

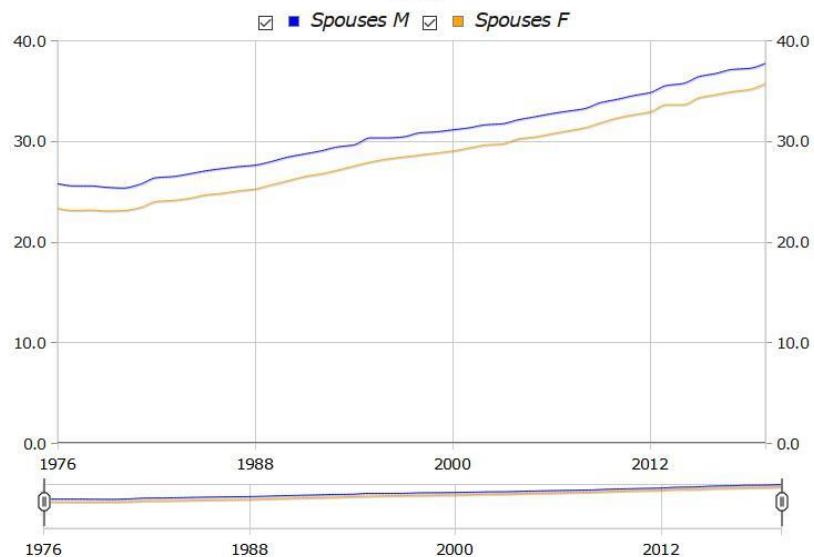
The number of marriages in the Basque Country continued to decline in 2019

The average age of first-time spouses was around 38 for men and over 35 for women

Once again it can be seen that marriages are becoming less common, their number standing at 7,471 in 2019, which was 3.7% down on the previous year, according to Eustat data. If we take into account the marriages of residents of the Basque Country between individuals of a different sex, the number was 7,265, 285 weddings fewer than the previous year.

The age at marriage continued to increase in 2019, as single men married at 37.7 years of age on average and single women at 35.7. These are the oldest ages since Eustat began publishing Marriage Statistics and, if we restrict ourselves to the last 25 years, the average age of first-time spouses has increased by 8.1 years, with the difference of 2 years between men and women remaining stable.

Average age at first marriage en the Basque Country by sex



Source: Eustat. Marriage statistics

The Basque marriage rate also reached an all-time low, with 3.2 weddings per thousand inhabitants, a lower figure than the Spanish rate (3.5%), and also lower than the European Union (27 countries) rate, which in 2017 (latest available data) stood at 4.4%.

206 of the married couples resident in the Basque Country were in homosexual marriages, slightly less than in 2018 (208). Marriages between women have exceeded marriages between men since 2012, and account for 58.3% of homosexual marriages. Regarding distribution between provinces, 28 were resident in Álava, 64 in Gipuzkoa, 98 in Bizkaia and 16 outside the Basque Country.

The greater presence of divorcees, resulting from marital breakdowns in previous years, has led to a higher percentage of divorcees in the total number of married couples: since 2005 this percentage has increased by 68.9% for men, to stand at 1,044, and 62.6% for women, reaching 1,003.

87.2% of marriages in 2019 were civil, which is four times the percentage of civil marriages in 1990

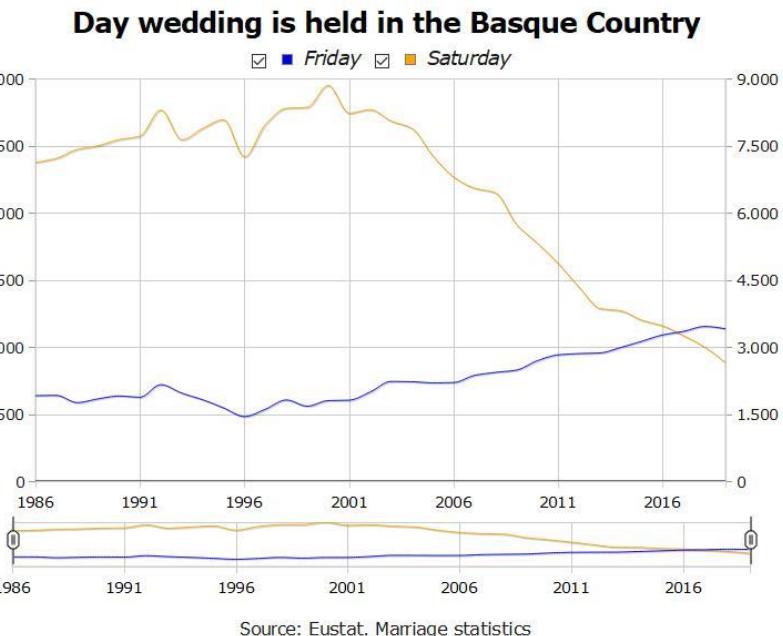
Civil marriages continued to increase and accounted for 9 out of every ten heterosexual marriages, 2.2% more than the previous year. Civil marriages only accounted for 23% of the total in 1990.

If we take into account the province of residency, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa showed higher percentages than the Basque Country as a whole and almost the same: 88% and 87.8%, respectively. Álava was below these figures with 85.5%. In the case of civil weddings of residents outside of the Basque Country, the percentage fell to 78.8%.

The preferred destinations for the 369 couples who fixed their residency outside the Basque Country after getting married were neighbouring provinces such as Cantabria and Navarra, in addition to Madrid, which remained very popular. Couples who married in Álava settled in Burgos and La Rioja, as well as Madrid; married couples from Bizkaia mainly went to Cantabria and Madrid and those from Gipuzkoa to Navarra and Madrid.

Weddings celebrated on Fridays exceeded those on Saturdays

The large increase in civil weddings, along with the fact that, from 2009, almost half of them were celebrated on a Friday, along with the significant reduction in religious weddings, meant that, from 2017, there were more weddings on Fridays than on Saturdays in the Basque Country; the proportion was 45.6% to 35.4% in 2019. This was not the case for married couples residing in Gipuzkoa, but it was very close, as 39.3% got married on a Friday and 40.2% on a Saturday. Most marriages celebrated in Álava were on a Friday, with 52% compared to 34.2% on a Saturday. There were also more marriages celebrated on a Friday in Bizkaia, with 49%, but there were fewer celebrated on a Saturday than in other provinces (31.8%), due to the fact that the weight of those celebrated on a Thursday was greater.



In 20.4% of marriages between individuals of a different sex, at least one of the spouses was of foreign nationality

Regarding the nationality of people entering into marriage, in 1,485 marriages (20.4% of the total) at least one of the spouses was foreign, with an increase of 19% compared with the preceding year; in 45.7% of these marriages, it was the wife who had foreign nationality, in 20.6% it was the husband, and in the remaining 33.7% both spouses were foreigners.

In the case of marriages in which only the women had foreign nationality, 72.6% of them were from an American country (mainly Colombia and Nicaragua), followed by 17.8% of them who had a European nationality (with Romanians and Ukrainians standing out). If it was only the man with foreign nationality, this was shared across American countries (38.2%), with Argentina and Colombia standing out, among others, and European countries (33.3%), mainly Portugal.

In the marriages in which both spouses were foreigners, most had American nationality, although the percentage was greater amongst women (70.7%) than men (65.3%). The second nationality continent was Africa, with 19.8% of men and 18.2% of women.

For further information:

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