

My dear fellow-Members of Parliament!

Yesterday evening Her Majesty the Queen announced that she will leave the monarchy to her son, His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange, on 30 April 2013. It befits us, as representatives of the people, to consider this announcement today, at the beginning of this sitting.

We owe much gratitude to Queen Beatrix for the intense devotion with which she performs her duties. She is a dedicated queen and the very picture of humanity; visibly present both at shocking events and in joyful moments.

During the reign of Queen Beatrix society has changed in many respects. Both within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and in the European Union new structures were established. The Queen has been a stable factor in this changing society. She has always shown that she, as a sovereign and as a private person alike, is committed to society, both at home and abroad. This was well visible at state visits, where the Queen worthily represented our country. Well informed, to the point but above all interested.

On 30 April 1980 Queen Beatrix was sworn in and inaugurated at a joint session of the States General in the Nieuwe Kerk Church in Amsterdam. The inauguration ceremony symbolizes the confidence between the Head of State and the people. The coming joint session is to be prepared in close consultation with the President of the Senate and the secretaries-general of both Houses. Of course this is done in conjunction with the Government and the municipality of Amsterdam.

We look forward with confidence to the coming of King Willem-Alexander. We know that he, together with his spouse, has thoroughly prepared himself for the responsibilities he is going to assume.

We wish Her Majesty the Queen, the Prince of Orange, Princess Maxima and their family good luck with the preparations of the succession and we wish them all the very best in the next years.