

el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW

Hugh Elliott

AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

«The CDI is ready, we are in the administrative procedures prior to signing»

ANNA MENCOS / ALBA CLADELLAS
ANDORRA LA VELLA

Hugh Elliott is the UK ambassador to Spain and Andorra. This week he visited the Principality on the occasion of 30 years of diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Principality. During his visit he held meetings with the Head of Government, Xavier Espot, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Imma Tor, the Minister of Tourism and Commerce, Jordi Torres, and the Minister of the Presidency, Economy, Work and Housing, Conxita Marsol. From EL PERIÒDIC we spoke with him about bilateral relations, the double taxation agreement that is expected to be signed before the summer, the United Kingdom's negotiations with Spain, the European Commission and Gibraltar, and the Agreement association with the European Union.

—How are relations between the United Kingdom and the Princi-

pality of Andorra currently?

—They are very good. Now we have just celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations. The exact date was March 9th, 1994. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries to establish these diplomatic relations and we were able to celebrate on Wednesday with both the Head of Government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and many partners of the administration and civil society who work here with us, with our teams and our wonderful Honorary Consul, Fiona Dean, who helps British people when they are in difficulty. Relationships are wonderful in so many ways.

—What was the reason for your visit to the Principality of Andorra?

—My visit is due to this singular event of 30 years. Being a non-resident ambassador means I'm obviously not here all the time and we wanted to use this date to mark this important moment in the relationship be-



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tween Andorra and the UK and emphasize how important it is to us with an event of celebration and symbolism of how good the relations between both countries are. I want to thank the Government of Andorra for all its collaboration with us.

—Have you met with the British community that resides in Andorra?

— We have been talking to different members of the British community. Our Honorary Consul maintains excellent relations with this community. The official figures for 2022 were that there were 803 British citizens resident in the country. As I have been told these days, the number has grown since then, and it is a community that is very comfortable here in Andorra. In fact, there are very familiar faces, several professional cyclists live there.

—Currently, there is a youth mobility agreement with the United Kingdom and they are now processing a double taxation agreement.

—When I was here in July last year I was able to sign a youth mobility agreement which for us and I hope for Andorra is also very important because it means that young people aged 18 to 30 can apply a special visa, which is very easy and not very expensive, to go to work or stay in the United Kingdom, and the British to come to Andorra. It is a facility to strengthen personal relationships, which after all are what make relations between countries as close as possible. We have also finished and hope to sign very soon, a double taxation agreement, which is important and symbolic, because it represents how close the collaboration between our



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«[With Gibraltar] the negotiation is progressing well, there is a shared will to reach an agreement»

administrations is. The CDI is ready, we are in the administrative procedures preparatory to the signature. I will push these procedures forward on the British side so that we can sign as soon as possible.

—You commented on the relations of the British honorary consul with the British community here. Has the consul conveyed any concerns you have?

—The reality is that it is a very prosperous community and they are very comfortable. The worries are the everyday ones that any resident of the country can have. There is a very fluid coexistence.

—The United Kingdom is in a negotiation for Gibraltar. What are the objectives? And the friction points?

— We are in the negotiation with four parties, the United

Kingdom, the European Commission, the Government of Spain and the Government of Gibraltar which is also fully involved in these issues. The negotiation is progressing well, there is a will shared by all parties to reach an agreement. The framework of this agreement consists of moving the current controls that are on the border of Gibraltar and Spain to the port and airport, both the control over goods and over people. This would involve a fluid movement of people between Spain and Gibraltar. The shared objective is prosperity in the whole area of Gibraltar and Camp de Gibraltar so that there is economic dynamism with employment and prosperity in this whole area. The negotiations are at an important moment, we will not go into details about the specific points. On April 12th there was a very positive meeting in Brussels between the ministers and the commission and we agreed on the general political lines and now we are negotiating the last points. Of course the treatment of goods in Gibraltar is important for the EU as Andorra knows very well after its negotiation, but I cannot go into these details because we are still negotiating.

—Although they are different cases, Andorra would now have completed the negotiation of the Association Agreement with the European Union. What is your opinion on this?

—It's not up to me to assess it. I observed the negotiation and congratulated the Government. I know that it has been many years and I am sure that the Government of Andorra acts for the benefit of all Andorra people. ●



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EUROPEAN UNION

The Association Agreement: they publish the official text in English and open to everyone

It has been sent to the 27 EU member states and the Catalan version is expected to be ready in the summer

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ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

Last Friday, the 14 documents that make up the official text of the Association Agreement were made public. This first installment is available in English and can be consulted at this link and via the andorraue.ad website.

However, the European Commission accepted the text after the technical and legal review of the document by Andorra and San Marino has been completed. In this way, the 27 member states of the EU already have the full publication of the document. Thus,

The 14 documents that complement the full text have been sent to the 27 member states of the European Union

the translations into the official languages of the European Union and into Catalan have begun and the Executive expects that they will be ready for summer.

It should be noted that the head of government, Xavier Espot, will travel to Brussels next May 7th to give an account of this step, in addition to working on the consultation binding on citizens, scheduled for 2025.

PUBLIC MEETINGS TO ANSWER DOUBTS // Regarding the actions that are being prepared to answer the various doubts that the full publication of the document may raise, a series of public meetings open to the public will be held in the coming weeks. The first me-



Landry Riba and Maros Sefcovic.



GOVERN D'ANDORRA

eting will be held on May 9th in Encamp and the intention is to hold a total of two sessions a week in different parishes in order to be able to approach the implications of the agreement first hand and throughout the territory. Next week it is planned to be able to announce the entire calendar of meetings, locations and hours, and the necessary dissemination will be made so that all citizens can decide which date is best for them to attend. ●

WWW.

Consult the texts by clicking or scanning this QR



MOBILITY

The capital and Escaldes are analyzing the creation of a new municipal bus line

The consuls have marked the bases of collaboration during the mandate

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ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The consuls of Andorra la Vella and Escaldes-Engordany, Sergi González and Olalla Losada, and Rosa Gili and Quim Dolsa, respectively, have addressed the main lines of a strategic collaboration plan between both parishes with the aim of uniting efforts and create synergies in favor of citizens. In this way, the authorities have marked a calendar of meetings to maintain fluid and regular communication. The meetings will not only question the representatives, but also workdays have been scheduled with the technicians of both parishes in order to get on with the topics discussed.

Among the issues addressed during the meeting are the interconnection of drinking water networks, for which González and Gili already signed a protocol of intent for their study last March; the creation of a new municipal bus line that connects the two parishes; and the management of parking lots and waste collection, among others.

The authorities have highlighted the good harmony and readiness to carry out the strategic plan of collaboration with the purpose of ensuring the well-being and quality of life of the ci-



The action that took place at the KM0 roundabout.

tizens, as well as taking care of the municipal finances through protocols and agreements of understanding of service management.

One of the first actions that have been carried out jointly is the signage at the intersection of the KM0 roundabout and the pedestrian crossing of Carrer de la Unió, which marks the territorial boundary between Andorra la Vella and Escaldes-Engordany.

The purpose of the signage is to prevent vehicles from parking there to improve traffic by preventing traffic jams in the area and guaranteeing the safety of pedestrians. ●



The meeting that took place between the consuls of Andorra la Vella and those of Escaldes-Engordany.

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