

## **Princess Laurentien**

Princess Laurentien is married to Prince Constantijn, the third and youngest son of Queen Beatrix. They have three children: Eloise, Claus-Casimir and Leonore.

### **Youth and education**

Petra Laurentien Brinkhorst was born in Leiden on 25 May 1966, the daughter of Laurens Jan Brinkhorst and Jantien Brinkhorst-Heringa. She has one brother.

Princess Laurentien started primary school in Groningen. Her family then moved to The Hague, where she completed her primary education. She spent four years at the Christelijk Gymnasium Sorghvliet, and then transferred to the Eerste Vrijzinnige Christelijk Lyceum, both in The Hague. After a few months there, she moved with her family to Japan, where her father had been appointed representative of the European Union. In 1984, she passed the Baccalauréat A examinations at the Lycée français in Tokyo.

Princess Laurentien studied history at Groningen University, completing her foundation year in 1986. In 1989, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in political science at Queen Mary College, London. In July 1991, she obtained her Master of Journalism degree at the University of California at Berkeley with a dissertation on street prostitution in San Francisco.

During her studies, she had several work experience placements in journalism: with the Haagsche Courant in 1986, CNN in Washington D.C. in 1988/1989 and CAL radio in Berkeley in 1990.

### **Marriage and family**

The engagement of Prince Constantijn and Laurentien Brinkhorst was announced on 16 December 2000.

The civil marriage was conducted by the mayor of The Hague, Wim Deetman, in the Oude Raadzaal, Javastraat, The Hague on 17 May 2001. The church wedding took place two days later in the Grote of St Jacobskerk, with Reverend Carel ter Linden officiating.

### ***Titles***

It is customary for wives of members of the Royal House to take the titles of their husbands. Since her marriage, therefore, Princess Laurentien has held the courtesy titles of Princess of the Netherlands, Princess of Orange-Nassau and Mrs Van Amsberg. She is addressed as 'Your Royal Highness'.

### ***Children***

The first child of Prince Constantijn and Princess Laurentien, their daughter Eloise (Eloise Sophie Beatrix Laurence Countess of Orange-Nassau, Jonkvrouw van Amsberg), was born on 8 June 2002. Their son Claus-Casimir (Claus-Casimir Bernhard Marius Max Count of Orange-Nassau, Jonkheer van Amsberg) was born on 21 March 2004. Their second daughter Leonore (Leonore Marie Irene Enrica Countess of Orange-Nassau, Jonkvrouw van Amsberg) was born on 3 June 2006. The three children were all born in Bronovo Hospital in The Hague.

Since Prince Constantijn now works in Brussels, the family moved there at the end of April 2004.

### **Work and official duties**

Besides a number of official duties as a member of the Royal House, Princess Laurentien works as a freelance communications consultant. Since June 2008, she has been a Fellow of the European Climate Foundation. She is also working on a series of children's books which centre on a character known as Mr Finney and deal with issues such as sustainability and climate change. The first book in the series will be published in October 2009. Princess Laurentien also works with the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), in particular with the office in Brussels. The Princess has been involved in activities to promote literacy, in particular projects and initiatives combating adult illiteracy in the Netherlands, since 2001. While living in Brussels

before her marriage, she worked as a volunteer teaching adults to read. She now also works to promote reading among children and young people. Princess Laurentien is the chair of Stichting Lezen & Schrijven (the Reading and Writing Foundation), which was set up on her initiative in 2004. She will become chair of the High Level Group on Literacy of the European Commission on 1 February 2011.

On 24 March 2009, Princess Laurentien was designated UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development. In this capacity, she will act as an advocate for the cause of literacy all over the world. She is patron of the Dutch Listening and Braille Library (NLBB) and the Dutch language society Genootschap Onze Taal and honorary chair of the Association of Public Libraries. The Princess is Vice-President of Fauna & Flora International. She is also chair of the European Cultural Foundation.

### ***Career***

Princess Laurentien started her career as a video journalist for CNN Headline News in Atlanta, Georgia (USA), where she worked from 1991 to 1992. From 1992 to 1995, she was executive director of the Belmont European Policy Centre in Brussels, a think tank on European affairs. From 1995 to 1997 she worked for Philip Morris in Brussels, where she was manager of government relations. In 1997 she was appointed deputy director of Edelman Worldwide, an international public relations agency, and in February 2000 joined the board of directors of the Brussels branch of Adamson BSMG Worldwide, an international consultancy specialising in strategic communications and public affairs.

After their marriage in May 2001, Prince Constantijn and Princess Laurentien went to live in London, where the Princess worked for BSMG Worldwide, the consultancy she had worked for in Brussels. In London, she was head of Corporate Communications Practice, first for the UK, then for the European market. BSMG Worldwide merged with Weber Shandwick in January 2002. Since May 2003, she has been working as a freelance communications consultant.

### **Leisure pursuits**

Princess Laurentien's favourite sports are tennis, skiing and sailing. She also likes to work out at the gym. Her other hobbies include reading, travelling and photography.

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