

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA) 1ST QUARTER 2006

The working population fell by 0.9% and the unemployment rate rose point two in the first three months of 2006 in the A.C. of the Basque Country

The unemployment rate stands at 5.1%, over three percentage points below the average for the Euro Zone

Data for the first quarter of 2006 for labour market of the A.C. of the Basque Country offer a figure of 942,600 employed persons, 8,900 fewer than three months before, - 0.9%, according to Eustat data. In addition, the unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points with regard to the previous quarter, coming to 5.1%, an increase of 1,300 unemployed.

With regard to the fourth quarter of 2005 and as a result of the evolution of the working and unemployed population, the activity rate fell by 0.4 percentage points and came to 54.5% in the first quarter of 2006.

The youth unemployment rate rose by point 8 of a point

The female unemployment rate fell by 5.5% (point one percentage point less), while the male rate increased by point four. The youth unemployment rate increased by point eight, thus affecting unemployment with 8,600 unemployed young active persons aged 16 to 24 (12.2%).

The number of unemployed women, a group of 23,400 persons, decreased by 600. Nevertheless, among males, unemployment increased by 1,900 in the last quarter, a situation which affects a total of 27,000. The increase in unemployment among the group aged 45 and over is also significant, with 1,200 more unemployed.

The unemployment rate of the A.C. of the Basque Country for the first quarter of 2006 came to 3.1 percentage points below that of the countries in the Euro Zone. According to EUROSTAT- Statistical Office of the European Union-, in February 2006 in this geographic area the unemployment rate fell to 8.2%. The rate for the whole of the European Union, taking into account the 25 countries that make it up, stands at 8.5%.

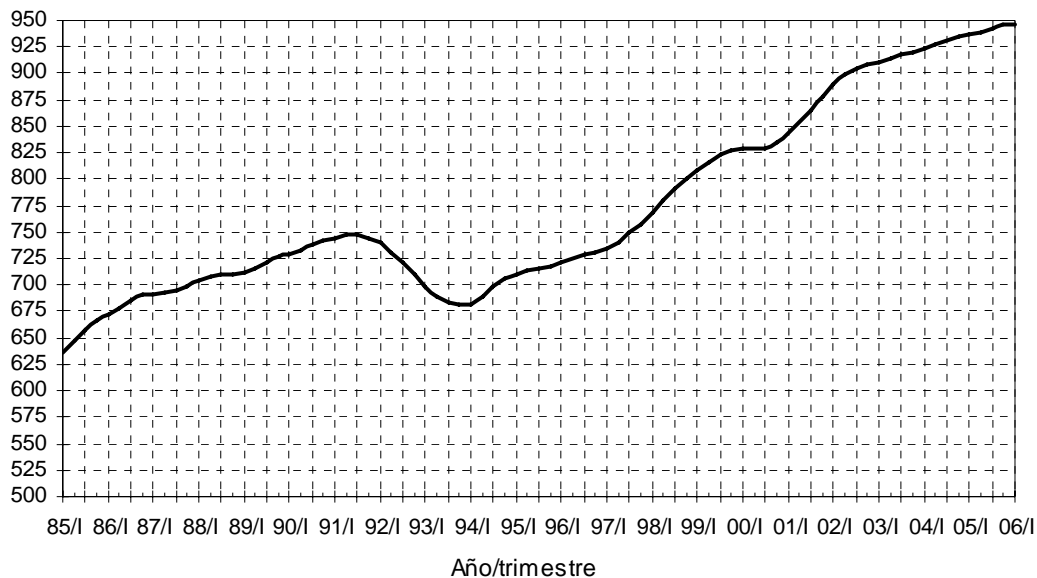
Increase in the unemployment rate in Álava and Gipuzkoa and a decrease in Bizkaia

The number of unemployed, i.e. persons who are seeking a job, making an active effort to find one and are also available for work, is estimated at 50,400 in the first quarter, 1,300 persons more than three months before. By provinces, in Álava, with a total of 6,600, there was an increase of 2,900 persons, the rate increasing to 4.5%, and in Gipuzkoa it was estimated as 300 more unemployed than three months before, but with a more favourable rate in the three provinces (3.3%). By contrast, in Bizkaia there were 32,800 unemployed, 1,900 fewer than three months before, but still with a the least favourable rate (6.3%).

Employment fell in the three provinces

The number of persons employed in the whole of the A.C. of the Basque Country came to 942,600, 8,900 persons fewer than three months before. Employment fell in all three provinces: Gipuzkoa was in first place with 3,800 net jobs fewer, followed by Álava with 2,600 fewer and, lastly Bizkaia, with 2,400 jobs lost. With regard to gender, the improvement only affected females, with 300 more employed than the previous quarter, while among men there was a loss of 9,100 employed.

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



Source: PRA, EUSTAT

Construction lost 10,700 jobs and industry another 7,100, while in agriculture and services there was an increase in employment.

With regard to the fourth quarter of 2005, there was an important decrease in the number of construction workers, with 10,700 fewer workers, and in industry with another 7,100. Agriculture gained 1,600 jobs and Services another 7,400.

The employment rate, percentage of employed people aged 16 to 64 in relation to the total people of this age, came to 65.6%, 0.5 percentage points lower than three months before. The rate for males came to 74.9%, while for women it was only 56.2%.

By provinces, the highest employment rate corresponded to Gipuzkoa with 69.2% and offers a decrease of point eight percent; followed by Álava with 67.9% and a 1.2 point decrease; Bizkaia has the lowest rate, with 62.9% and fell point one percent with regard to the fourth quarter of 2005.

In the first quarter of 2006 it was estimated that there were 777,400 households in the A.C. of the Basque Country, a third of which did not have an active member. Households whose active members were all unemployed came to 12,800 (1.6% of the total), 1,500 more than the previous quarter.

Over the last year the services sector created 18,900 net jobs

The employed population grew over the last twelve months by 6,500 persons, 0.7% more. There was a 1.8 percentage point increase in the female employment rate, while for males the rate fell by point two percent. By provinces, employment rates increased in Gipuzkoa (two points) and Álava (one point) while in Bizkaia the rate fell by point one percent with regard to the first quarter of 2005.

Over the last year the services sector created 18,900 net jobs, while numbers continued to fall in industry, construction and the primary sector.

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

The unemployment rate fell by 1.9 percentage points (from 7% to 5.1%) over the last year, which means 20,300 personas left a situation of unemployment in the A.C. of the Basque Country over the year. Two of the three provinces reduced their unemployment rates over the last twelve months: Gipuzkoa (2.8 percentage points fewer) and Bizkaia (2.2 percentage points fewer), while in Álava it increased by 1.1 percentage points.

SURVEY ON THE POPULATION IN RELATION TO ACTIVITY (PRA)

| | 1er trimestre de 2006 | | Variación sobre trimestre anterior | | Variación sobre mismo trimestre del año anterior | |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| | Miles | % | Miles | p.p.* | Miles | p.p.* |
| POBLACIÓN DE 16 Y MAS AÑOS | 1.823,2 | | +0,1 | | +2,4 | |
| POBLACIÓN ACTIVA/ TASA DE ACTIVIDAD | 993,0 | 54,5 | -7,5 | -0,4 | -13,7 | -0,8 |
| Varones | 570,2 | 64,3 | -7,3 | -0,8 | -10,6 | -1,3 |
| Mujeres | 422,7 | 45,1 | -0,3 | -0,1 | -3,3 | -0,4 |
| POBLACIÓN OCUPADA/ TASA DE OCUPACIÓN | 942,6 | 65,6 | -8,9 | -0,5 | +6,5 | +0,7 |
| Varones | 543,3 | 74,9 | -9,1 | -1,1 | -3,7 | -0,2 |
| Mujeres | 399,3 | 56,2 | +0,3 | +0,1 | +10,2 | +1,8 |
| Álava | 140,5 | 67,9 | -2,6 | -1,2 | +1,2 | +1,0 |
| Bizkaia | 484,2 | 62,9 | -2,4 | -0,1 | -3,0 | -0,1 |
| Gipuzkoa | 317,9 | 69,2 | -3,8 | -0,8 | +8,4 | +2,0 |
| Agricultura | 12,2 | | +1,6 | | -0,9 | |
| Industria | 237,5 | | -7,1 | | -10,2 | |
| Construcción | 77,2 | | -10,7 | | -1,3 | |
| Servicios | 615,7 | | +7,4 | | +18,9 | |
| POBLACIÓN PARADA/ TASA DE PARO | 50,4 | 5,1 | +1,3 | +0,2 | -20,3 | -1,9 |
| Varones | 27,0 | 4,7 | +1,9 | +0,4 | -6,8 | -1,1 |
| Mujeres | 23,4 | 5,5 | -0,6 | -0,1 | -13,5 | -3,1 |
| 16 - 24 | 8,6 | 12,2 | +0,5 | +0,8 | -5,5 | -6,0 |
| 25 - 44 | 33,6 | 5,8 | -0,4 | +0,0 | -8,9 | -1,5 |
| 45 y más | 8,2 | 2,4 | +1,2 | +0,3 | -5,9 | -1,7 |
| Álava | 6,6 | 4,5 | +2,9 | +2,0 | +1,8 | +1,1 |
| Bizkaia | 32,8 | 6,3 | -1,9 | -0,3 | -12,7 | -2,2 |
| Gipuzkoa | 11,0 | 3,3 | +0,3 | +0,1 | -9,4 | -2,8 |
| Buscan primer empleo | 4,5 | 8,9 | +0,9 | | -3,3 | |
| POBLACIÓN INACTIVA/ TASA DE INACTIVIDAD | 830,2 | 45,5 | +7,7 | +0,4 | +16,1 | +0,8 |
| HOGARES | 777,4 | | +0,6 | | +17,2 | |
| Hogares con 1 ó más activos | 530,6 | 68,3 | -4,0 | | +6,1 | |
| - Todos ocupados | 487,4 | 62,7 | -4,9 | | +23,3 | |
| - Todos parados | 12,8 | 1,6 | +1,5 | | -3,1 | |
| Hogares sin activos | 246,8 | 31,7 | +4,6 | | +11,1 | |

*p.p. = Difference in percentage points

Source: EUSTAT

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