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Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid

The Belgian economic missions are presided by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid, as Representative of His Majesty the King.

Princess Astrid, Princess of Belgium, was born in Brussels on 5 June 1962. She is the second child of King Albert II and Queen Paola.

At King Philippe's request, Princess Astrid leads the economic missions since October 2013. These missions are widely appreciated for their contribution to the development of economic and trade relations between Belgium and its regions and numerous foreign partners. They enable building bridges between Belgian and foreign companies, as well as between the participating Belgian companies amongst themselves.

In addition to her assignments to the economic missions, Princess Astrid devotes a great deal of attention to medical and scientific themes. She is the Honorary President of the Queen Elisabeth Medical Foundation (QEMF), and supports the King Baudouin Foundation's Scientific and Medical Funds. To support fundamental medical research in various fields, Princess Astrid maintains contacts with the scientific world, for example by means of site visits or participation in award ceremonies and colloquia.

Princess Astrid is also committed to the fight against epidemics and pandemics, as expressed in her many years of efforts as Special Envoy of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership in the fight against malaria, or as Honorary Chairwoman of the Damian Action against leprosy and tuberculosis.

Princess Astrid is also Honorary Member of the Management Committee of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), and is committed to the Special Olympics.

As Special Envoy for the Ottawa Convention, against anti-personnel mines, Princess Astrid strives since 2013 to persuade the last remaining countries, which have not yet signed the Convention against these mines, to join as well.

The Princess pays special attention to those in our society who are at risk of slipping through the net and supports initiatives for the underprivileged, especially children, single mothers and low-skilled workers, such as the Pelicano Foundation or the Food Banks. Princess Astrid is open to initiatives from other associations working for humanitarian purposes.

From 1996 to 2013, Princess Astrid has held a seat in the Senate as a Senator by right. She joined the armed forces on 22 May 1997 and became a Colonel in the Medical Component.

The Princess takes part in the official activities, which are part of the tasks of the Royal Family.

Princess Astrid studied art history in Leiden, in the Netherlands. She continued her education in Geneva, at the European Institute, and in Michigan, in the United States.

On 22 September 1984, Princess Astrid married Lorenz, Archduke of Austria-Este, in Brussels, who became Prince of Belgium in 1995. The Prince was born in Boulogne-Billancourt on 16 December 1955.

The princely couple has five children, all born in Belgium: Amedeo (21 February 1986), Maria Laura (26 August 1988), Joachim (9 December 1991), Luisa Maria (11 October 1995) and Laetitia Maria (23 April 2003).