

# About...

## the Grand-Ducal Family

The grand-ducal family has preserved its legitimacy amongst Luxembourg society because it has been able to gain its trust in the most difficult moments: the resistance movement during the Second World War, of which Grand Duchess Charlotte was a central figure, is one of the most significant examples. Through its demeanour, the grand-ducal family succeeded in transmitting a feeling of unity to the Luxembourg people which is still one of the key factors of the country's stability today.

Grand Duchy  
of Luxembourg

Capital:  
Luxembourg

Form of  
government:  
constitutional  
monarchy

Neighbouring  
countries:  
Germany,  
Belgium,  
France

Area:  
2,586 km<sup>2</sup>

Population:  
502,100  
inhabitants,  
of which  
216,400  
are foreigners

Population density:  
194.1 inhab./km<sup>2</sup>



TRH the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess  
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The accession to the throne of the Hereditary Grand Duke Henri on 7 October 2000 represents an important moment in the grand-ducal family's history. Determined to mark his reign with the stamp of continuity, Grand Duke Henri, the sixth sovereign of the Nassau-Weilburg dynasty, has strengthened, in his manner, the strong link which ties the population to the reigning House and carried on the style defined by his father, combining tradition and modernity.

"Before the representatives of the institutions of the country [...], I promise today to all citizens to do my best for the country and all its inhabitants."

(translated from *Lëtzebuergesch*)

Declaration of HRH the Grand Duke on the accession to the throne on 7 October 2000

## The “birth” of the Grand-Ducal House

The European powers met at the Congress of Vienna between **1814** and **1815** to reorganise Europe. It was here that it was decided to create a Kingdom of the Netherlands, of which William of Orange-Nassau became sovereign. The Duchy of Luxembourg was given to William I and raised to the rank of Grand Duchy. In theory, the Congress of Vienna made Luxembourg an independent state, but William I essentially governed the Grand Duchy as though it had been the 18th province of the Netherlands.

Luxembourg gained true independence with the **1839** Treaty of London. This Treaty confirmed that the Grand Duchy was sovereign and independent, while simultaneously being joined in personal union with the Kingdom of the Netherlands and becoming a member of the German Confederation. Luxembourg was broken up after the Treaty of London, with the French-speaking part being given to the Kingdom of Belgium and the German-speaking part forming the independent Grand Duchy.

### Sovereigns of the Grand Duchy from 1815 to the present day

<b>William I</b>	1815-1840
<b>William II</b>	1840-1849
<b>William III</b>	1849-1890
<b>Henry of the Netherlands</b>	Lieutenant representative of the Grand Duke from 1850 to 1879
<b>Adolf of Nassau</b>	1890-1905
<b>William IV</b>	1905-1912
<b>Marie-Adélaïde</b>	1912-1919
<b>Charlotte</b>	1919-1964
<b>Jean</b>	1964-2000
<b>Henri</b>	2000-...



King-Grand Duke William I

The country's national identity was formed as it gradually acquired independence, and has been strengthened by the presence in the Grand Duchy of the ruling Grand-Ducal House since 1890.

The 1783 family pact of the House of Nassau laid down that the grand-ducal crown had to pass to the Nassau-Weilburg branch upon the death of the last male descendant in the Orange-Nassau line. Thus, when William III of the Netherlands died without leaving a male descendant, the crown of the Grand Duchy passed to Duke Adolf of Nassau, while the eldest daughter of William III, Wilhelmina, succeeded to her father's throne in the Netherlands, which was governed by a different order of succession from the Grand Duchy. The personal union between Luxembourg and the Netherlands thus ended with the death of William III.

Grand Duke Adolf of Nassau thus became the founder of the national dynasty of Luxembourg in 1890 at the age of 73 and since then his direct descendants have succeeded to the throne.

## The sovereigns of the Grand Duchy

**Grand Duke Adolf** took the oath before Parliament on 9 December 1890 and made his joyous entry into the City of Luxembourg on 23 July 1891. He became the owner of the ruins of Vianden Castle as well as Berg and Fischbach Castles. He subsequently resided most of the time at Hohenburg Castle in Bavaria and left all political decisions to Paul Eyschen, head of the Luxembourg government. The dynasty thus placed itself above politics in the eyes of the people of Luxembourg.

His eldest son William IV was appointed lieutenant representative in 1902 and succeeded his father in 1905. During the taking of the oath, **Grand Duke William IV** asserted that the Grand Duke is beyond and above political parties. Health problems led him to name his wife, Marie-Anne de Bragance, first lieutenant representative, then regent in 1908. Having had six daughters by his marriage, he had foreseen that succession might be problematic upon his death. On 16 April 1907, Parliament approved the new family statute established by William IV. This provision obtained force of law on 10 July 1907. In accordance with the terms of this statute, his eldest daughter, Princess Marie-Adélaïde, was declared heir to the throne. Grand Duke William IV died on 25 February 1912.

**Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde** was the first sovereign born on Luxembourg soil since John the Blind in 1296. She took the oath on 18 June 1912. Two years later, on 2 August 1914, German troops invaded the Grand Duchy. The government protested against the violation of Luxembourg's neutrality, but renounced any opposition to the German war machine in order to protect the interests of the Luxembourg people. Until the liberation on 11 November 1918, the German occupant left intact all the structures of the Luxembourg state. The German occupation was limited to military aspects.

During the taking of the oath in Parliament, Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde asserted her interest in political and social affairs. Heavily influenced by her Catholic education and convinced she was sovereign by the grace of God, she claimed the right to intervene in political matters. Although she never went beyond the limits set by the Constitution, she attracted too much resentment



Grand Duke Adolf (1817-1905)

from the opposition of the time, which demanded her abdication in Parliament following the revolutionary unrest in January 1919.

In order to save the dynasty, the President of the government Émile Reuter convinced Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde to abdicate in favour of her younger sister Charlotte. She entered the Carmelite order in Modena in Italy and died in 1924 in the family castle at Hohenburg.

**Grand Duchess Charlotte** came to the throne in difficult times. During her taking of the oath on 15 January 1919 before a delegation of Parliament, she asserted her desire to remain above politics. Her position was strengthened by the results of a political referendum held on 28 September 1919 in which 77.8 % of the Luxembourg people voted to keep the dynasty under Grand Duchess Charlotte.

Her marriage to Prince Félix of Bourbon-Parma in Luxembourg on 6 November 1919 contributed to anchoring the Grand-Ducal House more firmly in the hearts of the Luxembourg people. Six children were born of this marriage: Jean (1921), Élisabeth (1922), Marie-Adélaïde (1924), Marie-Gabrielle (1925), Charles (1927) and Alix (1929).



Grand Duchess Charlotte (1896-1985)  
© Édouard Kutter

The revision of the Constitution in 1919 redefined the crown's prerogatives. It declared the nation sovereign and limited the sovereign's powers.

The interwar period was marked in particular by Luxembourg's entry into the League of Nations on 16 December 1920 and the creation of the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) in 1921. Luxembourg faced up to the world economic crisis. The government headed by Joseph Bech initiated a diligent foreign policy which allowed Luxembourg to hold a steadier position on the international scene. But war was once again looming on the horizon from the mid-1930s onwards.

German troops invaded Luxembourg on 10 May 1940, thus violating its neutrality. The Grand Duchess went into exile accompanied by her family and the government. From France, she passed through Spain, Portugal and then Great Britain, the United States and Canada. It was in London that the Grand Duchess sided with the Allies and the headquarters of the Luxembourg government were established. It was from her exile, the British capital, that Grand Duchess

Charlotte encouraged the Luxembourg resistance. Her attitude strengthened the people's spirit of unity. An enthusiastic crowd greeted her upon her return on 14 April 1945, seeing her as a symbol of the country's resistance.

On 28 April 1961, Grand Duchess Charlotte designated her eldest son, Jean, lieutenant representative and on 12 November 1964 she abdicated in his favour. She retired to Fischbach Castle where she died on 9 July 1985.

**Grand Duke Jean** of Luxembourg, duke of Nassau, prince of Bourbon-Parma, was born at Berg Castle in Luxembourg on 5 January 1921. He spent most of his childhood at Berg Castle. His primary and secondary education took place in Luxembourg, and completed at Ampleforth College in Yorkshire, Great Britain.

The crown prince came of age on 5 January 1939, after which he bore the title of Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg as heir presumptive to the crown of the Grand Duchy.

Upon the German invasion on 10 May 1940, the Hereditary Grand Duke left Luxembourg with his family and the government. In Québec, he took courses in law and political science at Laval University. In November 1942 he joined the British Army as a volunteer in the Irish Guards, where he gained the rank of lieutenant in 1943 and was promoted to officer in 1944. On 10 September 1944, he crossed the Luxembourg border with the American troops that liberated the Grand Duchy. He reached Luxembourg City in the afternoon, where he was greeted with wild enthusiasm. He then rejoined his unit on 13 September and continued the campaign with the Allies in Germany until the end of hostilities.

The Hereditary Grand Duke returned to Luxembourg on 14 April 1945 to assist Grand Duchess Charlotte's triumphal return from exile.

On 9 April 1953 the Hereditary Grand Duke married Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium. They had five children: Princess Marie-Astrid, born on 17 February 1954; Prince Henri, born on 16 April 1955; Prince Jean and Princess Margaretha, born on 15 May 1957; and Prince Guillaume, born on 1 May 1963.



The Hereditary Grand Duke was a member of the Council of State from 1951 to 1961, which enabled him to become familiar with the machinery of the legislative and political life of the country.

Grand Duchess Charlotte appointed the Hereditary Grand Duke lieutenant representative on 28 April 1961. Grand Duke Jean took the oath in a solemn ceremony in Parliament on 12 November 1964.

During the 36 years of his reign, Grand Duke Jean was at the head of a country that was marked by many changes, particularly the struggle to overcome the steel crisis in the 1970s, industrial diversification and the country's development into a financial centre, together with the establishment of the European institutions.

On 7 October 2000 Grand Duke Jean abdicated in favour of his son, the Hereditary Grand Duke Henri.

**Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte**, princess of Belgium, was born in Brussels Palace on 11 October 1927. Her godmother was Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg.

She spent her childhood in Stuyvenberg, the residence of her parents, Prince Léopold of Belgium and Princess Astrid of Sweden. Her father ascended to the throne on 23 February 1934, succeeding King Albert, who had died in an accident at Marche-les-Dames (Belgium).

At the age of seven she lost her mother, Queen Astrid, in a tragic car crash at Küsnacht in Switzerland. She entered a boarding school in 1940 and then received private tuition from 1942 onwards. After the war, the royal family settled in Prégny, near Geneva, where Princess Joséphine-Charlotte continued her studies.

On 9 April 1953 she married the Hereditary Grand Duke Jean in Luxembourg Cathedral. She assisted her husband in his duties and, in addition, being concerned about children and health matters, she was the president of the Luxembourg Red Cross from 1964. She passed away at Fischbach Castle on 10 January 2005.

**Grand Duke Henri**, eldest son of Grand Duke Jean and Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte of Luxembourg, was born on 16 April 1955 in Betzdorf Castle, Luxembourg.

In addition to *Lëtzebuergesch*, the Grand Duke speaks French, English, German and has some knowledge of Spanish. He attended secondary school in Luxembourg and France, where he successfully gained his baccalaureate in 1974. He then went on to study at Geneva University (Switzerland), graduating in political science in 1980. His Royal Highness the Grand Duke was proclaimed Honorary Doctor (Humane Letters) of the Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut (USA) and Honorary Doctor in Law of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio (USA). Furthermore, he was declared Honorary Doctor in Economics of the University of Khon Kaen (Thailand), Honorary Doctor in Politics of the University of Trier (Germany) and the University of León (Nicaragua).



TRH the Grand Duke Jean and the  
Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte  
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In 1974, Prince Henri enrolled at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, Great Britain, which awarded him his officer's commission in 1975. Since 1989, he has been an honorary major in the United Kingdom's Parachute Regiment. The Grand Duke commands the Luxembourg armed forces and holds the title of General.



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On 14 February 1981, he married Maria Teresa Mestre who also graduated in political science from Geneva University in 1980. Their Royal Highnesses have four sons and one daughter: Prince Guillaume, the current hereditary grand duke (born 11 November 1981), Prince Félix (born 3 June 1984), Prince Louis (born 3 August 1986), Princess Alexandra (born 16 February 1991) and Prince Sébastien (born 16 April 1992).

As honorary president of the Board of Economic Development, founded in 1977, the prince led many trade missions throughout the world to promote the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg as an investment centre.

From 1980 to 1998, in his quality as hereditary grand duke, he was a member of the Council of State, which enabled him to familiarise himself with the legislative machinery of the Grand Duchy.

On 4 March 1998, in accordance with Article 42 of the Constitution, he was appointed lieutenant representative of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke Jean.

On 7 October 2000, he succeeded his father Grand Duke Jean after the latter had abdicated, thus becoming Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

**Grand Duchess Maria Teresa**, daughter of José Antonio Mestre and Maria Teresa Batista-Falla de Mestre, was born in Havana, Cuba, on 22 March 1956.

In October 1959, during the revolution, Maria Teresa left Cuba with her parents. The family moved to New York, and in 1965 they lived for a few months at their family property in Santander, Spain, before finally settling in Geneva.

She graduated in political science from Geneva University in 1980. This is where she met Prince Henri, her future husband.

On 14 February 1981, Maria Teresa married His Royal Highness the Prince Henri, then hereditary grand duke, in Luxembourg. Since her husband's accession to the throne on 7 October 2000 she has borne the title of Grand Duchess of Luxembourg.

Since 10 June 1997, the Grand Duchess has been a UNESCO goodwill ambassador, promoting education



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TRH the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess with their five children and their daughter-in-law (on the left)  
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for young girls and women. She is very active in the promotion of microcredits. Chairing several humanitarian organisations, she strongly supports initiatives that provide women with the means to be independent and to defend their rights. The Grand Duchess therefore encourages any project aiming to improve the quality of life of young girls, women and their families through education programmes and the provision of microcredits.

The Grand Duchess is furthermore the honorary president of the Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa Foundation, which is dedicated to helping people in need in Luxembourg, people suffering from physical, psychological or mental disabilities and children with learning difficulties, and also to supporting aid-assisted development projects.

She is furthermore president of the Luxembourg Red Cross as well as president of the Luxembourg Cancer Foundation.

On 13 June 2006, she received the 2006 Path to Peace Award in New York. Each year, this award is bestowed upon a public figure in recognition of his or her outstanding commitment to humanitarian and social causes. Its previous recipients include Lech Walesa, Kofi Annan and King Baudouin.

Their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess have two grand-sons, Gabriel (born on 12 March 2006) and Noah (born on 21 December 2007), born from the union of Prince Louis and Princess Tessy.



## The Hereditary Grand Duke



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Prince Guillaume was born on 11 November 1981 at the Grand Duchess Charlotte Maternity Hospital in Luxembourg. He is the eldest son of Their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. His siblings are Prince Félix (1984), Prince Louis (1986), Princess Alexandra (1991) and Prince Sébastien (1992).

Prince Guillaume went to Lorentzweiler primary school, before attending secondary school at the Lycée Robert Schuman up to year four of the Luxembourg secondary education system. He continued his studies at the Collège Alpin Beausoleil in Switzerland, where he received his French baccalaureate in 2001.

From September 2001 to August 2002, he underwent an officer training course at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst in Great Britain. Sworn in as an officer of the Luxembourg army in December 2002, Prince Guillaume currently holds the rank of major.

After pursuing courses in international politics in Great Britain, the Prince continued his studies in the same field in Switzerland, while also playing an active part in current important events. In 2005, he thus attended the United Nations Millennium Conference in New York. In June 2009, Prince Guillaume was awarded his bachelor degree with distinction in humanities and languages as well as in political science, specialised in political science. Prince Guillaume's mother tongue is *Lëtzebuergesch*. He is also fluent in French, English, German and Spanish.

Prince Guillaume was officially appointed hereditary grand duke on 18 December 2000. In early 2001 he assumed the role of honorary president of the Board of Economic Development. His first assignments in this capacity led him to South Korea, Italy, Russia, Canada and the United States of America. It was also in this function that he accompanied his parents on a state visit to Slovakia in 2005. Since 24 June 2005, Prince Guillaume has been a member of the Council of State.

Since autumn 2000, Prince Guillaume has presided over the board of directors of the Fondation Kräizbiereg, a centre for disabled people. The Hereditary Grand Duke also provides patronage to the Luxembourg Cycling Federation, the Luxembourg Youth Hostel Association and the European Union Youth Wind Orchestra.

As a result of his interest in politics and economics, Prince Guillaume's favourite reading material includes biographies and historical novels. He likes classical as well as modern music and plays the piano. Of the performing arts, his favourite is the theatre. He took to the stage in several theatre productions during his school days in Switzerland.

Prince Guillaume is also a keen sportsman and enjoys football, tennis, skiing, swimming and other water sports.



## A constitutional monarchy

Luxembourg is a representative democracy in the form of a constitutional monarchy. Article 1 of the Constitution declares that the Grand Duchy is a “free, independent and indivisible democratic State”. Article 51 indicates that it is ruled by a system of parliamentary democracy. The nation is the source of sovereign power and it is before the representatives of the sovereign nation that the Grand Duke takes the oath established in the Constitution.

Sovereign power resides in the nation. The exercise of sovereign powers is entrusted to the Grand Duke. He has only those powers that the Constitution and laws expressly confer upon him.

## The Head of State

When the Grand Duke accedes to the throne he takes the following oath as soon as possible in the presence of Parliament or a deputation that it has appointed: “I swear to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and to maintain the national independence and integrity of the territory, as well as public and individual liberties.” (Article 5).

According to Article 33 of the Constitution, the Grand Duke is “the Head of State, symbol of its unity and guarantor of national independence. He exercises the executive power in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the country”.

The Grand Duke represents the state in its foreign relations. He plays an essential role in exercising legislative power. Justice is administered in his name, however, he has no means of interfering in the exercise of judicial power.

His legal status is characterised by the representative nature of his function, the constitutionality of his powers, the inviolability of his person, his freedom from responsibility and by special provisions concerning his patrimonial rights and the civil list.

The Grand Duke’s **representative character** is based on the principle of the hereditary devolution of

the crown set out in the Constitution. The Constitution places the Head of State beyond and above political parties and thus guarantees his impartiality.

The Grand Duke’s **inviolability** means that he cannot be accused or prosecuted by any person, neither can he be tried by any jurisdiction nor be asked to account for his actions. This inviolability implies complete freedom from responsibility. This freedom from responsibility is general and absolute from both a penal and political standpoint.

The Grand Duke’s **political freedom from responsibility** has ministerial responsibility as its counterpart. Any measure taken by the Grand Duke in the exercise of his political powers must in fact be countersigned by a member of government who takes full responsibility.



The Grand Duke promulgates the laws, decrees and treaties  
© SIP/Luc Deflorenne

## The Grand Duke's prerogatives

The Constitution of the Grand Duchy grants the Grand Duke considerable prerogatives. Yet in reality, the manner in which the Grand Duke exercises his sovereignty is more pragmatic than the Constitution would seem to indicate.

The Grand Duke's powers are mainly listed in **Articles 33 to 48 of the Constitution**. The crown's prerogatives as set out in the Constitution of 1868 were redefined in 1919: sovereign power no longer resides in the person of the sovereign but in the nation. The conditions for personal politics are no longer given. The Grand Duke exercises his power in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the country.

The Grand Duke promulgates the laws within three months of the vote of Parliament (Article 34). The Grand Duke makes the regulations and decrees necessary to enforce the laws, but he may never suspend the laws themselves nor dispense with their enforcement.

The Grand Duke has the power to organise and supervise the administrative services and to appoint civil and military officials. Finally, the Grand Duke commands the armed forces in order to maintain order and security in the country.

Justice is dispensed in the name of the Grand Duke by the courts and tribunals. Judgements and decisions are enforced in the name of the Grand Duke (Article 49).



© SIP/Luc Deflorenne

But he does not, however, have any means of interfering in the exercise of judicial power. The Constitution reserves the prerogative of mercy for the Grand Duke, which means the right to reconsider or reduce the penalties handed down by the judges.

In theory, the Grand Duke decides upon the organisation of his government, which comprises at least three members, choosing his ministers freely and dismissing them when he deems necessary. However, in practice, the Grand Duke chooses the *informateur* (a person appointed to lead exploratory talks) or *formateur* (a person appointed to form a government), who generally becomes prime minister, on the basis of the election results. The *formateur* presents the team of members of the government to the Grand Duke. They are generally leading figures in the political groups represented in Parliament. The Grand Duke proceeds to nominate and swear in the members of the government. He has the right to dismiss ministers, but has never made use of it until now. The tradition is that the entire government presents its resignation to the Grand Duke after the legislative elections.

The Grand Duke represents the country abroad and acts at an international level in the name of the state. He can also conclude treaties with foreign states, but these must receive the assent of Parliament.

## The order of succession to the throne

In accordance with the terms of Article 3 of the Constitution, the crown of the Grand Duchy is hereditary in the Nassau family in accordance with the pact of 30 June 1783, Article 71 of the Treaty of Vienna of 9 June 1815, and Article I of the Treaty of London of 11 May 1867.

### The family pact of 1783

The crown is handed down in a direct line by order of male primogeniture, to the exclusion of female descendants. If there is no male issue in a direct and collateral line in one of the branches of the House of Nassau, the crown is automatically handed down to the male



The 1783 family pact of the House of Nassau  
© Christof Weber/SIP

descendant of the other branch. If there is no male descendant in either branch, the crown is handed down by order of primogeniture to the female descendant of the reigning dynasty.

### The 1815 Treaty of Vienna

This treaty gave the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg the order of succession established between the two branches of the House of Nassau by the pact of 1783. It was in fact during the Congress of Vienna that the Grand Duchy was given to the King of the Netherlands, William I, Prince of Orange-Nassau, to be possessed by him and his successors for perpetuity. At the same time, Luxembourg was part of the German Confederation, and William I became grand duke of Luxembourg within this confederation.

### The 1867 Treaty of London

Article I of the treaty kept the links between the Grand Duchy and the House of Orange-Nassau, and confirmed the rights that the agnates of the House of Nassau had over the Grand Duchy.

### The family statute of 1907

In 1906, Grand Duke William IV suspected that his health was deteriorating and that a question of succession would arise since he had six daughters from his marriage to Marie-Anne de Bragance. He therefore drew up a new family statute that he had approved by Parliament, ensuring his daughters succeeded to the throne. This in fact amended Article 42 of the family pact.

## Accession to the grand-ducal throne

The heir presumptive acquires the crown by right when the throne becomes vacant either by the death or abdication of the holder. Accession to the throne is by right and does not depend upon taking the oath. However, there are cases in which the power of the Grand Duke has to be relegated. There are two possible cases in which this can occur.

### The regency

“If, on the death of the Grand Duke, his successor is a minor, the Regency is exercised in accordance with the family pact.” (Article 6)

The surviving mother of the Grand Duke minor acts as regent in accordance with the family pact if the Grand Duke is incapable of reigning.

The regent takes office only at the moment of taking the oath. He has all the prerogatives of the sovereign, taking his place ad interim. However, Article 115 of the Constitution stipulates that “during a Regency, no change may be made to the Constitution as regards the constitutional prerogatives of the Grand Duke, his status and the order of succession”.

Should the throne become vacant following the extinction of the dynasty, Parliament shall make temporary arrangements for a regency. A new parliament, to be summoned within 30 days with double the customary number of members, shall take the final steps to fill the vacancy.



## The lieutenancy

“The Grand Duke may have himself represented by a Prince of the blood, who bears the title of Lieutenant to the Grand Duke and resides in the Grand Duchy. This representative shall take an oath to observe the Constitution before exercising any of his powers.” (Article 42).

The Grand Duke thus delegates his powers, and this acting capacity may be temporary or permanent. The powers of the lieutenant representative are limited by this mandate, and the measures he takes by virtue of his mission have the same effect as if they had been issued by the Grand Duke himself. However, the Grand Duke is free to add to the mandate any limitations he deems necessary.

## There have so far been four regencies

**Duke Adolf of Nassau**, later grand duke of Luxembourg, acted as regent twice at the end of the reign of William III:

- from 8 April 1889 to 3 May 1889;
- from 4 November 1890 to 23 November 1890.

He took the oath on 9 December 1890.

**Grand Duchess Marie-Anne**, wife of Grand Duke William IV, acted as regent twice:

- once during the final illness of William IV (from 19 November 1908 to 25 February 1912);
- and subsequently during the minority of Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde (from 25 February 1912 to 18 June 1912).

## There have so far been five lieutenancies

The **first lieutenancy** was that of Prince Henry of the Netherlands, who was appointed by his brother, King-Grand Duke William III, on 5 February 1850. The lieutenancy lasted for almost 30 years, until Prince Henry's death in 1879.

The **second lieutenancy** was that of Prince William of Nassau, later Grand Duke William IV, who was entrusted with the powers of lieutenant representative on 4 April 1902 by his father, Grand Duke Adolf, then 85 years old. This lieutenancy lasted until his accession to the throne on 17 November 1905, with the death of Grand Duke Adolf.

The **third lieutenancy** began on 19 March 1908, when Grand Duke William IV, afflicted by ill health, appointed his wife, Grand Duchess Marie-Anne. This lieutenancy ended on 18 November 1908, with the beginning of the regency.

The **fourth lieutenancy** was that of Hereditary Grand Duke Jean, appointed lieutenant representative of Grand Duchess Charlotte on 4 May 1961. It ended on 12 November 1964 with the abdication of Grand Duchess Charlotte in his favour.

The **fifth lieutenancy** was that of Hereditary Grand Duke Henri, which began on 3 March 1998. It ended in October 2000, following the abdication of Grand Duke Jean in his favour.



## The accession to the throne of His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri

On 7 October 2000 Luxembourg witnessed the ceremonies of abdication of Grand Duke Jean and the accession to the throne of Grand Duke Henri.

On 24 December 1999 Grand Duke Jean announced his abdication in favour of his eldest son, the Hereditary Grand Duke Henri. After nearly 36 years on the throne, it seemed natural to Grand Duke Jean to “hand over power to the new generation” and to enable the Grand Duchy to benefit from the experience that the Hereditary Grand Duke had acquired during his two years of lieutenancy.

Hence on 7 October 2000 Grand Duke Jean signed a grand-ducal abdication decree at the grand-ducal palace, in the presence of Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte, the Hereditary Grand Duke Henri and the Hereditary Grand Duchess Maria Teresa. Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands, Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians, other members of the grand-ducal family, representatives of the principal political institutions as well as public figures attended the ceremony.



HRH the Hereditary Grand Duke takes the oath as lieutenant representative of HRH the Grand Duke Jean (4 March 1998)  
© SIP



TRH the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess with TM the King and the Queen of Sweden with their children during the state visit in Sweden in April 2008  
© SIP/Luc Deflorenne

The abdication ceremony was followed by the ceremony of the accession to the throne which was held at a formal sitting of Parliament. After taking his oath, the Grand Duke gave his enthronement speech, in which he committed himself to accomplishing the duties and obligations his new function imposes on him in all conscience and with the utmost of his ability. The day was marked by appearances in the capital of the new grand-ducal couple and by official ceremonies.

In the afternoon they went to Notre-Dame Cathedral and attended a thanksgiving service prior to proceeding to the City Hall, where they signed the Golden Book of the City of Luxembourg. After leaving the City Hall, Their Royal Highnesses presented themselves to the crowd, walking through the streets of the capital. A musical representation by the Luxembourg army rounded off the day.

## The symbols of the dynasty

### The coat of arms

By the grand-ducal decree of 23 February 2001 Grand Duke Henri fixed the lesser and the middle coat of arms. By the grand-ducal decree of 23 June 2001 he fixed the greater coat of arms. The coat of arms worn by Grand Duke Jean remain unaltered.



The lesser coat of arms of HRH the Grand Duke

### The *Wilhelmus*

The anthem of the Grand-Ducal House is inspired by a trumpet call or cavalry fanfare of which we have no written trace dating from before the 16th century. The tune is found in the *Oude Geuzenlied* printed in 1581.

This tune was revived during the visit of William III and Queen Emma to Luxembourg in 1883. Several years later, Grand Duke Adolf was greeted by the *Wilhelmus* serving as the national anthem alongside *Ons Heemecht*. The first text of the *Wilhelmus* in *Lëtzebuergesch* was published by Willy Goergen in 1915 to commemorate the centenary of the Congress of Vienna. This text was revised in 1939 but did not become established. Nikolaus Welter found the inspiration to create an anthem for the House of Luxembourg-Nassau-Bourbon on the occasion of Grand Duchess Charlotte and Prince Félix's wedding in 1919. He subsequently removed the first verse, which was marked too strongly by the events

of the period. The *Wilhelmus* is performed when one of the members of the grand-ducal family arrives at or leaves a ceremony.

### The national holiday

The national holiday is the commemoration of the day of birth of the sovereign. With Grand Duke Adolf's accession to the throne in 1890, the national holiday was established as 24 July. Under William IV, it was moved to 22 April. From 1913 the festivities were held on 14 June, Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde's birthday. With Grand Duchess Charlotte's accession to the throne in 1919, 23 January became the birthday holiday. In 1947 the Grand Duchess's birthday was declared a legal public holiday.

A grand-ducal decree of 23 December 1961 fixes the date of the public celebration of the Grand Duke's birthday on 23 June, irrespective of his actual day of birth.

The festivities begin on the evening of 22 June with visits from members of the grand-ducal family in Esch-sur-Alzette and in another town. At around 10 p.m.



Thousands of persons gather each year in Luxembourg City to watch the traditional fireworks  
© Marcel Schmitz/SIP

they reach Luxembourg to take part in the traditional torchlight procession organised by the associations of the city. A firework display is held on the Adolf Bridge.

On 23 June both a *Te Deum* in Luxembourg Notre-Dame Cathedral and a military parade in the Avenue de la Liberté take place.

## The Grand Duke's official residence

### The grand-ducal palace

Article 44 of the Constitution states that the grand-ducal palace in Luxembourg and Berg Castle are reserved for the residence of the Grand Duke. The grand-ducal palace – City Hall from 1572 to 1795, the Prefecture of the Forestry Department in 1795, and then the Luxembourg government offices in 1817 – has been the official residence of the sovereign for the exercise of his duties since 1890.

The total transformation of the existing rooms and the construction of a new wing in the courtyard proved necessary. The Brussels architect Bordiau was commissioned for the work, assisted by the state architect Charles Arendt.

The palace is a late 16th-century Spanish Renaissance style building. Such buildings are indeed to be found in the Iberian peninsula and the Spanish Netherlands (Amsterdam and Brussels in particular).

The grand-ducal palace served as a concert hall and tavern (*Schlossschenke*) under the Nazi occupation, which was regarded as a profanation by the Luxembourg population. It was not until 14 April 1945 that the people of Luxembourg could once again cheer Grand Duchess Charlotte on the balcony of the palace.

The interior of the palace has undergone significant changes since 1964 to give it a warmer atmosphere. The palace was completely renovated between 1992 and 1996.



The grand-ducal palace in Luxembourg City  
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