sectors

In relation to the fourth quarter of 2003, the number of jobs increased in only one of the four economic sectors, namely that of Services, with 9,600 more jobs. Industry lost 5,300 jobs, Construction 3,900 and Agriculture 400.

The variation in the employed population in the A.C. of the Basque Country, as far as sex is concerned, affected men and women in opposite ways. Whereas women experienced a positive evolution as regards employment, with 7,900 more than the previous quarter, the number of employed men fell by the exact same amount.

The employment rate, the percentage of people aged between 16 and 64 in work over the total number of people in this age bracket, came to 63.6%, point two per cent more than three months previously. This rate for men was 74.4%, while for women it only came to 52.8%.

By province, the highest employment rate was that of Gipuzkoa with 66.4%, a fall of point six per cent. It was followed by Álava with 66%, a fall of point two per cent.

Bizkaia had the lowest rate, with 61.3%, but it was the only province where there was an increase; 1.2 per cent more compared to the fourth quarter of 2003.

In almost two in three households all the members were in work (62.9%), although it should be pointed out that over the three month period 5,100 less households could claim to have everyone in work. In addition, households where all the active members were unemployed accounted for 2.7% of the 731,500 in the A.C. of the Basque Country, a proportion unchanged since the final quarter of 2003.

In the Services sector 23,900 net jobs were created in relation to the first quarter of 2003, while 14,100 were lost in the other sectors

The employed population grew with respect to the first quarter of 2003 by 9,900 people, 1.1%. There was an increase in the employment rate of one point: for women the rise was greater, 2.2 per cent, while in the case of men, there was a point two per cent fall. By province, the rate grew in Bizkaia (1.5) and Gipuzkoa (0.8), while in Álava the preceding 12 months saw a fall of point six per cent.

Over the year the Services sector created 23,900 net jobs. However, Industry continued to lose weight, with 6,200 less jobs, as did Construction (-6,700) and Agriculture (-1,200).

The unemployment rate fell in all three provinces during the year

Unemployment over the previous year fell point four per cent in the A.C. of the Basque Country. By sex, there was a fall of point nine per cent for women, while for men it was point two. The youth unemployment rate fell 1.5 per cent, while that of the over 45 age bracket increased by point seven per cent. The decrease occurred across the three provinces: in Álava (-1.1 per cent), in Gipuzkoa (-0.5) and in Bizkaia (-0.2).

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	1st quarter 2004		Variation on the previous quarter		Variation on the same quarter the previous year	
	Thousand	%	Thousand	%	Thousand	%
POPULATION AGED 16 AND OVER	1.787,6		-2,1		-6,6	
ACTIVE POPULATION/ ACTIVITY RATE	982,1	54,9	-2,0	-0,0	+6,1	+0,5
Males	564,7	65,4	-6,1	-0,5	-6,2	-0,4
Females	417,4	45,2	+4,1	+0,4	+12,3	+1,4
EMPLOYED POPULATION/ EMPLOYMENT RATE	897,3	63,6	+0,0	+0,2	+9,9	+1,0
Males	525,4	74,4	-7,9	-0,7	-4,7	-0,2
Females	371,9	52,8	+7,9	+1,1	+14,5	+2,2
Álava	134,9	66,0	-3,4	-2,0	-0,4	-0,6
Bizkaia	462,9	61,3	+7,0	+1,2	+7,6	+1,5
Gipuzkoa	299,6	66,4	-3,5	-0,6	+2,8	+0,8
Agriculture	18,0		-0,4		-1,2	
Industry	241,2		-5,3		-6,2	
Construction	77,9		-3,9		-6,7	
Services	560,2		+9,6		+23,9	
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION/ UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	84,8	8,6	-2,0	-0,2	-3,7	-0,4
Males	39,3	7,0	+1,8	+0,4	-1,5	-0,2
Females	45,5	10,9	-3,8	-1,0	-2,2	-0,9
16 - 24	18,4	20,9	-1,4	-1,9	-2,6	-1,5
25 - 44	53,3	9,2	-1,5	-0,2	-3,6	-0,7
45 and over	13,1	4,1	+0,9	+0,3	+2,6	+0,7
Álava	11,4	7,8	+0,8	+0,7	-1,8	-1,1
Bizkaia	47,6	9,3	-5,0	-1,0	-0,5	-0,2
Gipuzkoa	25,7	7,9	+2,1	+0,7	-1,5	-0,5
Seeking first job	10,1	11,9	-1,2		-2,3	
Seeking employment for 2 years or more	15,3	18,0	+1,8		+0,9	
INACTIVE POPULATION/ INACTIVITY RATE	805,5	45,1	-0,1	+0,0	-12,8	-0,5
HOUSEHOLDS	731,5		-6,5		-9,1	
Households with 1 or more active	531,8	72,7	-8,9		+0,7	
- All employed	459,9	62,9	-5,1		+1,8	
- All unemployed	19,8	2,7	-0,4		+1,0	
Households without active members	199,8	27,3	+2,5		-9,8	

Source: EUSTAT

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