

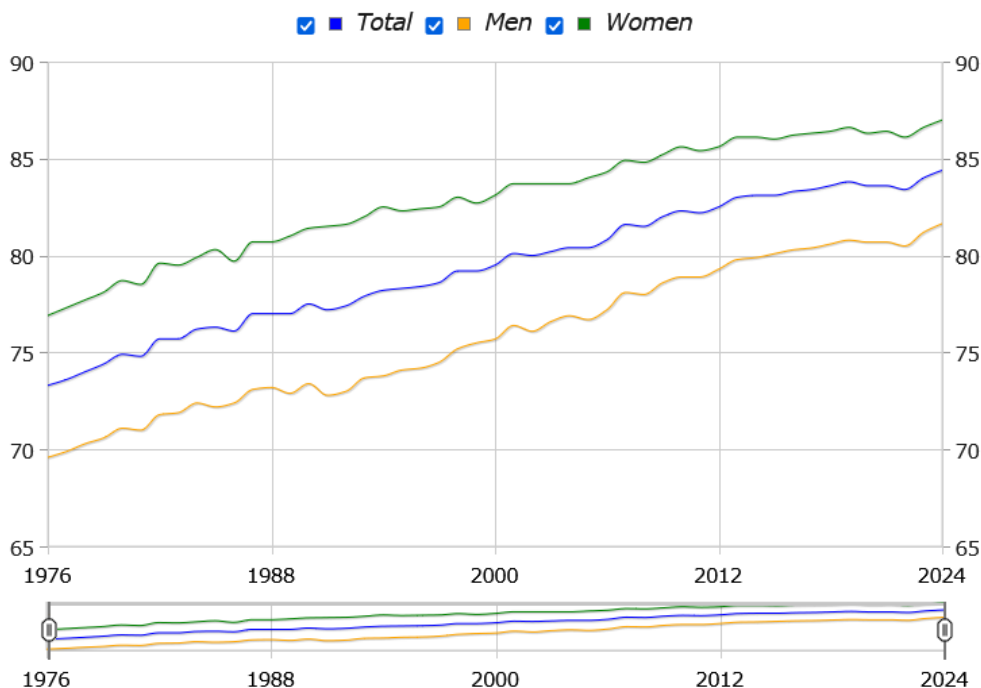
In 2024, life expectancy for men in the Basque Country rose to 81.7 years, and 87 years for women

The birth rate stood at 1.17 births per woman, and the average age of mothers giving birth was 33.4 years

In 2024, life expectancy for both men and women in the Basque Country rose, according to data produced by Eustat. Male life expectancy increased by 0.5 years compared with the figures one year earlier, standing at 81.7 years, whereas the increase for women was 0.4 years, rising to 87.0 years. These figures are the all-time highest life expectancies at birth for both sexes.

A comparison against the European Union as a whole reveals that the population of the Basque Country enjoys a greater life expectancy: men live an average of 2.5 years longer than their European counterparts, while women are 2.6 years above the European average. If we compare the figures with Spain, a country which stands out as having one of the highest life expectancies in Europe, the Basque Country likewise registers higher figures, specifically 0.3 years for men and 0.5 years for women.

Life expectancy at birth in the Basque Country, by sex



Source: Eustat. Indicators for the analysis of demographic phenomena

Both men and women in the Basque Country have registered a sustained increase in their life expectancy, despite the decline registered in the year of the pandemic and the two subsequent years (between 2020 and 2023). A comparison with the figures for 1976, when life expectancy was 69.6 years for men and 76.9 years for women, reveals an increase of 12.1 years in the case of men, and 10.1 years for women.

This evolution reflects an approximate annual gain of three months of life for men and two and a half months for women. The sharper rise among men has led to a shrinking of the gender gap: the difference between the two sexes now stands at 5.3 years, whereas in 1991 and 1994 it reached a peak of 8.7 years.

Tumours remain the main threat to life expectancy. If they were completely eliminated, men would see a 4.0 year increase in lifespan, and 2.8 years in the case of women. Meanwhile, external causes of death have a lesser impact: they cut male life expectancy by slightly over 9 months, and 4 months for women, figures which fall in the case of traffic accidents to almost one and a half months for men, and a negligible amount for women.

Birth rates remain low, and women give birth at a late age

The birth rate in the Basque Country remained at very low levels in 2024. The average stands at 1.17 births per women, below the 1.38 births registered in the European Union (2023 data), and far lower than the 2.7 births on average recorded in 1976, and the 2.1 needed to ensure generational replacement. If we analyse the data by province, Bizkaia has the lowest rate, with 1.09 births per woman, while the figure rises in Álava to 1.27, and stands at 1.25 in Gipuzkoa.

According to the Indicators for Analysing Demographic Phenomena, the expectation is that an average woman would have 0.59 initial childbirths, meaning that 41% of women would have no offspring. Furthermore, the average number of second births would be 0.42, and 0.16 for the third and subsequent births. This means that for every ten women, there would on average be fewer than two third or subsequent births, while in 1976, the number recorded was almost 8 third or subsequent births per ten women.

Another of the birth rate characteristics among Basque women is the high average age on giving birth, rising to 33.4 years, a figure more than two years higher than the European Union average (31.2 years in 2023), and 4.8 years above the age registered in 1976. Álava reveals a slightly lower average age than the other two provinces (32.9 years), while the figure in Bizkaia stands at 33.4 years, and in Gipuzkoa, 33.6 years. The particularly low birth rate means that the average age on the birth of a woman's first child is now 7.1 years higher than in 1976, standing at 32.5 years.

The rate of marriage resumes levels prior to COVID-19

The percentage of first marriages being held, according to the 2024 marriage rate index, is 46.6% for men and 50.5% for women, figures indicating a drop of 2.0 percentage points for men and 0.9 points for women, compared with one year earlier. Despite this decline, the percentages have now returned to the levels seen during the pre-pandemic period, revealing a recovery in the marriage trend

An analysis of marriage rates indicates that the average age on marrying for the first time was 38.3 years for men in 2024, and 36.8 years for women. These figures are practically the same as those registered in 2023 for both sexes.

As with the birth rate, we see a considerable concentration of marriages within certain age bands. 53% of marriages take place in the range between 30 and 39 years, for both men and women.

On average, a resident in the Basque Country will move town around four times over the course of their life

Men will undertake an average of 4 such moves, and women 3.7, over the course of their lives. Relocation in the Basque Country stands out in particular for its clear intra-provincial profile. In more than half of such moves, among both men and women, the destination municipality is within the same province. The specific figures indicate an average of 2.1 moves within the same province out of a total of 4.0 over the lifespan of a man, and 2.0 out of 3.7 in the case of women.

Meanwhile, men undertake 1.7 moves outside the Basque Country, equivalent to 43% of all relocations, while women undertake 1.5 moves of this type, representing 40% of the total.

If we analyse the various provinces, we find differences among the average number of moves for men. In Álava, the average is 3.3 moves, while in Bizkaia this rises to 4.3, and in Gipuzkoa stands at 3.8. These differences are tied to intra-provincial mobility: men in Bizkaia register an average of 2.5 moves within their home province, compared with 0.9 seen in Álava. Álava stands out in terms of movements between provinces, with 0.5 per person, double those in Bizkaia (0.2); Gipuzkoa lies in the middle with 0.3. Women reveal a similar distribution, maintaining roughly the same ratios and figures as men in the different provinces.

As for the average age when moving town, we find that women move out of the Basque Country at a later age: 35.1 years on average. Relocations within the same province take place at the age of 33.6 on average, while the average for moves to other provinces is 33.4 years. Among men, the highest age is for those migrating out of the Basque Country, at an average age of 35.9 years, while the youngest are those relocating between provinces (33.7 years), and those moving town within their home province have an average age of 34.1 years.

If we look at those moving home within the same municipality, the highest mobility rate is among the population of Álava, for both women and men. Women in Álava move on average 4.7 times within the same municipality, while the figure for men amounts to 4.8. These averages are higher than those registered in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, where the average number of house moves per person is below four.

Indicators for the analysis of demographic phenomena in the Basque Country by sex. 2023-2024

	Men	Women
Mortality indicators		
Life expectancy (years)	81,7	87,0
Life expectancy without external causes	82,4	87,3
Life expectancy without traffic accidents	81,8	87,0
Life expectancy without tumours	85,7	89,8
Fertility Indicators		
Average of children per woman		1,17
Of first children		0,59
Of second children		0,42
Of third and subsequent children		0,16
Average age of maternity (years)		33,4
Of first child		32,5
Of second child		34,2
Of third and subsequent child		34,6
Marriage Indicators		
Average number of first marriages per 100 individuals	46,6	50,5
Average age at first marriage (years)	38,3	36,8
Emigration Indicators		
Average number of migrations	4,0	3,7
To a destination outside the Basque Country	1,7	1,5
To a destination in the same province	2,1	2,0
To a destination in another province	0,3	0,3
Average number of changes of residence in the same municipality	3,8	3,8
Average age at emigration total (years)	34,9	34,3
To a destination outside the Basque Country	35,9	35,1
To a destination in the same province	34,1	33,6
To a destination in another province	33,7	33,4
Average age at change of residence in the same municipality	33,4	33,8

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Source: Eustat. Indicators for the analysis of demographic phenomena

For further information:

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