



## Juan Bolívar Díaz ▶ Ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Spain and Andorra

ALBA CLADELLAS  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY  
@PeriodicAND

Juan Bolívar Díaz is the ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Spain and Andorra. Resident in Madrid, he was appointed in 2020 and, since then, he has been working to strengthen relations between countries.

This week he visited Andorra on the occasion of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Constitution. He also took the opportunity to meet with the Dominican community in the country and meet with the business sector.

**– You are on an official visit to the country, how many times have you been to Andorra? And what did you think of the country?**

– This is my third visit to Andorra. The first time was March 10th, 2021 for the presentation of credentials. The second time I participated in the XXVII Summit of Heads of State on April 21st, 2021 together with the president of the Dominican Republic.

I know the country and we are committed to relations with Andorra.

**– Also, the visit coincides with Constitution Day, why did you decide to come?**

– We have come because the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Constitution is a weighty reason. Since our presentation of credentials, we have had a desire to come, mainly to host a reception for the diaspora. After the addition of the commercial adviser in February 2022, who has been in contact with our honorary consul in the country, Mrs. Cristina Rico, an attempt was made to hold a business meeting in November 2022, but it was not possible due to scheduling reasons.

Now, as part of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Andorran Constitution, it was a good time to come and hold the meeting with the diaspora. In addition, to meet with Andorra Business and hold a business meeting in coordination with the Confederation of Andorran Companies (CEA).

**– A few weeks ago the Dominican community in Andorra announced its intention to create an association. How do you see it?**

– Dominicans are a lot to get together. Associations can be representative organizations for many sectors, so I think it is very good that Dominican residents organize and make efforts of this kind so that they are heard more and channel their needs. They have our support in what we can contribute.

There are about 250,000 Dominicans in all of Europe.

**– What feedback do you have from the Dominican community?**

– So far it has been difficult to receive this feedback because they were not organized, and we already expressed our desire for them to do so. But there are many relations with the Do-



José Manuel Vargas, Commercial Counselor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs María Ubach and the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic Juan Bolívar Díaz.

## Juan Bolívar Díaz

Ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Spain and Andorra

«Andorra and the Dominican Republic are two major tourist attractions»

minican Republic, in fact, the wife of the former head of government is Dominican.

We receive feedback from our honorary consul, with whom we have met virtually and in person, and

who also must issue a report periodically and send it to the embassy. We also have it through the consul of Barcelona, César Méndez, since the honorary consulate of Andorra depends on our Consulate General

in Barcelona.

**– Andorra is a country historically related to tobacco and taking into account the Cuban tobacco supply crisis, how is the Dominican tobacco in-**

**dustry doing?**

– Tobacco is a historic product in our country. We were exporters of raw tobacco for a long time, now we are the first exporters of manufactured cigars in the world. The shortage of Cuban cigars, mainly in the Spanish market, is basically due to a change in strategy by the brands of the sister country Cuba, which increased the price considerably and, on the other hand, are focusing their commercial efforts on the Chinese market. This represents an opportunity for us to continue increasing our presence in Spain and Andorra, where Cubans have historically been leaders.

It is important to note that the Dominican Republic is the largest exporter of pure tobacco cigars in the world, with around 220 million



«I came to Andorra because the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Constitution is a compelling reason to visit the country»

«Creating an association of Dominicans in the Principality is a very good initiative because it will help centralize communication»

units, followed by Cuba (170), Nicaragua (90) and Honduras (70). In our country, this sector represents nearly 10% of total exports and is the industry that generates the most employment with 38,750 workers, 21% of employment in free trade zones, the vast majority being women. The role of women is very important in this sector.

**– Dominican Republic is a great tourist attraction, how do you see Andorra in this aspect?**

– We know that the Principality of Andorra is also a great tourist attraction. It registered nine million overnight stays between December 1st, 2021 and December 30th, 2022, which represents a 12% increase compared to the same period in 2019 and 165% more than last year. In fact, most Dominicans living here work in the tourism sector.

A couple of years ago there were approaches between the tourism ministries of the two states to sign an agreement regarding collaboration for the exchange and training of specialized staff in the field of catering and hospitality. At that time

everything was practically closed, as we were coming out of the pandemic. In fact, Andorra and the Dominican Republic are among the few countries in the world that managed to recover more than 100% of tourists before the end of 2021. In the last quarter of 2021, we exceeded the tourist flow of the same period in 2019.

**- The Principality is experiencing remarkable growth in the real estate sector, what is the situation in the Dominican Republic in the construction sector?**

- In the Dominican Republic, the construction sector is diversifying thanks, in part, to direct foreign investment and also local investment. Construction occupies the fifth position within the main development sectors, behind services (7.6%), free trade zones (7.2%), local manufacturing (4.3%) and agriculture (2.9%). It represents about 15% of the gross domestic product, with more than 16 million dollars, and generates around 420,000 direct and indirect jobs in the Dominican Republic.

Last year, four Dominican companies were participating as exhibitors at SIMA, the leading real estate event in Spain, which showed their



►► The ambassador of Andorra in Spain, the ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Spain and Andorra and the ambassador of the United States in Spain.

portfolio of real estate investment projects, being the only country in America with this presence

**-Is there a considerable number of foreign residents in your country?**

- There are quite a few foreign residents. And of all of them, a very large number are Spanish. Currently there are 39,000.

**- The Dominican Republic has an**

**honorary consul in Andorra, what is the agenda it develops and what future plans does it have with the Dominican community resident here and the relationship with Andorran institutions?**

- Cristina Rico was appointed in October 2018. Since then she has been in charge of responding to people who contact her to make inquiries, both from Andorra residents who want to travel to the Dominican Re-

public, especially during the pandemic, such as inquiries about procedures that derive from the consulate in Barcelona.

At the end of last year, the consul of Barcelona, César Méndez, visited to comment on different options to facilitate the management of procedures for Dominican residents, could be done in Andorra, but there is still no answer on this issue, already which has a difficult solution.

It also attends to inquiries from Andorran entrepreneurs who want to expand their business and consider the Dominican Republic as a gateway. Through the commercial counselor of the Madrid Embassy, we put you in touch with the people who manage these issues in the country.

As honorary consul, she receives invitations to official events organized in Andorra and, although there are many, she always tries to attend so that the Dominican Republic is represented.

One of the main motivations when she was proposed as honorary consul is that she has an adopted Dominican son and it seemed interesting to her to be able to share the experience with other people who were in the same situation. It also collaborates with aspects related to adoptions, and has met with representatives of the National Council for Children and Adolescence (CO-NANI), when they visited Andorra.

Creating an association that brings together Dominican residents in Andorra is a very good initiative because it will help to centralize and direct communication with them. This is what César Méndez told when he visited Andorra last February. ≡

**Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.**

*Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.*

📞 (+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

📞 (+376) 747 747

✉️ [laportella@andorra.ad](mailto:laportella@andorra.ad)

📍 Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

🌐 [www.laportella.ad](http://www.laportella.ad)

**Don't miss any special editions of El Periòdic!**