

The population of the Basque Country fell for the second consecutive year in 2014

The population of Gipuzkoa rose in 2014, whereas it fell in Álava and Bizkaia

The population of the Basque Country in 2014 stood at 2,172,877 people, according to data prepared by EUSTAT, and it is the second time that the population has fallen with respect to 2012, a year in which the population reached a historic high. Specifically, the Basque Country lost 6,072 people with respect to 2013. This contrasts with the positive balance between 2006 and 2012 when the population increased every year and gained 66,200 people over the period as a whole.

Gipuzkoa was the only province that gained population between 2013 and 2014, with an extra 704 inhabitants, in addition to the increases between 2006 and 2013 (21,599 people). Álava and Bizkaia lost population in the last year (234 and 6,578, respectively), but the increase that occurred between 2006 and 2013 means that over the period as a whole their population rose: by 18,232 inhabitants in Álava and 16,923 in Bizkaia.

The three Basque capitals lost population between 2013 and 2014: Bilbao registered 3,326 fewer inhabitants; Donostia-San Sebastián, 629; and Vitoria-Gasteiz, 49. Moreover, both Bilbao and Donostia-San Sebastián saw their populations fall between 2006 and 2013, and as a result they lost 3,480 and 1,636 inhabitants, respectively, over the period as a whole. Vitoria-Gasteiz, despite losing population over the last two years, gained 12,217 people between 2006 and 2014.

The municipalities that lost the greatest population between 2006 and 2014 include Getxo, Portugalete, Sestao and Basauri, which belong to the region of Gran Bilbao, registering 7,168 fewer people between them. The municipalities with the highest population density in the Basque Country, above 6,000 inhabitants per km², are concentrated in this region, with the highest density occurring in Portugalete, with 14,642 inhabitants per km² in 2014.

On the other hand, municipalities such as Kuartango, Lagrán, Bernedo, Arraia-Maeztu and Valle de Arana, belonging to the region of Montaña Alavesa and with fewer than 7 inhabitants per km², have also lost population between 2006 and 2014.

In 20 municipalities of the Basque Country more than a quarter of the population is 65 or over

At 20.7%, the Basque Country in 2014 has a greater proportion of the population over the age of 65 than Spain (18.2%). Castilla y León, Principado de Asturias and Galicia, with over 23%, are the Autonomous Communities that have higher proportions. If compared with Europe, only Italy and Germany exceed the Basque figures. In 2006 the proportion was lower by 4 percentage points.

Table 1. Population of the Basque Country by province, according to large age groups

	Total	0 - 19	20 -64	>= 65
Total	2.172.877	389.411	1.333.599	449.867
Historic territories				
Araba/Álava	320.032	59.242	199.892	60.898
Bizkaia	1.144.214	196.210	705.099	242.905
Gipuzkoa	708.631	133.959	428.608	146.064
Capitals				
Bilbao	344.443	55.317	209.303	79.823
Donostia / San Sebastián	180.397	30.706	109.662	40.029
Vitoria-Gasteiz	238.862	43.882	149.378	45.602
Districts				
Arabako Ibarrek / Valles Alaveses	6.016	1.036	3.750	1.230
Arabako Lautada / Llanada Alavesa	255.941	47.616	160.367	47.958
Arabako Mendialdea / Montaña Alavesa	3.063	434	1.800	829
Arratia Nerbioi / Arratia-Nervión	23.751	4.491	14.727	4.533
Bidasoa Beherea / Bajo Bidasoa	76.327	14.697	46.534	15.096
Bilbo Handia / Gran Bilbao	862.813	143.576	530.421	188.816
Deba Beherea / Bajo Deba	55.230	9.922	32.977	12.331
Deba Garaia /Alto Deba	62.850	11.493	37.903	13.454
Donostialdea / Donostia-San Sebastián	323.836	58.269	196.856	68.711
Durangaldea / Duranguesado	97.978	18.507	60.879	18.592
Enkartzazioak / Encartaciones	32.088	5.458	19.983	6.647
Errioxa Arabarra / Rioja Alavesa	11.574	2.308	6.970	2.296
Gernika-Bermeo	45.859	7.989	27.828	10.042
Goierni	67.633	13.547	40.207	13.879
Gorbeia Inguruak / Estribac. del Gorbea	8.757	1.846	5.529	1.382
Kantauri Arabarra / Cantábrica Alavesa	34.681	6.002	21.476	7.203
Markina-Ondarroa	26.276	4.550	15.879	5.847
Plentzia-Mungia	55.449	11.639	35.382	8.428
Tolosaldea / Tolosa	48.196	10.095	28.950	9.151
Urola-Kostaldea / Urola Costa	74.559	15.936	45.181	13.442

Source: Eustat. Municipal inhabitants statistics of the Basque Country. 1/1/2014

91 municipalities exceed the average percentage of the Basque Country, whilst 160 presented the same or a lower percentage. Amongst those that exceed it are Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastián and Barakaldo, which account for 29% of the population of the Community. In 2006, 147 municipalities had a percentage higher than that of the Community. Moreover, between the two dates the proportion of people over 65 years of age dropped in 101 municipalities, although they only make up 5.7% of the total population.

There is quite a lot of disparity between the municipalities regarding the percentage of people 65 and over, where it goes from 9.6% in Irura to 39.8% in Lagrán. In the Community there were just two municipalities that had a percentage below 10%:

Alegría-Dulantzi and Irura, which had a combined population that stood at 4,700. On the other hand, 3 municipalities had a percentage over 30%: Lagrán, Harana/Valle de Arana and Elantxobe, which have a combined total of 823 residents.

The high proportion of elderly people in all of the municipalities in the region of Montaña Alavesa caused its figure to reach over 27%, whilst the regions with the next-highest percentage, Markina-Ondarroa and Bajo Deba, had 22.3% of people 65 and over.

In the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, there was a ratio of 1.4 people over 65 to every person under 16, exceeding the ratio for Spain as a whole, which is 1.1. 80 municipalities exceeded this ratio, with extreme cases such as that of Lagrán, with a ratio of over 8 to 1. Harana/Valle de Arana has a ratio of 5.5 to 1. Elantxobe, Moreda de Álava/Moreda Araba and Añana have more than 4 elderly people for every person under 16. On the other hand, there were Larraul, Irura, Alegría-Dulantzi and Altzo which had more than 2 young people up to the age of 15 for each person aged 65 and over.

Population distribution by age is most extreme in the municipalities of Álava where, due above all to its small size and the fact that any demographic phenomena, such as migration, modifies this distribution.

Methodological note: The available series were amplified by incorporating the period 2006 to 2009, meaning that the series 2006-2014 are available in the Eustat databank.

For further information:

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Municipal Inhabitants Statistics of the Basque Country databank