

After a decade of growth, births fell by 1.8% in 2009

The average age of motherhood was 33.1 years for Spanish women and 28.7 for the foreigners

In 2009, 20,928 babies were born in the Basque Country, which was 1.8% down on the previous year, according to Eustat data. This fall in the birth rate was the first after a 10-year period of continuous growth.

The start of the strong downward trend in the birth rate can be traced back to 1976. It slowed down from the end of the 1980s and reached its lowest point in 1994. The 2009 figures consolidate the rally in the birth rate that began in 1999.

With regard to the distribution of births by provinces, Álava, with 3,224 births, registered a slight increase (0.5%), compared to the downturns in Bizkaia (-3.0%) and Gipuzkoa (-1.1%), with 10,540 and 7,164 births, respectively.

The birth rate was 9.6 per thousand inhabitants, far below the 20 per thousand in the 1960s. The highest figure was in Gipuzkoa (10.3‰), followed by Álava (10.2‰) and Bizkaia (9.1‰).

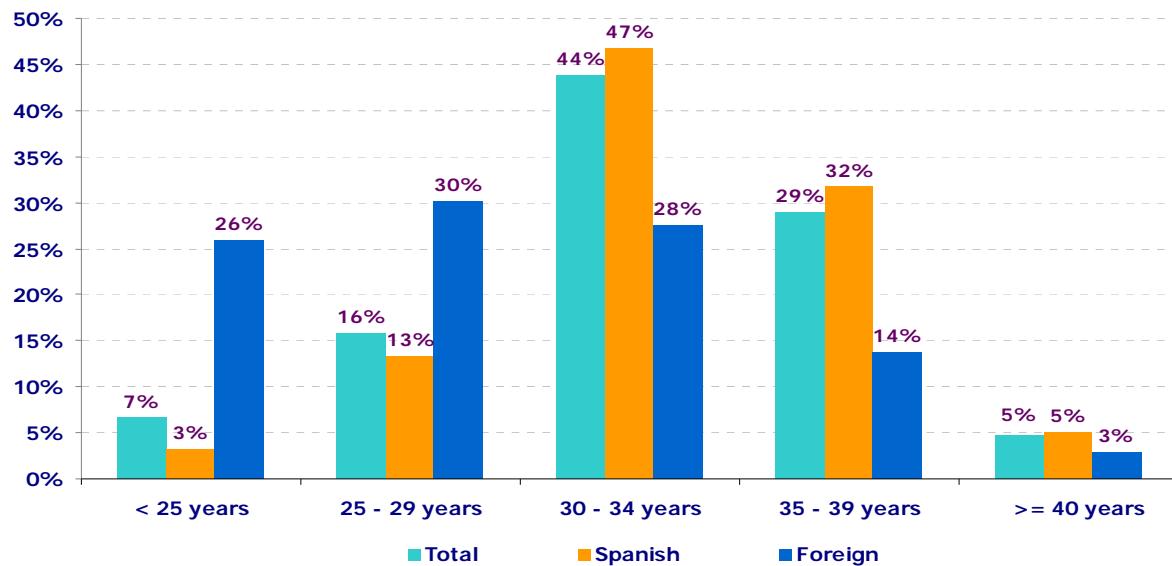
Seventy-seven per cent of women who gave birth in 2009 were aged 30 or over. Women aged between 30 and 34 comprised the largest group, with 44% of the total births. On other hand, the number of women over 35 years old giving birth (34%) continued to increase and easily doubled the 25-29 age bracket (16%). Seven per cent of the mothers were under 25 years old, a similar figure to the one for 2008.

153% of the mothers were foreigners in 2009 years old

If the nationality of the new mothers is considered, 15.3% were foreigners who gave birth to 3,195 children. The most common countries of origin were: Morocco with 501 mothers, Bolivia (302), Colombia (294), Romania (284), Ecuador (167), Brazil (157) and China (152).

Foreign mothers had children at an earlier age than the mothers with Spanish nationality resident in the Basque Country. In fact, 56% gave birth when they were under 30 years old, which is in clear contrast with 17% of Spanish citizens who decided to start a family before their thirtieth birthday.

Graph 1: Living births by nationality and age of the mother (%). 2009



Source: EUSTAT. Birth Statistics of the Basque Country

The average age of the mothers was 32.4 years, with this average increasing to 33.1 years old among Spanish citizens and was 28.7 years old for the mothers from other countries.

The average age of the first-time mothers was 31.5 years old.

31.2% of births were outside marriage in 2009

In 2009, there were 6,531 births outside marriage, a figure that accounted for 31.2% of the total births and was up 0.9% on 2008. Álava and Bizkaia posted percentages higher than for the Basque Country overall, with 32.2% and 31.4%, respectively, while Gipuzkoa was the only province with relatively lower values (30.4%). If we compare the percentage for 1990 (7.7%) with the current one, the proportion of births outside marriage had quadrupled.

With regard to the birth order, first borns accounted for 56% in 2009, second borns 36% and third and subsequent births 8%.

The number of deliveries came to 20,502, out of which 20,000 were single, 483 double and 19 triple.

The breakdown by sex of the live births in 2009 was 109 males for every 100 females. The average weight was 3,308 grams in the case of the boys and 3,190 grams in the case of the girls.

Table 1: Live births by province of residence of the mother. 2009

	Basque Country	Alava	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
Total	20.928	3.224	10.540	7.164
Sex				
Men	10.899	1.685	5.456	3.758
Females	10.029	1.539	5.084	3.406
Order of birth				
First	11.780	1.796	6.061	3.923
Second	7.483	1.146	3.671	2.666
Third or posterior	1.665	282	808	575
According to age of mother				
< 25 years	1.391	281	747	363
25 - 29 years	3.325	560	1.520	1.245
30 - 34 years	9.164	1.357	4.500	3.307
35 - 39 years	6.061	891	3.233	1.937
>= 40	987	135	540	312
According to the marital status of the mother				
Married	14.397	2.185	7.226	4.986
Not married	6.531	1.039	3.314	2.178
Nationality of the mother				
Spanish	17.733	2.473	8.982	6.278
Foreign	3.195	751	1.558	886

Source: EUSTAT. Birth Statistics of the Basque Country

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