

Keep It In the Family

Keep It in the Family

Before we get into the intricacies of who's related to who, here's a quick rundown of the current monarchies operating in Europe.

The majority of European countries are now republics, having deposed, exiled or executed their royals at some point before and during the 20th century (the French seem to enjoy the process so much that they've become a republic five times).

Currently, there are only twelve European monarchs left in existence, only seven of which are the heads of "kingdoms":

- Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- King Harald V of Norway
- King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden
- King Felipe VI of Spain
- King Phillippe of Belgium
- King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands



Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee 2002

Seated (LtoR): Queen Margrethe, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Beatrix
(Denmark) (England) (Netherlands)

Standing (LtoR): King Albert, King Juan Carlos, King Harald, King Carl Gustav, Grand Duke Henri
(Belgium) (Spain) (Norway) (Sweden) (Luxembourg)

All of These Royal Families...

Have two main things in common

The first thing is that they all operate as ceremonial constitutional monarchies.

This means that they share power with an elected government, and the power they do have is more symbolic or traditional in nature and has very little impact on how the country is actually run.

The 2nd thing is each other



The European monarchies are often represented on their coat of arms by noble animals, such as lions, eagles, or – in Scotland’s case – unicorns.

Naturally, the extent to which they’re related varies. It’ll probably surprise no one that the Scandinavian royals are extremely close, and that the Crown Princes and Princess even have group video calls – almost like any other family separated during this pandemic (almost).



Crown Prince
Haakon on Norway



Crown
Princess
Victoria
of Sweden

Crown Prince
Fredrik of Denmark

Scandinavian Royal Families catching up on Zoom.
Photo: [Kongehuset](#)

However, what is surprising is that the British royals are just as intertwined with the Scandinavians as they are with each other – and not only through Prince Philip of England. In fact, both King Harald and King Carl Gustaf are in line to the British throne (though admittedly that line is getting longer and longer every year).

While Scandinavia and the UK have a long history of shared monarchies, their current close ties can be attributed to two key figures: Queen Victoria I of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (*at the time) and King Christian IX of Denmark (who were third cousins themselves).

The Grandmother of Europe

Queen Victoria is often referred to as “the Grandmother of Europe”, as she had nine children who all married into key positions in other European royal families.



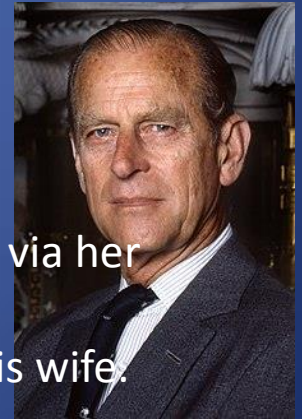
Out of the seven European monarchs, six of them are her direct descendants, and three of her nine children became the great-grandparents of the current reigning monarchs of the UK, Denmark, Norway and Sweden (as of May 2021).

Queen Victoria I					
Edward VII = <i>Alexandra</i>		Alice	Arthur		Leopold
George V	Maud = <i>Haakon VII</i>	Victoria	Margaret		Charles Edward
George VI	Olav	Alice = <i>Andrew</i>	Ingrid = <i>Fredrick IX</i>	Gustaf	Sibylla
Elizabeth II = <i>Prince Philip</i>	Harald V of Norway	Prince Philip = <i>Elizabeth II</i>	Margrethe II of Denmark	Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden	

Via Queen Victoria's Bloodline:

- Queen Elizabeth and King Harald are second cousins, which means that King Harald is Queen Elizabeth's closest related monarch
- King Carl Gustaf's parents were second cousins. This means that:
 - King Carl Gustaf and Queen Margrethe are both cousins *and* third cousins
 - King Carl Gustaf and Queen Elizabeth are third cousins *twice* over, as are King Carl Gustaf and King Harald
- Queen Elizabeth and Queen Margrethe are third cousins
- Queen Margrethe and King Harald are third cousins

Prince Philip was also one of Queen Victoria's great great grandsons via her daughter Alice. This makes him a third cousin of King Harald, Queen Margrethe, Carl Gustaf, *and* Queen Elizabeth, the latter also being his wife.



Prince Philip, 1921-2021

The Grandfather of Scandinavia

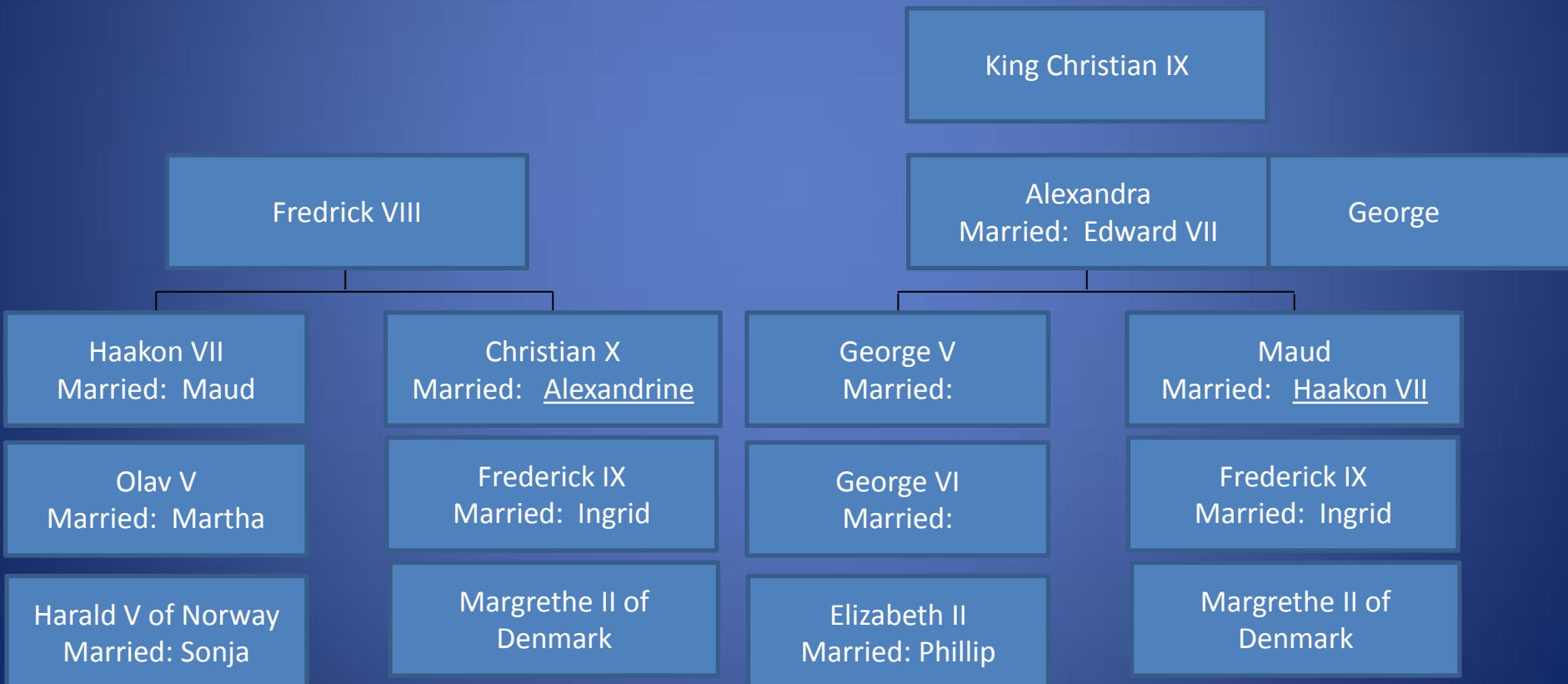
Technically, King Christian's nickname is "the Father-in-law of Europe".

However, given that the majority of European royal families that his children married into are no longer operating monarchies, and given that he's almost as related to the current Scandinavian and British royals as Queen Victoria is, "Grandfather of Scandinavia" is more appropriate.

Christian IX of Denmark



Of Christian's six children, two of them became the great-grandparents of the current reigning monarchs of the UK, Denmark, Norway and Sweden (as of May 2021).



Via King Christian's Bloodline:

- Queen Elizabeth and Queen Margrethe are third cousins
- King Harald's grandparents were cousins. This means that:
 - King Harald and Queen Elizabeth are both second cousins *and* third cousins, as are King Harald and Queen Margrethe

While King Carl Gustaf doesn't appear on this side of the family tree, Prince Philip does. Via King Christian's son George, he is the second cousin once removed of King Harald, Queen Margrethe, as well as Queen Elizabeth (again, his wife).

Blue Blood?

In 2018, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (William and Kate) paid a visit to Norway and Sweden. In his speech welcoming them to Norway, King Harald said:

“The Queen and I are delighted to welcome you on your first official visit to Norway. You are family and that makes the visit very special for the queen and me, and for all of us.”

While there are a lot of cultural differences between Scandinavia and the UK (and between the Scandinavian countries, for that matter), there is also a lot of shared history, and in many ways, the relationship between our royal families is an excellent representation of this.

We often describe royals and aristocracy as having “blue blood”, which distinguishes them from the rest of us red-blooded commoners. Of course, we realize that this is just an expression, and that all humans bleed the same, regardless of status.

That said, if the royals *do* have different blood from us, it’s probably due to the haemophilia they’ve all inherited by Queen Victoria.

Have you ever met a Scandinavian royal?

Is there a member of the royal family you particularly admire?

Are you related to any of them?

Let us know!