

Towards European standards in Employment Quality: The case of the A.C. of the Basque Country

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Introduction

If we wished to trace the history of studies on employment quality, it would not be necessary to go too far back in time or space: In November 1997, in Luxembourg, an extraordinary European Council on employment was held in which the basic outlines were made for the creation of a European Employment Strategy.

The next and best-known step was made in the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, where the need arose for a new Social Policy Agenda. As well as other ambitious objectives related to training and education, such as the promotion of lifelong learning, access to and training in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), the reduction of social exclusion, etc., the basic objective was to be the attainment of full employment.

The concept was to be made operational by reaching a 67% employment rate by 2005 and 70% by 2010, which for women would be 57 and 60% respectively. Parallel to this, unemployment in the European Union would have to fall to 4%.

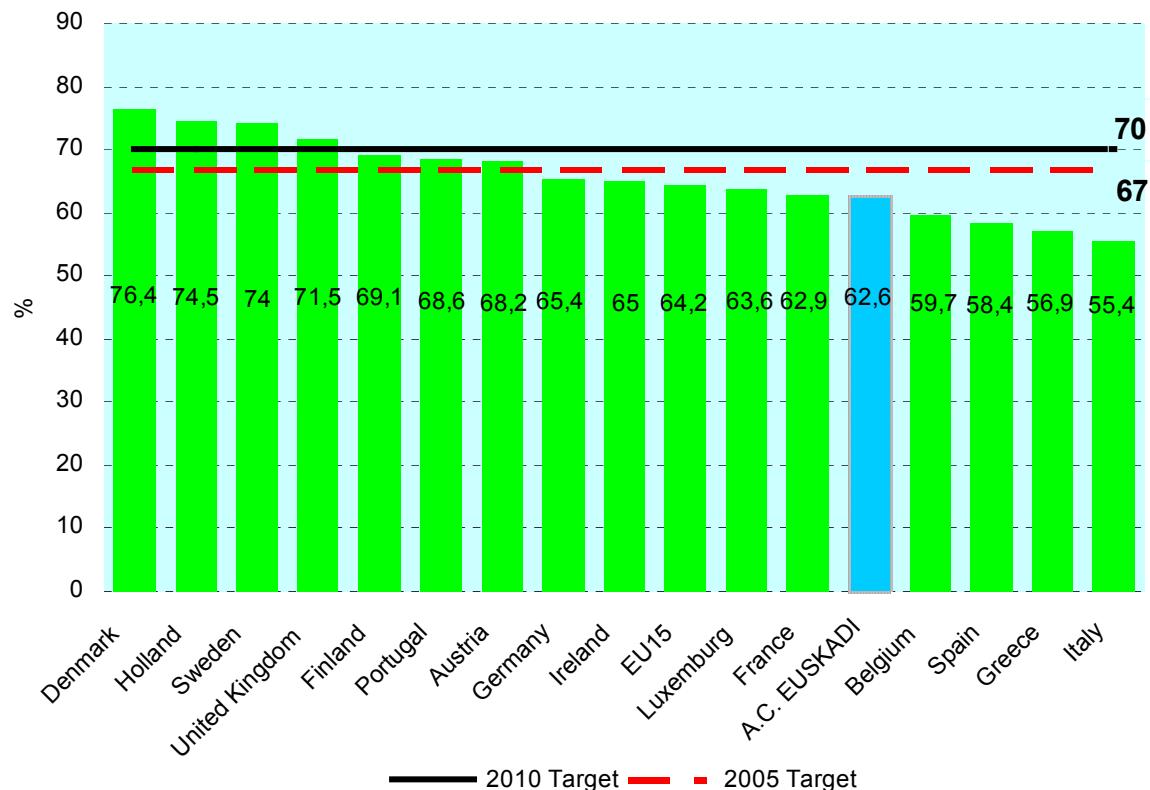
These objectives should be placed in a context of economic optimism, the result of a cycle of growth by European economies, associated with high job creation rates and which lasted until the end of the nineties.

This bonanza situation did not prevent the failings of the European Labour Market from being seen, and by comparing it with that of the United States, the most significant gaps or differences were defined:

- Employment gap: in 1997 in the EU there was a 60% employment rate, compared to almost 75% in the United States.
- Services gap: 40% of employees compared to 55%.
- Gender gap: half of the women in the EU work, compared to two thirds of those on the United States.
- Age gap: low rate of employment among people aged 55 to 64 (36% employment rate in the EU and 57% in the USA in 1999).
- Long duration of structural unemployment: half of the long-term unemployed are in this situation for over a year.
- Specialisation gap: the types of posts required by the EU Market are not filled in all cases.
- Spatial unemployment gap: the scarcity of work in Europe is concentrated in East Germany, France, Southern Italy, Spain and Greece.¹

¹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. Social Policy Agenda. BRUSSELS, 28.6.2000. COM(2000) 379 FINAL. Pag 9-10

Graph 0. Employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 in the EU countries and the A.C. of the Basque Country (2002). Lisbon Objectives for 2005 and 2010.(%)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey. Eustat, PRA

Elsewhere, we can see that we are among the group of countries that are some distance from the objective set out for 2005: although only 1.6 percent separates us from the European average as regards the employment rate, we are still 4.4 percent away from fulfilling the most immediate general objective.

Spain as a whole, which is 6 points below the average, is still 8.8 percent away. Greece and Italy have even further to go.

Four countries have already surpassed even the objective for 2010: Denmark, Holland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Finland, Austria and Portugal, for their part, had already reached the objective for 2005 in 2002.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the EU has considerable employment potential, especially among women and older people and in particular in the services sector.

Nice and Stockholm are the next venues where the dimensions and conditions should be settled and defined in order to make the Lisbon objectives a reality.

Fundamentally, emphasis is placed upon the maintenance and development or modernisation of the so-called European Social Model. A model which does not differ from that of other countries in its level of expenditure, but in its financing method,

which is basically public in Europe, but which is mainly directed to the private sector in other developed countries (especially in the United States). There, where expenditure per person is higher as a proportion of GDP than in Europe, 40% of the population do not have access to the primary health system.²

1. Context and components of Employment Quality

The aim of the Lisbon Council is to direct the changes needed in Europe towards constructing ‘the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’.³

Ultimately, without losing sight of the objectives of economic growth expressed through competitiveness and economic dynamism, the search for social cohesion (increasing or improving social protection, lessening social exclusion, fighting discrimination or strengthening basic rights) is added to a labour policy orientated towards Employment Quality and the attainment of full employment.

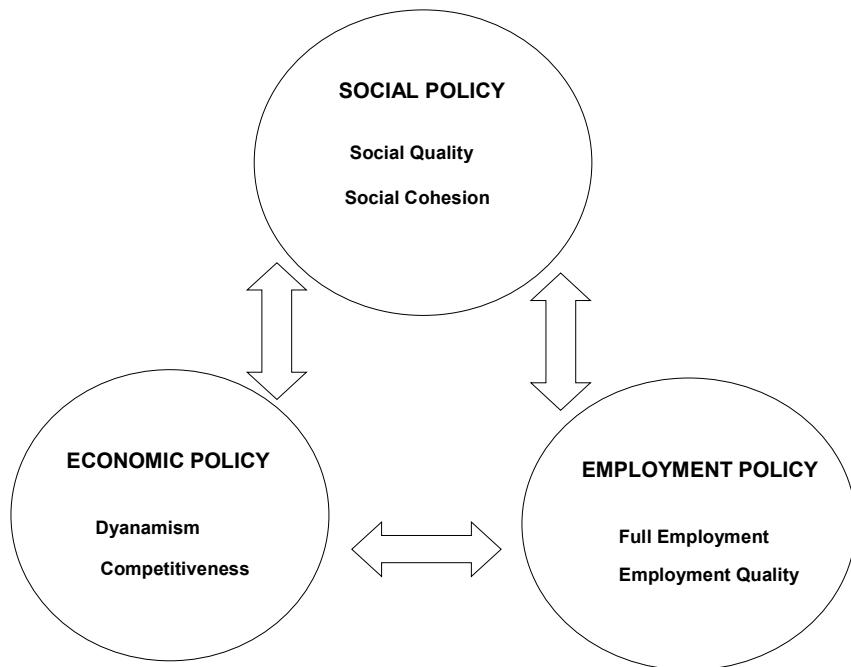
In fact, it is believed that social and employment policies could provide significant input in economic processes. The modernisation of the so-called European Social Model is to be understood along these lines. In Graph 1 we can see what is known as the ‘triangle of the Social Policy Agenda’.

The general objective can be summarised by the phrase, now slogan, ‘more and better employment’. Quality, a concept previously associated mainly with productive processes, could be extended right across the economy and society, with the aim of constructively facilitating relationships between the economy and social policy.

² COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. Employment and social policies: a framework for investing in quality. BRUSSELS, 20.6.2001. COM(2001)313 FINAL. Page 5.
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/sep/quality_en.pdf\[2003-10-25\]](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/sep/quality_en.pdf[2003-10-25])

³ COM(2000) 379 FINAL. Page 2.

Graph 1. Axes of the New European Social Model



It is not simple to establish a definition of Employment Quality, since it necessarily comprises of a multi-dimensional and relatively complex reality.

The concept of 'Work' is not used, since nowadays this embraces wider situations and circumstances: domestic work, social support work, voluntary work, etc., which fall outside what we currently understand as the Labour Market.

In fact, no standard exists in the academic world to guide, in one direction or another, the definition of the concept and research area of Employment Quality. Frequently, attention is focused on the characteristics of the job (working hours, skills required, job definition); in other cases, on the working environment (working conditions, training, health insurance, etc.) or often, efforts are centred on subjective aspects (job satisfaction, integration in the post, job prospects, conformity with the organisation or management, etc.).

However, the European Commission in the Stockholm summit of March 2001 adopted a list of eight dimensions essential in the understanding of Employment Quality, criteria that were developed and set down in detail in the Communication from the Commission of June 2001 (see quotation 2).

In this document, which set out to establish a working framework for analysis, it stated that a definition of Employment Quality should bear in mind four basic areas:

- The characteristics of the post: working environment and special features of the post.

- The special features of the people occupying the post.
- The suitability of the abilities of the worker to the job definition.
- The perception or subjective evaluation of the post by the worker: job satisfaction.⁴

To be specific, these areas put forward two major dimensions in the classification of Employment Quality: on one hand, that of the characteristics of the post (work satisfaction, remuneration, work time, etc.) and on the other, the general environment of the post and the Labour Market (gender equality, access to work, social dialogue, etc.).

Between these large dimensions and the proposed indicators, which should ultimately serve to set out and assess concrete objectives, the document of the Commission defines 10 areas or ‘the 10 main elements’ of Employment Quality.

These areas are presented alongside the political objectives, within the legal framework where they can be applied (Guidelines on employment, economic policy of the European Commission, etc.) and with possible statistical indicators.

The areas and their general objectives by dimension are as follows:

I.- Dimension: Special features of the post.

- 1) **Intrinsic quality of the job.** Jobs should be intrinsically satisfactory, compatible with the abilities of the person and with an appropriate level of income.
- 2) **Lifelong learning, development of the professional career and personal abilities.** Develop the abilities of the workers by promoting lifelong learning.

II.- Dimension: General environment of the post and the Labour Market.

- 3) **Gender equality.** Promote equal opportunities between men and women, both in salaries and possibilities in the professional career.
- 4) **Health and safety in the job.** Ensure adequate working conditions, from the viewpoint of safety and physical and mental health.
- 5) **Employment Flexibility and Security.** Construct a new European Labour Market, in which geographical and professional mobility is possible and in which support is given to those who lose their job or who seek other alternatives.
- 6) **Access and continuity in the Labour Market.** Facilitate access and continuity in the Labour Market of those groups with difficulties (young people, long-term unemployed, etc.).
- 7) **Organisation of work and its reconciliation with private life.** Ensure that the labour customs and provisions, especially those associated with work time, together with the support services, allow a balance between working life and life outside work.

⁴ COM(2001)313 FINAL. Page. 7.

- 8) **Social Dialogue and worker participation.** It is hoped that all workers are informed and participate in the development of their companies and in the decisions that affect their own working life.
- 9) **Diversity and non-discrimination.** It is essential to guarantee an equal treatment for all workers, independent of their age, disabilities, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation.
- 10) **Productivity and standard of living.** It is essential to raise the levels of productivity and improve the standard of living in all regions of the Community.

This final point, within the employment guidelines related to 'Improving work quality and productivity', occupies one of the two paragraphs dedicated to this subject and which are found in the Council Decision of July 11 2003 on the Guidelines for the employment policies of member States.

To quote from the text: 'Increasing employment rates must go hand in hand with raising overall labour productivity. Quality at work can help increase labour productivity and the synergies between both should be fully exploited. This represents a specific challenge for social dialogue.'⁵

In the European summit of Laeken (December 2001) attention had already been drawn to the bonds between Quality and productivity.

Probably due to the fact that the current economic situation of the principal countries of the EU is not comparable to that which existed when interest in the objectives of full employment and quality arose, this section, coming last in the list of areas and quality indicators, should be highlighted.

As has been explained, the Commission document proposes three indicators per area. With this proposal, of areas and indicators, as a starting point, the various institutions, official or otherwise, dedicated to the study or analysis of Employment Quality have made classifications and compiled indicators.

2. Towards a system of Employment Quality indicators

There have been two outstanding sources for this area of research. In the European context, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, an institution that has carried out surveys since the early 90s on working conditions and which in 2001 took part in the design of the indicators that would later be included in the Commission documents.

Closer to home, in both time and space, attention should be drawn to the efforts of the Institute of Labour Studies (ESADE), which, sponsored by Randstad, recently (June 2003) published the 'RANDSTAD Report on Employment Quality', a study that

⁵ Council Decision from July 11 2003 on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States. (2003/578/CE). Official Journal of the European Union. 5.8.2003.L 197/17.

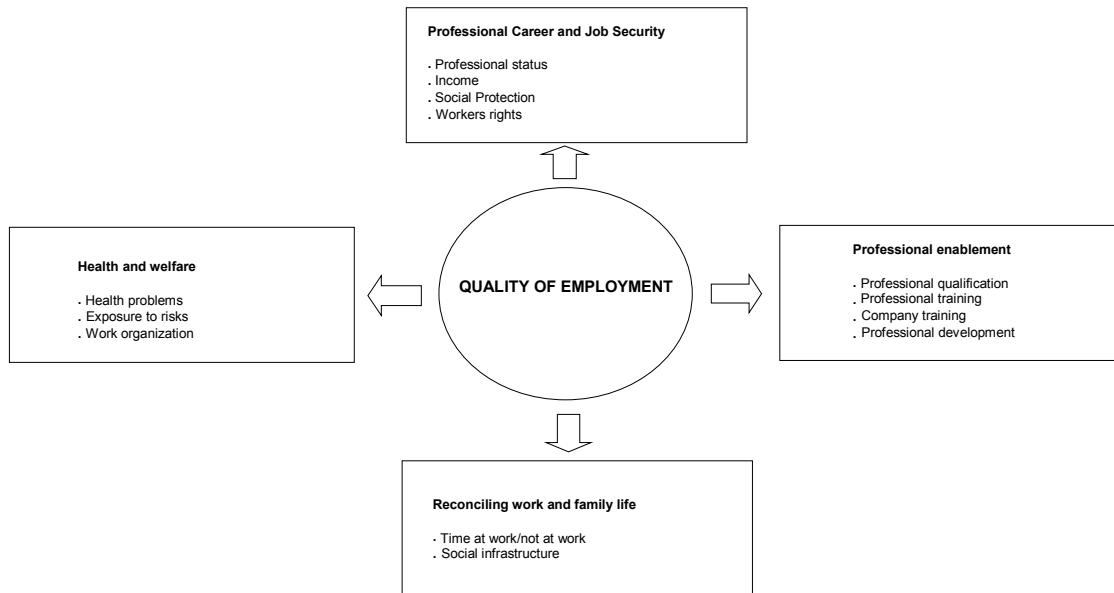
included a broad list of indicators for the 15 EU countries, in an attempt to situate the position of Spain in the European context.⁶

In this last case it does not consider a systematic vision of the phenomenon of Employment Quality, but follows the classification proposed in the Commission document of June 2001: dimensions, aspects (known as areas) and indicators.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions does present a systematisation of indicators by homogenous groups. However, despite this being a later study, it does not include some of the dimensions considered basic by the Commission: aspects related to labour discrimination (by gender, access, etc.) or productivity.

It is true that these elements, closely linked to social policies, could be considered foreign to the concept of Quality, if associated with job analysis. But it is undeniable that they are closely related to productivity, or that they form the environment which gives rise to Employment Quality or not.

Graph 2. Components of Employment Quality



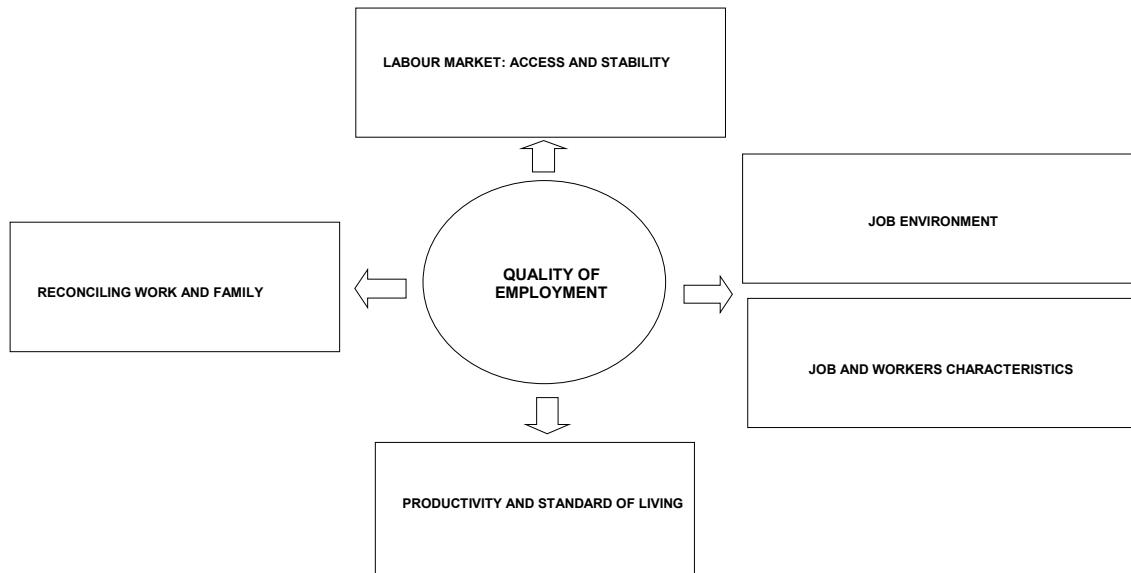
Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. ⁷

In order, on one hand, to integrate the dimensions missing from the diagram shown in Graph 2, and on the other, to simplify or better arrange the list created by the Commission and followed by the Randstad Report, it would seem appropriate to form coherent groups of types of indicators.

6 IEL, Instituto de Eustudios Laborales. ESADE 2003. RANDSTAD report on Employment Quality. http://www.randstad.es/documents/Prensa/Calidad_en_el_trabajo.pdf 2003-11-1]

7 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Quality of work and employment in Europe. Issues and Challenges. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. 2002.

Graph 3. Axes and dimensions of Employment Quality



The concept of Employment Quality, as understood by the European Commission, comes from the meeting of two major axes: Labour Market-Productivity on one hand and Work-Family life on the other.

The former is dominated by the Labour Market, with its access laws, its conditions and continuity circumstances: inequality of access due to gender, age or race. In turn, fluctuations in the Market itself determine and are determined by production results: productivity, also associated with economic dynamism and competitiveness. This axis includes the following areas or dimensions: gender equality, access to and continuity in the Labour Market, diversity and non-discrimination, and at the other extreme, productivity.

The latter contrasts/associates the job environment and its special features with family life. It seems reasonable to believe that there is a direct relationship: the better the conditions in the working environment the greater the possibility of balancing working life and family life, or, more generally, life outside of work.

The part relative to the job would be sub-divided into the job environment and the characteristics of the job and the workers. The first group would include the areas of health and safety in the job, flexibility and job security and social dialogue and participation. In the second, the abilities and training of the workers, job satisfaction, as well as those related to the post.

3. Labour Market: access and continuity

Following the proposed scheme, we will begin by presenting the indicators which could be directly associated with the conditions of access/exclusion or expulsion from the Labour Market. We will include the available indicators which, in the Communication from the Commission in June 2001 on employment and social policy, were grouped into

the areas of gender equality, diversity and non-discrimination and access to the labour market.

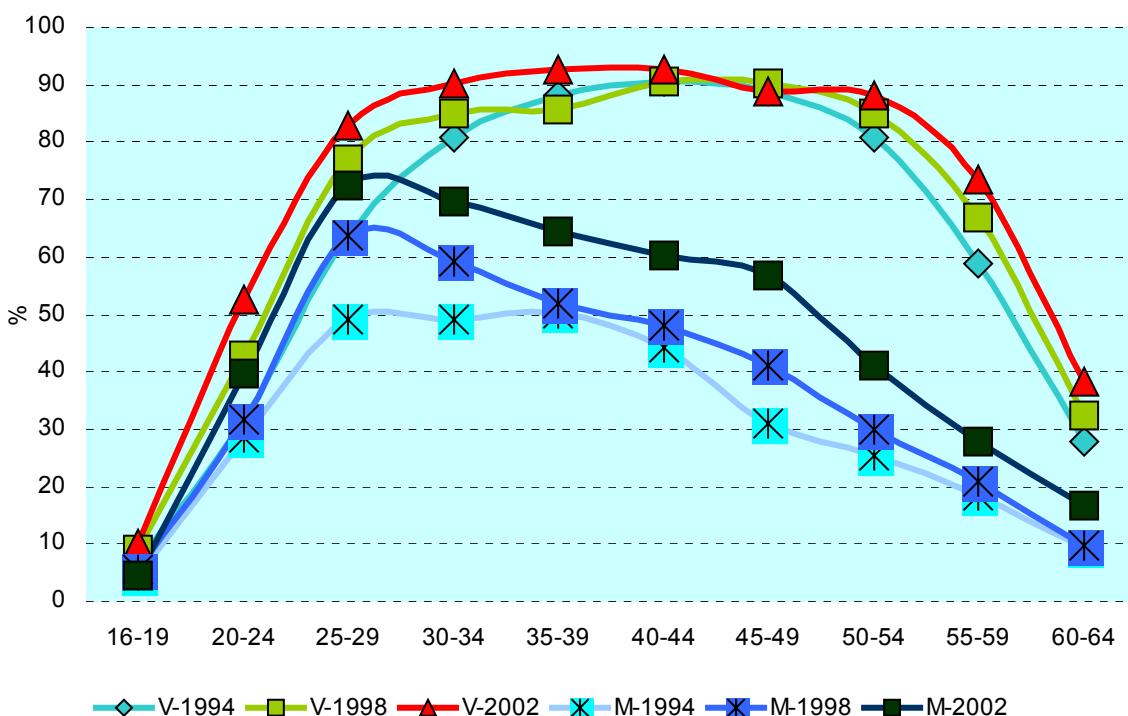
3.1 The unequal access of women to the Labour Market

It is well-known that the mass incorporation of women into the Labour Market (in this case understood as paid work) in this country goes back no further than two decades.

As a result of a harsh economic crisis –we must remember that in the European countries and in the United States this step began at the height of World War II- and of important social changes in favour of equality (increased access to education at all levels etc.), women slowly began to enter the Labour Market.

At present, with the data for the Eustat Survey on the Population in Relation to Activity in the A.C. of the Basque Country –PRA– from the third quarter of 2003, three in four men aged 16 to 64 are in work –76.1%-, whereas for women of the same age bracket, it is only one in two –51.9%.

Graph 4. Evolution of Employment Rates of the population aged 16 to 64 by gender and age. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1994-1998-2002. %
A.C. of Euskadi. Annual Averages. 1994-1998-2002.%



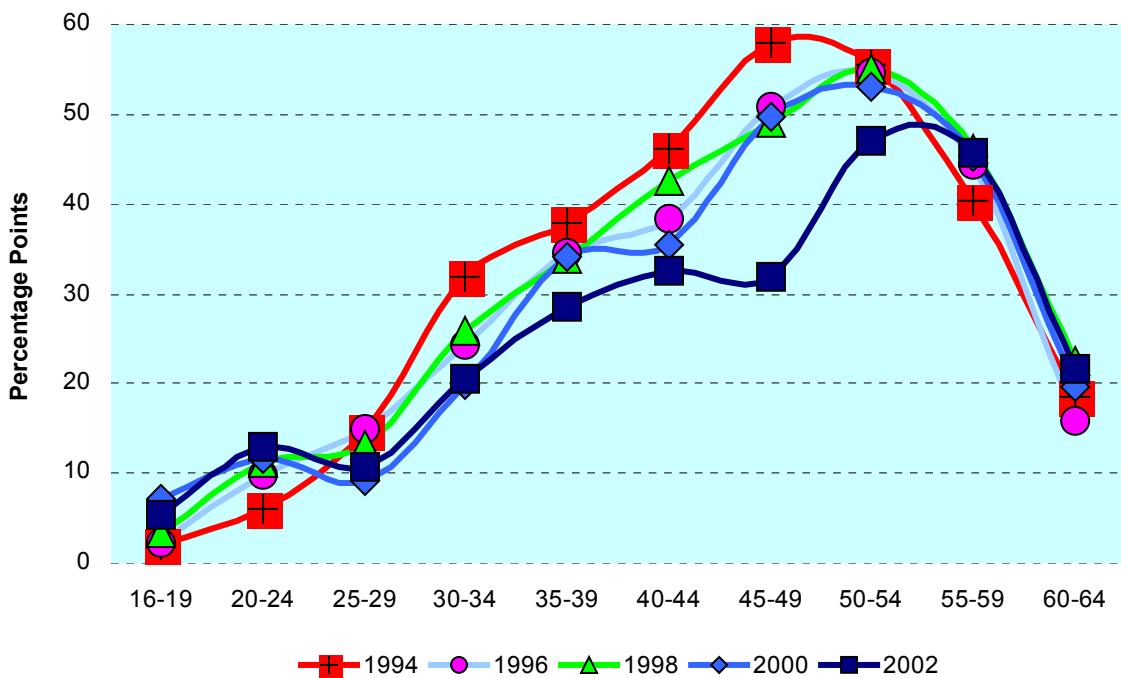
Source: Eustat, PRA.

If we analyse this gap from the mid-90s onwards, we can see that it has hardly closed: in 1994 it was 29 points and in 2002 it was 26. Although the employment rates for women have increased substantially, so have those of men: from 62 to 76%.

The evolution can be seen in greater detail by looking at age. On the one hand, we can distinguish the generation effect: young women, aged under 30, are closest to catching up with men of the same age as regards employment. It is clearly in the 25 to 34 age bracket where women have most increased their employment rate. From 34 onwards, the gap widens, despite substantial improvements, falling sharply after 49 years old.

It should be stressed, however, that in all age groups for women, from 1998 onwards, employment increased more sharply, but in parallel to men.

Graph 5. Evolution of the difference in female and male Employment Rates of the population aged 16 to 64. A.C. of the Basque Country. 1994-2002. Annual Means. P.P.



Source: Eustat, PRA.

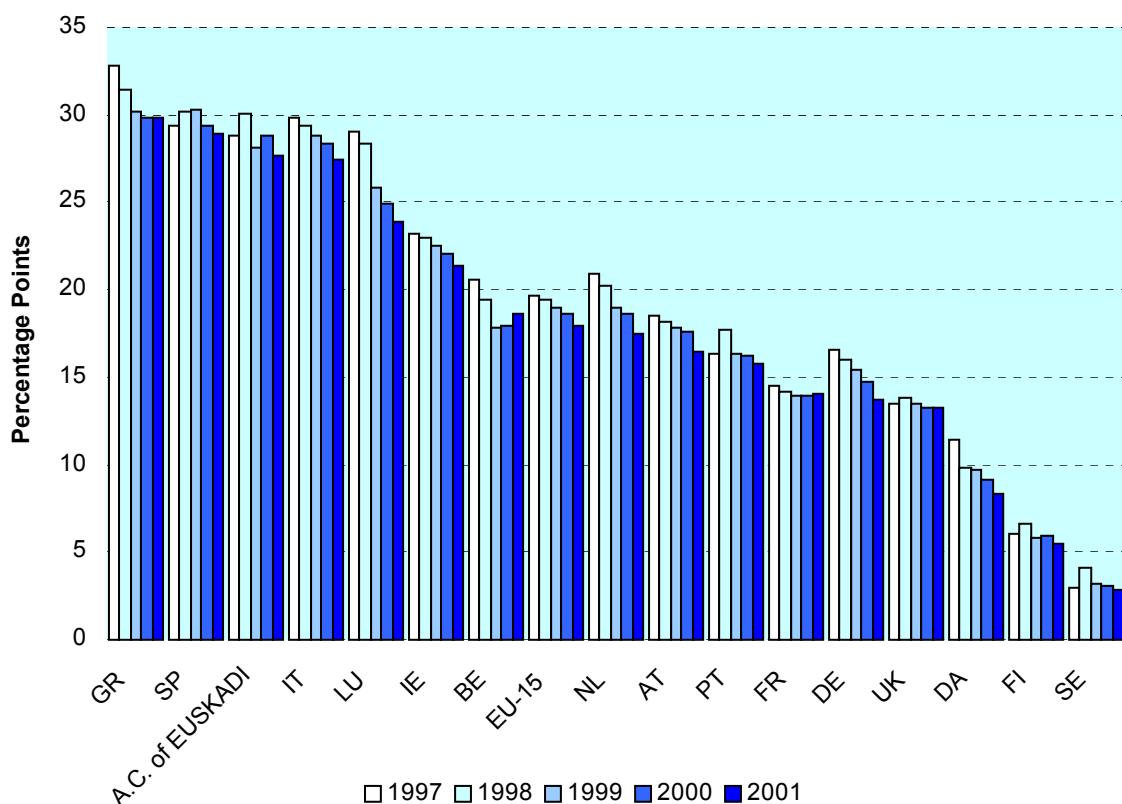
By using the inequality indicator obtained from the difference in employment rates, we can see important falls in the central groups –from 30 to 49-, while there are less variations among young people –which are smallest-, and those of people aged over 50. It is worth noting the narrowing of the gap among women aged 40 to 49: The 40 to 44 age bracket closed it by 14 points and the 45 to 49 year-olds by 26. It is clear that reintegration into the labour market is increasingly possible for women who left due to maternity.

Finally, if we place gender inequality as regards access to employment in a European context, we can see the poor position of Spain and the A.C. of the Basque Country, who only surpassed Greece: in 2001, the latter presented 30 points difference, with 29 in the case of Spain and 28 for the A.C. of the Basque Country, 10 points above the EU average.

The Nordic countries such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark showed a gap of 3, 5 and 8 points respectively.

In general, a slight trend of lessening of differences in employment rates by gender can be identified: two points in the last 5 years in the EU; although in countries such as Belgium, Portugal, Spain and the A.C. of the Basque Country itself, there are contradictory variations, perhaps due on one hand to special characteristics of the labour markets –seasonal work, etc.-, or, on the other, to substantial growth in employment, where the momentum was greater for men.

Graph 6. Evolution of the difference between female and male Employment rates of the population aged 15 to 64 by country. 1997-2001. P.P.



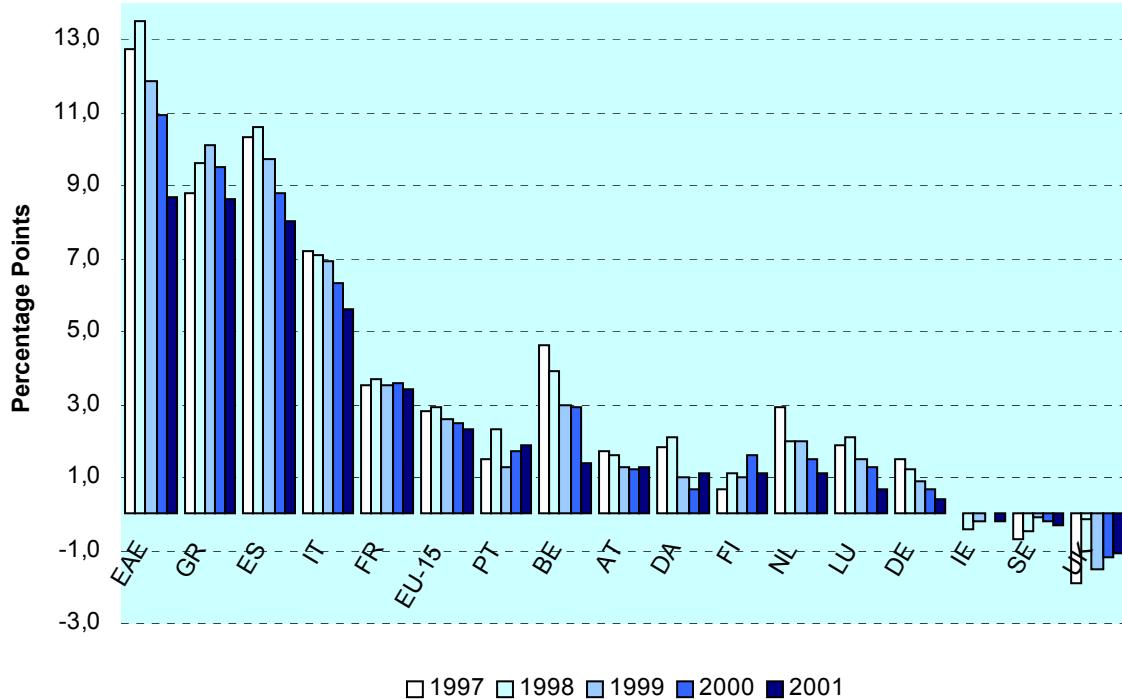
Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA (from 16 to 64).

In order to complete the analysis of inequality between sexes, it is also useful to include the differences and evolution of unemployment. In Graph 7 we see once more the poor positions for Basque, Greek and Spanish women, who in 2001 suffered gaps of between 8 and 9 points of difference with their male counterparts as far as unemployment was concerned, taking the sub-group of people aged 16 to 64 as a reference and, in our case, the new definition of jobless.

Conversely, countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden and Ireland showed lower unemployment rates for women than for men. The distance between the EU average – 2.3 per cent- and the countries at the tail end is great: between 5 and 6 points.

However, in Spain and the A.C. of the Basque Country the trend definitely points towards a decrease, especially dramatic in the case of the latter, falling from 13 points in 1997 to 8 in 2001.

Graph 7. Evolution of the difference in the Unemployment Rates of the population aged 15 to 64 by gender and country. 1997-2001. P.P.



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA (16 to 64).

As indicators of gender discrimination, the Commission also proposed using distributions -their distances-, from the professional and activity sector perspective and even the analysis of the different access to levels of responsibility. The Randstad Report adds salary differences, an indicator included by Eurostat in its document on 'Structural Indicators'.⁸

According to the data given by these indicators, in 1999 the gross average income per hour for a female worker in Europe was 84% of that received by a man, a difference that had remained unchanged since 1994 (the first year in which this information was offered).⁹

In the case of Spain, which showed an above-average percentage -86% in 1999 -, the trend is negative, since in 1994 a woman received 90% of the salary of a man and two years later it was 86%. The United Kingdom and Ireland with 78% and Holland and Austria with 79% are the countries with the greatest inequalities between the genders in salaries. Portugal -with 95%- and Italy with 91%, are the countries where the salary difference between the sexes is smallest.

There is no doubt that the composition (sector and occupation distribution by gender) and the individual legislation of the various national markets could be behind what are a

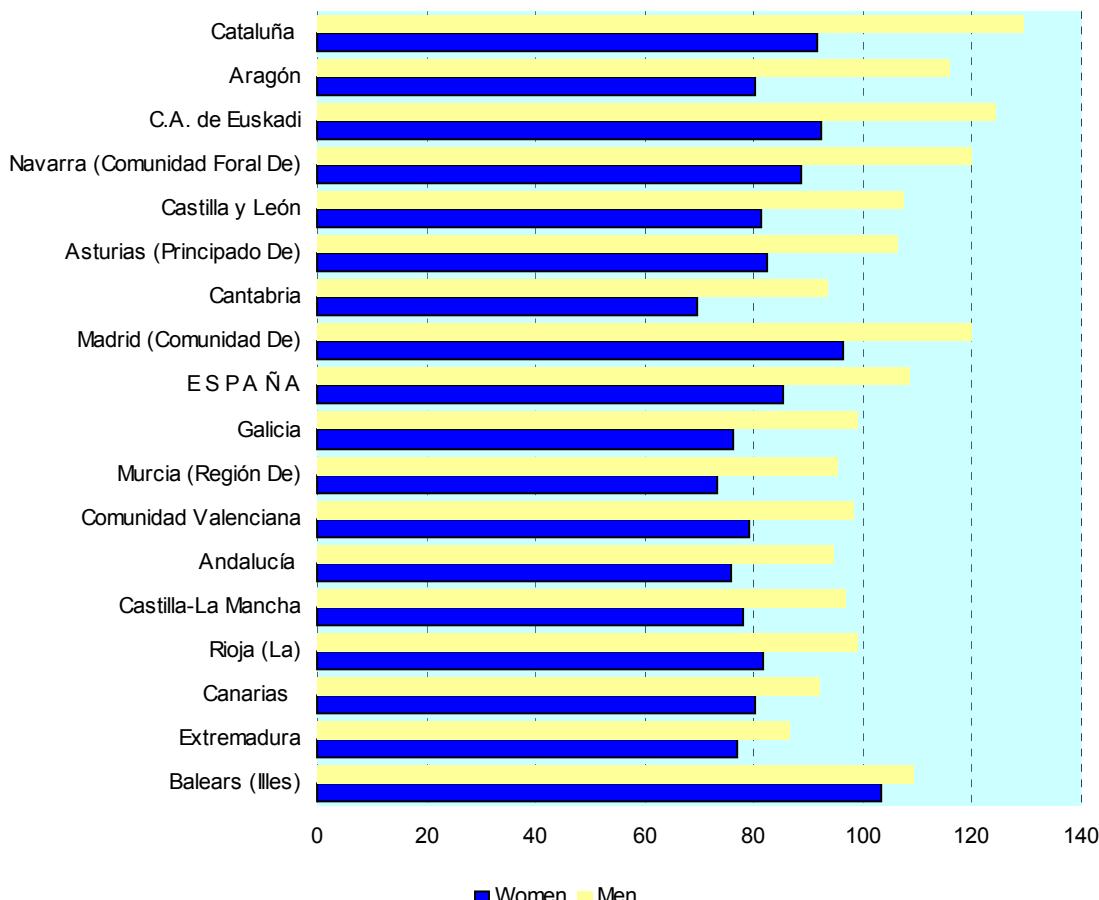
8 <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datasshop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=1-structural-EN&mode=download#Emploi> [2003-11-1]

9 <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datasshop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=1-em030-EN&mode=download> [2003-11-1]

priori such surprising differences. It is possible that the variety of salary types and scales, as well as a greater complexity of the economic fabric is responsible for the gender inequality in this aspect.

The only localised source at the moment which offers data of this type by autonomous community is the European Union Household Panel, in the edition for the year 2000.¹⁰

Graph 8. Salary difference (monthly salary) by gender and Autonomous Community. Spain = 100. 2000.



Source: INE, European Union Household Panel. 2000.

If we take paid workers that work 15 or more hours per week and their average monthly salary, we can see the distances for the whole of the state by gender and Autonomous Community. The phenomenon found in Europe is partly repeated: Extremadura, Castile-La Mancha, Andalusia, as well as La Rioja, the Canaries and the Balearic Islands have the smallest differences. There might be some association between salary equality and the weight of agriculture and/or some activity branches of specific services.

Catalonia, with Aragon, the A.C. of the Basque Country and Navarre, on the other hand are in the position of having the greatest differences.

¹⁰[http://www.ine.es/inebase/cgi/axi?AXIS_PATH=/inebase/temas/t25/p442/a2000/10/&FILE_AXIS=04049c.px&CGI_DEFAULT=/inebase/temas/cgi.opt&COMANDO=SELECCION&CGI_URL=/inebase/cgi/\[2003-11-1\]](http://www.ine.es/inebase/cgi/axi?AXIS_PATH=/inebase/temas/t25/p442/a2000/10/&FILE_AXIS=04049c.px&CGI_DEFAULT=/inebase/temas/cgi.opt&COMANDO=SELECCION&CGI_URL=/inebase/cgi/[2003-11-1])

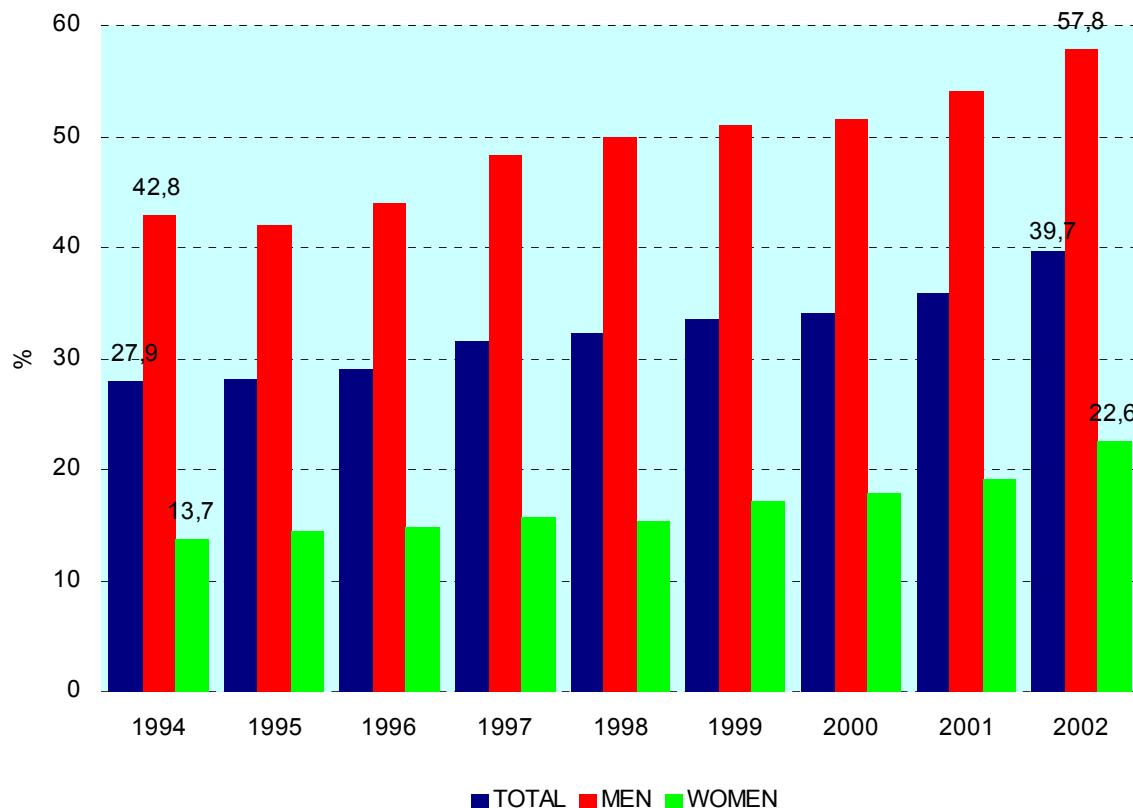
This data requires a perspective, as we said earlier, which takes into account the professional and sector structure as regards gender in order to explain the origin of the differences that have been identified.

3.2. Exit from the Labour Market due to age

In the introduction to this report, it was stated that in the United States almost twice the proportion of people aged 55 to 64 work compared to Europe –in 1999, 57% of the latter and 36% of the former.

What at an earlier time had been considered as personal and social improvement, early or anticipated retirement, increasingly gives rise to two negative situations: on the one hand, it means a burden on and is detrimental to the finances of the Social Security, on the other, the loss of valuable human capital, which in many cases, is in excellent physical and mental condition. This should also be put into the context of the long-term effects of the reduction in the birth rate, making the generations that join the Labour Market increasingly scarce.

Graph 9. Evolution of the Employment Rate of the population aged 55 to 64 by gender. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1994-2002. %



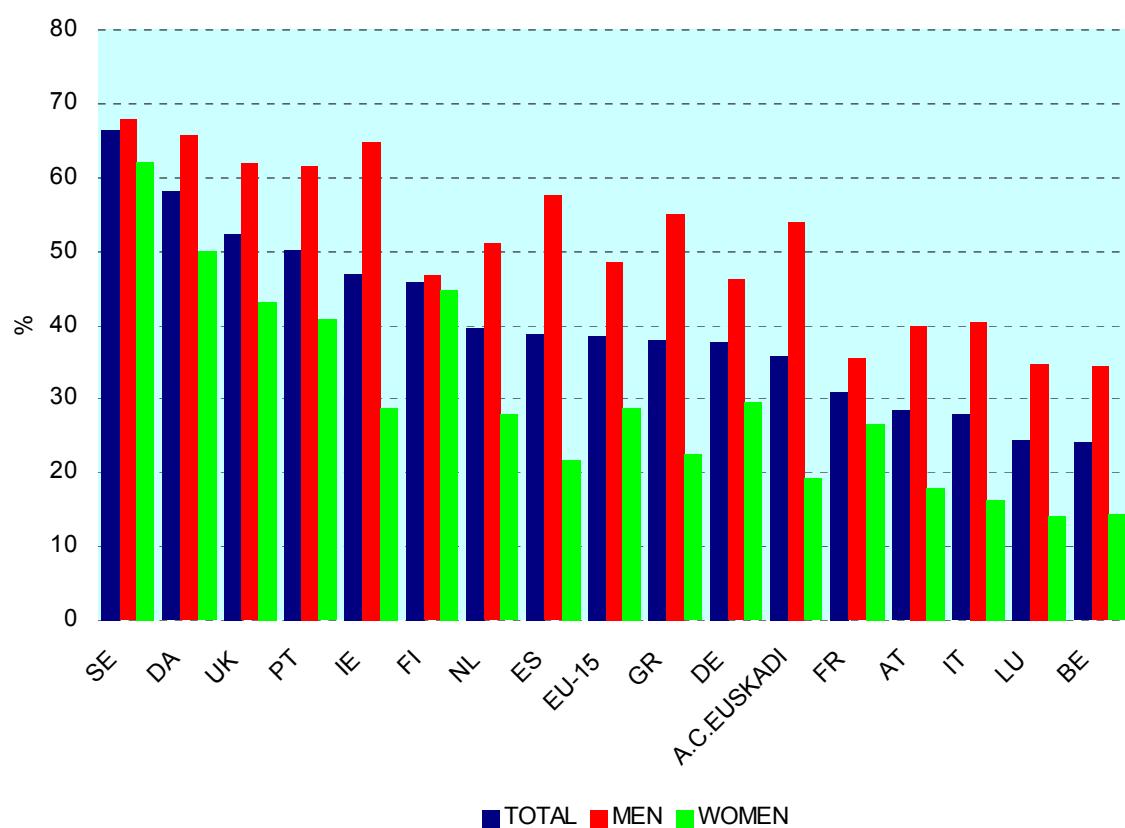
Source: Eustat, PRA.

In 2002, two out of every five people aged 55 to 64 were working –39.7%, or 91,000 people. Monitoring the series, we can see that growth has been constant since 1994, slowly at first and then rising more sharply towards the end of the period: as much as three percent between 2001 and 2002.

The reasons given earlier, the completion of the processes of adjustment –wrongly known as reconversion- of the last sector to be revised –the services sector-, together with measures to extend the years of contribution in order to obtain better and more complete pensions, could be behind this prolongation of the working life of older people. A general improvement in health should also not be ruled out as an influential factor.

As regards the sexes, growth can be identified in both cases. For men, the increase in quantity was dramatic: they went from 43% to 58% and in the case of women there was a significant rise, with a notable increase in numbers – from 14 to 22.6%, from 1994 to 2001.

Graph 10. Employment Rate of the population aged 55 to 64 by gender and country. 2001. %



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA.

Only Sweden, with a rate of 66.5% in 2001 is close to the situation in North America, followed by Denmark with 58% and the United Kingdom with 52.3%. In this indicator, Spain is practically at the same level as the European average – 38.5%- with Holland, Greece and Germany. The A.C. of the Basque Country is at a distance of 2.6 percent from the community average, although ahead of France, Austria, Italy, Luxembourg and Belgium, countries that fluctuate between the 24% of the last two countries and France's 31%.

Legislation in these countries, regarding both labour and Social Security as well as policies to revise public expenditure, could be behind this disparity as regards continuity in the Labour Market.

To conclude, we should point out that the indicator mentioned in this section is included in the area defined as 'Diversity and non-discrimination' in the Commission document¹¹, together with others related to discrimination for reasons of race or disability. Given the difficulty in obtaining this information, which in many cases would mean resorting to administrative or census sources, for the moment they cannot be included. The Population and Housing Census of 2001, once available, should shed some light on these other indicators.

3.3 Continuity and changes within the Labour Market: flow study

As is known by any analyst of the Labour Market, or indeed of economic or demographic phenomena in general, the vast majority of data provided by statistics regarding variations or evolutions turns out to be the result or 'balance' of other phenomena or movements.

Thus, the variation of the 'Stock' of the population in a given space is determined by a continuous flow of births, deaths and migratory movements. It could occur that two completely different places produce identical population differences, but as the result of totally contrasting changes: one country with high birth and mortality rates (characteristics of the former demographic regime), and another with low rates in both cases. Although the variation is the same, it is not difficult to guess that the first example shows a developing country with a very young society, whereas with the second we are closer to a rich country with an ageing population structure.

With variations in numbers that enter or leave the Labour Market, something similar happens: we know whether unemployment or employment grows, but we cannot always be sure where the jobless or employed people come from, and even less so their weight in the evolution in the market itself. Neither do we know the direction nor the intensity of the changes from one situation to another

It is possible to solve this type of problem with what is known as longitudinal analysis, which is simply monitoring individually the behaviour of a series of collectives over a given period.

In this case, the changes in the individuals who were part of the panel of the PRA were monitored between 1997 and 1998 and between 2001 and 2002, taken as annual means, in order to assess the direction and weight of the flow itself.

The Household Panel of the European Union (PHOGUE)¹² on the one hand and the workforce surveys themselves on the other, given their continuous nature (collected throughout the year and the sample, although rotated, remains in the surveying phase over a long period –18 months), allow this type of analysis to be carried out.

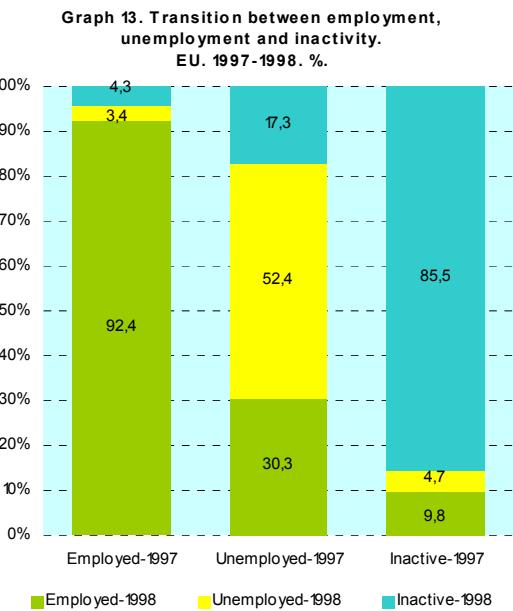
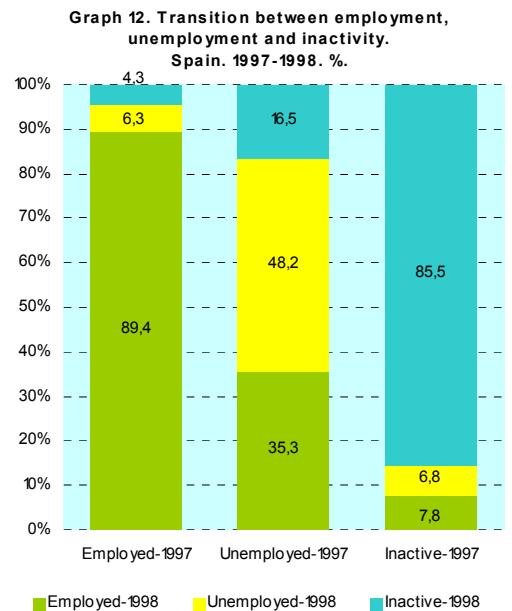
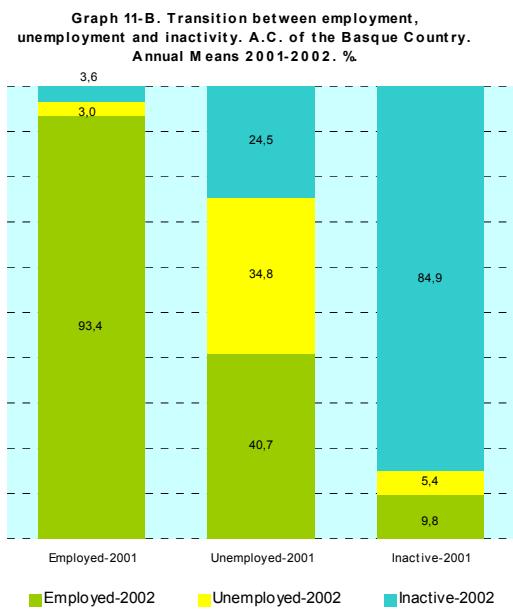
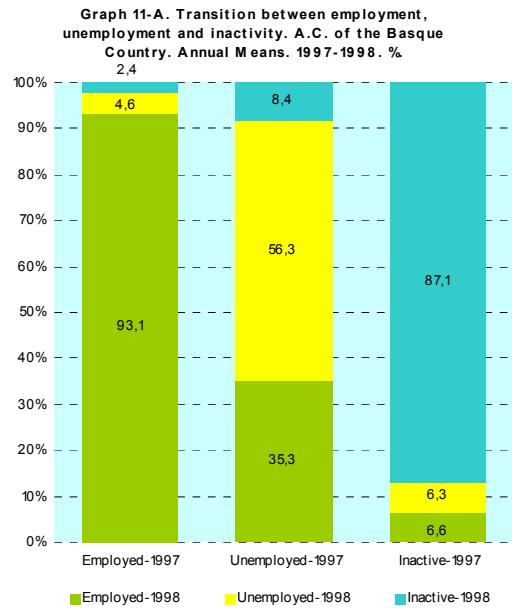
There are three indicators included in the control documents of the Employment Guidelines 2002, of the European Employment Committee, the source necessary for

11 Brussels, 20.6.2001. COM (2001)313 final. Page 13

12 http://www.ine.es/prodyser/catalogo/masinfo_phogue.htm [2003-11-1] Metodología:
http://www.ine.es/daco/fichas/ficha_phogue.htm [2003-11-1]

comparison: firstly, the transition between employment, non-employment and inactivity, secondly, between employment, non-employment and type of contract and finally, between employment, non-employment and training. The third corresponds to what is called, from the perspective of Employment Quality, the 'transition of young people into active life'.

Given that we need very broad samples to be specific, from a longitudinal point of view, on movements by age, it was considered appropriate to extract and analyse the other two indicators alone.



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA.

Graphs 11-A, 11-B, 12 and 13 record the flow of the population aged 16 to 64, bearing in mind the main groups related to activity: employed, unemployed and inactive, using as the average number of movements made over two years for the same individuals.

Both between 1997 and 1998 and between 2001 and 2002, counting the people who have remained in the PRA sample, a considerable stability can be seen in the group of the employed –93.1% remain in this situation in the first period and 93.4% in the second.

Just over one in three people who declared themselves unemployed in 1997 –35.3%-, found work the following year, while for the jobless in 2001, 43% managed to do so in 2002. In the first period half the people remained unemployed –56.3%-, a figure that affected 34.8% in the second period. The improvement in the Labour Market seems to have had a bearing on the reduction of the length of time out of work.

Although only 8.4% of the jobless in 1997 became inactive the following year, this percentage tripled in the case of the unemployed in 2001 during the following year: 24.5% either gave up the search for work, returned to housework, retired or became a student. Worth noting was a significant group of women who fluctuated between the search for work, employment or remained in unpaid household activity. We should not forget the effect of the change of definition of unemployment in 2002, which we know affected this group.

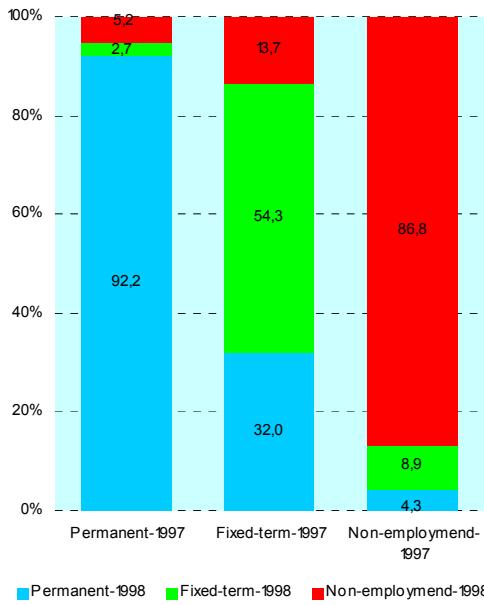
The group of inactive people also remained stable, although much more so between 1997-1998, when 87.1% remained inactive, compared to the 84.9% of the people appearing in the 2001-2002 samples. However, of the inactive from the first period, 6.1% managed to find work, a percentage that grew significantly in the second –9.8%.

The behaviour of the labour market as a whole, as regards flow, was not very different from the total of the European Union, if we take the period 1997-1998 as a reference. Among the most notable results: the employed were slightly less stable: 92.4% repeated their situation in the European average compared to 89.4% of the employed in Spain, where, conversely, there were a greater number of movements from unemployment to employment –35% of the Spanish jobless in 1997 found work in 1998, whereas this percentage fell to 30.3% in Europe.

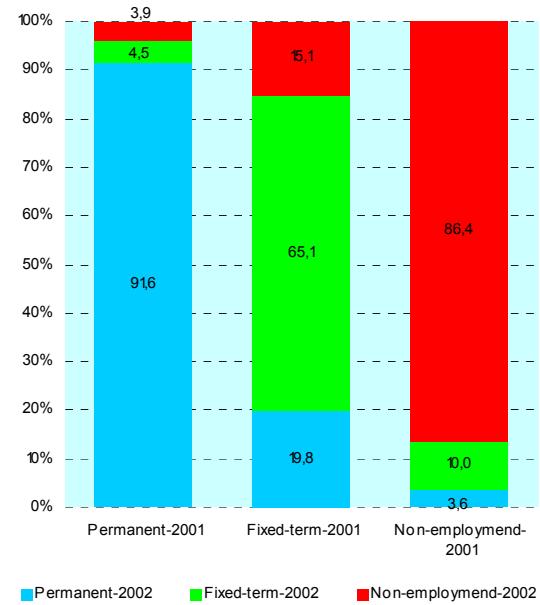
Some of the flow calculated in the A.C. of the Basque Country was more like that of Europe than Spain: 93.1% and 92.4% of stability rate for the employed, or 56.3% and 52.4% the rate for remaining out of work (this latter rate was 48.2% for Spain).

The less frequent movement from non-activity to employment (6.6% in the A.C. of the Basque Country, compared to 7.8% for Spain or 9.8% for Europe), could be explained by greater barriers for women to enter the market and possibly by the greater weight of retired and elderly people among this group, given that the Basque population structure is appreciably older than the Spanish population structure.

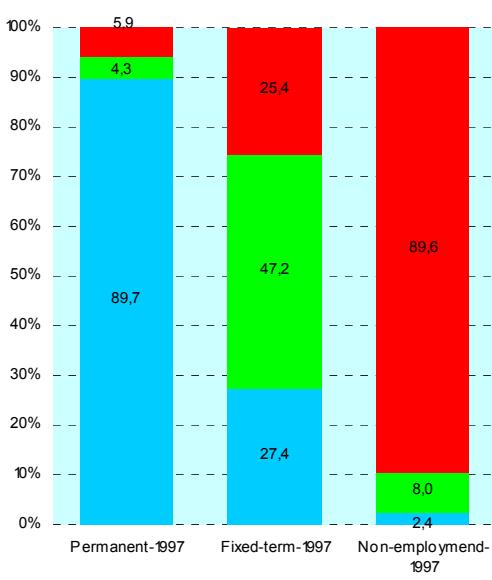
Graph 14-A. Transition between employment and non-employment according to type of contract. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1997-1998. %.



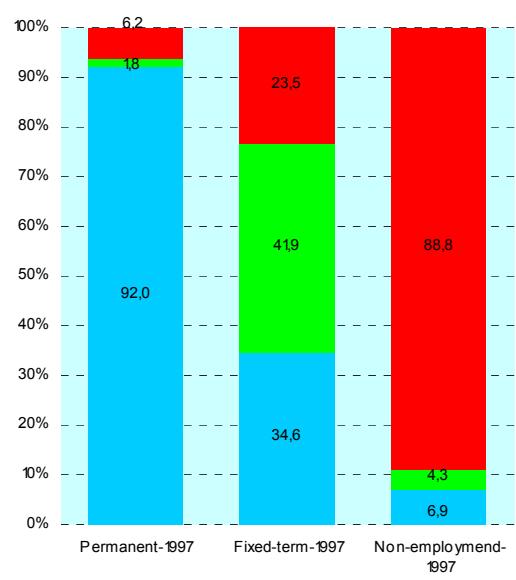
Graph 14-B. Transition between employment and non-employment according to type of contract. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 2001-2002. %.



Graph 15. Transition between employment and non-employment according to type of contract. Spain. 1997-1998. %.



Graph 16. Transition between employment and non-employment according to type of contract. EU-15. 1997-1998. %.



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA.

Graphs 14-A and 14-B include among the non-employed group the unemployed, the inactive, and those working without contract, as recommended by the Commission. In the permanent contract group, the unwaged employed, as well as those permanently contracted by a third party. In both cases it was necessary to make these aggregations in

order, on the one hand, to maintain the greatest number of flow patterns and on the other, to have an adequate sample.

The first outstanding data is the high rate of contractual stability, since among the employed, 92.3% between 1997 and 1998 and 91.6% during the period 2001-2001 managed to remain permanently contracted or unwaged (employers or self-employed workers). This rate coincides with the European rate if we take the first two-year period as a reference. Of the remainder, 2.7% and 4.5% respectively went over to temporary contracts during the two periods. Of those going over to being non-employed, the trend is coherent: falling from 5.2% to 3.9%. It would seem that the tendency is to substitute the step from permanent to unemployed for the step from permanent to contracted.

The most negative evolution would seem to be found among the employed with temporary contracts. Over half of those in this situation in 1997 –54.3%- , continued to be so in 1998, becoming even more marked between 2001 and 2002, when the rate rose to 65.1%. If during the first period under study almost one in three temporary workers – 32%- attained a permanent contract in a year, this proportion fell to one in five –19.8%- five years later.

There were practically no variations in the non-employed group (inactive, unemployed and working without contract), which could indicate that the flow in this group is subject to demographic rather than economic rules, at least during the periods under study.

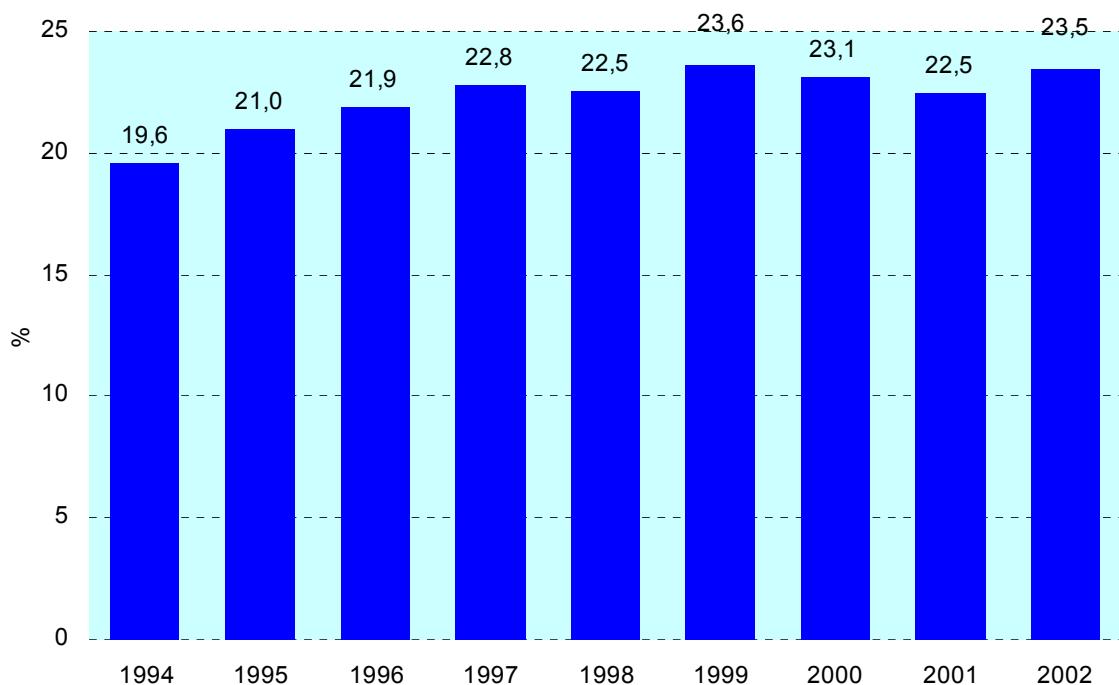
The main difference with the European situation lies in there being less movement from temporary contracts towards stability: more than one in three managed this in the European Union –34.6%- , seven percent more than in the same sub-group in Spain and only 2.6 more than among the employed in the A.C. of the Basque Country between 1997-1998. Since there is not a high percentage of people repeating temporary contracts, both in Spain and in Europe it is more frequent to make the step from this type of situation to unemployment –25.4% and 23.5% respectively- than in the case of the Basque Country: only 13.7%.

Thus a main feature of the Spanish and especially the Basque market is there being less rotation of temporality, or to put it another way, inflexibility as regards stabilising a significant part of the workforce.

3.4 The temporality of contracts

We have seen how moving away from temporality is more difficult in the Basque labour market than in its Spanish and European counterparts.

Graph 17. Evolution of the Rates of employees aged 16 to 64 with temporary contracts. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1994-2002. %



Source: Eustat, PRA.

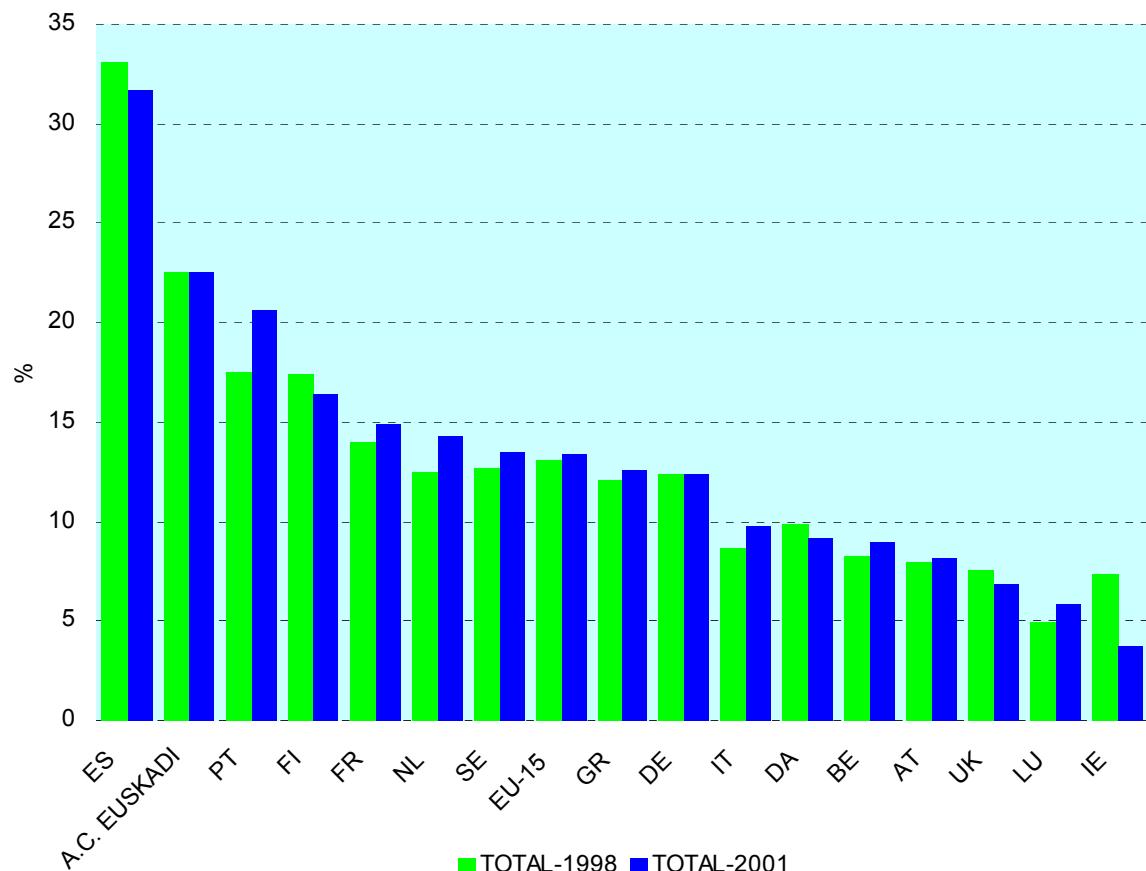
In the A.C. of the Basque Country contractual temporality affects just over one in five employed people aged 16 to 64. Over the nine-year period, 1994 to 2002, there was a three percent increase, although it seems that over the final four years, it levelled off at around 23%.

If this analysis is carried over to the European situation, we can see how in 2001, for the group of 15, the temporality rate remained at the 13% of 1998. An overwhelming impression is made by the Spanish rate, which almost triples the community rate, with 31.7% (1.4 percent less than in 1998).

After the Spanish rate we have the A.C. of the Basque Country, although with nine points less than in 2001. Only Portugal is close to the Basque situation, with a rate of 20.6% in the last year to be compared.

Finland, France and Holland stand considerably above the European average, while temporality seems very limited in countries such as the United Kingdom -6.8%-; Luxembourg -5.8%-; and especially Ireland -3.7%-.

Graph 18. Evolution of the Rates of employees aged 15 to 64 with temporary contracts by contracts. 1998-2001. %



Source: Eurostat, Employment in Europe 2002; Eustat, PRA (from 16 to 64).

4. Reconciling work and family life

In connection with quality and social cohesion, the objective is to reconcile work and family life and find a balance between these two basic aspects of life.

The Commission proposes three indicators: the proportion of workers with flexible types of work, opportunities for taking and enjoying maternity or paternity leave and social resources to support child care.

In our case, given the difficulty of comparability and access to homogenous sources, we will use two basic indicators: the distribution of flexible working days and the effect of maternity or paternity on employment.

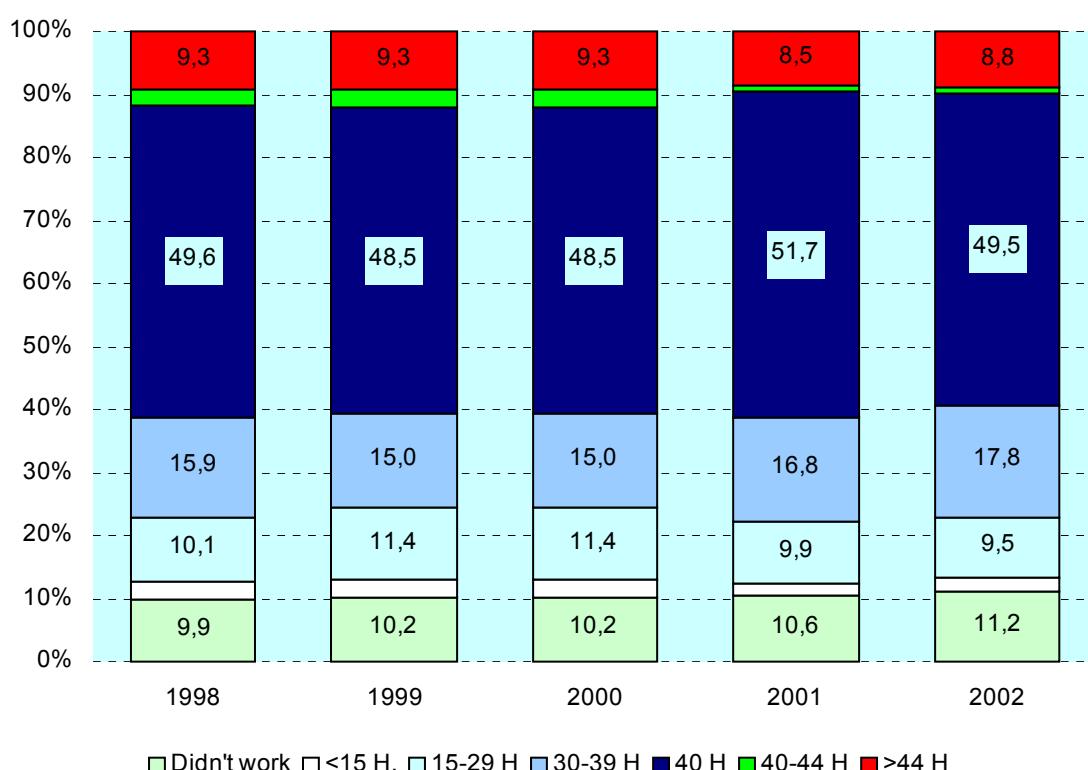
4.1 The flexible working day

The first difficulty presented by this indicator derives from its very definition. On the one hand, we need to clarify whether this situation is desired or imposed. On the other, the exact distribution and proportion of hours has to be made to include a working day in this category.

The Employment Committee in its indicators for monitoring the employment guidelines 2002 proposes that of the number of workers employed voluntarily in part-time work.

The statistical definition of a part-time working day makes reference to the cases where the number of hours worked is below the average for the sector. If this information is not available, after offering an overview of the distribution of people in employment according to the number of hours per week, we define the measurement of the part-time job as that which takes up less than 30 hours per week, since this figure is very close to the average number of hours worked per week (included in the calculation are those workers who did not work during the reference week).

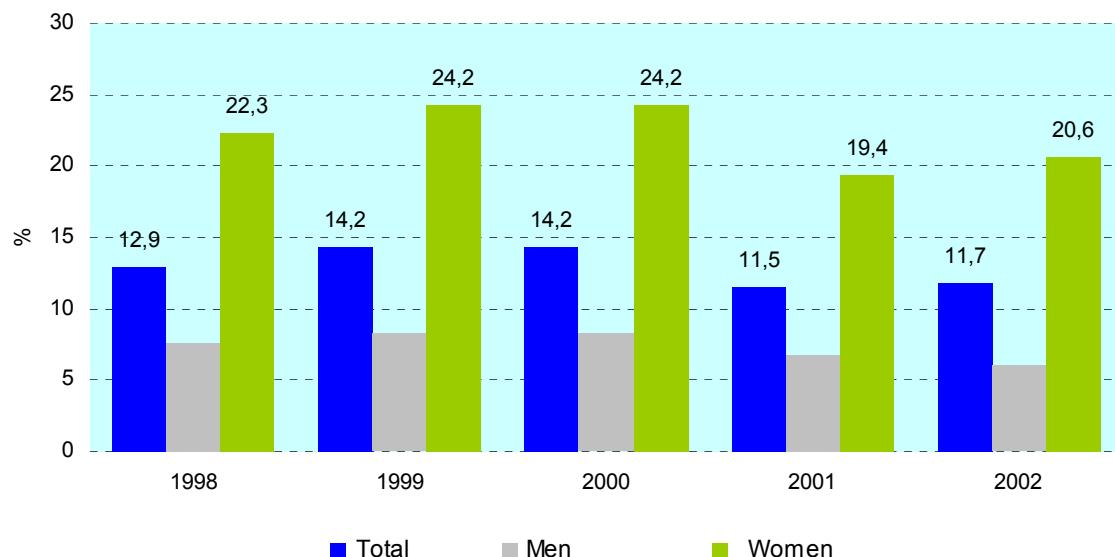
Graph 19. Evolution of the hours worked per week by employees aged 16 or over. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1998-2002. %.



Source: Eustat, PRA.

Graph 19 clearly shows how, over this five-year period, there was hardly any variation in the distribution of the number of hours per week. The most common working week was that of 40 hours (worked by almost half of those in employment), followed by that of 30 to 39 hours (one in six). Around 9% worked over 44 hours and nearly 10% from 15 to 29. Between 2 and 3% stated that they worked less than 15 hours per week.

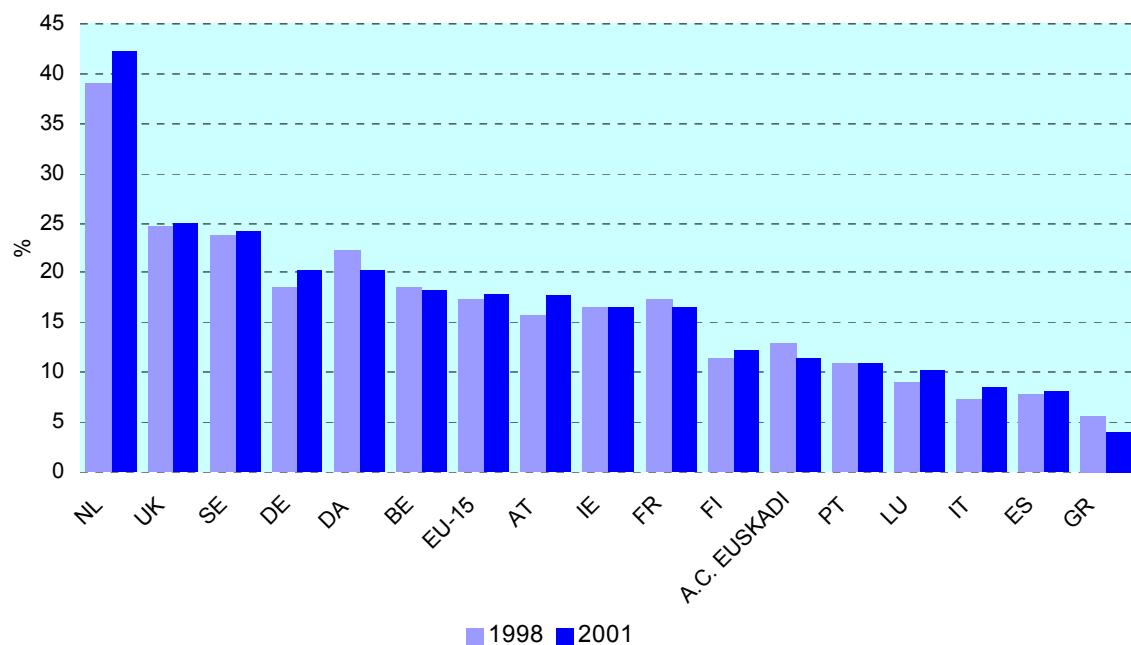
Graph 20. Employed population aged 16 or over who work less than 30 hours a week by gender and year. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1998-2002. %



Source: Eustat, PRA.

If we centre the analysis on what could be considered a part-time working day (less than 30 hours per week), we can see a slight trend towards a decline, since in 1999 and 2000 it was the option for 14% of workers and in 2001-2002 it did not reach 12%. It fell significantly among women, going from one in four in 1999-2000 (24.2%) to one in five over the following two years (19.4% and 20.6% respectively).

Graph 21. Evolution of the Employment Rate for those aged 15 to 64 who work part-time by country. 1998-2001. %



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA (16-64).

In 2001, one in three women in the European Union chose this type of working day, affecting 18% of workers aged 16 to 64. Paradise for this type of work was in Holland, where it was enjoyed by two out of every five workers and as many as 71% of women.

The United Kingdom, with 25% of the total number of workers and 44.1% of women, was the second country in the use of the part-time contract. Greece, with 4% and Spain, with 8% occupied the bottom places.

The position of the A.C. of the Basque Country, which, as we have explained, uses a definition which does not take into account the voluntary nature or otherwise of the situation, is 6.4 points away from the European average for workers aged 16 to 64, and 14 percent in the case of women.

4.2 Maternity and employment

The relationship between motherhood and work has been one of the classic areas of study and research for Demography and even for Economic Sciences. Life cycles have been related to entering and leaving the Labour Market, as well as the costs related to maternity and salaries.

Regardless of hypotheses and results, the negative effect that maternity has on working life has always been taken for granted. On the other hand, society increasingly associates the delay of the maternity age with work prospects.

Given that this affects women more negatively, the Commission document on employment has defined an indicator that sets out to measure the effect of maternity on employment. The quotient is calculated of the proportion of men with children aged 0 to 6 years old out of those who do not have children divided by that of women with children of the above age, out of those who do not have children. The population which is the object of the ratio should be aged 20 to 50 and is related to employment rates. However, before this data is calculated, we need to look at the situation of the A.C. of the Basque Country in more detail.

Table 1. Population aged 20 to 50 in nuclear families (Primary) according to whether or not they have children aged under 7 by gender and relation to the activity. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 2002.

	Men			Women		
	Total	no children	children	Total	no children	children
Total	231,9	172,5	59,4	272,1	210,9	61,2
Employed	215,8	159,1	56,7	135,4	103,5	32
Unemployed	9,2	7,2	2	29,7	23,7	6
Inactive	6,8	6,2	0,7	106,9	83,7	23,2
Employ %	93,1	92,2	95,5	49,8	49,1	52,3
Unemploy %	4,0	4,2	3,4	10,9	11,2	9,8
Inactivity %	2,9	3,6	1,2	39,3	39,7	37,9

Source: Eustat, PRA.

From the PRA, an operation carried out continuously by Eustat since 1985, we have obtained the numbers of men and women, with or without children and according to their relation to activity for the years 1998 to 2002. Table 1 shows the results corresponding to 2002 and Graph 22 gives the results of the proposed index for 1998, 2000 and 2001. For technical reasons of representativity and difficulty, the second or subsequent nuclear families have been excluded, which in any case had a minimum weight.

The first surprising fact is that, despite the verifiably different employment rates for men and women – 94.6% in the case of the former and nearly 60% for the latter-, in both cases having young children or not does not seem to have much to do with the level of employment. There is a meagre difference of three points in favour of men with children and minus three percent for women with children –compared to those without. The only clear distinction is the effect of gender, but not the effect of maternity or paternity.

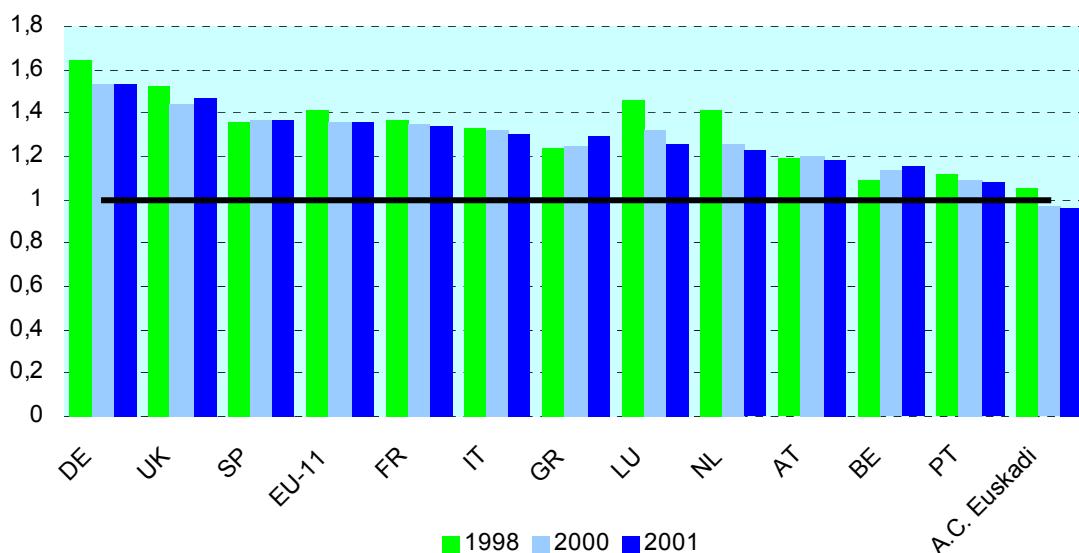
The unemployment rate works in the same way, with apparently little difference between those who have young children and those who do not, although unemployment rates are lower by around one percent for the former group.

In conclusion, we could say that the only clear effect on the level of employment and unemployment is gender, and not maternity or paternity.

The ratio for 2002, using the data for the A.C. of the Basque Country, gives a result of 1.09, which, being close to 1, and indicates that employment hardly affects maternity, as we have stated, perhaps because it comes later in time: maternity/paternity is postponed until work has been found.

Over the five years under study, the indicator varied between this 1.09 and 0.96 for 2001.

**Graph 22. Evolution of the gender gap in employment for maternity by country.
1998-2001.**



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA.

The figures for the A.C. of the Basque Country are only comparable with the Portuguese ratio of 1.08 and the 1.15 of Belgium, for 2001.

As seen in Graph 6, this circumstance may have to do with the low rate of female employment in these countries.¹³

The European Union average for 2001, calculated with the data of only 11 countries stood at 1.36, point zero five percent less than in 1998. Germany with 1.53 points, the United Kingdom with 1.47 and Spain with 1.37, head the list of countries where maternity tends to oust more women from employment than men.

The fact that Spain is among the leading group, given its female employment rate, detracts from the credibility of this explanation and causes research to be directed towards other circumstances associated with social or cultural habits, prospects, legislation, etc.

5. Characteristics of the worker and the job

This area, which for Ergonomics and Health and Hygiene at work contains the central points for looking into Employment Quality, under the criteria of the Commission groups together aspects of quality that are intrinsic to work (satisfaction and work improvement) and workers' personal characteristics (levels of training, preparation in Information and Communications Technology –ICT, continuous training, etc.)

There can be no doubt that the empowerment of human resources, whether for the market or for the benefit of individuals themselves, becomes one of the key variables for improvement. We shall start by analysing the level of education of the population in relation to employment.

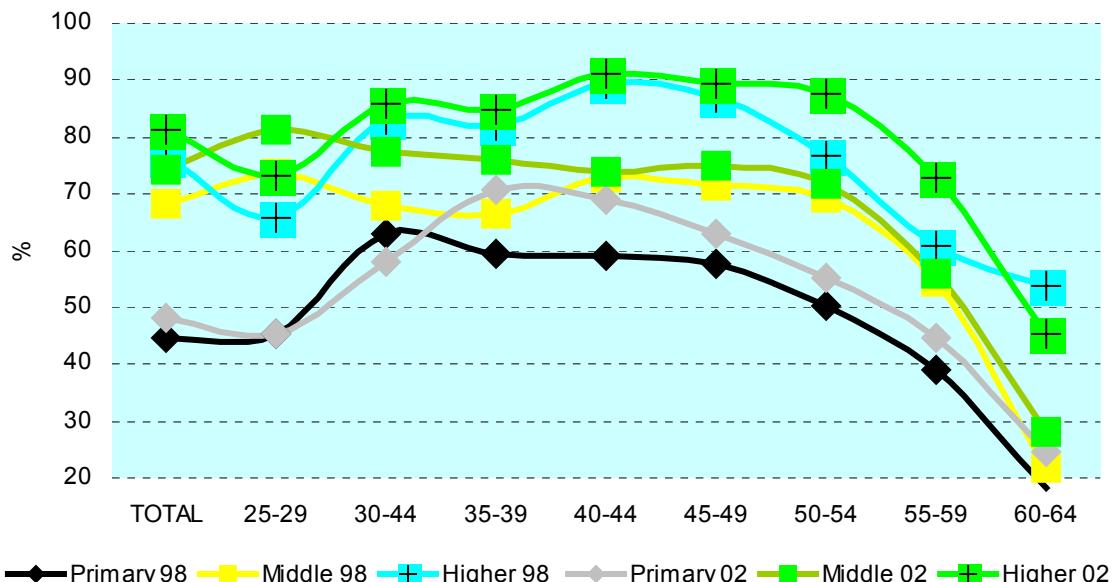
5.1. The level of human resources training

A way of measuring the association between employment and training is proposed by the OECD in its publication on employment in 2002, in which the proportion of the working population is presented by educational levels in relation to the total population with the same level.

In Graph 23 we present this calculation for the years 1998 and 2002 and by age. It should be mentioned that some explanations are omitted, as there is no gender differentiation, a variable that we know to be closely associated with employment in our case.

¹³ IEL, Instituto de Estudios Laborales. ESADE. Informe Randstad de calidad del trabajo. 2003. Pag.68.

Graph 23. Evolution of the Ratio of the employed population aged 25 to 64 by level of education out of the total population aged 25 to 64 by level of education. A.C. of the Basque Country. Annual Means. 1998-2002.%



Source: Eustat, PRA.

It should be noted that the group with primary studies (this includes former primary studies, the initial and middle cycle of E.G.B. *Basic General Education* –up to 10 years of age- and the present primary education up to the second cycle inclusive –also up to the age of 10-); includes both those who have attained this level and those who have not. The averages include the classification of those with the higher E.G.B. cycle; their homonyms with the second cycle of primary, Technical Training and professional modules, through to university studies, which make up the third group.

We can say that over the five year period under study (1998-2002), the population of 25 to 64 year old, the group with primary studies or less fell 3.8 percent, the intermediate studies group grew 7.6 percent (rising from 29.3% in 1998 to 36.9% in 2002) and the group with university studies rose four percent, representing almost one in five workers (18.2%).

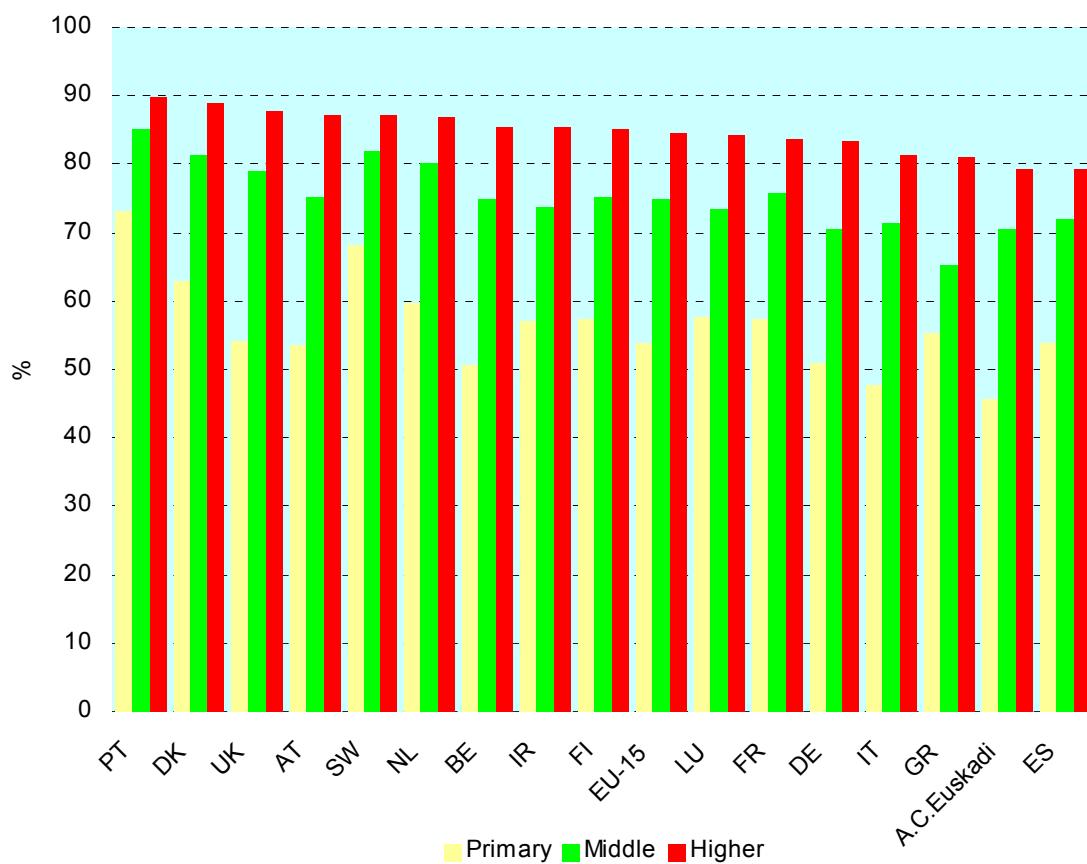
If we look directly at the proposed indicator: relationship between employment and level of education, we can distinguish the group with university studies as the group which most succeeds in getting employment: in 2002 up to 81.3% of the university graduate population, followed by 74.1% of those with intermediate studies, while only 48.1% of those with primary studies or less were successful.

The improvement in the labour market over the five year period has an unbalanced effect according to technical training: a 3.4 percent improvement for those with the lowest preparation, while there is a similar improvement between intermediate and higher levels: 5.7 and 5.1 percent respectively. The demand for human resources with professional qualifications (F.P., etc.) may have something to do with these results.

In Graph 23 we can notice the gap between levels and how the working population with high levels of study have very stable rates for both age groups, except for the over 45s. The prolongation of the working life which we are experiencing in general, is probably more noticeable for the better educated. We should also bear in mind the arrival at these ages of the generations that in the middle of the 60s and 70s produced the boom in Spanish universities.

The age groups that were most favoured among those with lower studies, are those aged between 35 and 45, which we can consider to be strongly influenced by the entry of women to the labour market.

Graph 24. Ratio of the employed population aged 25 to 64 by level of education out of the total population aged 25 to 64 by level of education, by country.
2000. %



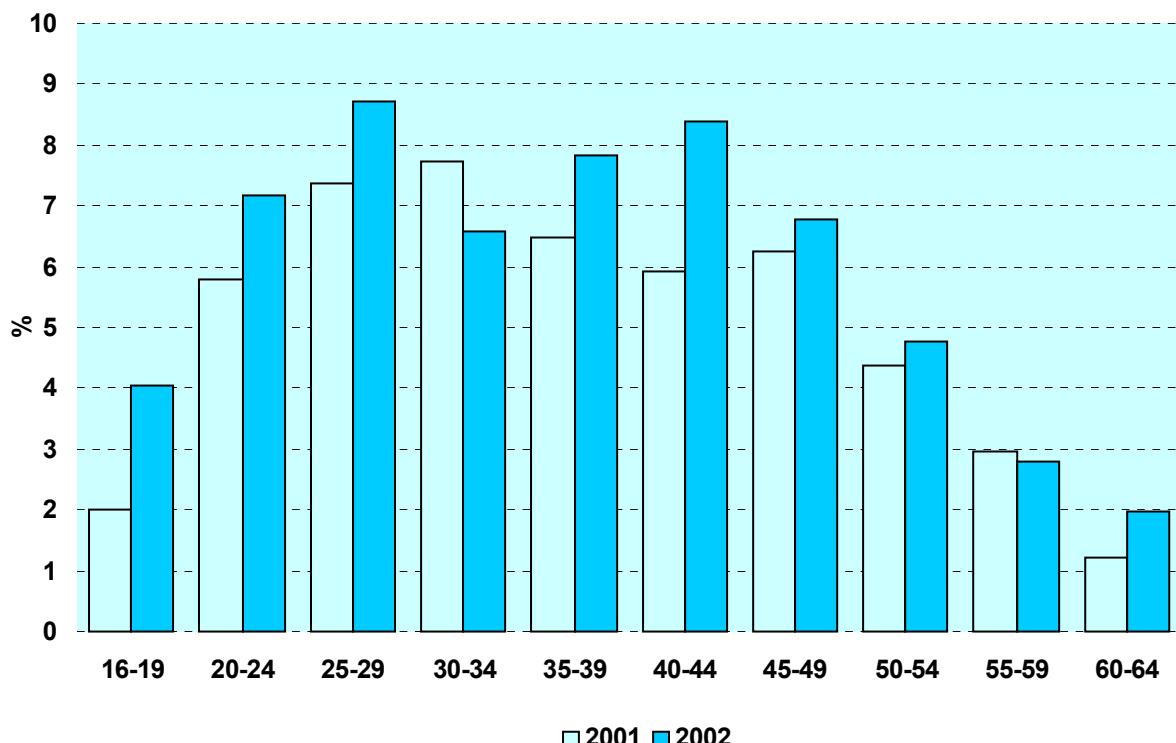
Source: OCDE Employment Outlook. July 2002, Eustat: PRA.

In Graph 24 we can see how the population with higher training has benefited almost identically in the A.C. of the Basque Country and in Spain, as well as in Greece and Italy, but 10 percent below Denmark or the UK, which appear to capitalize more on investment in higher training qualifications. We are five percent below the European average. The ill-use of the population with medium studies is also patent if we compare our country with the aforementioned countries, Holland or Sweden.

Another of the indicators to take into account when assessing the capacity of human resources derives from the measurement of continuous training. Fundamentally the

proportion of workers who have carried out some kind of course over the last 12 months associated or related to professional improvement is used.

Graph 25. Evolution of the employed population to take complementary studies in the last 12 months. 2001-2002.%



Source: Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security. Basque Government. Labour Market Census.

If we focus on the working population aged 16 to 64 (no doubt it would also be of interest to assess the unemployed or inactive population), we have 6% in 2001 and 6.8% in 2002 participated in some kind of training. This is over 5% in both years for workers from 20 to 49 years of age, especially those from 25 to 29 and from 35 to 44.

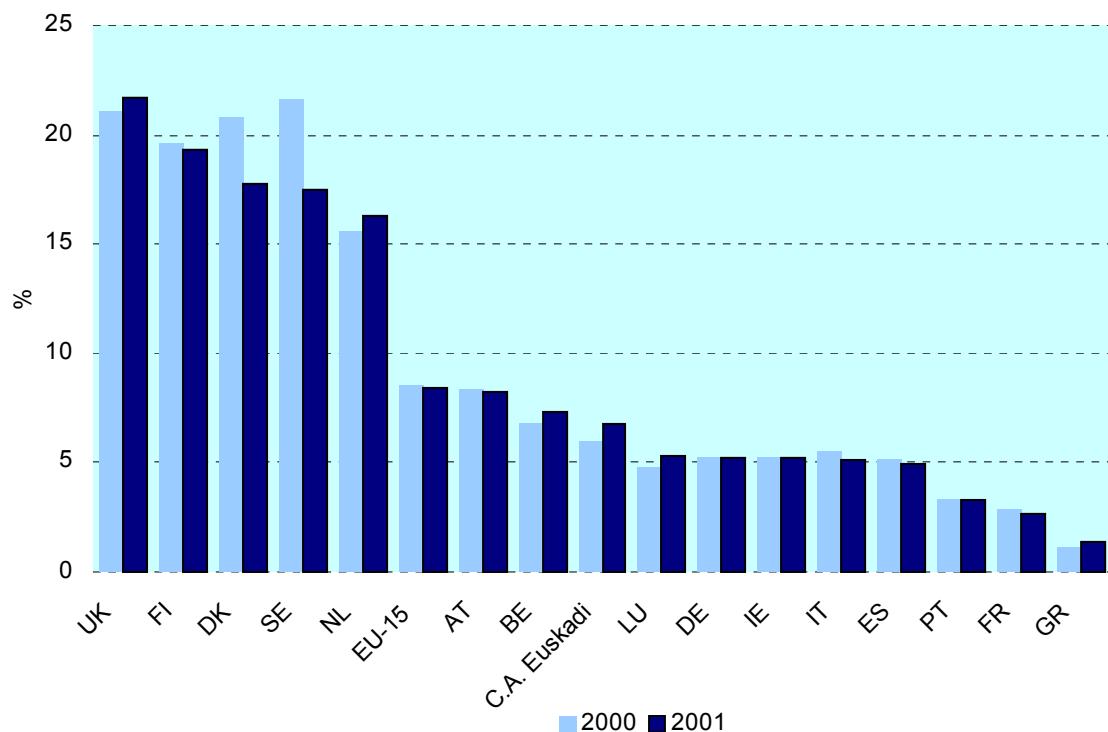
This may indicate, if we consider the younger age group, that they arrive with deficient or at least unsuitable training and/or they are more interested in improving professionally or at work.

In the case of the 40 to 44 age group, it may indicate a greater need to update knowledge.

The UK, Finland, Denmark and Sweden present the highest levels of continuous training, with almost one in five workers involved.

These high rates cause the Community average to rise 8.4% and 8.4% in 2001 and 2002 respectively, but the rest of the countries are at some distance below these levels.

Graph 26. Employed population aged 25 to 64 to take complementary studies in the last 12 months, by country. 2000-2001. %



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security. Basque Government. Labour Market Census.

It is worth emphasizing that the percentage for the A.C. of the Basque Country, which is little more than one percent below the average for the EU-15, improves the situation of countries like Germany and France (1.6 and 4.1 percent more in 2001). Spain, with 4.9% of workers having received some kind of course, is almost two percent below.

5.2. Intrinsic quality of the job

Besides the objective aspects of work or its environment, there is a current with a certain tradition that is dedicated to investigating the subjective side of workers in relation to their jobs.

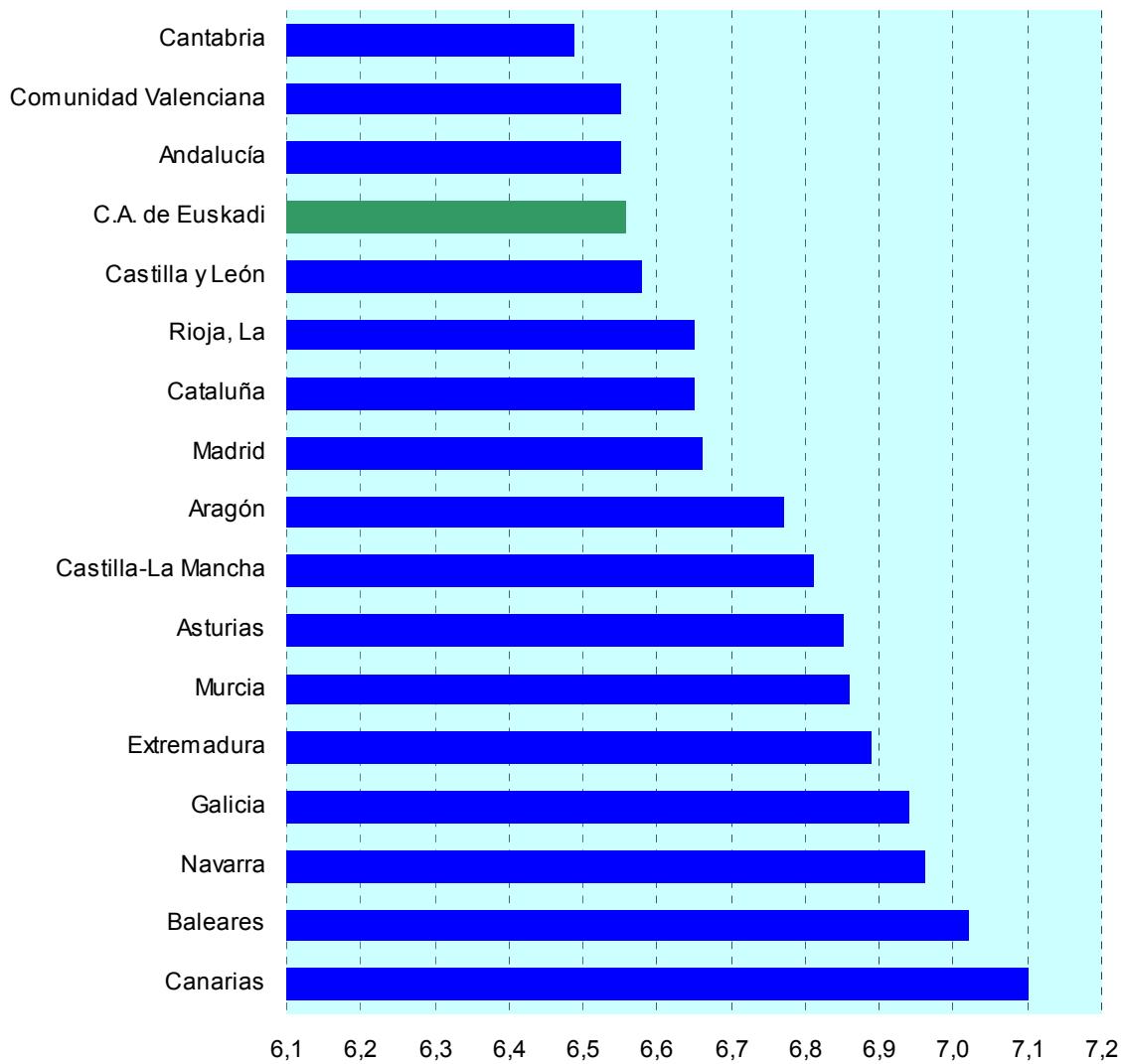
In this sense, in addition to studies on the Psycho-Sociology of Work or even on Ergonomics, as sciences strive towards the adaptation of the job-person, periodical surveys entitled 'Quality of Life at Work' (Working Conditions Survey) have been carried out, above all, by the employment departments of different governments.

Both the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Spanish Government (annual since 1999), and the corresponding Department of the Basque Government (four yearly, 1996, 2000) carry out their own surveys.

Within this sphere the Commission proposes several indicators: Satisfaction at Work (in its different aspects –type of contract, working day, job description–), improvements in pay and inequalities in the distribution of salaries.

Given the difficulty of comparing indicators for the A.C. of the Basque Country with the rest of Europe, in this case, we offer a reduced outlook of the Spanish Autonomous Communities. The Randstad Report uses the third European Working Conditions Survey (2000) as a source. Those interested should look to the report or the survey.

Graph 27. Employed population aged 16 or over by average level of job satisfaction by Autonomous Community 2002.%



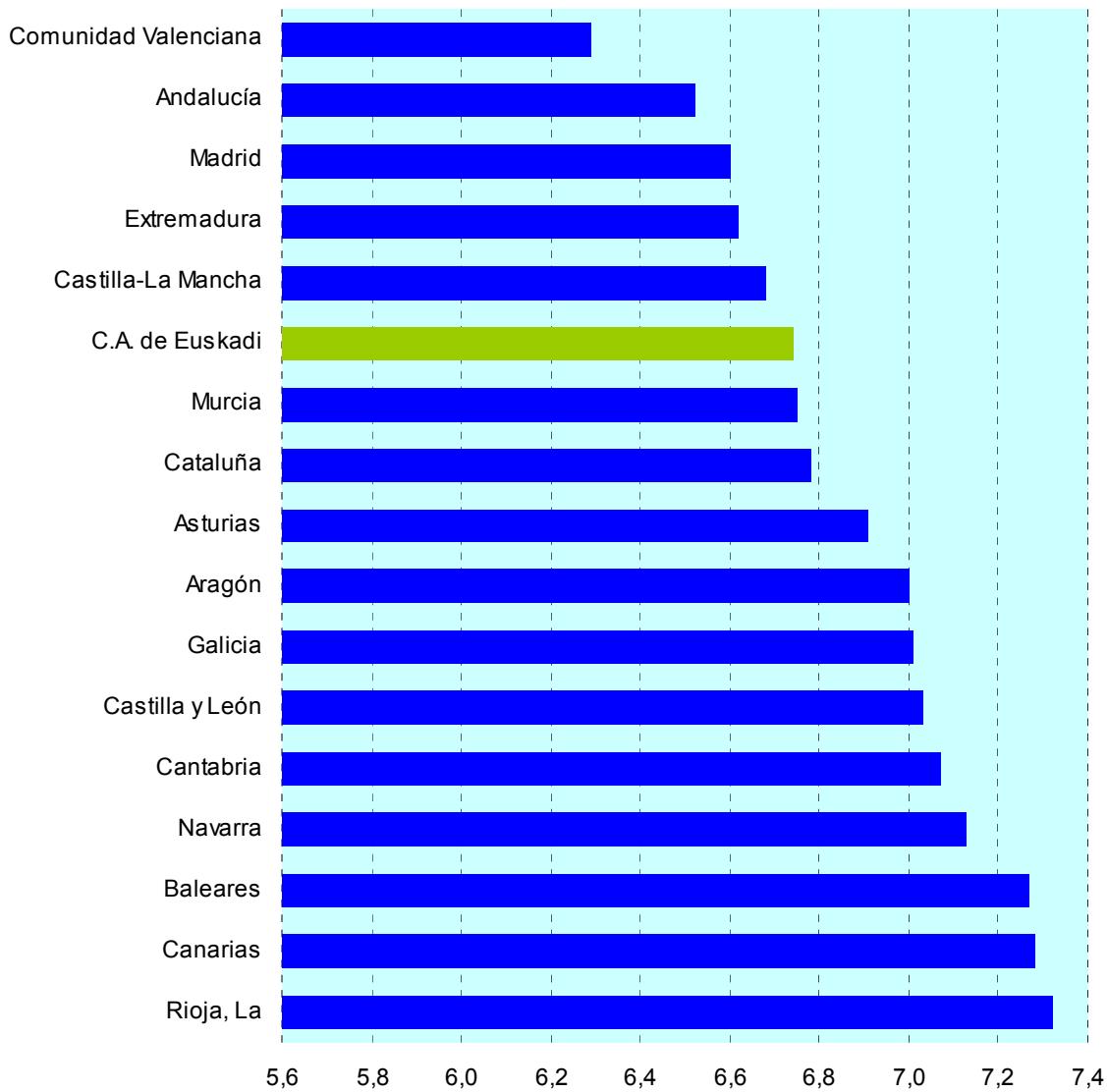
Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Survey on Quality at Work.2002

The A.C. of the Basque Country is among the four communities with the lowest level of satisfaction in relation to work; only workers in Cantabria, Valencia and Andalusia claim to be less satisfied than Basque workers. Workers in the Canaries and, above all, residents in the Balearic Isles and Navarre are at the other end of the spectrum.

This dissatisfaction could be the result of the unsuitability of the job to the person; at least this is what is indicated in Graph 28, in which workers from the A.C. of the Basque Country are among the group who find work less attractive or interesting.

Valencians and Andalusians are in this group, together with workers from Madrid and Extremadura, who in the previous indicator did not appear as very dissatisfied. Workers from the Rioja and both archipelagos and Navarre, once more, form the group of workers who best adapt to their work.

Graph 28. Employed population aged 16 or over according to average level of job attraction and interest by Autonomous Community. 2002.



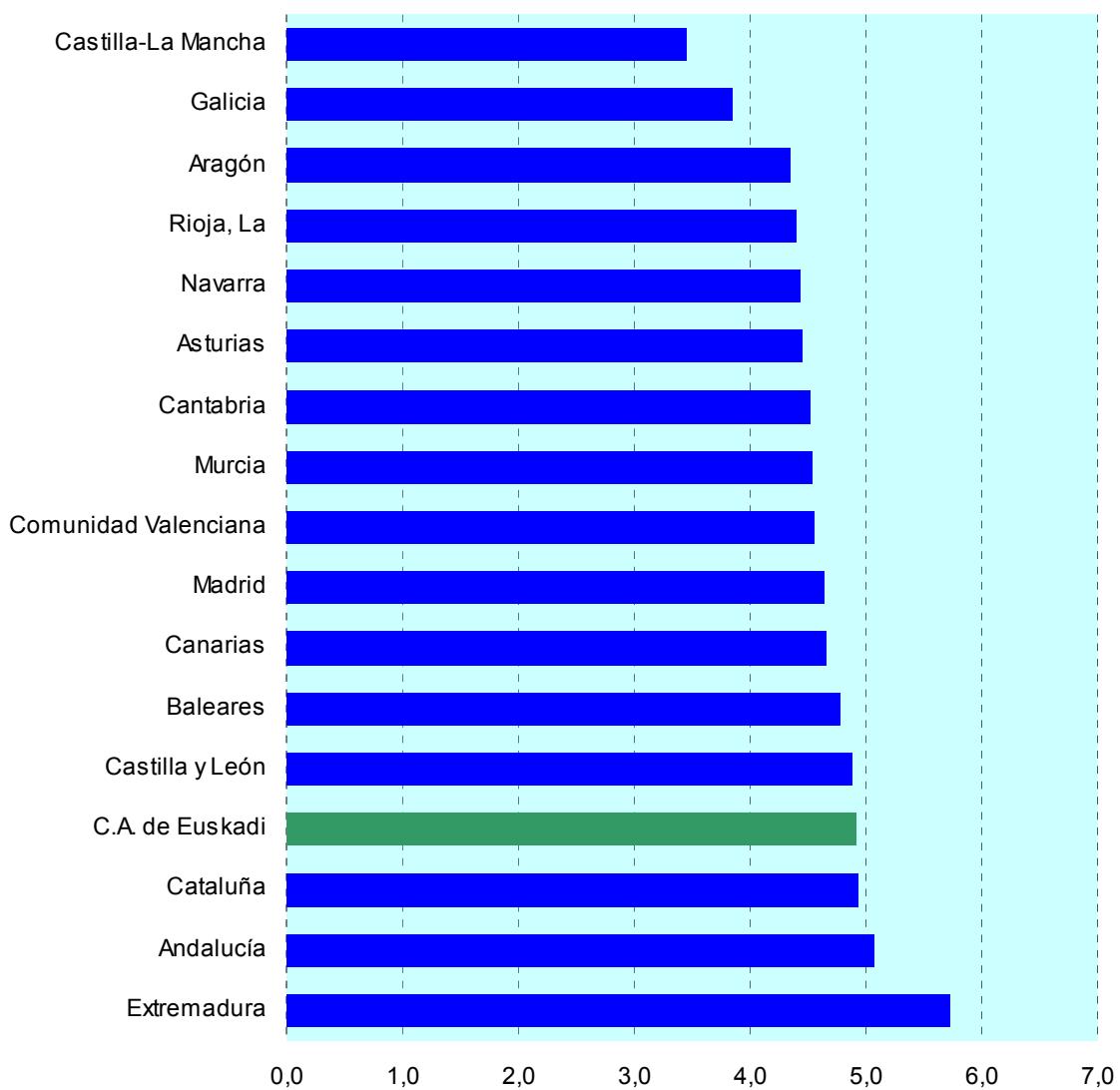
Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Survey on Quality at Work.2002

Finally, we will sum up the results for the medium stress level among workers by Autonomous Communities. In this indicator, the A.C. of the Basque Country is also among the regions with highest level of stress suffered by workers; only Extremadura, Andalusia and Catalonia have higher levels than the Basque Country.

La Mancha, Galicia, Aragon, Rioja and Navarre have the lowest stress levels at work among all the Autonomous Communities, or at least this is what they claim.

This last indicator is usually included in the section Health and Safety at Work; however, given the methodology of collection we have preferred to leave it in the area of worker subjectivity.

Graph 29. Employed population aged 16 or over according to average level of job stress by Autonomous Community. 2002.



Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Survey on Quality at Work.2002

5.3. The battle for the services sector.

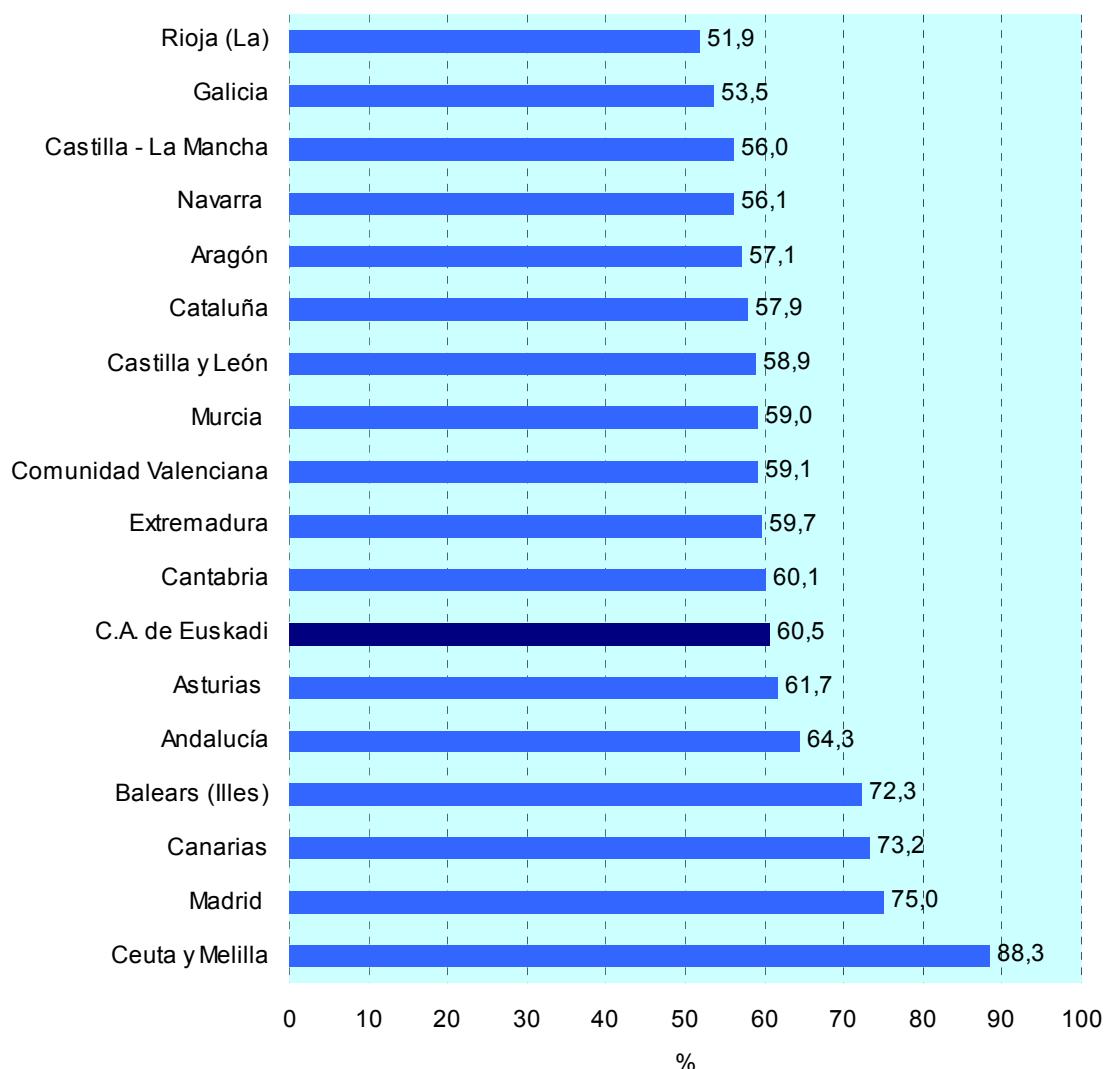
We have already seen that the emergence of the concept of Employment Quality had a lot to do with the search for an economy equal to or more competitive than the American economy, for which the generic objective put forward was the development of the elements that make up what we today understand to be the Information Society: new Information and Communications Technology (TIC).

Apart from the indicators themselves, there is no doubt that an indirect indicator derives from the growth of the services sector in the weight of the economy. Although we should really specify the sub sectors where new technologies are nested, given that this is not feasible, we will use the global indicator.

From the point of view of the worker, who depends as we have said on the sub sectors (we should speak from the sociological concept of an information society or sector), we could also put forward as a hypothesis the improvement of working conditions in this new area, against the merely productive.

This does not avoid the discussion about the location of the new sector or the metamorphosis of old sectors in new, where automation and control components have been able to reconvert manual tasks and workers in new Information Society workers, without substantially changing the results or types of production.

Graph 30. Employed population aged 16 or over in services out of the total number of employed by Autonomous Community. 2001-4th Quarter.%



Source: INE, EPA.

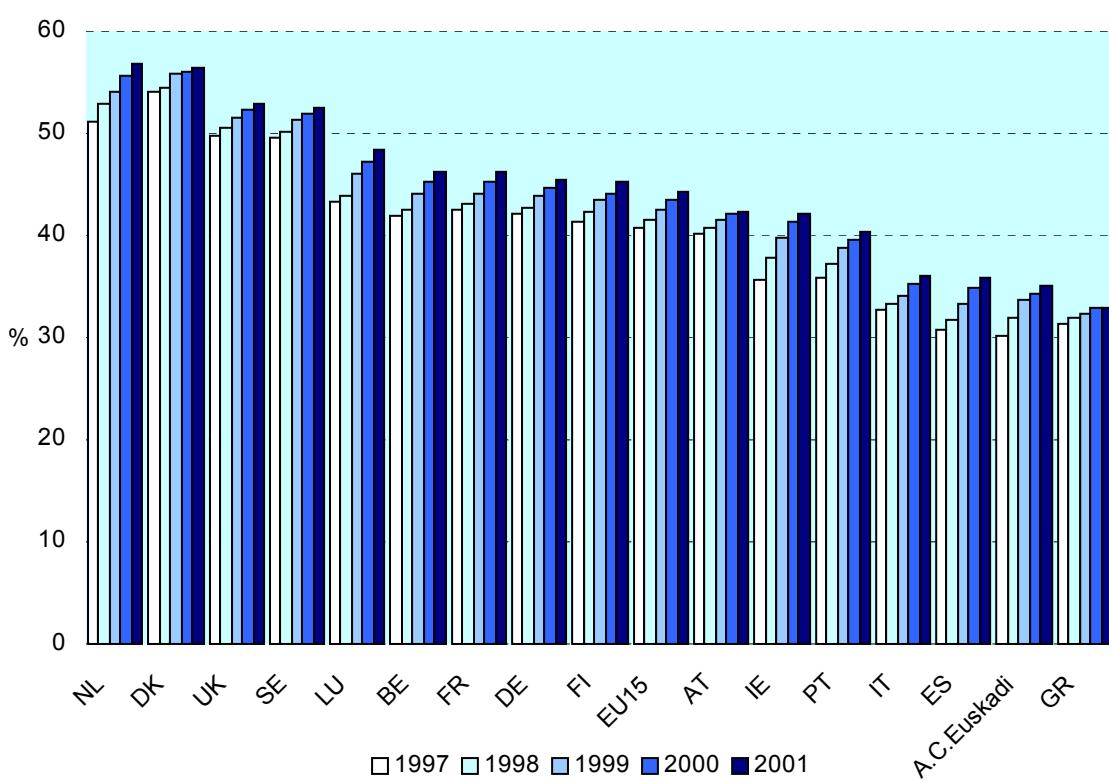
If we consider the distribution of the sector within the Autonomous Communities in the Spanish State, we can see, except for the case of Ceuta and Melilla, how Madrid turns out to be the Community where services have significantly higher weight: up to three out of every four workers. Not far behind are the Canaries, Balearic Isles and Andalusia, perhaps with a percentage that is highly influenced by the tourism sub sector.

The A.C. of the Basque Country and Asturias register similar rates: 60.5 and 61.7% respectively.

The Autonomous Community with the smallest services sector is La Rioja, followed by Galicia and at some distance Castile-La Mancha, Aragon, Navarre and Catalonia.

We must insist that the higher weight of other sectors does not mean that certain regions are further behind in what we understand to be the Information Society.

Graph 31. Evolution of the population aged 15 to 64 employed in the services sector out of the total population aged 15 to 64 by country.1997-2001.%



Source: Employment Committee. Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines 2002. Compendium-JER2002. Eustat, PRA (16-64 años).

If we extend the outlook and take the European area as a reference, we can see that only four countries exceeded the proportion of 50% workers aged 15 to 64 in the services sector in 2001, in relation to a total population at these ages: Holland with 56.9%, Denmark with 56.4%, the UK with 52.9 and Sweden with 52.5%.

The European average came to 44.4%, as the average for most countries was between 40 and 50%.

Below this average, in this order we find Italy, Spain, the A.C. of the Basque Country and Greece. The first three were behind the European Union average in 2001 by 8 to 9 percent and the latter by up to 11.

The fact that the most tertiarized countries are the most economically developed, in some way strengthens the general hypothesis of association between economic advance and the increase in the services sector.

6. The job environment

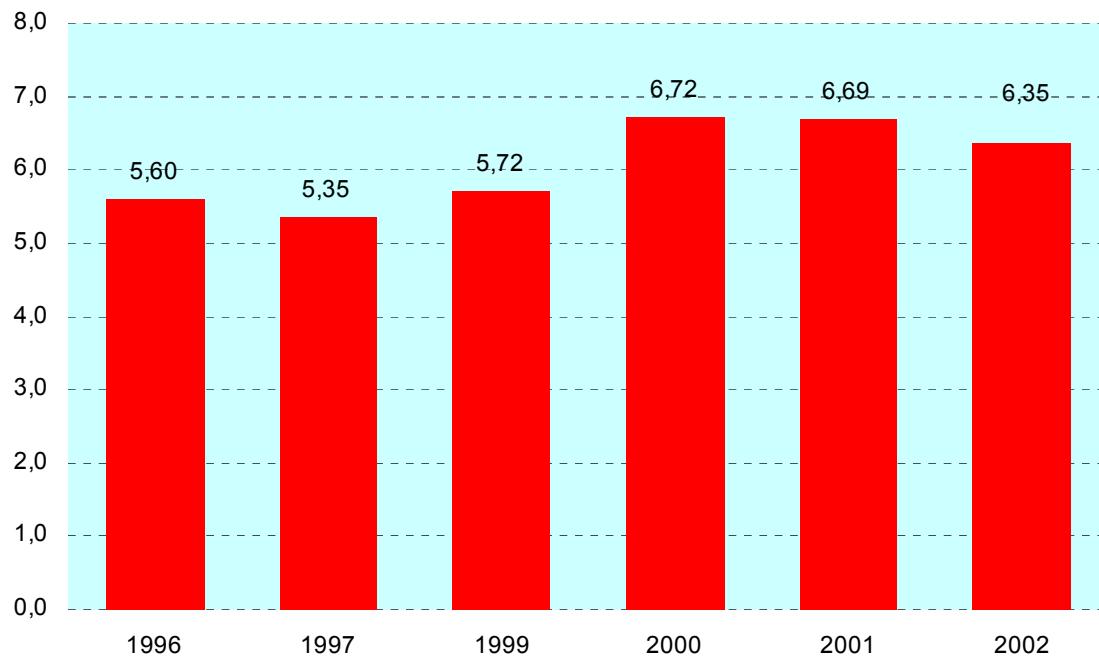
Within the area of the job we will include aspects associated with Safety and Health in the work place, systems of social protection and the section on social dialogue and the involvement of workers.

6.1. Accidents at work: lack of safety

There is no doubt that accidents at work and accidents themselves determine the quality of a working environment. The data offered by OSALAN statistics (Basque Government) do not leave room for commentaries.

While from 1996 to 2002 the working population aged 16 and over grew 23%, accidents at work with over three days sick leave increased by almost 40%. From 40,257 the first year the figure grew to 56,265. Although it should be mentioned that between 98 and 99% were slight. Serious injuries, except in 1996, settled at almost 600 per year.

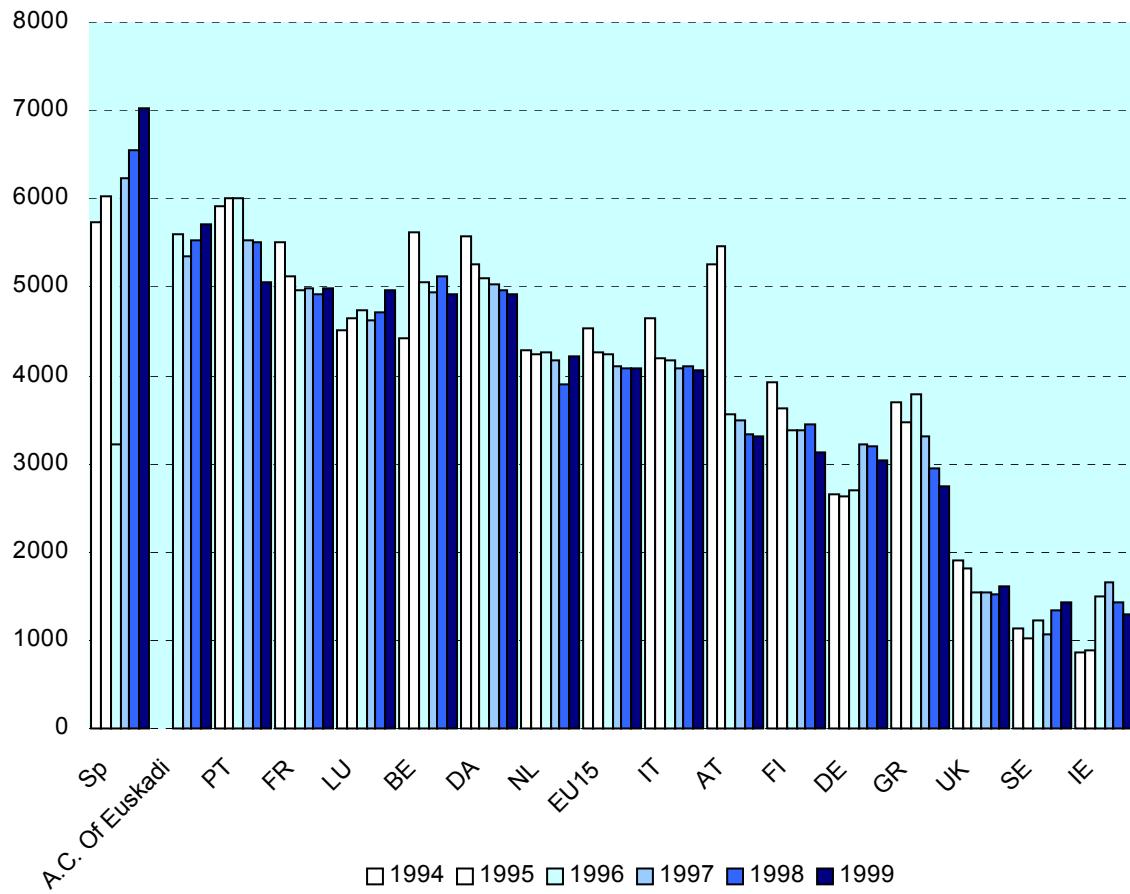
Graph 32. Evolution of the proportion of work accidents out of the employed population aged 16 to 64. 1996-2002. A.C. of the Basque Country.%



Source: OSALAN, Basque Government. Own production.

Relating the figures to the working population, for the six years presented the figure rose almost one percent: slightly over six in every 100 workers suffers an accident each year.

**G. 33 Accident rate for every 100.000 employed by country.
UE 1994-1999. A.C. Of Euskadi 1996-1999.**

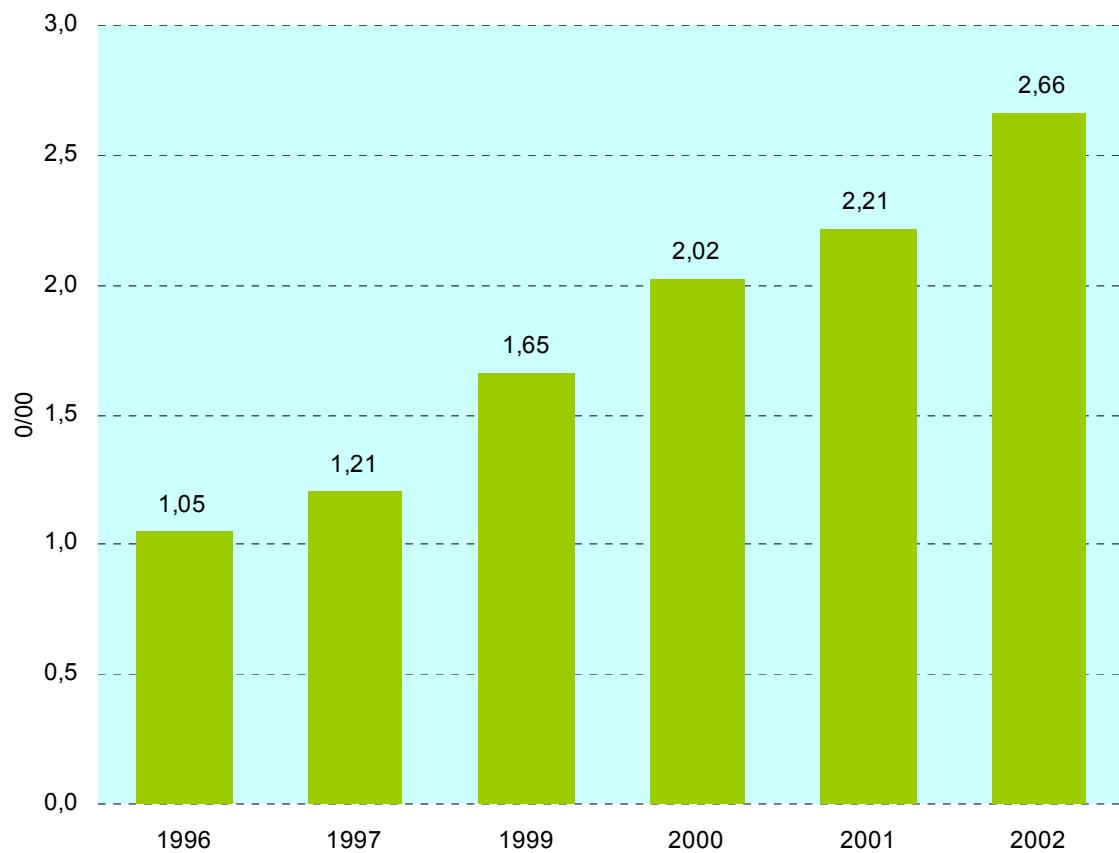


Source: Eurostat-ESAW (European Statistics on Accidents at Work) A.C. of the Basque Country, OSALAN (Basque Government). Own production.

If we look at the level of accidents in the A.C. of the Basque Country on a wider scale, we can appreciate how in 1999 there was a rate of 5,716 accidents per 100,000 workers, a figure only exceeded by the Spanish State with 7,000 accidents. The distribution by countries of this index is very asymmetrical, perhaps the result of different definitions of information or collection methodologies (or legal regulations as the case may be). The Irish, Swedish, British and Greek are least affected by accidents at work –under 2,000 cases for the first three nationalities and almost 3,000 the Greeks). The European average stands at a rate of 4,000.

The Portuguese, French, people of Luxembourg, Belgians and Danes reached a rate of nearly 5,000 accidents.

Graph 34. Evolution of the proportion of work-related illnesses out of the employed population aged 16 to 64 1996-2002. A.C. of the Basque Country. 0/00



Source: OSALAN, Basque Government. Own production.

The increase in professional illnesses in the A.C. of the Basque Country over recent years has been substantial: they have practically tripled. If in 1996 they affected one in every thousand workers, in 2002 the figure was 2.7.

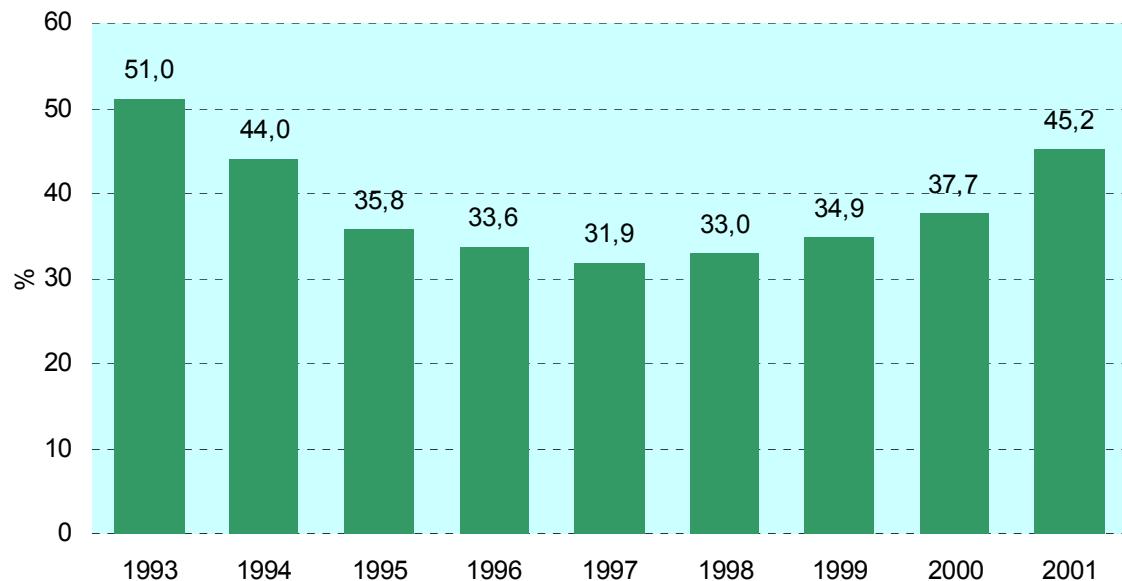
6.2. Social protection of employment

A direct way to assess safety at work and the quality of the work environment, derives from the resources that society uses to protect those who lose their jobs.

This basic element of the European social system and any advanced society, covered little more than half the unemployed aged from 25 to 64 in the A.C. of the Basque Country in 1993 –which together with 1994 and 1995 represented the maximum historic peak in unemployment.

Up to 1997 this rate had followed a downward trend –in this year it covered only 32% of the unemployed-, then growing little by little to cover most of the affected population. In 2001 45% of unemployment had access to unemployment benefit.

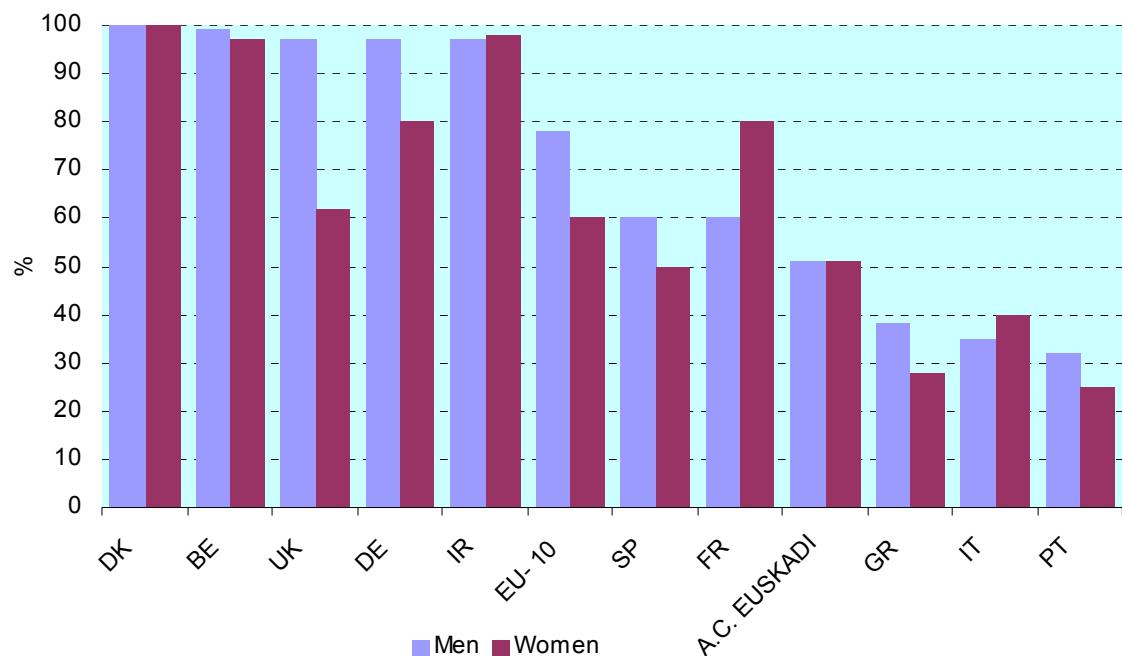
Graph 35. Evolution of the total number of beneficiaries of unemployment cover out of the total number of jobless aged 25 to 64. A.C. of the Basque Country. 1994-2001. %



Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Own production.

To place this indicator in the European context is very difficult, due to the lack of sources and bearing in mind the variations in legislation on this subject.

Graph 36. Proportion of the beneficiaries of unemployment benefit out of the total number of jobless aged 25 to 64 by gender. A.C. of the Basque Country=Total. 1993. %



Source: Randstad, based on ETUC, Benchmarking Working Europe 2003. Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Own production.

However, in Graph 34 we show the data collected in the Randstad Report for 10 European countries, in which you can see that in 1993 four countries had practically covered all their unemployed (except the case of unemployed German females): Denmark, Ireland, Belgium and Germany. British males were also, when unemployed, covered 100%, although only slightly over 60% of British females had the same cover.

The average for the 10 countries in the Union came to almost 80% for unemployed males and 60% for females. Spain is at some distance, 18 percent for males and 10 for females. This year in the A.C. of the Basque Country, as we have stated, unemployment insurance covers only half the unemployed population.

We should say that in this respect the Commission recommended another three indicators: the proportion of workers with flexible working contracts, assessment of the loss of jobs and the proportion of workers who changed geographic location, who are not included in this document.

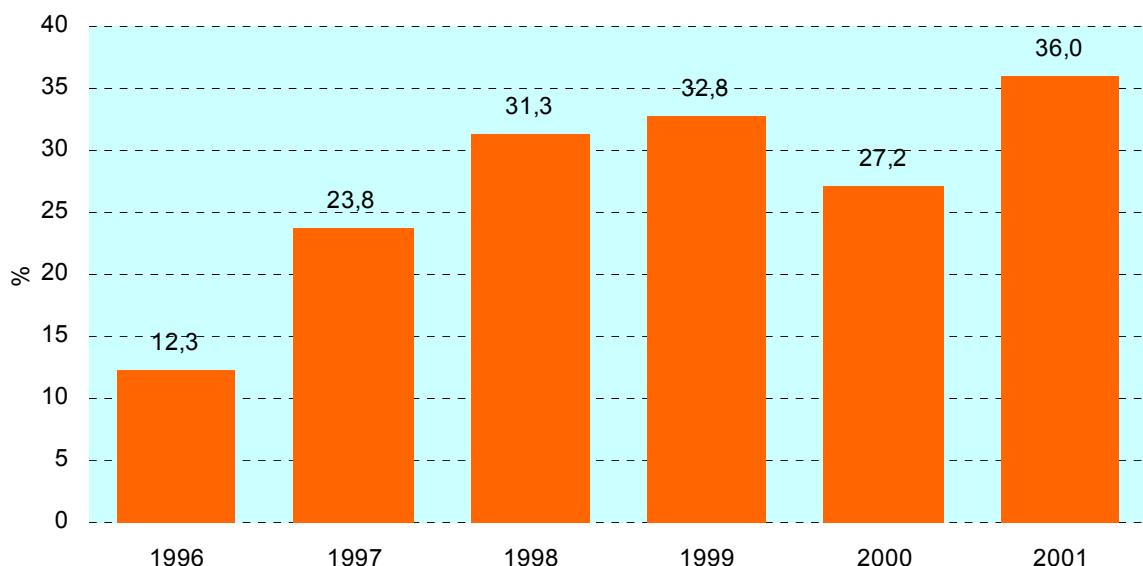
6.3 The employee-employer relationship: social dialogue

Another of the pieces that make up Employment Quality is related to the labour climate, the type of relationships between social agents or the involvement of different parts of companies in management processes or in property itself.

A key indicator to look into social dialogue is to be found in the proportion of workers who have managed to set out their working conditions and salaries in a common form legal document: the coverage rate of collective agreements.

We shall start by saying that if we look at the data offered by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, we can see that over six years of growth in the proportion of workers included in an agreement has been significant: from 12% in 1996 (we must not rule out underestimations) it has risen in six years to 36% in 2001.

Graph 37. Evolution of the coverage rates of Collective Agreements out of the number of employees aged 16 to 64. A.C. of the Basque Country. 1996-2001. %

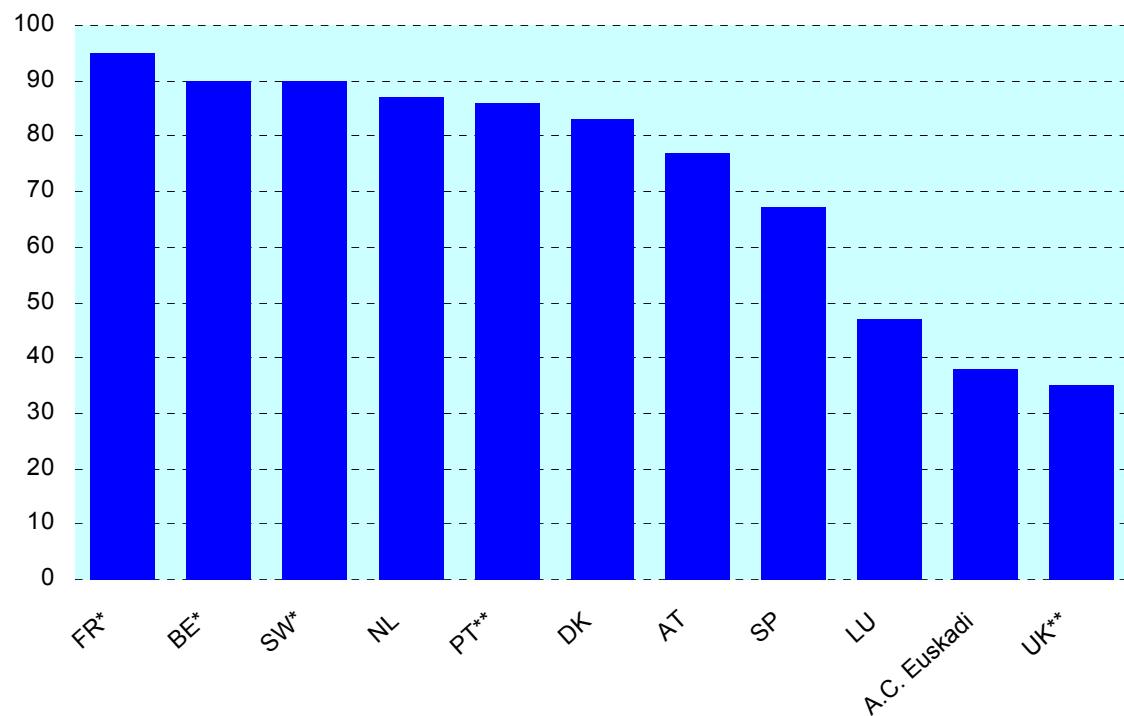


Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs . Own production.

In the territory of the A.C. of the Basque Country the number of signed agreements rose from 216 to 396 over the same period. The increase in companies is also spectacular: from 11,555 to 30,764.

There is no doubt that greater regulation –in this case we are speaking of self regulation– of working conditions and salaries tends not only to improve relations between social agents, but also leads to stability and an improvement in the quality of employment, and in general, of the lives of all those affected.

Graph 38. Coverage rates of Collective Agreements by country. 2001. %



Source: Randstad .Eiro. Collective bargaining coverage and extension procedures.2003. Adjusted rate. (**)Data from 2000. Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs.

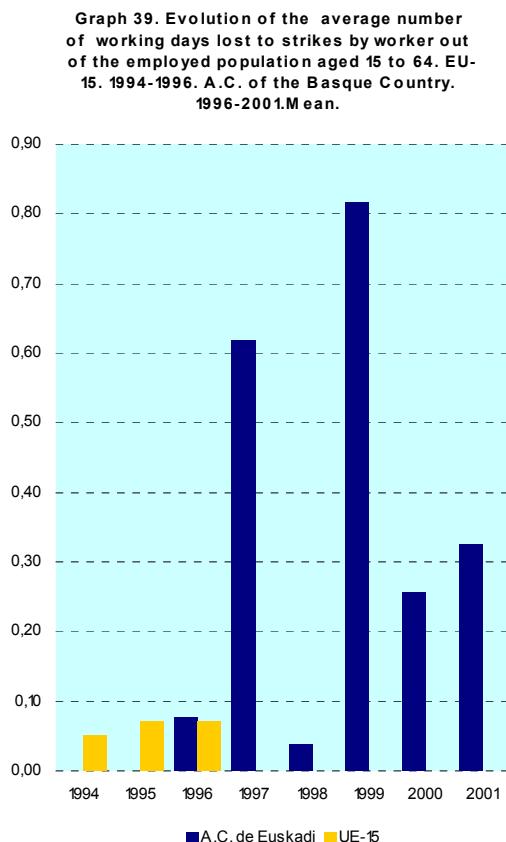
There also appear to be no comparable sources for this indicator, or at least no sources that follow homogeneous definitions, as it is not possible to explain the differences between the A.C. of the Basque Country and Spanish rates, close on 70%. Nonetheless, it could be said that there appears to be a greater tradition in collective negotiation in the European countries analysed (close to or exceeding rates of 80%), with the exception of the group of Spain, Luxembourg and the UK.

From a negative point of view, with regard to the breakdown of relationships at a determined moment between employers and workers, a battery of indicators includes the number of days lost due to labour conflicts in relation to social dialogue.

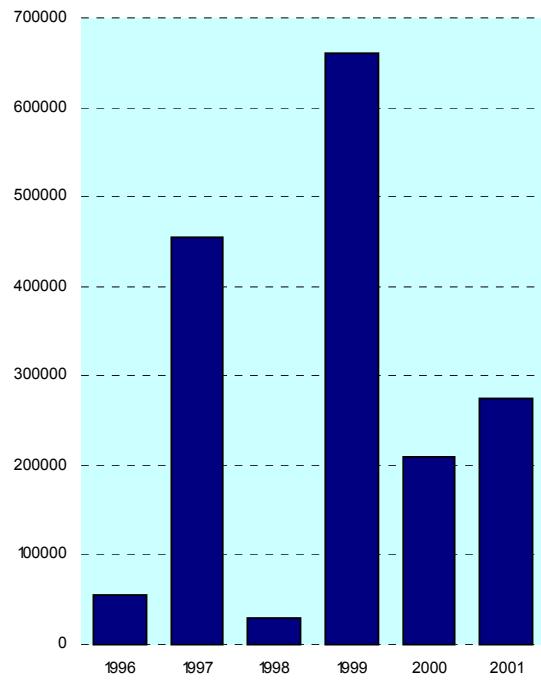
It should be said that statistics do not offer clear differences with regard to the origin or causes of collective conflicts at this moment; we really do not know if they arise in work places or economic sectors (many strikes are the result of collective agreements

themselves), or in wider calls to action where there is a conflict not only between social agents, but also on many occasions with the political powers.

The possibilities of comparison with other data from different areas is also complicated.



G. 38 Evolución de las Jornadas perdidas por huelgas. C.A. de Euskadi.1996-2001.



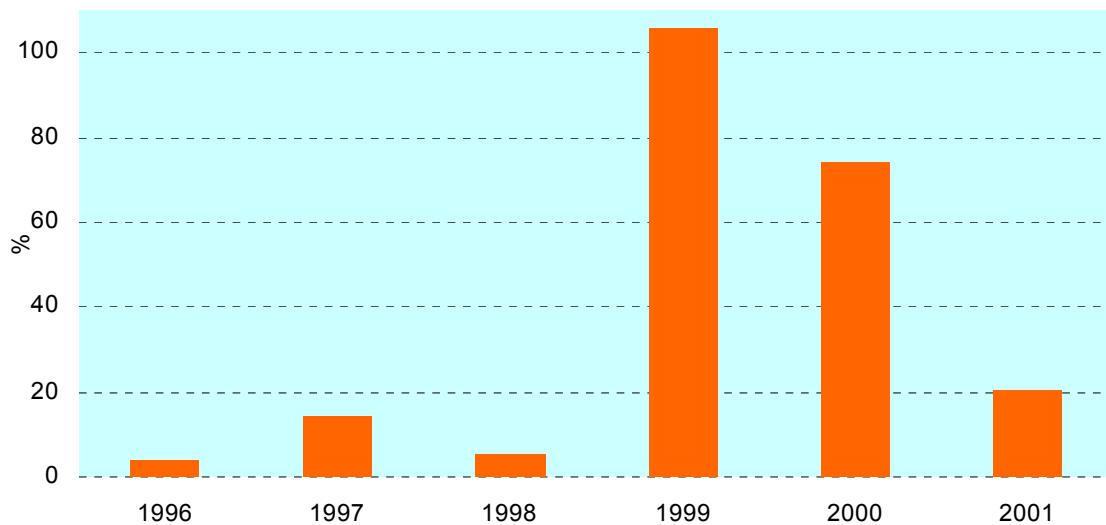
Source: UE-15, Randstad, EFILWC, The Europeanisation of Industrial relations.2002.A.C. of the Basque Country. Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Own production.

If we look at Graphs 39 and 40 we notice a great asymmetry in relation to the days lost per year. In 1997 over 453,000 working days were lost and in 1999 up to 659,000, which represented an average of 0.62 and 0.81 days lost per worker respectively. We should remember that in 1999 there was a general strike for 35 hours on May 21.

Over the years 2000 and 2001 there were fewer conflicts, as only 0.26 and 0.32 days were lost per worker on average.

The only comparable data we have with Europe for 1996, the year when the whole of the European Community last nearly eight million days due to strikes, giving an average of 0.07 days per worker, only one hundredth below the average for the A.C. of the Basque Country.

Graph 41. Evolution of the Rate of involvement in strikes by employees out of the employed population aged 16 to 64. A.C. of the Basque Country. 1996-2001.%



Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos sociales. Own production.

In order to complete the above indicators we have obtained the proportion of workers involved in collective conflicts in relation to the total number of workers aged 16 to 64. We should highlight that a worker could be counted more than once, which means we could never talk about a rate, however, we consider that it significant to get closer to the effect of labour or political-labour disagreements on people and on society.

The number of workers involved in strike situations in 1999 –854,000- was even higher than the average number of workers that year –809,300-. This means that many workers took part in over one strike that year.

The indicator for the following year came to 74% of the workers who were affected. Given that the proportion of days was significantly lower than the year before, this is a case that really affected more different workers.

In the rest of the years studied, in no case was over 20% involved.

7. Production and productivity

The circle of research indicators on Employment Quality is closed with those related to productivity and workers' standard of living. It does not seem logical to isolate work from results, both for the economy of a country and for domestic or business economies.

The battery of measures proposed by the Commission includes: average productivity per hour and worker, average annual production per worker and the annual average family standard of living, taking into account the unemployment rate and the ratio of dependence.

We will focus on productivity per hour and worker, through annual percentage increases, as they are usually more easily accessible, in addition to, obviously enabling the assessment of the evolution of the indicator. Initially, we start by reviewing real GDP increases, a macro figure which is of great interest due to how much it is used and how well it is known.

7.1 European economic growth. The point of inflection

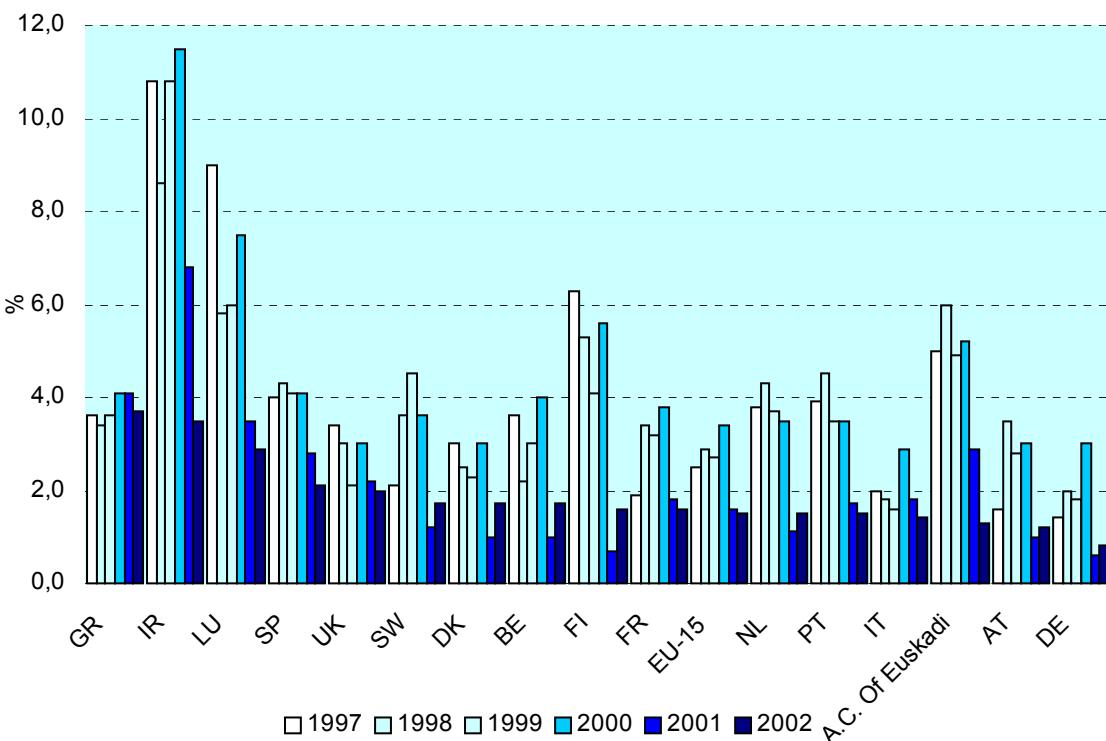
The end of the second millennium and the start of the third has meant a good time for Europeans as a whole and for practically all countries individually, from an economic point of view, as in all cases there has been strong positive growth.

However, we can clearly distinguish two periods over the six years analysed: the end of the millennium saw growth rates of almost 3% in the whole of the Union and the start of the new millennium, which continued to grow, the tempo being significantly lower – 1.6 and 1.5% in 2001 and 2002-.

Ireland had growth of nearly 11% in the first period, note that economic miracles are still possible in Europe. Luxembourg and Finland also exceeded European average growth with ease.

Similar growth rates to these countries are found in the A.C. of the Basque Country, which over the same years grew at a rate of between 5 and 6%. The Spanish economy was one percent above the European average and one point below the Basque average.

**Graph 42. Evolution of percentages of real annual growth of GDP by country.
1997-2002.%**



Source: European Commission. Employment in Europe 2002 (GDP at market prices 1995). Eustat, Economic Accounts.

2001 and the following year represented the start of a sharp correction in former growth rates: in the A.C. of the Basque Country growth fell from 5.2% in 2000 to 2.9 the following year and to 1.7% twelve months later.

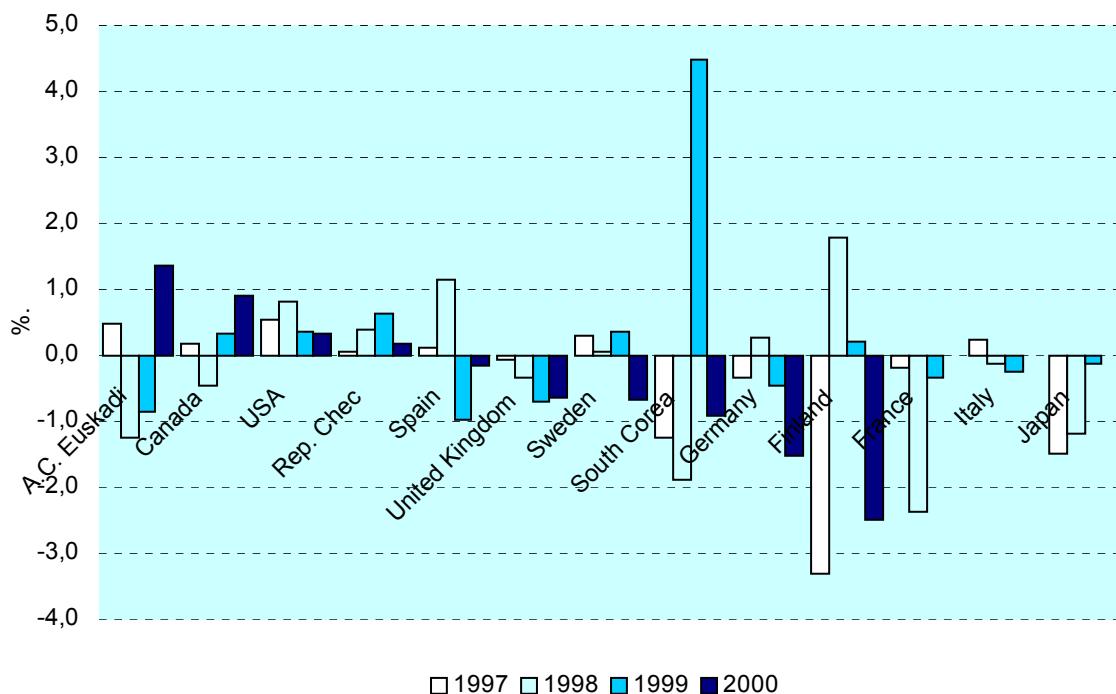
In general this trend was repeated in all countries, appearing to indicate a change in trend in economic cycles. The optimism at the summit meeting in Lisbon and many of the objectives that were established there, appear to have been questioned over recent months in the light of this new situation for the economy.

7.2 Evolution of work productivity.

Before presenting the variations in productivity, we think it is interesting to assess the changes in total hours worked, as this is clearly a good indicator of Employment Quality.

As in other cases, the calculation methods for this parameter –whether through surveys on work forces or others, or estimated through national accounting- produce a series of divergences in the totals, which in many cases cast more shade than light on the analysis. In order to avoid these difficulties, and following the trend for this section, we offer variations for the countries for which we have found information, through OECD statistics.

Graph 43. Evolution of the variations in the average number of working hours per worker / year and by country.1996-2000. %



Source:OCDE.Employment Outlook.2001.Eustat,PRA

Once we have examined the variations presented in Graph 43, without difficult we come to the conclusion that they are minimum, in many cases insignificant, in so far as they could be due to random elements.

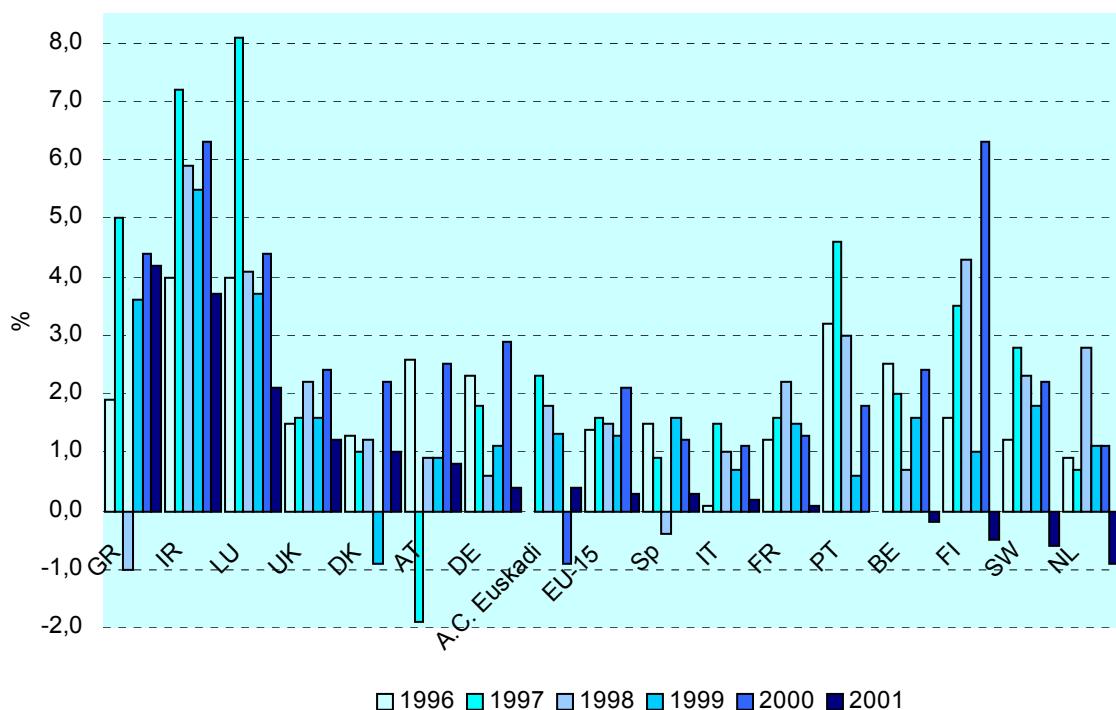
As such and taking as a reference the period from 1997 to 2000, it is possible to appreciate some trends for the 12 selected countries (information was not available for all the European countries). Thus the USA (with an average of 1877 hours in 2000) and Canada, as well as the Czech Republic maintain constant increases in their annual working hours; Sweden, except for a small decline in 2000, should also belong to this group.

Germany (1480 hours in 2000), Japan (1840 in 1999), France (1562 in 1999) and the UK (1708 in 2000) follow an inverse trend.

Spain in 1997 and above all in 1998, with a 1.2% increase (reaching 1833 hours), has positive variations which are corrected in the following two years, until returning to 1997 hours in 2000 (1812).

Annual hours in the A.C. of the Basque Country fell 1.2 and 0.8% in 1998 and 1999, recovering in 2000 (+1.3%).

**Graph 44. Evolution of the variations in productivity per working hour by country.
1996-2001. %**



Source: European Commission. Employment in Europe 2002(PIB a precios de mercado 1995). Eustat, Cuentas Económicas.

Growth in productivity per hour worked in the European Union was stable in the period from 1996 to 2001: practically rising one and a half percent each year, except in 2001 when the increase was 0.3%.

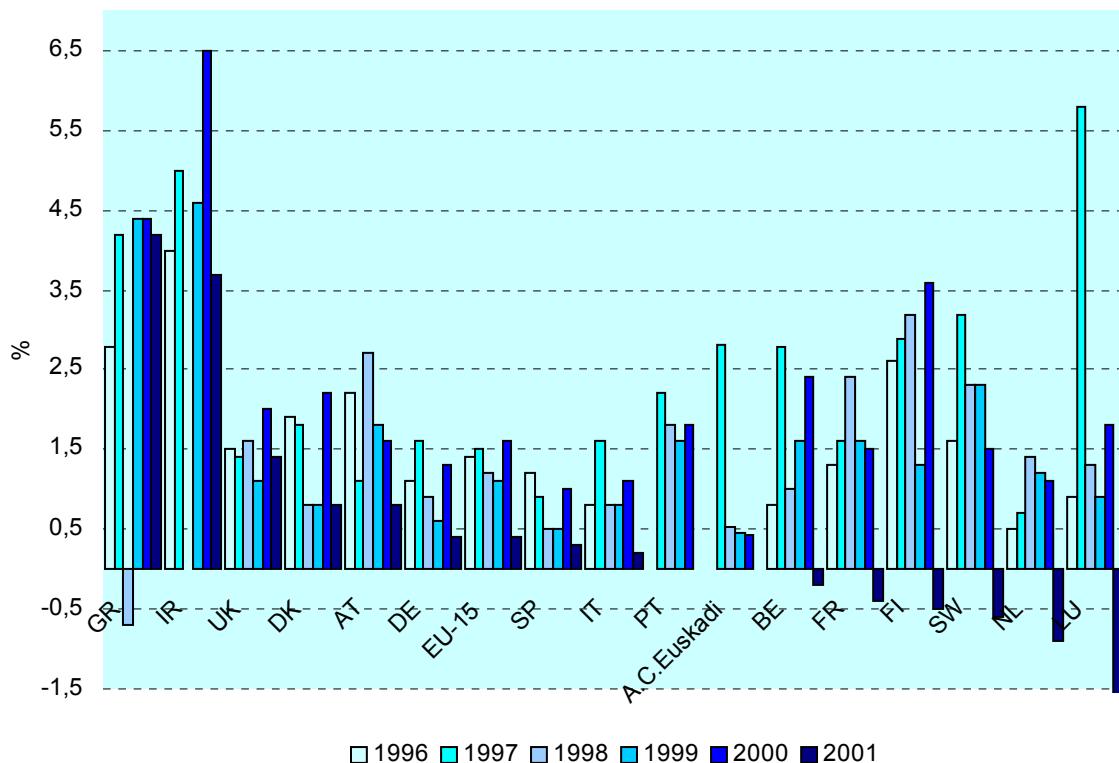
Ireland, again, stands out for increases of between 6 and 7%, Luxembourg, Finland and the UK are at some distance from the European average, as are Germany (except in 1998 and 1999) and Greece.

Spain, except in 1996 and 1999 (with growth of 1.5% and 1.6% respectively) was below the European average.

In the A.C. of the Basque Country we can see, in the four years for which information is available, above average growth in 1997 and 1998 (2.3 and 1.8%), falling to 1.3 the following year and falling by -0.9% in 2000.

We should emphasize in all cases, without exception, the increase in productivity per hour fell in 2001.

Graph 45. Evolution of the variations in productivity per person by country. 1996-2001. %



Source: European Commission. Employment in Europe 2002 (GDP at market prices 1995). Eustat, Economic Accounts.

Ireland, with positive variations of nearly 5%, Greece with 4%, Denmark and Austria with 2%, the UK and Portugal with 1.5% to 2% and Germany with 1%, are clearly above average with regard to growth in productivity per worker and year, over the whole period.

Belgium, France, Finland and Sweden also reached important growth, but obtained negative rates in 2001.

Spanish growth rates came to between half and one percent, to continue the general downward trend in the last year of the study.

Finally, the A.C. of the Basque Country registered important positive growth in 1997 (+2.8%) falling to an annual average growth of nearly half a percent, before coming to a halt in 2001.

Conclusions

In an attempt to revitalize the European Social Model developed from political and social fracture caused by World War II in a clearly optimistic economic setting that closed the second millennium, the European institutions not only presented ambitious policies and objectives in economic and social areas, but also through specific guidelines linked to performance or evolution indicators, attempted to fulfil and ensure the fulfilment of these proposals.

The objective of Lisbon 2000 to reach full employment is combined with a new concept demanded historically by workers: Employment Quality. More and better employment in a European Labour Market, which is presumed to have a high development capacity.

The Communication of the Commission to the Council, to the European Parliament, to the Economic and Social Committee and of the Regions on employment and social policies of 20 June 2001, defines the framework for investment in quality and becomes the starting point.

The concept of Employment Quality, never defined, aims to encompass areas related to employment and its immediate environment –the labour and economic market-, equality of rights –for women, elderly persons, immigrants- and the balance with family life.

This work philosophy, a mirror in which it is not always pleasant to see oneself, offers the possibility of setting concrete policies and objectives, at the same time as the rest of the countries and communities in our area. The tempo and specific measures to achieve these objectives remains in the hands of the different powers.

From the point of view of the A.C. of the Basque Country, in so far as its political and institutional framework enables the development of programmes, it is interesting to first approach the analysis and then the policies of the rest of the Europeans, also in the area of Employment Quality.

From the statistical viewpoint, we try to develop the knowledge tools to achieve not only the pertinent analyses, but also the indicators that permit the surveillance of the proposed policies.

This document is a starting point in this sense, an initial attempt to investigate a new area of study and to systematize the different information available. The results obtained are a first approach.

Focusing on the aspect of access to the Labour Market, we have found that the gap between genders, despite a greater involvement of women in the labour market, remains almost intact: in 1994 there was a 29 percent difference between the rates of female and males employment , in 2002 it was 26. Only the reduction in the distance between unemployment rates is more important: from 13 points in 1997 it fell to 8 in 2001. however, in both aspects the distance with the European average is substantial.

Both between Autonomous Communities and European countries, a dangerous trend has been detected in the increase in salary differences by gender, probably associated to the tertiarization of the economy and growth itself.

Faced with these black spots we have found other promising aspects: processes to expel older workers from the labour market seems to have slowed down or come to a halt: the employment rate for persons aged 55 to 64 rose from 28% in 1994 to 40% in 2002.

As for movements towards and within the labour market, though flow analysis, we have seen that the amount of employment has reduced temporary permanence in unemployment: 56.3% of those who were unemployed in 1997 were still in this situation in 1998, while this percentage fell to 35% between 2001 and 2002.

These changes have led to another not so positive result: if in the first period mentioned slightly over half the unemployed continued in a situation of temporary contracts – 54.3%-, between 2001 and 2002 this percentage grew to 65.1%, tending to stabilize temporality. This does not mean that the number of employees in this situation has grown, as in the last four or five years the figure has settled at around 23%.

The indicators used to look into the conciliation between work and family life, another of the key axes of Employment Quality, do not appear positive either as the little flexible or part time work that exists seems to fall more and more to females: 24% of females aged 16 and over worked in 1999 with contracts of under thirty hours per week, 20% in 2002, while in Europe this figure was 33%.

Non discrimination of maternity or paternity in access to the Labour Market, which differentiates us from the rest of European countries, indicates that a vital phase is put back in almost all cases until employment is secured. Perhaps housing linked to employment is, in our community, the true source of fertility. We might therefore question, if this is so, many pro-birth rate improvement policies.

If we approach the other fundamental dimension, the working environment and the characteristics of workers, we will see that employment rates are highest among those who have better training than those with less: 81.3% among university graduates, 74% among those with medium or professional studies and 48% among those with primary or less. If we analyse this rate over time, we will see how from 1998 to 2002, what increases the rate most are those with medium studies; this higher increase is probably due to the larger demand for technical workers with professional training. The improvement in rates for older university graduates is also important. However, when our rates are compared with European rates, we can still see a clear misuse of more and better trained human resources.

Another important aspect for a dynamic society and economy derives from the proportion of workers that follow retraining courses or courses associated to work. Although the Basque rate of 6% is only one percent below the European average, it is far from the 20% for British or Finish workers.

The so called intrinsic quality of work, which focuses on the subjective aspects of employment, does not offer a flattering diagnosis: by Autonomous Community we are fourth in workers who are least satisfied with work and the fourth in workers who feel less stressed out. We are sixth in finding the work we carry out less attractive.

From 1996 to 2002 employment increased 23% and the number of accidents by 40%. While the average number of accidents in the European Union came to 4,000 per 100,000 workers, the A.C. of the Basque Country has a rate of 5,700, only superseded in Europe by the Spanish rate of 7,000 for 1999.

The rate of professional illnesses has also increased substantially: from 1 per 100,000 in 1996 to 2.7 in 2002.

Employment protection, measured by the rate of coverage, although it has recovered over recent years to reach 45% of unemployed, is still far from European rates –60% for females and 80% for males-.

The regulation of life and labour relations through collective agreements seems to have a longer tradition in other European countries, despite the fact that an important increase has occurred in our community over recent years. If in 1996 the percentage of workers with agreements was 12%, five years later it has reached 36%.

The last area that closes the circle of Employment Quality is focused on the analysis of productivity linked, above all, to work.

The current Labour Market, and consequently the European labour market, cannot be understood without strong growth in GDP at the end of the millennium. Average growth in the EU came to 3%, while in the A.C. of the Basque Country it grew to 5 and 6%. 2000 and 2001 saw the start of a reduction in growth: falling to 2.9 and 1.7%, respectively. These reductions affected almost all European countries, even more sharply in some cases.

From 1997 to 1999 productivity per hour worked in the A.C. of the Basque Country grew at a higher rate than the European average: 2.3%, 1.8% and 1.3%, but in 2000 there was a dual 0.9% decrease which was joined in 2001 by other European countries such as Sweden, Holland and Finland.

Nevertheless, average growth in productivity per person did not turn negative and has remained at nearly half a percent per year.

Without wishing to examine, but with the healthy intention of emulating, we have joined the other European countries in an aim to presenting our current situation and the road we have to travel, which may quite often turn out confusing.

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