



Danish kings ...and their history

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Timeline

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Overview About

The Royal Act of 1665

That of [Frederick III](#). Royal Act signed on November 14, 1665. The world's only written constitution for an absolute monarchy – prepared by the royal chamber secretary [Peder Schumacher Griffenfeld](#). The law constituted [autocracy legal basis, determined the succession to the throne and formalized the king's absolute power.](#)

The Royal Act consists of 40 articles. The first seven articles define the content of royal power. The remaining articles deal with the king's authority and guardianship, the king's accession to power and anointment, the indivisibility of the kingdoms, the king's duty to maintain absolute power and succession.

The royal prerogatives are the right to legislative power, the right to appoint officials, wage war, enter into and dissolve alliances, levy taxes, and govern the church.

The background to the Royal Act was the political and economic crisis that arose in the wake of the Karl Gustav Wars in 1657-60. With the coup d'état in 1660, [Frederick III's coronation](#) [The time of the aristocracy was thus definitively over, the king's power definitively established, and the Royal Act formalized the change in system.](#)

Only a narrow circle around the king knew of the existence of the Royal Act until it was read out in the Council of State upon Christian V's accession to the throne. It was not until 1709 that the Royal Act was published in print and, with a few exceptions, repealed by [the Constitution of 1849.](#)

Royal Law · Lex Regia

Wii Friderich dend Tredie, aff Gods Naade Dannemarckis, Norgis, Wendis och Gottis Konning, Duke udi Schleszuig, Holsten, Stormarn och Dihmarschen, Greffue udi Oldenborig och Dellmenhorst, etc.,

Let all make it known that since we have not only perceived and found out the action from the example of others, but also from our own experience, it is strange that the great and Almighty God rules over all kings and dominions as well as their subject kingdoms and countries according to the counsel of His inscrutable wisdom and directs and orders everything therein, especially in His Divine Omnipotence He has so paternally averted and brought to such an end our Royal House and these Our Kingdoms and Countries, which in past years were in danger, indeed, even foreseeing extreme ruin and destruction, that not only we have been saved and have established desirable peace and tranquility, while also the Council of Our Kingdom and all the Estates, Noble and Pagan, Clergy and Secular, to that end, their previous right and authority to renounce and surrender, the previously signed by Us hand-signature with all its parts, clauses and clauses dead, powerless and to do nothing, Us from Our oath, We did, when We first entered the Government, in all ways and without any exception to declare, and thus Us and those of Us, such as the Court and first Lords, by right lawful marriage, male and female lines, so long as any of them are alive, the right of succession to these Our Kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, including all the right of Majesty, absolute power, sovereignty and all Royal glories and regalia unforced and without any of Our instigation, request or demand of our own free will and full consent, most submissively to petition and offer, dislige to renounce the aff Us at Voris Elskl. kiere Søns Printz Christians Veygne anno 1650 den 18 Junij udgiffne revers samt Voris provisional

Search Danish kings



Peder Schumacher Griffenfeld

disposition dated the year 1651 on the 9th of June, as well as all if any external recess, ordinance and other regulations could be found, according to the handfasting, to conflict with this Our Right of Succession, sovereignty and absolute Government, stating also the external Our most gracious will, not only in what manner the Government should be organized hereafter, while also regarding the succession and the order of the lines of succession between man and woman, and in what manner the Regiment should be led and appointed by men in the young age of the minor King (if such a minority should occur in the future) and about this, according to Our most gracious thought and pleasure, an ordinance to be made, which they then promised and with oath obliged themselves to be for this, their heirs and posterity a fundamental, it is an unchangeable fundamental law and of this, all its points and clauses are observed, so that We, Our True Heirs of Life and their descendants, in no way secretly or openly, should be hindered and disturbed by this or their heirs and descendants, while furthermore we bind ourselves with oath against all and any one, in any case it may be, domestic or foreign, who should act or speak against this, to defend, to put life and honor, property and blood thereon, and that from such duty and obligation, this or their heirs and descendants, no friendship or enmity, fear or danger, harm or harm, hatred, envy or any human cunning and invention in the slightest way should turn away, and what is more, our most humble promises and undertakings, which are hereby stated beloved and faithful subjects their inner devotion and love to Us and their heartfelt desire for the flourishing growth and increase of Our Royal Hereditary House and the general security and quiet prosperity of these Our Hereditary Kingdoms have been willed to be made known: Then We have also duly observed and considered such a special mission of Divine Providence and the great love and most submissive devotion of Our beloved and faithful subjects to Us, and therefore Our thoughts are willingly turned and directed thereto, to ordain and appoint such a form of government and hereditary succession as such an absolute hereditary Kingdom and regime ultimately requires and demands, because We also with and issue this Royal Law as the right unchangeable fundamental law of the Kingdom, will have ordained and appointed, which shall be held and respected by Our Heirs, their descendants and descendants, as well as the common founders of our kingdoms and countries from the highest to the lowest, no one is subject to a completely unshakable and irrefutable decree and law for ever.

III

The best beginning for everything is to begin with God. The first thing therefore, which We would have commanded in this Royal Law for everything, is: that Our descendants, children and grandchildren for a thousand generations on the Feroes and the Moors, the absolute hereditary kings of Denmark and Norway, honor, serve and worship the one right and true God in the way and manner which He has revealed in His holy and true Word, and Our Christian faith and confession clearly declare this in the form and manner which the pure and unadulterated has been set forth and presented in the Augsburg Confession of the year one thousand five hundred and thirty-five, and by the same pure and unadulterated Christian faith, the inhabitants of the country and the mighty hold and protect in these countries and kingdoms against all heretics, fanatics and blasphemers of God.

II

The sole and hereditary King of Denmark and Norway shall be hereafter and by all his subjects held and esteemed as the supreme and highest court here on earth, above all human law, and where no other court or judge is known, either in spiritual or secular matters, except God alone.

III

Therefore, the King alone shall have the supreme power and authority to make laws and regulations according to his own good will and pleasure, to explain, change, modify, diminish, and even to repeal previous laws issued by himself or by his ancestors (this King's Law alone undertaken, since the true foundation and fundamental law of the Kingdom must ultimately remain unchangeable and unshakable), and to undertake whatever action is desired from the general command of the Law.

IV

The King shall also have supreme power and authority to appoint and dismiss all officials, high and low, whatever name and title they may have, according to his own free will and judgment, so that all offices and appointments, in whatever authority they hold, shall have their first origin from the King's absolute power as from one source.

V

The king shall have the power of arms and armament, to wage war, to conclude and dissolve alliances with the people, and when it is convenient, to impose duties and all other contributions, because everyone knows well that kingdoms and countries cannot be securely possessed without armed force, and military power cannot be maintained without tribute, and tribute cannot be brought to the streets without taxes.

WE

Shall and the king have the highest power over all the clergy from the highest to the lowest, to command and arrange all churches and divine services; Mother, Gatherings and gatherings about

Religious matters, when the hand deems it advisable, to allow, to forbid; and in general, to speak briefly, the King shall have sole power to use all regalia and rights. Majesty, what name they may have and what power they may have.

VII

All government affairs, letters and transactions shall be issued in the name of the King and under his signet, and he shall always sign with his own hand, even if he has reached the age of majority.

VIII

The king's year of majority shall be considered the fourteenth year of his age, the thirteenth completed, the fourteenth begun, so that, as soon as he enters his fourteenth year, he shall publicly declare himself to be of age and no longer wish to use any guardians or tutors.

IX

The King's guardianship and guardianship, while he is a minor, shall in all respects be so appointed, as the King next to him in power has decreed in writing for his death. But if no such decree or last will exists, then the following shall apply, namely: The widowed Queen, who is the rightful mother of the minor King, shall be Regent, and to her aid and assistance in the guardianship shall be added the highest Royal Council and officers, and these shall altogether manage the Government and decide everything by majority vote, whereupon the Queen shall have two votes and the others shall have one vote; and all letters, orders and all matters of the Government shall always be executed and issued in the King's name, even if they are signed by the Regent and all the Regent Guardians.

X

If the Queen Dowager, the King's mother, dies or remarries, then the next of the King's relatives among the princes of the blood of Ours's descending lines, who are here in the kingdom and can always remain present, shall be Regent (if he has come to his age of majority, which shall be considered to be the eighteenth year of his age, the seventeenth completed, the eighteenth begun) and shall likewise have the right of two votes; and everything else shall be dealt with as previously stated.

XI

But if the aforementioned Prince of the Blood had not yet come of age, and if no Prince of the Blood was present, then the publicly announced highest Royal Servants should assume and administer the government and guardianship with equal power and authority, and each person should have one vote, and then everything should be distributed in the manner previously stated.

XII

If any of the Governing Trustees should be removed by death or other accident, the others shall immediately appoint another who is fit for the appointment in his place, and whoever is then his successor in office shall also take his place and occupy his seat in this Governing Trusteeship.

XIII

The Regent and all Governing Guardians were to immediately swear not only allegiance and loyalty to the King, but also, in the special interest of their guardianship, that in the King's memory they would so manage the Government that the King's absolute sovereign power and right of inheritance would be preserved in every way, inviolate and undiminished, for him and his descendants, and that everything would be so governed and ruled as they deemed it right for God and the King to defend.

XIV

And as soon as they have taken their oath and entered upon the business of their office, the first thing they shall do is to immediately and without delay draw up a proper inventory, that is, a declaration, of the cities, fortresses, and goods, treasures, money, military power of these kingdoms and subordinate countries, both on land and at sea, as well as all the king's income and expenditure, so that from this it can be immediately ascertained in what condition they enter upon the governing guardianship, after which declaration they, without any pretext, have to render an account and answer the king for everything and stand before him in court for all charges, as soon as he has come of age.

XV

Therefore, and henceforth, these kingdoms and countries shall never be held to be without a king, while Our descending lines continue on the fore and the aft, so that as soon as a king passes away by death, he is immediately and in fact king himself and bears the name and title of king, who The line of succession is the next to be shown, and the title of Royal Majesty and unrestricted sovereign power shall be inherited immediately and the same gaze shall be cast upon him as his chairman.

The spirit gives up.

XVI

And even in all estates, nobility, non-nobility, clergy, secular, an unbounded power of absolute monarchy has been once and for all offered to us and the lines descending from us on the Faroes and the Møres for ever by inheritance, henceforth immediately, when a king dies, the next in the line of succession crown, scepter and absolute royal title and power immediately become and belong to him, so that no further offer is needed in any way, since the kings of Denmark and Norway are hereafter for ever, while none of our royal hereditary line are offered, are born and born and not chosen or ruled kings; Nevertheless, so that all the world may know that the Kings of Denmark and Norway consider it their greatest highness to humble themselves before God, and that they consider it their highest power and authority to be blessed by God through the servants of His Word for a happy beginning of their reigns, then we would also have the King publicly anointed in church with appropriate ceremonies.

XVII

But the King shall not give any oath or any obligation, whatever it may be called, orally or in writing, for the same reason that a free and unbound absolute king cannot be bound by his subjects by any oath or prescribed obligation.

XVIII

The king may have the solemn feast of his anointing held whenever he pleases, even if he has not yet reached the age of majority; and the sooner the better to accept and receive God's blessing and the Lord's powerful assistance, which follows his anointing; however, everything that does not concern ceremonies may be dealt with as the convenience of the time dictates.

XIX

And since reason and daily experience sufficiently teach that a united and connected power is far stronger and of greater force and power than that which is separate and dispersed, and the greater the power and dominion a lord and king possesses, the safer his hand and his subjects are from the attacks of all external enemies: then We would also that these Our hereditary Kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, together with all the provinces and lands belonging thereto, islands, fortresses, royal glories and rights, treasures, money and all other movables, military power and armor both on land and at sea, as well as all houses which We now possess by right of Our own eyes, or which can hereafter be won by Us or by Our descendants with the sword or by inheritance and any other lawful title and means, all together, nothing shall be undertaken, unchangeably and undividedly be and remain under one sole and hereditary King of Denmark and Norway; the other Princes and Princesses of the blood let themselves be content with hope and wait, until the order finally comes to this and their lines, one after another.

XX

And as We have now previously arranged and as a most necessary article in this Royal Law we absolutely wanted to be held inviolably and without any contradiction, namely that these Our kingdoms and all the lands which We now truly possess or and in the future could have a right of inheritance and fair claim to, may in no way be separated, exchanged or divided, so We also wanted that, on the other hand, the other Royal Children should be provided with necessary and reputable maintenance, somewhat commensurate with their status, by the King, whereby they should be satisfied in every way, whether they are given in cash or in land estates, and if land estates, be they under what high title of honor it may be, are granted and assigned to them, they should have the annual income, use, use and fruit thereof only for the duration of their lives, The property, including all royal power, shall always remain with the King; this also applies equally to the Queen's retinue.

XXI

No young prince of the blood who is here in the kingdom and resides outside our jurisdiction may marry or leave the country or enter the service of foreign lords, unless permission is obtained from the King.

XXII

The royal daughters and sisters were to be provided with royal maintenance until they, with the King's will and knowledge, entered into the state of marriage, when they were to be supported with a royal dowry in fixed money at the King's own discretion, and on the other hand were to refrain from seeking or requesting any further maintenance from the King for them or for their children, until the succession to the kingdom could fall to them.

XXIII

If the King dies and the next in line to the succession to the throne is then out of the kingdom, when the inheritance falls to him, then he shall immediately, all other affairs aside, without delay, proceed here into his kingdom of Denmark to live and hold court, and the throne shall immediately be taken over.

And if the same next in line and then the rightful heir to the throne does not resign within three months, which is to be calculated from the first day on which the fatal abdication of the previous King is proclaimed and notified, then, unless prevented by illness or other unavoidable event by law, the next in line after him, who after his death is next in line to the heir, shall be King in his place. The administration of the Governorship and the Regiment, however, until the King comes, shall be governed as provided in the Royal Act on the Regnant Guardianship.

XXIV

The princes and princesses of the blood were to have the highest place in the seat and rank after the king and queen, and among themselves to have precedence and honor, just as the line shows them to be next in line to the succession to the throne.

XXV

They should also be answerable to no subordinate judges, while their first and last judge should be the King, or someone else who specifically orders it.

XXVI

What has been said above about the power and sovereignty of the King's absolute rule, and if there is anything more that has not now been expressly explained, is briefly stated in these few, yet concise words, that: The King of Denmark and Norway is a free and supremely sovereign, absolute and hereditary King, so that everything that can be said or written about an absolute, sovereign, Christian, hereditary King must also be explained and interpreted in the most gracious and best sense about the absolute and hereditary King of Denmark and Norway, and the same must be understood about the absolute and hereditary Queen of Denmark and Norway, when the hereditary succession to the government should fall to a princess of the blood in due time. And since daily experience and the pitiful examples of other countries show how harmful it is when the gentleness and piety of kings and lords are so abused that their power and authority are permanently and unjustly curtailed by one or another, and sometimes even by their own closest and most trusted servants, and in such a way that the common good as well as the kings themselves suffer the greatest prejudice and detriment, so that it would have been highly desirable in many places that kings and lords had held on to their authority with greater zeal than has often and frequently happened: then we would have commanded our successors, the absolute hereditary kings of Denmark and Norway, to take care with a zealous and watchful eye to hold on to their hereditary right and absolute sovereignty, that is, the absolute power, His Majesty inviolate, just as it is now perfectly imagined by us here forth this Royal Law for eternal inheritance, and therefore also for its further strengthening now strictly hereby forbid and command, that if anyone, be it possible, should undertake to effect or procure anything, which could in one way or another be the King's absolute sovereign power for breach and infringement, everything which may thus be promised and obtained shall be considered unsaid and undone, and those who have so procured or procured shall be punished as those who have offended His Majesty and grossly encroached upon the King's sovereignty.

XXVII

And as We have said before, that One alone shall be absolute King and Lord of these kingdoms and all the lands subject to Us or which in the future may be added, and that the other Royal Children shall be provided with the necessary maintenance of the King, whose condition is somewhat commensurate, and with the hope that they have in their time for the hereditary succession to the government: So We would now, to avoid and avert all dispute and strife, briefly arrange here, in what manner and in what manner one after another in his time shall succeed to the hereditary government. Therefore, the sword side, outside a proper legal marriage, shall always first belong to the succession to the government, and while man is a victim, the woman shall be called woman of man, or man or woman of woman, and absolutely no one of the Mørne Tribe shall inherit the crown, as long as no life heir is found in the ancestral Tribe, so that even a woman of a man shall pass for a man of a woman.

XXVIII

In the order of succession, all the lines must be carefully observed, so that no line is skipped over for the sake of age, while the son immediately takes the place of the father, and while there is no male person outside the first male line, the second male line must be able to inherit nothing, and so on line after line. When the succession finally falls to the female sex, then first come forward the female lines descending from us on the Fern tribe through the sons, and then finally those who descend from us on the Morn tribe through the daughters, all line after line, one after another, and the right of primogeniture always taken into account, so that, in short, the sword always goes first, the male lines always first, and so among those who are equal in line and sex, the elder always precedes the younger and then the right of primogeniture.

XXIX

And so that everything must be so clearly presented that no one in the future with any semblance of fairness should be able to present any controversial wording difficulty in this Royal Law regulation, then We would explain it with the names of Our Royal Children in particular, as an example. When We

Therefore, if God wills and wishes to give up and exchange this earthly crown for the eternal and heavenly one, then the complete, unbound, supremely powerful sole kingdom and dominion of Denmark and Norway and all Our lands shall belong to Our firstborn son Prince Christian by inheritance, so that, as long as no male heir exists outside the male lines descending from him (even if he himself could be deceased before the succession to the government actually falls to him), Prince George and his lines or his sisters and their lines shall inherit the very smallest part of Our kingdoms and lands.

XXX

If the male line of Prince Christian's sons and grandsons for a thousand generations is extinct, then the male lines of Our second son Prince George will come forward first and possess the power of the absolute monarchy of Our realms and countries for eternal inheritance, everything unchangeable and undivided, as has been said before, all one after another, man after man, line after line, while man after man is sacrificed, age being taken into account only among those who are equal in the same line and sex, so that the elder brother is always preceded by the younger, even though the elder was born before his father became king, and on the other hand the younger died after his father, after the succession of the government had truly fallen to him; And everything must be dealt with in the prescribed manner, even if God further blesses our marriage with several male heirs.

XXXI

Should it happen then (for God graciously forbid) that all the male line of the sword should be entirely extinct, then the succession to the government shall belong to the daughters of the sons of the last king, and their lines, if any exist, shall not be his own daughters, first the eldest and her descending lines, then the others and their descending lines, one after another, line after line, and among those who are equally from the same line, the sex shall always be considered first and then the age, so that the son always goes before the daughter, and then the elder precedes the younger, which must always be taken into account.

XXXII

If he leaves no daughters after him, then the princess of the blood to whom the male in the paternal line belongs next shall have the hereditary succession and the government devolve upon her, and her lines, one after another, in the manner previously stated.

XXXIII

Then the next of kin and family of the last king, who are however outside the female lines descending from us through the sons, shall inherit the reign, and her children and grandchildren shall succeed her, one after another, line after line, in the manner explained before.

XXXIV

If the lines of Our sons, male and female, are completely extinct, then the turn comes to the lines of the princesses, Our daughters, and first to Princess Anna Sophia, the eldest, and her children and grandchildren in a thousand generations; then to the others, all one after another, line after line, so that always among those who are of the same line, the sex is considered first and then the age, son before daughter and then the elder before the younger; and while one of Our blood is sacrificed, the absolute monarchy and dominion of these kingdoms and countries belong hereditary to the same prince or princess, line after line, one after another.

XXXV

The daughter of the elder daughter in a thousand generations shall always precede the son and daughter of the younger daughter, and may not be skipped from line to line; but the second line shall be after the first, the third after the second, the fourth after the third, and so on.

XXXVI

But if the succession to the government comes to a daughter's son, and he leaves male heirs after him, then everything shall be treated with the male lines descending from him, just as We have decreed with the male lines descending from Us, that all those descending from him on the Färne Tribe and the Sword Side should then succeed to the government hereditarily before all others, one after another, line after line, the elder always before the younger, so that, in short, man of man goes first before woman of man, and then woman of man goes before man and woman of woman, and then everything shall be treated as before.

XXXVII

It is the daughters and the daughters' children and grandchildren in perpetual succession to whom the hereditary succession to the government shall belong, and not the daughters' husbands, who should have absolutely nothing to do with the absolute rule of these kingdoms, and however high and powerful they may be in their own lands, they should nevertheless, when they are out of this kingdom, assume absolutely no power, while always honoring the hereditary queen and giving her the right hand and highest place.

XXXVIII

Among children and grandchildren, even the fetus is counted, so that, although it first comes after the father's

When death is born into the world, it immediately takes its rightful place and order in the inheritance list, just like the others.

XXXIX

And since We, by the gentle and paternal blessing of God, certainly have to hope and suppose that Our Royal hereditary house and tribe shall always flourish and grow and be formed in diversity, so that in the future, due to the multitude of the descending and crossing lines, no dispute and confusion beyond age or confusion among the lines should be caused, We would therefore and hereby absolutely order and command that, when any son or daughter of Our tribe is born, the parents of the same Prince or Princess shall without delay have the name and date of birth of the same Prince or Princess reported and announced to the King, so that they may claim no right of inheritance to these kingdoms and lands in their time, and on the other hand, request from the King a documentum insinuationis, that they have duly given such knowledge, wherefore the other part of Our Archive shall is kept, and also a real Family Register of Our Royal Family is always kept and preserved.

XL

All that has been reported so far about children and grandchildren in a thousand generations is all to be explained and interpreted about legitimate children and no one else. Legitimate sons and daughters, born out of legitimate marriage of the Royal Line of Succession descending from us, are only to be understood by the children and grandchildren mentioned out of the Royal Law.

So now, as far as human prudence is possible, we have arranged and arranged everything in the best way and manner, and as it has been best and most convenient for us to avoid all harm and inconvenience, and our dearly beloved subjects to be able to build and live safely in peace and tranquility without fear of internal strife and rebellion. Even the wisest plans of man are out of God's hand, and where a wise thing is begun, it is God who brings about its end and outcome according to his pleasing will, out of the house of divine providence and paternal protection we command our Royal House of Heritage and our kingdoms and countries and their inhabitants for ever. Given at our castle Copenhagen, November 14, 1665.

Under our sign
Frederick

by order of the King
Majesty's proprium P.
Schumacher