

Curriculum Vitae of Her Royal Highness Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg

Maria Teresa Mestre was born on 22 March 1956 in Havana (Cuba). Her family moved to New-York in 1959 and remained there until 1965, before crossing the Atlantic to settle in Geneva, where she acquired Swiss citizenship.

Maria Teresa Mestre attended Marymount School in New York and, from 1961, was a pupil at the École française. Once her family had moved to Geneva, she continued her education first at the Marie-José Institute in Gstaad, then at the Marie-Thérèse boarding school in Geneva, where she obtained her French Baccalaureate in June 1975. In 1980, she graduated as a Bachelor of Political Science at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

It was during the course of her university studies that Maria Teresa Mestre met her future husband, Prince Henri of Luxembourg. They both read Political Science for four years, during which she presented several theses, including a comparative study of EEC legislation on women at work and motherhood.

On 14 February 1981, Maria Teresa Mestre married His Royal Highness Prince Henri of Luxembourg at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Luxembourg, and became Princess Maria Teresa, Hereditary Grand Duchess of Luxembourg.

The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess have five children: Prince Guillaume (born 1981), the current Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Prince Félix (1984), Prince Louis (1986), Princess Alexandra (1991) and Prince Sébastien (1992).

As a student, Maria Teresa Mestre was early interested in social and humanitarian causes, which found expression in her work for the community (care for the elderly and for children with learning difficulties).

Following her marriage, she created the *Prince Henri and Princess Maria Teresa Foundation*, which aims to support persons with specific needs to help their integration in society.

On 10 June 1997, Princess Maria Teresa was made a Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO, through which she aims to promote the education of young girls and women and fight against poverty through microcredits. Her commitment to social causes is reflected in her patronage of many charitable organizations in Luxembourg and abroad, and in her many trips to the world's poorest regions.

On 7 October 2000, Prince Henri acceded to the throne and became Grand Duke of Luxembourg. Since then, Maria Teresa has borne the title of Grand Duchess of Luxembourg.

The Grand Duchess regularly travels abroad to see how the projects she promotes have developed, and already visited Nepal, Mali, Bangladesh, Thailand, Bosnia, Laos, Chile and Burundi.

She places particular emphasis on the cause of child soldiers and the protection of children and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS. For her ongoing commitment, H.R.H. was named in 2007 *Eminent Advocate for Children* of UNICEF.

Beginning 2010, the Grand Duchess launched as President of her own foundation, *“Foundation of the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess”*, a project, called *Projet de la Main Tendue* linked to Her visit of the Bujumbura prison in June 2009 in Burundi. The main objective of this new project is to ease the liberation of minor people from prison and to give them new opportunities for their future.

(Source: Service Presse et Communication de la Cour grand-ducale)

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