



4 June 2014 - King Juan Carlos of Spain has abdicated. "A new generation must be at the forefront... younger people with new energies," the king said in [a televised address](#) . His son, Crown Prince Felipe will take over the throne.

King Juan Carlos took the throne in 1975, after the death of Dictator Francisco Franco, becoming the first reigning monarch since 1931. After his ascension to the throne, Juan Carlos implemented reforms, which removed the dictatorial regime and put Spain on the path to democracy. A new constitution was approved in 1978 establishing a Spanish constitutional monarchy.

He was one of the world's most popular monarchs for most of his reign due to his role in the democratic transition of Spain. However recently his reputation has been tarnished by accusations of long-running corruption and elaborate expenditures, such as a luxurious elephant-hunting trip in 2012 in the midst of a financial crisis.

However, his abdication comes from his desire to leave a new generation to rule, especially as he faces a deteriorating health. King Juan Carlos is the fourth reigning European monarch to abdicate in just over a year, following the abdications of Pope Benedict XVI of Vatican City, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and King Albert II of Belgium.

Juan Carlos' abdication has sparked calls for [a referendum](#) on Spain's monarchy. Thousands of people across Spain took to the streets on the announcement of his abdication. Police estimated that more than 20,000 people descended on Madrid's Puerta del Sol square, and thousands more on Barcelona's Catalunya square. Solidarity rallies were also held in 30 cities across Europe and Latin America.

As no law pertaining to abdication exists in Spanish legislation, a constitutional amendment

must be drafted to permit King Juan Carlos to hand over the reigns to his son. On the occasion of the King's abdication, the Spokesman of the Secretary-General on behalf of Ban Ki-moon [said](#)

, "The Secretary-General wishes to express his sincere gratitude to His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain for his personal engagement and valuable contributions to the work of the United Nations, including in the context of the Alliance of Civilizations and the global efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals."