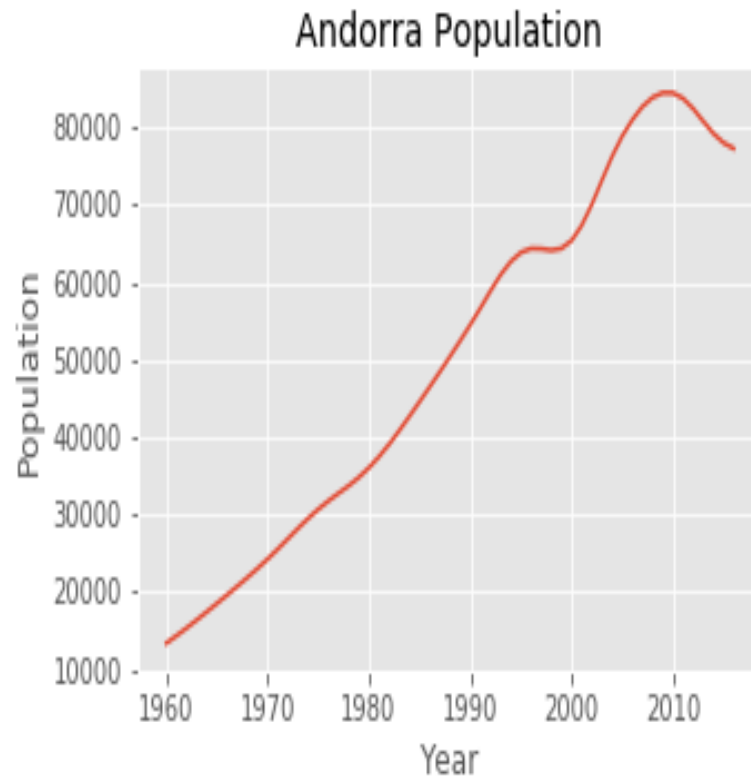


Andorra



Andorra (listen); Catalan: [anˈdor], locally [anˈdɔra]), officially the Principality of Andorra (Catalan: Principat d'Andorra), also called the Principality of the Valleys of Andorra (Catalan: Principat de les Valls d'Andorra), is a sovereign landlocked microstate on the Iberian Peninsula, in the eastern Pyrenees, bordered by France in the north and Spain in the south. Created under a charter in 988, the present principality was formed in 1278. It is known as a principality as it is a diarchy headed by two Co-Princes: the Catholic Bishop of Urgell in Spain and the President of France. Andorra is the sixth-smallest nation in Europe, having an area of 468 km² (181 sq mi) and a population of approximately 77,281. Andorra is the 16th-smallest country in the world by land and 11th-smallest country by population. Its capital Andorra la Vella is the highest capital city in Europe, at an elevation of 1,023 metres (3,356 feet) above sea level. The official language is Catalan, although Spanish, Portuguese, and French are also commonly spoken. Andorra's tourism services an estimated 10.2 million visitors annually. It is not a member of the European Union, but the euro is the official currency. It has been a member of the United Nations since 1993. In 2013, the people of Andorra had the highest life expectancy in the world at 81 years, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study. == Etymology == The origin of the word Andorra is unknown, although several hypotheses have been formulated. The oldest derivation of the word Andorra is from the Greek historian Polybius (The Histories III, 35, 1) who describes the Andosins, an Iberian Pre-Roman tribe, as historically located in the valleys of Andorra and facing the Carthaginian army in its passage through the Pyrenees during the Punic Wars. The word Andosini or Andosins (Ἀνδοσίνους) may derive from the Basque handia whose meaning is "big" or "giant". The Andorran toponymy shows evidence of Basque language in the area. Another theory suggests that the word Andorra may derive from the old word Anorra that contains the Basque word ur (water). Another theory suggests that Andorra may derive from Arabic al-durra, meaning "The forest" (الدرة). When the Moors colonized the Iberian Peninsula, the valleys of the Pyrenees were covered by large tracts of forest, and other regions and towns, also administered by Muslims, received this designation. Other theories suggest that the term derives from the

Navarro-Aragonese *andurrial*, which means "land covered with bushes" or "scrubland". The folk etymology holds that Charlemagne had named the region as a reference to the Biblical Canaanite valley of Endor or Andor (where the Midianites had been defeated), a name also bestowed by his heir and son Louis le Debonnaire after defeating the Moors in the "wild valleys of Hell".

== History ==

=== Prehistory ===

La Balma de la Margineda found by archaeologists at Sant Julia de Loria was the first temporal settlement in 9,500 BC as a passing place between the two sides of the Pyrenees. The seasonal camp was perfectly located for hunting and fishing by the groups of hunter-gatherers from Ariege and Segre. During the Neolithic Age the group of humans moved to the Valley of Madriu (nowadays Natural Parc located in Escaldes-Engordany declared UNESCO World Heritage Site) as a permanent camp in 6640 BC. The population of the valley grew cereals, raised domestic livestock and developed a commercial trade with people from the Segre and Occitania. Other archaeological deposits include the Tombs of Segudet (Ordino) and Feixa del Moro (Sant Julia de Loria) both dated in 490–4300 BC as an example of the Urn culture in Andorra. The model of small settlements begin to evolved as a complex urbanism during the Bronze Age. Metallurgical items of iron, ancient coins and relicaries can be found in the ancient sanctuaries scattered around the country. The sanctuary of Roc de les Bruixes (Stone of the Witches) is maybe the most important archeological complex of this Age in Andorra, located in the parish of Canillo, about the rituals of funerals, ancient scripture and engraved stone murals.

=== The Iberian and Roman Andorra ===

The inhabitants of the valleys were traditionally associated with the Iberians and historically located in Andorra as the Iberian tribe Andosins or Andosini (Ἀνδοσίνων) during the 7th and 2nd centuries BC. Influenced by Aquitanias, Basque and Iberian languages the locals developed some current toponyms. Early writings and documents relating this group of people goes back to the second century BC by the Greek writer Polybius in his Histories during the Punic Wars. Some of the most significant remains of this era are the Castle of the Roc d'Enclar (part of the early Marca Hispanica), l'Anxiu in Les Escaldes and Roc de L'Oral in Encamp. The presence of Roman influence is recorded from the 2nd century BC to the 5th century AD. The places found with more Roman presence are in Camp Vermell (Red Field) in Sant Julia de Loria and in some places in Encamp as well as in the Roc d'Enclar. People continued trading, mainly with wine and cereals, with the Roman cities of Urgellet (nowaday La Seu d'Urgell) and all across Segre through the Via Romana Strata Ceretana (also known as Strata Confluetana).

=== The Visigoths and Carolingians: the legend of Charlemagne ===

After the fall of the Roman Empire Andorra came under the influence of the Visigoths, not remotely from the Kingdom of Toledo, but locally from the Diocese of Urgell. The Visigoths remained in the valleys for 200 years, during which time Christianity spread. When the Muslim Empire and its conquest of the Iberian Peninsula replaced the ruling Visigoths, Andorra was sheltered from these invaders by the Franks. Tradition holds that Charles the Great (Charlemagne) granted a charter to the Andorran people for contingent of five thousand soldiers under the command of Marc Almugaver, in return for fighting against the Moors near Porté-Puymorens (Cerdanya). Andorra remained part of the Marca Hispanica of the Frankish Empire being part of the territory the Count of Urgell and eventually by the bishop of the Diocese of Urgell. Also tradition holds that it was guaranteed by the son of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, writing the Carta de Poblament or a local municipal charter circa 805. In 988, Borrell II, Count of Urgell, gave the Andorran valleys to the Diocese of Urgell in exchange for land in Cerdanya. Since then the Bishop of Urgell, based in Seu d'Urgell, has been Co-prince of Andorra. The first document that mentions Andorra as a territory is the Acta de Consagració i Dotació de la Catedral de la Seu d'Urgell (Deed of Consecration and Endowment of the Cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell). The old document dated from 839 depicts the six old parishes of the Andorran valleys and therefore the administrative division of the country.

=== Medieval Age: The Paréages and the founding of the Co-Principality ===

Before 1095, Andorra did not have any type of military protection and the Bishop of Urgell, who knew that the Count of Urgell wanted to reclaim the Andorran valleys, asked the Lord of Caboet for help and protection. In 1095 the Lord of Caboet and the Bishop of Urgell signed under oath a declaration of their co-sovereignty over Andorra. Arnalda, daughter of Arnau of Caboet, married the Viscount of Castellbò and both became Viscounts of Castellbò and Cerdanya. Years later their daughter, Ermessenda, married Roger Bernat II, the French Count of Foix. They became Roger Bernat II and Ermessenda I, Counts of Foix, Viscounts of Castellbò and Cerdanya, and co-sovereigns of Andorra (shared with the Bishop of Urgell). In the 13th century, a military dispute arose between the Bishop of Urgell and the Count of Foix as aftermath of the Cathar Crusade. The conflict was resolved in 1278 with the mediation of the king of Aragon, Pere II between the Bishop and the Count, by the signing of the first paréage which provided that Andorra's sovereignty be shared between the count of Foix (whose title would

ultimately transfer to the French head of state) and the Bishop of Urgell, in Catalonia. This gave the principality its territory and political form. A second *paréage* was signed in 1288 after a dispute when the Count of Foix ordered the construction of a castle in Roc d'Enclar. The document was ratified by the noble notary Jaume Orig of Puigcerdà and the construction of military structures in the country was prohibited. In 1364 the political organization of the country named the figure of the *syndic* (now spokesman and president of the parliament) as representative of the Andorrans to their co-princes making possible the creation of local departments (*comuns*, *quarts* and *veïnats*). After being ratified by the Bishop Francesc Tovia and the Count Jean I, the *Consell de la Terra* or *Consell General de les Valls* (General Council of the Valleys) was founded in 1419, the second oldest parliament in Europe. The *syndic* Andreu d'Alàs and the General Council organized the creation of the Justice Courts (*La Cort de Justicia*) in 1433 with the Co-Princes and the collection of taxes like *foc i lloc* (literally fire and site, a national tax active since then). Although we can find remains of ecclesiastical works dating before the 9th century (*Sant Vicenç d'Enclar* or *Església de Santa Coloma*), Andorra developed exquisite Romanesque Art during the 9th through 14th centuries, as much in the construction of churches, bridges, religious murals and statues of the Virgin and Child (being the most important the *Our Lady of Meritxell*). Nowadays, the Romanesque buildings that form part of Andorra's cultural heritage stand out in a remarkable way, with an emphasis on *Església de Sant Esteve*, *Sant Joan de Caselles*, *Església de Sant Miquel d'Engolasters*, *Sant Martí de la Cortinada* and the medieval bridges of *Margineda* and *Escalls* among many others. While the Catalan Pyrenees were embryonic of the Catalan language at the end of the 11th century Andorra was influenced by the appearance of that language where it was adopted by proximity and influence even decades before it was expanded by the rest of the Kingdom of Aragon. The local population based its economy during the Middle Ages in the livestock and agriculture, as well as in furs and weavers. Later, at the end of the 11th century, the first foundries of iron began to appear in Northern Parishes like *Ordino*, much appreciated by the master artisans who developed the art of the forges, an important economic activity in the country from the 15th century. === 16th to 18th centuries === In 1601 the *Tribunal de Corts* (High Court of Justice) was created as a result of Huguenot rebellions from France, Inquisition courts coming from Spain and indigenous witchcraft experienced in the country due to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. With the passage of time, the co-title to Andorra passed to the kings of Navarre. After Henry of Navarre became King Henry IV of France, he issued an edict in 1607, that established the head of the French state and the Bishop of Urgell as Co-Princes of Andorra. During 1617 communal councils form the *sometent* (popular militia or army) to deal with the rise of *bandolerisme* (brigandage) and the *Consell de la Terra* was defined and structured in terms of its composition, organization and competences current today . Andorra continues with the same economic system that it had during the 12th-14th centuries with a large production of metallurgy (*fargues*, a system similar to *Farga catalana*) and with the introduction of tobacco circa 1692 and import trade. The fair of *Andorra la Vella* was ratified by the co-princes in 1371 and 1448 being the most important annual national festival commercially ever since. The country had a unique and experienced guild of weavers, *Confraria de Paraires i Teixidors*, located in *Escaldes-Engordany* founded in 1604 taking advantage of the thermal waters of the area. By the time the country constitutes the social system of *prohoms* (wealthy society) and *casalers* (rest of the population with smaller economic acquisition), deriving to the tradition of *pubilla* and *hereu*. Three centuries after its foundation the *Consell de la Terra* locates its headquarters and the *Tribunal de Corts* in *Casa de la Vall* in 1702. The manor house built in 1580 served as a noble fortress of the *Busquets* family. Inside the parliament was placed the *Closet of the six keys* (*Armari de les sis claus*) representative of each Andorran parish and where the Andorran constitution and other documents and laws were kept later on. In both *Guerra dels Segadors* and *Guerra de Sucesión Española* conflicts, the Andorran people (although with the statement neutral country) supported the Catalans who saw their rights reduced in 1716. The reaction was the promotion of Catalan writings in Andorra, with cultural works such as the *Book of Privileges* (*Llibre de Privilegis* de 1674), *Manual Digest* (1748) by *Antoni Fiter i Rossell* or the *Polità andorrà* (1763) by *Antoni Puig*. === 19th century: the New Reform and the Andorran Question === After the French Revolution, in 1809, Napoleon I reestablished the Co-Principate and deleted the French medieval tithe. However, in 1812–13, the First French Empire annexed Catalonia during the Peninsular War (*Guerra del francès*). They divided it into four *départements*, with Andorra being made part of the district of *Puigcerdà* (*département* of *Sègre*). In 1814 a royal decree reestablished the independence and economy of Andorra. During this period, Andorra's late medieval institutions and rural culture remained largely unchanged. In 1866 the *syndic* *Guillem d'Areny-Plandolit* led the reformist group in a Council General of 24 members, elected by

suffrage limited to heads of families, replaced the aristocratic oligarchy that previously ruled the state. The New Reform (Nova Reforma or Pla de Reforma) began after being ratified by both Co-Princes and established the basis of the constitution and symbols (such as the tricolor flag) of Andorra. A new service economy arose as a demand of the inhabitants of the valleys and began to build infrastructures such as hotels, spa resorts, roads and telegraph lines. The authorities of the Co-Princes (veguer) banned casinos and betting houses throughout the country by establishing an economic conflict with the demand of the Andorran people. The conflict led to the so-called Revolution of 1881 or Troubles of Andorra, when revolutionaries assaulted the house of the syndic during 8 December 1880 and established the Provisional Revolutionary Council led by Joan Pla i Calvo and Pere Baró i Mas, who granted the construction of casinos and spas to foreign companies. During 7 and 9 June 1881, the loyalists of Canillo and Encamp reconquered the parishes of Ordino and Massana by establishing contact with the revolutionary forces in Escaldes-Engordany. After a day of combat finally the Treaty of the Bridge of Escalls was signed the 10 of June. The Council was replaced and new elections were held. But the economic situation worsened, as society was divided over the Qüestió d'Andorra (the Andorran Question in relation to the Eastern Question). The struggles continued between pro-bishops, pro-French and nationalists who derived the troubles of Canillo in 1882 and 1885. Andorra participated in the cultural movement of the Catalan Renaixença. Between 1882 and 1887 the first academic schools were formed where trilingualism coexists with the knowledge of the official language, Catalan. Some romantic authors from both France and Spain reported the awakening of the national consciousness of the country. Jacint Verdaguer lived in Ordino during the 1880s where he wrote and share works related to the Renaixença with Joaquim de Riba, writer and photographer. Fromental Halévy, for his part, had already premiered in 1848 the opera *Le Val d'Andorre* of great success in Europe, where the national consciousness of the valleys during the Peninsular War was exposed in the romantic work. === 20th century: Modernization of the country and the Constitutional Andorra === Andorra declared war on Imperial Germany during World War I, but did not take part directly in the fighting. It is known that some Andorrans volunteered to take part in the conflict as part of the French Legions. It remained in an official state of belligerency until 1958 as it was not included in the Treaty of Versailles. In 1933, France occupied Andorra following social unrest which occurred before elections due the Revolution of 1933 and the FHASA strikes (Vagues de FHASA); the revolt led by Joves Andorrans (a labour union group related to the Spanish CNT and FAI) called for political reforms, the universal suffrage vote of all Andorrans and acted in defense of the rights of local and foreign workers during the construction of FHASA's hydroelectric power station in Encamp. The 5th April 1933 Joves Andorrans took the Andorran Parliament under their custody in rebellion to their requests. These actions were preceded by the arrival of Colonel René-Jules Baulard with 50 gendarmes and the mobilization of 200 local militias or sometent led by the Síndic Francesc Cairat. On 12 July 1934, adventurer Boris Skossyreff issued a proclamation in Urgell, declaring himself "Boris I, King of Andorra", simultaneously declaring war on the Bishop of Urgell. He was arrested by the Spanish authorities on 20 July and ultimately expelled from Spain. From 1936 until 1940, a French military detachment was garrisoned in Andorra to secure the principality against disruption from the Spanish Civil War and Francoist Spain. Francoist troops reached the Andorran border in the later stages of the war. During World War II, Andorra remained neutral and was an important smuggling route between Vichy France and Spain. Given its relative isolation, Andorra has existed outside the mainstream of European history, with few ties to countries other than France, Spain and Portugal. In recent times, however, its thriving tourist industry along with developments in transport and communications have removed the country from its isolation. Since 1976 the country sees the need to reform Andorran institutions due to the anachronisms in the field of sovereignty, human rights and the balance of powers as well as the need to adapt legislation to modern demands. In 1982 a first separation of powers took place when instituting the Govern d'Andorra, under the name of Executive Board (Consell Executiu), chaired by the first prime minister Òscar Ribas Reig with the approval of the Co-Princes. In 1989 the Principality signed an agreement with the European Economic Community to regularize trade relations. Its political system was modernized in 1993 after the Andorran constitutional referendum, when the constitution was drafted by the Co-Princes and the General Council and approved on 14 March by 74.2% of voters, with a 76% turnout. The first elections under the new constitution were held later in the year. The same year Andorra became a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. == Politics == Andorra is a parliamentary co-principality with the President of France and the Catholic Bishop of Urgell (Catalonia, Spain) as Co-Princes. This peculiarity makes the President of France, in his capacity as Prince of Andorra, an elected reigning monarch, although he is not elected

by a popular vote of the Andorran people. The politics of Andorra take place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democracy, whereby the Head of Government is the chief executive, and of a pluriform multi-party system. The current Head of Government is Antoni Martí of the Democrats for Andorra (DA). Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both government and parliament. The Parliament of Andorra is known as the General Council. The General Council consists of between 28 and 42 Councillors. The Councillors serve for four-year terms, and elections are held between the 30th and 40th days following the dissolution of the previous Council. Half are elected in equal numbers by each of the seven administrative parishes, and the other half of the Councillors are elected in a single national constituency. Fifteen days after the election, the Councillors hold their inauguration. During this session, the Syndic General, who is the head of the General Council, and the Subsyndic General, his assistant, are elected. Eight days later, the Council convenes once more. During this session the Head of Government is chosen from among the Councillors. Candidates can be proposed by a minimum of one-fifth of the Councillors. The Council then elects the candidate with the absolute majority of votes to be Head of Government. The Syndic General then notifies the Co-Princes, who in turn appoint the elected candidate as the Head of Government of Andorra. The General Council is also responsible for proposing and passing laws. Bills may be presented to the Council as Private Members' Bills by three of the local Parish Councils jointly or by at least one tenth of the citizens of Andorra. The Council also approves the annual budget of the principality. The government must submit the proposed budget for parliamentary approval at least two months before the previous budget expires. If the budget is not approved by the first day of the next year, the previous budget is extended until a new one is approved. Once any bill is approved, the Syndic General is responsible for presenting it to the Co-Princes so that they may sign and enact it. If the Head of Government is not satisfied with the Council, he may request that the Co-Princes dissolve the Council and order new elections. In turn, the Councillors have the power to remove the Head of Government from office. After a motion of censure is approved by at least one-fifth of the Councillors, the Council will vote and if it receives the absolute majority of votes, the Head of Government is removed.

== Law and criminal justice == The judiciary is composed of the Magistrates Court, the Criminal Law Court, the High Court of Andorra, and the Constitutional Court. The High Court of Justice is composed of five judges: one appointed by the Head of Government, one each by the Co-Princes, one by the Syndic General, and one by the Judges and Magistrates. It is presided over by the member appointed by the Syndic General and the judges hold office for six-year terms. The Magistrates and Judges are appointed by the High Court, as is the President of the Criminal Law Court. The High Court also appoints members of the Office of the Attorney General. The Constitutional Court is responsible for interpreting the Constitution and reviewing all appeals of unconstitutionality against laws and treaties. It is composed of four judges, one appointed by each of the Co-Princes and two by the General Council. They serve eight-year terms. The Court is presided over by one of the Judges on a two-year rotation so that each judge at one point will preside over the Court.

== Foreign relations, defence, and security == Andorra does not have its own armed forces, although there is a small ceremonial army. Responsibility for defending the nation rests primarily with France and Spain. However, in case of emergencies or natural disasters, the Sometent (an alarm) is called and all able-bodied men between 21 and 60 of Andorran nationality must serve. This is why all Andorrans, and especially the head of each house (usually the eldest able-bodied man of a house) should, by law, keep a rifle, even though the law also states that the police will offer a firearm in case of need. Andorra is a full member of the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and has a special agreement with the European Union (EU).

=== Military === Andorra has a small army, which has historically been raised or reconstituted at various dates, but has never in modern times amounted to a standing army. The basic principle of Andorran defence is that all able-bodied men are available to fight if called upon by the sounding of the Sometent. Being a landlocked country, Andorra has no navy. Prior to World War I, Andorra maintained an armed force of about 600 part-time militiamen. This body was not liable for service outside the principality and was commanded by two officials (viguiers) appointed by France and the Bishop of Urgell. Despite not being involved in any fighting during the First World War, Andorra was technically the longest combatant, as the country was left out of the Versailles Peace Conference, technically remaining at war with Germany from its original declaration of war in 1914 until 24 September 1958 when Andorra officially declared peace with Germany. In the modern era, the army has consisted of a very small body of volunteers willing to undertake ceremonial duties. Uniforms were handed down from generation to generation within families and communities. The army's role in internal security was largely taken over by the

formation of the Police Corps of Andorra in 1931. Brief civil disorder associated with the elections of 1933 led to assistance being sought from the French National Gendarmerie, with a detachment resident in Andorra for two months under the command of René-Jules Baulard. The Andorran Army was reformed in the following year, with eleven soldiers appointed to supervisory roles. The force consisted of six Corporals, one for each parish (although there are currently seven parishes, there were only six until 1978), plus four junior staff officers to co-ordinate action, and a commander with the rank of major. It was the responsibility of the six corporals, each in his own parish, to be able to raise a fighting force from among the able-bodied men of the parish. Today a small, twelve-man ceremonial unit remains the only permanent section of the Andorran Army, but all able-bodied men remain technically available for military service, with a requirement for each family to have access to a firearm. The army has not fought for more than 700 years, and its main responsibility is to present the flag of Andorra at official ceremonial functions. According to Marc Forné Molné, Andorra's military budget is strictly from voluntary donations, and the availability of full-time volunteers. The myth that all members of the Andorran Army are ranked as officers is popularly maintained in many works of reference. In reality, all those serving in the permanent ceremonial reserve hold ranks as officers, or non-commissioned officers, because the other ranks are considered to be the rest of the able-bodied male population, who may still be called upon by the Sometent to serve, although such a call has not been made in modern times. === Police Corps === Andorra maintains a small but modern and well-equipped internal police force, with around 240 police officers supported by civilian assistants. The principal services supplied by the corps are uniformed community policing, criminal detection, border control, and traffic policing. There are also small specialist units including police dogs, mountain rescue, and a bomb disposal team. ===== GIPA ===== The Grup d'Intervenció Policia d'Andorra (GIPA) is a small special forces unit trained in counter-terrorism, and hostage recovery tasks. Although it is the closest in style to an active military force, it is part of the Police Corps, and not the army. As terrorist and hostage situations are a rare threat to the country, the GIPA is commonly assigned to prisoner escort duties, and at other times to routine policing. === Fire brigade === The Andorran Fire Brigade, with headquarters at Santa Coloma, operates from four modern fire stations, and has a staff of around 120 firefighters. The service is equipped with 16 heavy appliances (fire tenders, turntable ladders, and specialist four-wheel drive vehicles), four light support vehicles (cars and vans) and four ambulances. Historically, the families of the six ancient parishes of Andorra maintained local arrangements to assist each other in fighting fires. The first fire pump purchased by the government was acquired in 1943. Serious fires which lasted for two days in December 1959 led to calls for a permanent fire service, and the Andorran Fire Brigade was formed on 21 April 1961. The fire service maintains full-time cover with five fire crews on duty at any time: two at the brigade's headquarters in Santa Coloma, and one crew at each of the other three fire stations. == Geography == === Parishes === Andorra consists of seven parishes: Andorra la Vella Canillo Encamp Escaldes-Engordany La Massana Ordino Sant Julià de Lòria === Physical geography === Due to its location in the eastern Pyrenees mountain range, Andorra consists predominantly of rugged mountains, the highest being the Coma Pedrosa at 2,942 metres (9,652 ft), and the average elevation of Andorra is 1,996 metres (6,549 ft). These are dissected by three narrow valleys in a Y shape that combine into one as the main stream, the Gran Valira river, leaves the country for Spain (at Andorra's lowest point of 840 m or 2,756 ft). Andorra's land area is 468 km² (181 sq mi). Phytogeographically, Andorra belongs to the Atlantic European province of the Circumboreal Region within the Boreal Kingdom. According to the WWF, the territory of Andorra belongs to the ecoregion of Pyrenees conifer and mixed forests. === Climate === Andorra has an alpine climate and continental climate. Its higher elevation means there is, on average, more snow in winter, lower humidity, and it is slightly cooler in summer. == Economy == Tourism, the mainstay of Andorra's tiny, well-to-do economy, accounts for roughly 80% of GDP. An estimated 10.2 million tourists visit annually, attracted by Andorra's duty-free status and by its summer and winter resorts. One of the main sources of income in Andorra is tourism from ski resorts which total over 175 km (109 mi) of ski ground. The sport brings in over 10 million visitors annually and an estimated 340 million euros per year, sustaining 2,000 direct and 10,000 indirect jobs at present since 2007. The banking sector, with its tax haven status, also contributes substantially to the economy (the financial and insurance sector accounts for approximately 19% of GDP). The financial system comprises five banking groups, one specialised credit entity, 8 investment undertaking management entities, 3 asset management companies and 29 insurance companies, 14 of which are branches of foreign insurance companies authorised to operate in the principality. Agricultural production is limited, only 2% of the land is arable, and most food has to be imported. Some tobacco is grown locally. The principal

livestock activity is domestic sheep raising. Manufacturing output consists mainly of cigarettes, cigars, and furniture. Andorra's natural resources include hydroelectric power, mineral water, timber, iron ore, and lead. Andorra is not a member of the European Union, but enjoys a special relationship with it, such as being treated as an EU member for trade in manufactured goods (no tariffs) and as a non-EU member for agricultural products. Andorra lacked a currency of its own and used both the French franc and the Spanish peseta in banking transactions until 31 December 1999, when both currencies were replaced by the EU's single currency, the euro. Coins and notes of both the franc and the peseta remained legal tender in Andorra until 31 December 2002. Andorra negotiated to issue its own euro coins, beginning in 2014. Andorra has traditionally had one of the world's lowest unemployment rates. In 2009 it stood at 2.9%. Andorra has long benefited from its status as a tax haven, with revenues raised exclusively through import tariffs. However, during the European sovereign-debt crisis of the 21st century, its tourist economy suffered a decline, partly caused by a drop in the prices of goods in Spain, which undercut Andorran duty-free shopping. This led to a growth in unemployment. On 1 January 2012, a business tax of 10% was introduced, followed by a sales tax of 2% a year later, which raised just over 14 million euros in its first quarter. On 31 May 2013, it was announced that Andorra intended to legislate for the introduction of an income tax by the end of June, against a background of increasing dissatisfaction with the existence of tax havens among EU members. The announcement was made following a meeting in Paris between the Head of Government Antoni Martí and the French President and Prince of Andorra, François Hollande. Hollande welcomed the move as part of a process of Andorra "bringing its taxation in line with international standards".

== Demographics ==

Population == The population of Andorra is estimated at 77,281 (2016). The population has grown from 5,000 in 1900. Two-thirds of residents lack Andorran nationality and do not have the right to vote in communal elections. Moreover, they are not allowed to be elected as prime minister or to own more than 33% of the capital stock of a privately held company.

== Languages == The historic and official language is Catalan, a Romance language. The Andorran government encourages the use of Catalan. It funds a Commission for Catalan Toponymy in Andorra (Catalan: la Comissió de Toponímia d'Andorra), and provides free Catalan classes to assist immigrants. Andorran television and radio stations use Catalan. Because of immigration, historical links, and close geographic proximity, Spanish, Portuguese and French are also commonly spoken. Most Andorran residents can speak one or more of these, in addition to Catalan. English is less commonly spoken among the general population, though it is understood to varying degrees in the major tourist resorts. Andorra is one of only four European countries (together with France, Monaco, and Turkey) that have never signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities. According to the Observatori Social d'Andorra, the linguistic usage in Andorra is as follows:

== Religion == The population of Andorra is predominantly (88.2%) Catholic. Their patron saint is Our Lady of Meritxell. Though it is not an official state religion, the constitution acknowledges a special relationship with the Catholic Church, offering some special privileges to that group. Other Christian denominations include the Anglican Church, the Unification Church, the New Apostolic Church, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The small Muslim community is primarily made up of North African immigrants. There is a small community of Hindus and Bahá'ís, and roughly 100 Jews live in Andorra. (See History of the Jews in Andorra.)

== Statistics ==

Largest cities ==

== Education ==

Schools == Children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by law to have full-time education. Education up to secondary level is provided free of charge by the government. There are three systems of school, Andorran, French and Spanish, which use Catalan, French and Spanish languages respectively, as the main language of instruction. Parents may choose which system their children attend. All schools are built and maintained by Andorran authorities, but teachers in the French and Spanish schools are paid for the most part by France and Spain. About 50% of Andorran children attend the French primary schools, and the rest attend Spanish or Andorran schools.

== University of Andorra == The Universitat d'Andorra (UdA) is the state public university and is the only university in Andorra. It was established in 1997. The university provides first-level degrees in nursing, computer science, business administration, and educational sciences, in addition to higher professional education courses. The only two graduate schools in Andorra are the Nursing School and the School of Computer Science, the latter having a PhD programme.

==== Virtual Studies Centre ==== The geographical complexity of the country as well as the small number of students prevents the University of Andorra from developing a full academic programme, and it serves principally as a centre for virtual studies, connected to Spanish and French universities. The Virtual Studies Centre (Centre d'Estudis Virtuals) at the University runs approximately twenty different academic degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in fields including tourism, law,

Catalan philology, humanities, psychology, political sciences, audiovisual communication, telecommunications engineering, and East Asia studies. The Centre also runs various postgraduate programmes and continuing-education courses for professionals.

== Healthcare == Healthcare in Andorra is provided to all employed persons and their families by the government-run social security system, Caixa Andorrana de Seguretat Social (CASS), which is funded by employer and employee contributions in respect of salaries. The cost of healthcare is covered by CASS at rates of 75% for out-patient expenses such as medicines and hospital visits, 90% for hospitalisation, and 100% for work-related accidents. The remainder of the costs may be covered by private health insurance. Other residents and tourists require full private health insurance. The main hospital, Meritxell, is in Escaldes-Engordany. There are also 12 primary health care centres in various locations around the principality.

== Transport == Until the 20th century, Andorra had very limited transport links to the outside world, and development of the country was affected by its physical isolation. Even now, the nearest major airports at Toulouse and Barcelona are both three hours' drive from Andorra. Andorra has a road network of 279 km (173 mi), of which 76 km (47 mi) is unpaved. The two main roads out of Andorra la Vella are the CG-1 to the Spanish border, and the CG-2 to the French border via the Envalira Tunnel near El Pas de la Casa. Bus services cover all metropolitan areas and many rural communities, with services on most major routes running half-hourly or more frequently during peak travel times. There are frequent long-distance bus services from Andorra to Barcelona and Toulouse, plus a daily tour from the former city. Bus services are mostly run by private companies, but some local ones are operated by the government. There are no airports for fixed-wing aircraft within Andorra's borders but there are, however, heliports in La Massana (Camí Heliport), Arinsal and Escaldes-Engordany with commercial helicopter services and an airport located in the neighbouring Spanish comarca of Alt Urgell, 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) south of the Andorran-Spanish border. Since July 2015, Andorra–La Seu d'Urgell Airport has operated commercial flights to Madrid and Palma de Mallorca, and is the main hub for Air Andorra and Andorra Airlines. Nearby airports located in Spain and France provide access to international flights for the principality. The nearest airports are at Perpignan, France (156 kilometres or 97 miles from Andorra) and Lleida, Spain (160 kilometres or 99 miles from Andorra). The largest nearby airports are at Toulouse, France (165 kilometres or 103 miles from Andorra) and Barcelona, Spain (215 kilometres or 134 miles from Andorra). There are hourly bus services from both Barcelona and Toulouse airports to Andorra. The nearest railway station is L'Hospitalet-près-l'Andorre 10 km (6 mi) east of Andorra which is on the 1,435 mm (4 ft 8 1/2 in)-gauge line from Latour-de-Carol (25 km or 16 mi) southeast of Andorra, to Toulouse and on to Paris by the French high-speed trains. This line is operated by the SNCF. Latour-de-Carol has a scenic 1,000 mm (3 ft 3 3/8 in) metre gauge trainline to Villefranche-de-Conflent, as well as the SNCF's 1,435 mm gauge line connecting to Perpignan, and the RENFE's 1,668 mm (5 ft 5 21/32 in) -gauge line to Barcelona. There are also direct Intercités de Nuit trains between L'Hospitalet-près-l'Andorre and Paris on certain dates.

== Media and telecommunications == In Andorra, mobile and fixed telephone and internet services are operated exclusively by the Andorran national telecommunications company, SOM, also known as Andorra Telecom (STA). The same company also manages the technical infrastructure for national broadcasting of digital television and radio. By the end of 2010, it was planned that every home in the country would have fibre-to-the-home for internet access at a minimum speed of 100 Mbit/s, and the availability was complete in June 2012. There is only one Andorran television station, Ràdio i Televisió d'Andorra (RTVA). Radio Nacional d'Andorra operates two radio stations, Radio Andorra and Andorra Música. There are three national newspapers, *Diari d'Andorra*, *El Periòdic d'Andorra*, and *Bondia* as well as several local newspapers. There is also an amateur radio society. Additional TV and radio stations from Spain and France are available via digital terrestrial television and IPTV.

== Culture == The official and historic language is Catalan. Thus the culture is Catalan, with its own specificity. Andorra is home to folk dances like the contrapàs and marratxa, which survive in Sant Julià de Lòria especially. Andorran folk music has similarities to the music of its neighbours, but is especially Catalan in character, especially in the presence of dances such as the sardana. Other Andorran folk dances include contrapàs in Andorra la Vella and Saint Anne's dance in Escaldes-Engordany. Andorra's national holiday is Our Lady of Meritxell Day, 8 September. American folk artist Malvina Reynolds, intrigued by its defence budget of \$4.90, wrote a song "Andorra". Pete Seeger added verses, and sang "Andorra" on his 1962 album *The Bitter and the Sweet*.

== Sports == Andorra is famous for the practice of Winter Sports. Popular sports played in Andorra include football, rugby union, basketball and roller hockey. In roller hockey Andorra usually plays in CERH Euro Cup and in FIRS Roller Hockey World Cup. In 2011, Andorra was the host country to the 2011 European

League Final Eight. The country is represented in association football by the Andorra national football team. However, the team has had little success internationally because of Andorra's small population. Football is governed in Andorra by the Andorran Football Federation - founded in 1994, it organizes the national competitions of association football (Primera Divisió, Copa Constitució and Supercopa) and futsal. Andorra was admitted to UEFA and FIFA in the same year, 1996. FC Andorra, a club based in Andorra la Vella founded in 1942, compete in the Spanish football league system. Rugby is a traditional sport in Andorra, mainly influenced by the popularity in southern France. The Andorra national rugby union team, nicknamed "Els Isards", has impressed on the international stage in rugby union and rugby sevens. VPC Andorra XV is a rugby team based in Andorra la Vella actually playing in the French championship. Basketball popularity has increased in the country since the 1990s, when the Andorran team BC Andorra played in the top league of Spain (Liga ACB). After 18 years the club returned to the top league in 2014. Other sports practised in Andorra include cycling, volleyball, judo, Australian Rules football, handball, swimming, gymnastics, tennis and motorsports. In 2012, Andorra raised its first national cricket team and played a home match against the Dutch Fellowship of Fairly Odd Places Cricket Club, the first match played in the history of Andorra at an altitude of 1,300 metres (4,300 ft). Andorra first participated at the Olympic Games in 1976. The country has also appeared in every Winter Olympic Games since 1976. Andorra competes in the Games of the Small States of Europe being twice the host country in 1991 and 2005. As part of the Catalan cultural ambit, Andorra is home to a team of castellers, or Catalan human tower builders. The Castellers d'Andorra, based in the town of Santa Coloma d'Andorra, are recognized by the Coordinadora de Colles Castelleres de Catalunya, the governing body of castells. === Major achievements === Ariadna Tudel Cuberes and Sophie Dusautoir Bertrand earned the bronze medal in the women's team competition at the 2009 European Championship of Ski Mountaineering. Joan Verdu Sanchez earned a bronze medal in Alpine Skiing at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympics. In 2015, Marc Oliveras earned a silver medal in Alpine Skiing at the 2015 Winter Universiade, while Carmina Pallas earned a silver and a bronze medal in the same competition. == See also == Index of Andorra-related articles Outline of Andorra Bibliography of Andorra == References == == External links == Govern d'Andorra – Official governmental site (in Catalan) "Andorra". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. Portals to the World from the United States Library of Congress Andorra from UCB Libraries GovPubs Andorra at Curlie (based on DMOZ) Andorra from the BBC News Andorra – Guía, turismo y de viajes History of Andorra: Primary Documents from EuroDocs A New Path for Andorra – slideshow by The New York Times Geographic data related to Andorra at OpenStreetMap Wikimedia Atlas of Andorra