



Religion

Population

Area

- Christians : **90.8%**
- Agnostics : **6.4%**
- Muslims : **1.4%**
- Others : **1.4%**

69,200

468 Km²

Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

Andorra is a parliamentary democracy, which has two princes as its heads of state. The two princes are the President of France and the Bishop of Urgell, whose diocese is located in Spain.^[1]

The constitution of Andorra guarantees freedom of religion and provides that “freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in the interests of public safety, order, health or morals, or for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.”^[2]

The constitution acknowledges a special relationship with the Catholic Church, “in accordance with Andorran tradition” and “recognises the full legal capacity of the bodies of the Roman Catholic Church which have legal status in accordance with their own rules”.^[3]

The concordat of 2008 regulates relations with the Catholic Church.

The constitution provides that all persons are equal before the law and that discrimination on the grounds of religion is prohibited.^[4]

As a result of its religious status, the Catholic Church has some privileges not available to other religious groups. For instance, the government paid the salaries of foreign Catholic priests serving in local churches. However, migrants who performed religious functions for non Catholic groups were unable to obtain religious working permits and had to enter Andorra with a different immigration status.^[5]

In a report published on 22nd May 2012 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe recommended that Andorra should make certain changes to protect religious minorities. It was recommended that the country should address the lack of cemeteries for Jewish and Muslim communities in the country, create a

special status for minority religions as religions (and not merely “cultural organisations”), improve public information about minority religions in Andorra, and authorise the building of a mosque for the Muslim community!^[6]

In a follow-up report published on 9th June 2015, the ECRI did not revisit any of these recommendations or state whether or not they had been addressed.^[7] On 14th September 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe published its periodic review of Andorra. It did not note any specific concerns regarding the position of religious minorities.^[8]

Ten religious communities make up a body known as the Interfaith Dialogue Group. The Andorran National Commission for UNESCO collaborated with the group, which met periodically to discuss issues of common interest regarding religious traditions, beliefs, and tolerance.^[9]

| Incidents

In the period analysed there have been no reported incidents of violations of religious freedom in Andorra. The absence of Jewish and Muslim cemeteries remains an unresolved issue. Some time ago, representatives of these communities initiated discussions with the government about the construction of cemeteries where they could bury their dead according to their own traditions and customs. Although these communities are allowed to use existing cemeteries, there is no separate or prominent area for them. As a result, most choose to bury their dead outside the country!^[10]

Members of the Muslim community have raised concerns that religious head coverings have to be removed for photographs for official documents.^[11]

| Prospects for freedom of religion

The 2017 report of the ECRI on Andorra noted that the country had made progress in combatting discrimination by making relevant amendments to its criminal code and by addressing the issue through public education. However, there are calls for the creation of a specialised national body to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. The lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has also been identified as a flaw in the country’s legislative framework which, if addressed, might further protect the right to freedom of religion!^[12]

| Endnotes / Sources

[1] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, ‘Andorra’, International Religious Freedom Report for 2016, U.S. State Department, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[2] Andorra’s Constitution of 1993, Article 11, [constituteproject.org](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Andorra_1993.pdf?lang=en), https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Andorra_1993.pdf?lang=en, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid, Article 6

[5] Ibid.

[6] ECRI Secretariat, ECRI Report on Andorra (fourth monitoring cycle), Directorate General II – Democracy, Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/andorra/AND-CBC-IV-2012-024-ENG.pdf>, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[7] ECRI Secretariat, ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Andorra subject to Interim Follow-Up, Directorate General II – Democracy, Council of Europe,

https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/andorra/AND_IFU-IV-2015-21-ENG.pdf, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[8] Stefan Schennach, The progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (October 2014 August 2015), Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=22023&lang=en>, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[9] Andorra, U.S. Department of State, www.state.gov/documents/organization/171680.pdf, (accessed 25th April 2018).

[10] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *op. cit.*

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] ECRI Secretariat, ECRI Report on Andorra (fifth monitoring cycle), Directorate General II – Democracy, Council of Europe, [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by country/Andorra/AND-CbC-V-2017-001-ENG.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by%20country/Andorra/AND-CbC-V-2017-001-ENG.pdf), (accessed 25th April 2018).