

Life expectancy in the A.C. of the Basque Country has increased by almost seven years over the last 25

Fertility remains at a low level, with the virtual disappearance of children born subsequent to the second born

Life expectancy in the A.C. of the Basque Country has risen by 6.8 years for both sexes since 1976, according to data appearing in the Demographic Indicators, published by Eustat. Both men and women in the A.C. of the Basque Country have experienced a constant increase in their life expectancy.

Men gained 4.10 months of life each year, going from 69.6 in 1976 to 76.4 in 2001 and women benefited by 4.13 months more per year, reaching 83.7. The difference in life expectancy between the sexes narrowed to 7.3 years from the maximum of 8.7 reached 10 years ago. With these figures, the A.C. of the Basque Country is at the head of the list of developed countries, especially in the case of women, where it comes above the 25 countries of the European Union, Canada and the United States, and is only bettered by Japan.

Tumours are the main threat to life expectancy; if tumours could be completely eradicated, then men would prolong their life by four and a half years and women by three. External causes of death, on the other hand, had a less extreme effect, since they deducted just over a year of life from men and five months from women. If we consider solely traffic accidents among external causes, then the reduction comes to 5 months for men and only two months for women.

Fertility remains at a low level

The degree of fertility in our community is low, if compared with neighbouring countries. In 2000, the average number of children was 1.03, at some distance from the average 2.7 children in 1975 and the 2.1 needed for generational replacement. The lowest index was seen in Bizkaia (0.98) while in Gipuzkoa it came to 1.12 children per woman. The figure for women in Álava was 1.05 children.

Based on this data, it is expected that a woman will have 0.6 first children, meaning that less than half the women will have no children, 0.4 second children and less than one in ten will give birth to a third or subsequent child. In this respect, the decline in births of three or more offspring was 90% in relation to 1975.

Another of the characteristics of the fertility of Basque women is the concentration of births in a short period of time. The average age for motherhood was very similar in all three provinces, just over 32 years old, 3.6 years later than in 1975, leading to a significant concentration of births around this age.

In addition, a period of two and a half years passed between the first and second child and less than a year and a half between the second and third.

The number of marriages recovers slightly

The number of first marriages to be held came to 56.1% of men and 59.5% of women, meaning a slight increase in relation to indexes of five years ago, which were 52.5% and 54.7% respectively. These figures also mean that over 40% of people remained single. This situation is very different from that of twenty-five years ago, when practically 100% of people got married.

From an analysis of marriages it is clear that the constant rise in the age to get married continues. The average age of the first marriage was 31.8 for men (5.2 years older than in 1976) and 29.6 in the case of women (5.5 years older than in 1976).

As was the case with fertility, there was a significant concentration of marriages around certain ages. 62.3% of men married between the ages of 28 and 34, and 65.5% of women married between the ages of 27 and 32.

On average, an inhabitant of the A.C. of the Basque Country makes two moves during their life

The most common move was an intra-provincial one, which is to say the destination municipality is in the same province as the one of origin; this was the case in over half the migrations (1.2 out of a total of 2.1 for men and 1.1 out of 2 for women). In contrast, the average citizen made 0.8 migrations whose destination was outside the A.C. of the Basque Country (36.5% of the total number of moves). Movements between provinces accounted for a mere 8% of the total.

By province, there was a marked difference between Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa on one hand and Alava on the other. Whereas the latter showed 1.4 migrations for both sexes, Gipuzkoa gave the number of migrations as 1.8 for men and 1.9 for women and Bizkaia surpassed 2 moves for both sexes. These differences were due to intra-provincial mobility, since there were 1.1 moves of this type in Gipuzkoa and over 1.2 in Bizkaia, while in Alava this barely reached 0.5 moves. In other types of mobility, indexes were fairly similar.

In addition to this, as the distance of the move grew, so did age, so that, on average, men who moved within the three Provinces were the youngest ones, aged 34.2, while the youngest women were those to change their residence within the municipality (35.0 years old). The eldest ones were men who moved from one Province to another (37.7) and women who left the A.C. of the Basque Country (36.4).

As regards moves within the same municipality, the most mobile were women from Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia, with almost 3 moves and the least so were men from Álava and Bizkaia with 1.6 moves.

If migrations and changes of residence are added together, a Basque inhabitant makes, on average, five changes of residence during his or her lifetime, whether it be within their municipality or outside of it.

Demographic Indicators for the A.C. of the Basque Country 2000/2001.

Mortality indicators	A.C. of the Basque Country	
	Men	Women
Life expectancy at birth	76.4	83.7
Life expectancy without external causes	76.7	84.2
Life expectancy without traffic accidents	76.9	83.9
Life expectancy without tumours	81.1	86.8

Fertility indicators	A.C. of the Basque Country	
	Women	
Average number of children per woman	1.03	
First children	0.6	
Second children	0.38	
Third or subsequent	0.06	
Average age of motherhood	32.2	
Of first child	31.0	
Of third child	33.6	
Of third or subsequent	34.8	

Marriage indicators	A.C. of the Basque Country	
	Men	Women
Average number of first marriages per hundred people	56.1	59.5
Average age of first marriage	31.8	29.6

Migration indicators	A.C. of the Basque Country	
	Men	Women
Average number of migrations	2.1	2.0
With destination outside the A.C. of the Basque Country	0.8	0.7
With destination in another Province	0.2	0.2
With destination within the Province	1.1	1.1
Average number of changes of residence within the same muni	2.8	2.9
Average age for total number of migrations	36.5	35.1
Con destino fuera de la A.C. of the Basque Country	37.4	36.4
With destination within the Province	37.7	36.3
With destination in another Province	34.2	35.7
Average age to change residence	34.7	35.0

Source: EUSTAT

For further information:

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