

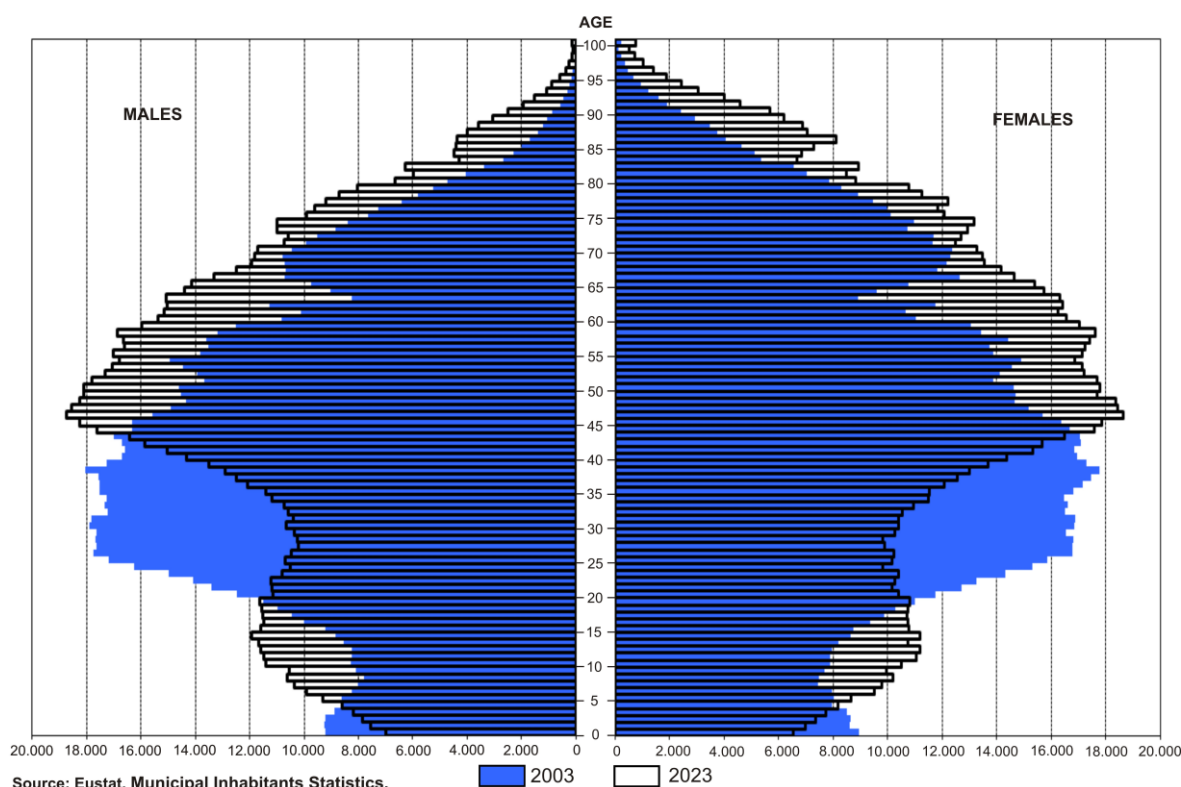
In 2023, after 2 years of decline, the Basque population increased by 10,228 people

Growth was distributed across the three provinces

On 1 January 2023, the population of the Basque Country stood at 2,196,745 people, an increase of 10,228 (+0.5%) compared with 2022, according to Eustat data. This reverses the trend of the last two years, with decreases of 6,682 people in 2022 and 6,512 in 2021.

In absolute terms, the greatest population increase was in Bizkaia, with 4,810 more residents than in 2022 (+0.4%); followed by Gipuzkoa, with a resident population of 719,875, 3,259 more people than the previous year (+0.5%); and lastly, Álava, where the increase was 2,159 inhabitants, rising to 332,851 (+0.7%).

Population pyramids. 2003 and 2023.



The analysis over a broader period, between 2003 and 2023, indicates that Álava increased its resident population by 41,813, an increase of 14.4%, followed by Gipuzkoa, with growth of 6%, in other words 40,812 more people. As for Bizkaia, it added 24,170 inhabitants during this period, 2.2% of its population.

All three Basque provincial capitals saw their population increase between 2022 and 2023. Bilbao saw the greatest rise, with 2,029 more inhabitants, followed by Vitoria-Gasteiz with 1,994, and lastly San Sebastian, with 872 more people. Looking back to 2003, we find that the population of Bilbao has dropped by 3,291 people over the last 20 years (-1%), and San Sebastian has seen a slight increase in its population, of 2,611 people (+1.5%). Meanwhile, Vitoria-Gasteiz has increased its population over these two decades by 30,517 people, or 13.9%, rising from 219,583 to 250,100 inhabitants.

As for the other municipalities of the Basque Country, it should be noted that over the last year 145 of them regained population, while 99 lost residents. The municipalities registering the greatest population increases were Barakaldo (479 inhabitants), Santurtzi (364 inhabitants), Leioa (309 inhabitants) and Sestao (282 inhabitants), all within the Gran Bilbao region. Meanwhile, the municipality with the greatest decline in absolute terms for the year was once again Getxo, losing 199 inhabitants, although the drop is significantly lower than in recent years (-0.3%). Elduain, Lanestosa and Kuartango are the municipalities with the greatest percentage decline, in all three cases slightly more than 5%.

Between 2003 and 2023, Portugalete, Getxo, Basauri and Sestao in the Gran Bilbao region were the municipalities that saw the greatest decline in their population, with an overall loss of 16,766 people. Arrasate and Eibar in Gipuzkoa and Ondarroa in Bizkaia also suffered decreases of more than 1,000 inhabitants each.

Looking at the regions, it was specifically Gran Bilbao which registered the greatest population growth over the past year, adding 3,678 inhabitants, followed by Llanada Alavesa, with 2,076, and Donostialdea, up by 1,924. Among the remainder, it should be pointed out that only 4 of the 20 regions lost population, all by a relatively small percentage: Markina-Ondarroa, with 143 fewer inhabitants, saw a decrease of 0.6%; Bajo Deba, losing 88 inhabitants, fell by 0.2%; Montaña Alavesa, with 35 fewer inhabitants, was down 1.1%; and Añana, with 20 fewer inhabitants, dropped 0.3%.

Looking back to 2003, we find that Llanada Alavesa registered by far the greatest increase, of more than 35,000 people, followed by Donostialdea, with an additional 15,742 inhabitants, and Plentzia-Mungia, gaining 12,800. Only two regions have lost population over the past 20 years: Gran Bilbao down by 2,720 people, and Markina-Ondarroa, losing 778.

The proportion of people aged 65 and over continues to increase in the Basque Country

The average age of the population of the Basque Country stood at 45.6 years in 2023, almost 2 years older than in Spain as a whole. Compared to 2003, the average age increased by 3.4 years. The difference between the genders stands at 3.1 years, as men have an average age of 44 and women 47.1, because of the greater volume of female population of more advanced ages. The average age in the provinces reflected their age structure: Álava had an average age one year younger than the Basque Country average (44.6 years old); Gipuzkoa was close to that average, but just below at 45.1; and Bizkaia exceeded it, reaching 46.1 years.

In 2023 the proportion of the population of the Basque Country aged 65 and over (23.5%) was greater than in Spain (20.1%). Only 3 autonomous regions had higher percentages: Asturias (27.5%), Castile-Leon (26.5%) and Galicia (26.3%). If we take gender into

account, the proportion of women aged 65 or over was 26.1% compared to 20.7% of men.

In 2023, the number of municipalities with a higher than average percentage population aged over 64 in the Basque Country was 85, while 166 presented the same or a lower percentage. The former include Bilbao, San Sebastian, Barakaldo and Getxo, home to 31.8% of the overall population of the Basque Country. In 2003 the percentage of the population aged over 64 was 18.4% and 154 municipalities had a percentage higher than the average. Furthermore, between 2003 and 2023, there were 95 municipalities in which the proportion of those aged over 64 decreased, although they are home to just 4.8% of the total population.

Population of the Basque Country by province, according to large age groups . 01/01/2023

	Total	0 - 19		20 -64		>= 65	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	2.196.745	399.011	18,2	1.281.696	58,3	516.038	23,5
Historic Territories							
Araba/Álava	332.851	64.249	19,3	194.808	58,5	73.794	22,2
Bizkaia	1.144.019	198.250	17,3	671.528	58,7	274.241	24,0
Gipuzkoa	719.875	136.512	19,0	415.360	57,7	168.003	23,3
Capitals							
Bilbao	342.484	53.884	15,7	203.466	59,4	85.134	24,9
Donostia / San Sebastian	182.641	30.546	16,7	105.374	57,7	46.721	25,6
Vitoria-Gasteiz	250.100	47.566	19,0	146.483	58,6	56.051	22,4
Districts							
Añana	6.309	1.234	19,6	3.698	58,6	1.377	21,8
Arabako Errioxa / Rioja Alavesa	11.762	2.478	21,1	6.832	58,1	2.452	20,8
Arabako Kantaurialdea / Cantábrica Alavesa	34.368	6.517	19,0	19.573	57,0	8.278	24,1
Arabako Lautada / Llanada Alavesa	268.014	51.688	19,3	157.286	58,7	59.040	22,0
Arabako Mendialdea / Montaña Alavesa	3.208	549	17,1	1.842	57,4	817	25,5
Arratia-Nerbioi / Arratia-Nervión	24.135	4.758	19,7	14.137	58,6	5.240	21,7
Bidasoa Behea / Bajo Bidasoa	77.220	14.114	18,3	44.814	58,0	18.292	23,7
Bilbo Handia / Gran Bilbao	856.313	142.921	16,7	502.577	58,7	210.815	24,6
Debagoiena / Alto Deba	62.735	11.929	19,0	35.540	56,7	15.266	24,3
Debarrena / Bajo Deba	54.775	10.474	19,1	30.800	56,2	13.501	24,6
Donostialdea	330.342	59.056	17,9	192.116	58,2	79.170	24,0
Durangaldea / Duranguesado	99.295	19.135	19,3	58.405	58,8	21.755	21,9
Enkartzioak / Encartaciones	32.055	5.731	17,9	18.891	58,9	7.433	23,2
Gernika-Bermeo	46.386	8.572	18,5	26.587	57,3	11.227	24,2
Goierrri	68.316	14.232	20,8	38.796	56,8	15.288	22,4
Gorbelaidea / Etribaciones. del Gorbea	9.190	1.783	19,4	5.577	60,7	1.830	19,9
Markina-Ondarroa	25.626	4.557	17,8	14.600	57,0	6.469	25,2
Plentzia-Mungia	60.209	12.576	20,9	36.331	60,3	11.302	18,8
Tolosaldea	49.720	10.491	21,1	28.622	57,6	10.607	21,3
Urola Kosta	76.767	16.216	21,1	44.672	58,2	15.879	20,7

Date October 11, 2023

Source: Eustat. Municipal Inhabitant Statistics

There is some considerable disparity in terms of the age of the resident population across the Basque municipalities, and more specifically with regard to the percentage of those aged 65 and over, ranging from 9.7% in Baliarrain to 36.1% in Lagrán.

Aside from the former, there were another 6 municipalities with percentages below 13%: Irura, Arakaldo, Alegría-Dulantzi, Astigarraga, Larraul and Iruña de Oca. The combined population of the 7 municipalities stood at 16,818 inhabitants. Meanwhile, aside from

Lagrán, there were 3 municipalities with a percentage above 30%: Valle de Arana, Elantxobe and Sukarrieta. Overall, these four had a total of 1,131 residents.

Focusing on the regional level, there were two regions where the population aged over 64 exceeded 25% of the total: Bajo Bidasoa (25.5%) and Markina-Ondarroa (25.2%). Meanwhile, the region with the lowest percentage was once again Plentzia-Mungia, where it was below 19%.

If we look at older age groups, people aged 85 and above went from constituting 1.9% of the total population in 2003 to 4.1% of the total population in 2023, although this percentage was very unevenly distributed between men and women: 2.7% of the male population in the Basque Country were aged 85 or over, while this proportion rose to 5.5% among women. This process has been very dramatic for the centenarian population, with a rise in the number of centenarians from 269 in 2003 to 883 twenty years later, 85.7% of whom were women.

In the Basque Country, there were 1.7 people aged 65 and over for every minor aged under 16, exceeding the ratio for Spain as a whole, which was 1.4, but still far from that for Asturias, which was 2.5.

By region, Gran Bilbao and Montaña Alavesa revealed the highest proportion, with almost two people aged over 64 for each minor aged under 16, while in Plentzia-Mungia, the ratio was 1 to 1.

In municipal terms, 88 municipalities were above average, with such extreme cases as Sukarrieta, Valle de Arana and Lagrán, with a ratio of more than 3 to 1. At the other end of the scale we have municipalities such as Baliarrain, Irura and Arakaldo, with 2 young people aged between 0 and 15 years for each person aged 65 or over. 49 municipalities had at least one person aged under 16 for each person aged over 64.

For further information:

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