**Beat: Miscellaneous**

# Belgian royal family uses passports with false names

-, 24.09.2013, 20:39 Time

**USPA News -** Belgium`s King Philippe and other members of the royal family have been issued passports with false names for private trips, the country`s foreign ministry confirmed on Tuesday, revealing for the first time a practice that has been used for more than a century. Foreign minister Didier Reynders said he was surprised by the revelations, saying he was not aware of the practice despite being in charge of the ministry for nearly two years.

He has now instructed the head of his ministerial office to carry out an internal investigation, of which the results are expected to be made public at a later date. The ministry said the administrative practice to issue passports with pseudonyms for members of the royal family dates back to King Leopold II, who ruled Belgium between December 1865 and December 1909. "They are not false passports but authentic passports in which a pseudonym is used," it said in a statement. The purpose of this practice is to protect the privacy and security of the royal family, as the national register uses only a royal`s title and first name. "This official name is used on their diplomatic passport [and] makes it particularly difficult to travel discretely," the ministry said, explaining the royals only use passports with pseudonyms during private trips. Despite Reynders ordering an internal investigation, his ministry emphasized that the royal family is "not committing deceit" and that it has a "detailed and documented file" for each case in which such a passport was used. "If members of the royal family are on official travel, it is obvious that Foreign Affairs issues them with a diplomatic passport with their name and title according to the rules that apply," it added. The practice was first made public on the VTM television program "Royalty," in which former prime minister Mark Eyskens said the royal family has long used "false passports." He went back on those remarks after the issue made headlines in Belgium, saying the foreign ministry would never issue false passports. "These are not real passports of course. It is actually a forgery, objectively speaking," Eyskens had said on Monday`s broadcast, which revealed King Philippe uses the name Philippe Dermulle. Others on the broadcast said the royal family also makes reservations or takes memberships under pseudonyms, and even instructors at sports clubs do not know they are teaching the king`s children.

**Article online:**
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1462/belgian-royal-family-uses-passports-with-false-names.html

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