

2006 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS. POPULATION (EPV06)

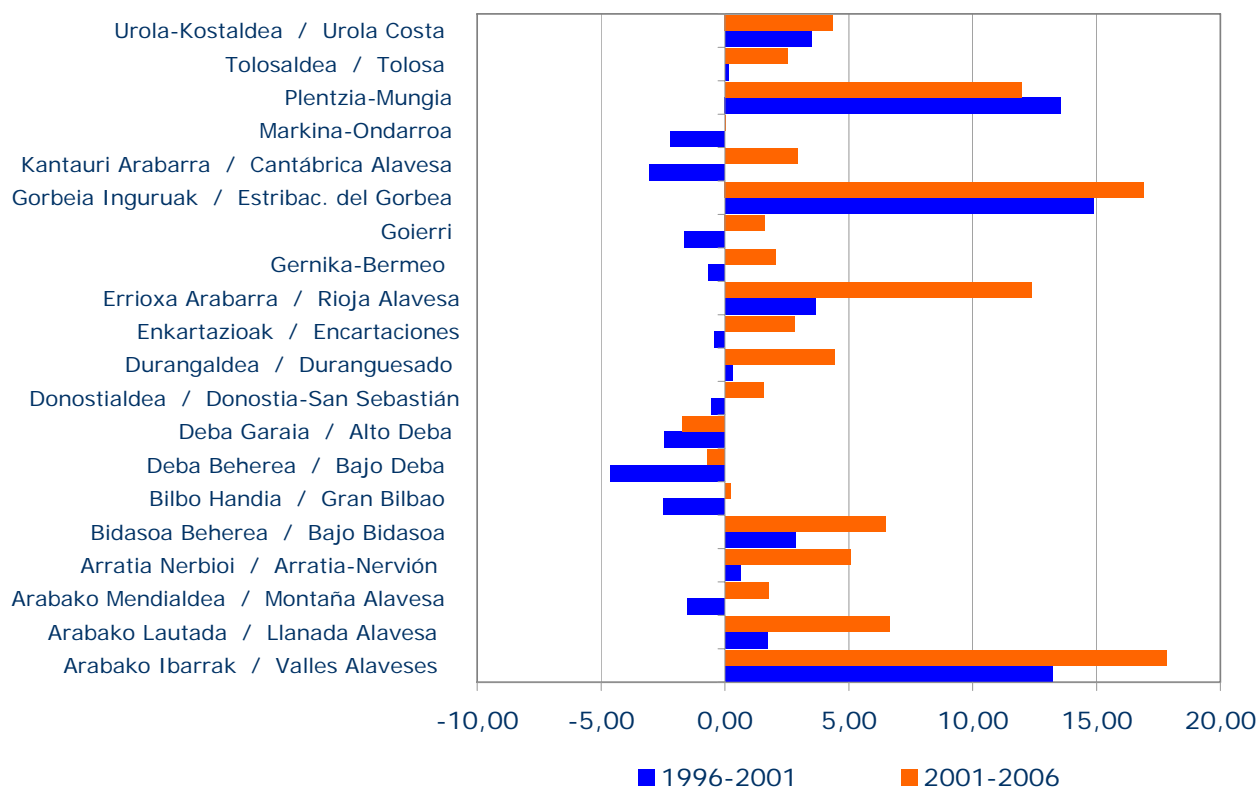
## The population of the A. C. of the Basque Country is disperse and the population of three out of four municipalities increased between 2001 and 2006.

***The total population grew, the foreign population tripled and there was a upturn in the number of children***

The population of the A.C. of the Basque Country stood at 2,129,339 people in 2006, according to the 2006 Population and Housing Census conducted by Eustat. Between 2001 and 2006, there was a general increase in the population and a change in trends, leaving behind the progressive loss of inhabitants that had started in the Eighties. A population recovery was confirmed that was already becoming evident in 2001.

Álava, with an increase of 6.8%, continued the growth trend between 1996-2001 and, for the first time in the last twenty years, Gipuzkoa (1.9%) and Bizkaia (1.3%) saw their population increase. Nonetheless, the population distribution in the A. C. of the Basque Country barely changed: Álava has 14.2% of the population with 305,822 inhabitants, Gipuzkoa 32.2%, with 686,665 inhabitants, and Bizkaia 53.4%, with 1,136,852.

### Evolution of the population as per Districts 1996-2006. (%)



Source: EUSTAT

By regions, the situation was reinforced with respect to 2001. Alto Deba (-1.7%) and Bajo Deba (-0.7%) were the only regions that lost population, even though more moderately than in the previous five-year period. The most dynamic regions continued to be Valles Alaveses, where the population grew by 17.8%, Estribaciones del Gorbea (16.9%), Rioja Alavesa (12.4%) and Plentzia-Mungia (12%), all of which exceeded the mean growth of the A. C. of the Basque Country (2.2%).

The number of inhabitants increased in three out of four municipalities, but in general those towns are proportionally the smaller ones. The population is scattered and is to be found in low-density areas outside the more urban areas. This was the case in two of the municipalities where greatest growth was recorded: Ribera Baja with 6.1 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and population growth of 41.5% and Zambrana with 16.9 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and growth of 31.5%.

In the towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants, the population increase was 5.2% and occurred in 171 out of the 212 municipalities, i.e. in nearly 81%. The population in 18 of the 30 towns with 10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants increased, but the increase was lower (1.4%); and only Irun (6.2%) and Barakaldo (2%) were the only ones of the 6 over 40,000 that did not see its population decrease. As far as the capitals were concerned and in relation to 2001, the populations of Bilbao (0.3%) and Donostia-San Sebastian (1.2%) grew moderately, while the increase in Vitoria-Gasteiz (5.9%) was lower than in the previous five-year period (8.7%).

Among the municipalities with a larger population, there is a group that is traditionally connected to industry whose population continued to drop. Those towns were as follows: in Bizkaia, Sestao (-7.4%), Portugalete (-5.8%), Basauri (-4.2%) and Ermua (-3.8%); in Gipuzkoa, Mondragón (-5.7%), Soralue-Placencia de las Armas (-4.4%) and Eibar (-3.6%) and in Álava: Llodio (-3%).

### **Youngest population grows and the oldest sector stabilises**

Between 2001 and 2006, special mention should be made of the increase in the number of children under one year old (16.5%) and the age groups between 1 and 4 (13.6%). The population of 65 years or over remained stable and slightly surpassed the percentage of young people, who accounted for 18.6% of the population. Meanwhile, the potential working population stood at 65%, as had been the case in the previous five years.

No significant differences were noted between the provinces, even though Bizkaia had the oldest population (19.2% are over 65), Gipuzkoa the youngest (17.3% are under 20) and Alava had the largest percentage of potential workers (66.6%).

### **Between 2001-2006, there was a significant rise in the number of Bolivians and Rumanians and the existing nationalities were reinforced**

In 2001-2006, there were 95,313 foreigners on the census, which accounted for 4.5% of the A. C. of the Basque Country, compared to 31,167 in 2001. The working age group, between 20 and 40 years old, were the largest group. The majority were from South America (43.8%) and, for the most part, were women from Colombia, Bolivia or Ecuador. Europeans made up the second group of immigrants (27.8), where the majority were Rumanian and Portuguese men.

Four of the six most numerous nationalities were already so in 2001. The greatest increase was among the Bolivians, which were up from 125 in 2001 to 8961 in 2006 and 72% are concentrated in the region of Gran Bilbao. The Rumanians increased from 582 to 7934 and were more widely distributed in the different regions of the A. C. of the Basque Country. Álava had the largest percentage of immigrants (6.3%) of the three provinces and, at a municipal level, Baños de Ebro (14%) and Leza (11.3%) headed the immigrants ranking among its population.

**Methodology note:**

The Population and Housing Census has been prepared using different administrations records as the main source, without carrying out the traditional large-scale collections of information. This important methodological change is in line with the methods being used by the leading pioneer statistics institutes, such as Sweden, Finland or Holland, with similar methods based on administrative records. The reference date of the Population and Housing Census was 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006

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