

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA) 4th quarter 2004

The unemployment rate fell by 7% and the number of people in work rose by over four thousand in the A.C. of the Basque Country

The unemployment rate stood at almost two per cent below the EU-25 and Euro Zone average in the fourth quarter of 2004

2004 closed with 912,500 people in work in the A.C. of the Basque Country in the fourth quarter of the year, 0.5% more than in the previous quarter, according to Eustat data. Additionally, the unemployment rate fell to 7%, its lowest level since 1985. These figures confirm the rising trend in employment shown throughout the year and the reduction in the number of jobless.

In relation to the third quarter of 2004, the number of jobless fell by 5,700 and the unemployment rate by 0.6 percentage points. As a result of this evolution of the numbers of those in and out of work, the employment rate stood at 55%.

The female unemployment rate fell below 8%

The female unemployment rate came to 7.8%, falling one and a half percentage points, while the male one remained virtually unchanged (6.4%). The youth unemployment rate fell by 3.3 percentage points, affecting nearly two in five active young people aged 16 to 24 (18.9 %).

The unemployment rate for the A.C. of the Basque Country in the fourth quarter of 2004 was almost two percent below that of the Euro Zone countries. According to EUROSTAT- the Statistics Office of the European Union – the unemployment rate in the Zone stood at 8.9% in November 2004. The rate for the European Union as a whole, with all 25 countries, was identical to that of the Euro Zone.

The unemployment rates fell in all three provinces

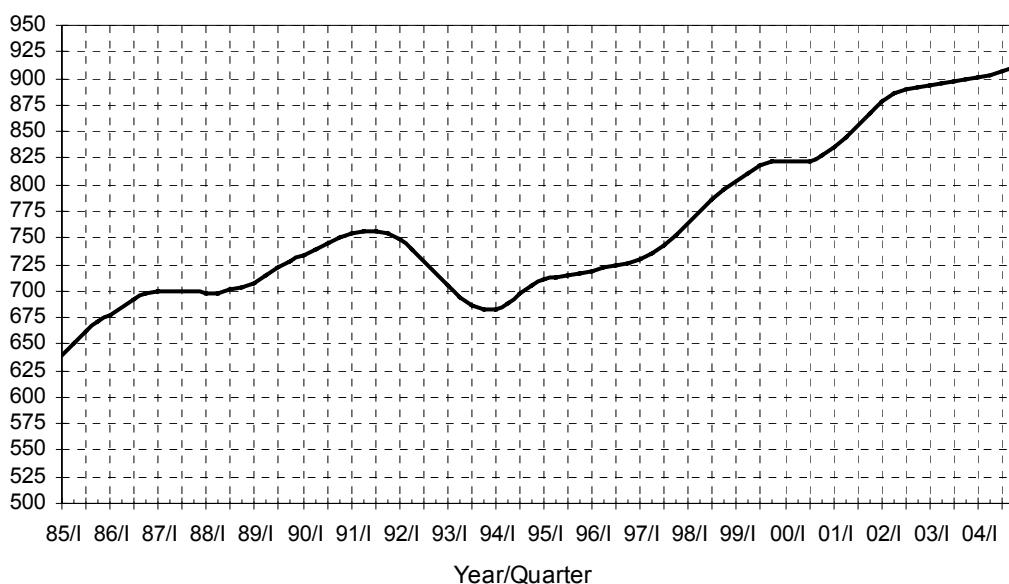
The number of women out of work, which came to 32,900, descended by 6,300, falling below the number of male unemployed (35,700) for the first time since 1985. There was also an important fall among those aged 16 to 24, with 4,300 less jobless.

The number of people out of work, which stood at 68,600 in the fourth quarter, fell in all three provinces. In Bizkaia 39,500 were registered as being jobless, 2,800 less than three months previously, although its rate of 7.7% continued to be the highest of the three provinces. The jobless figure in Álava, with a total of 7,300, remained practically unchanged from the previous quarter, giving an unemployment rate of 5%, the most positive of the three provinces. The number of unemployed in Gipuzkoa fell by 2,700 giving a 6.7% unemployment rate and leaving 21,700 people out of work.

The employed population reached a new maximum, although net employment was only created in Bizkaia

The number of people in work came to 912,500, 4,300 more than three months previously. By province, Bizkaia accounted for all the net employment creation with 7,800 more jobs, compared to Gipuzkoa where 3,200 jobs were lost and finally, Álava, losing 300. As regards sex, the improvement was confined to women, with 8,200 more jobs than the previous quarter, whereas for men the result was worse than the previous quarter with 4,000 less jobs.

**Trend of the employed population since 1985.
A.C. of the Basque Country. (In thousands)**



Source: EUSTAT

The increase in employment was produced in the services and construction sectors

In comparison with the third quarter of 2004, there was an important rise in the number of jobs in the services sector, with 4,700 more employees, and in construction, with 3,200. 1,900 jobs were lost in agriculture and fishing and 1,700 in industry.

The unemployment rate, the percentage of people aged 16 to 64 in work out of the total number of people in this age range, came to 64.8%, point four per cent higher than three months previously and 2.2 points away from the Lisbon Summit objective for 2005. This rate for men came to 74.5%, while for women it was only 55%.

By province, the highest employment rate remained that of Álava with 67.2%, although it fell two tenths of a point. It was followed by Gipuzkoa with 66.9% and a decrease of six tenths. Bizkaia had the lowest rate, with 62.9%, but it was the only province with growth, with just over one percentage point, in relation to the third quarter of 2004.

In the final quarter of 2004, there were 739,700 households in the A.C. of the Basque Country, a third of which had no active member. Households whose active members were all unemployed came to 14,800 (2% of all households), 1,600 people less than

the previous quarter. Finally, those households where all the active members were in work accounted for just over 64%, 9,500 more people than three months ago.

Women, Bizkaia and the services sector accounted for the majority of the 15,000 net jobs created over the year

The employed population grew over the twelve-month period by 15,200, or 1.7% more. There was a 3.3 percent increase in the female employment rate, whereas in the case of men, there was a decrease of point six per cent. By province, the rate for Bizkaia increased (2.7 percentage points), while in Álava it fell point eight per cent and remained unchanged in Gipuzkoa in relation to the fourth quarter of 2003.

Over the year, the services sector created 17,200 net jobs and construction 5,300. However, industry continued to lose weight, with 1,500 less jobs, as did agriculture (-5,800). Over this period, the employment rate increased by 1.4 percentage points.

The unemployment rate fell by almost two points over the last year in the A.C. of the Basque Country

The unemployment rate in the last year fell by almost two per cent (from 8.8% to 7%), a decrease of 18,200 people in the A.C. of the Basque Country. This fall was true of all the groups under study. There was an important fall among women (-16,400) and among people aged 25 to 44 (-12,700) and, by province, in Bizkaia, with 13,100 less people unemployed.

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA)

	4th quarter 2004		Variation on the previous quarter		Variation on the same quarter the previous year	
	Thousand	%	Thousand	p.p.*	Thousand	p.p.*
POPULATION AGED 16 AND OVER	1.784,8			-1,4		-4,9
ACTIVE POPULATION/ ACTIVITY RATE	981,1	55,0		-1,4	-0,0	-3,0
Males	561,5	65,1		-3,4	-0,3	-9,3
Females	419,6	45,5		+2,1	+0,2	+6,3
EMPLOYED POPULATION/ EMPLOYMENT RATE	912,5	64,8		+4,3	+0,4	+15,2
Males	525,9	74,5		-4,0	-0,3	-7,4
Females	386,6	55,0		+8,2	+1,1	+22,6
Álava	137,3	67,2		-0,3	-0,2	-1,0
Bizkaia	473,8	62,9		+7,8	+1,1	+17,9
Gipuzkoa	301,4	66,9		-3,2	-0,6	-1,7
Agriculture	12,6			-1,9		-5,8
Industry	245,0			-1,7		-1,5
Construction	87,1			+3,2		+5,3
Services	567,8			+4,7		+17,2
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION/ UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	68,6	7,0		-5,7	-0,6	-18,2
Males	35,7	6,4		+0,6	+0,1	-1,8
Females	32,9	7,8		-6,3	-1,5	-16,4
16 - 24	14,8	18,9		-4,3	-3,3	-5,0
25 - 44	42,1	7,4		-1,7	-0,3	-12,7
45 and over	11,7	3,5		+0,3	+0,1	-0,5
Álava	7,3	5,0		-0,2	-0,1	-3,3
Bizkaia	39,5	7,7		-2,8	-0,6	-13,1
Gipuzkoa	21,7	6,7		-2,7	-0,7	-1,9
Seeking first job	9,5	13,8		-1,6		-1,8
Seeking employment for 2 years or more	11,6	16,9		-2,4		-1,9
INACTIVE POPULATION/ INACTIVITY RATE	803,8	45,0		+0,0	+0,0	-1,8
HOUSEHOLDS	739,7			+8,7		+1,7
Households with 1 or more active	531,5	71,9		+3,7		-9,2
- All employed	475,2	64,2		+9,5		+10,2
- All unemployed	14,8	2,0		-1,6		-5,4
Households without active members	208,2	28,1		+4,9		+10,9

*p.p. = Difference in percentage points

Source: EUSTAT

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