

WHAT DOES A 'SLIMMED-DOWN' MONARCHY MEAN?

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Royal commentator Richard Fitzwilliams said it has become “totally unclear” what exactly the term refers

to.

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Much has been made—for some years, in fact—of the idea the British monarchy under King Charles III will be “[slimmed down](#).” Much other than what this *actually* means. This concept is said not only to apply to the upcoming [coronation](#) but to the monarch’s rule beyond May 6th. It has, however, become “totally unclear” what a slimmed-down monarchy will actually look like. That is according to royal commentator Richard Fitzwilliams. This, he added, is “especially true regarding royal patronages.”

A royal patronage involves a member of the royal family working to support and publicise the acts of a particular charity or organisation. With Prince Andrew and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex having stepped back from their senior duties in recent years, the number of royal patronages has decreased quite apart from the coming of the new King’s reign. In this sense, Mr. Fitzwilliams told *The European Conservative* that “the royal family is already ‘slimmed down.’” He said:

Buckingham Palace [has] announced a review of royal patronages, the royal family used to carry out some 2,300 a year for some 3,000 charities. Andrew, in disgrace, gave up over 200, the Sussexes have stepped down as senior working royals, they had few charitable links but these would have been expanded ... Also, the King and Queen Consort are in their 70s, as is the indefatigable, hard working and deservedly popular Princess Royal.

With Prince Philip having over 750 patronages when he died and the Queen over

500, it may be that the numbers will go down substantially, at least in the short term. The Prince and Princess of Wales are attached to relatively few, but do far more for certain causes, lending them a unique cachet as they are the world's most glamorous royal couple. Royal connections give charities probity and a higher profile and can be very valuable.

Even beyond patronages, there has been much talk about the British royal family taking a step back, particularly with regard to spending. *The Wall Street Journal* late last year highlighted that the UK's cost of living crisis, which has many causes but, as yet, no serious cure, means the court of King Charles faces a "balancing act on costs." But Mr. Fitzwilliams suggested that on this point, too, the rhetoric appears more extreme than will the actions. He told this paper that while the way the family's various palaces are used may change, including opening them up more to the (paying) public, Charles "is not known for his frugality."

The royal commentator added:

Under him, the monarchy, which will hopefully reach a more peaceful period on the domestic front, is likely to continue to be costly, though a glance at the disastrous refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster should reassure doubters that they will continue [to] get value for money from the monarchy, a symbol of national unity which is unique.

The term "slimmed down" is likely used because it has "tantalisingly democratic connotations, implying thrift, especially during a cost of living crisis and also a contemporary outlook."

All eyes, for now, will be fixed on the upcoming coronation, about which there appears to

be more ground to point to a slimming down. Even this, though, Mr. Fitzwilliams assures, will be “magnificent,” and it will surely attract the attention of millions upon millions around the world.