

Multinational Conventions and Agreements

CONGRESS OF VIENNA

TREATY AT A GLANCE

Completed

June 9, 1815, at Vienna

Signatories

Great Britain, Austria, France, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Spain, and Sweden

Overview

The general treaty of June 9, 1815, resulted from a congress held from September 1814 through June 1815. The business of the congress was, pursuant to the FIRST PEACE OF PARIS, to reestablish a balance of power in Europe and, to the extent possible, restore pre-Napoleonic dynasties.

Historical Background

With Napoleon presumably in permanent exile on the island of Elba, the powers of Europe convened in Vienna, where after 25 years of almost constant war stretching back to the French Revolution, the old order was ready to reassert its control over Europe and establish a stable, conservative international settlement. Austria's Francis I (formerly Holy Roman Emperor Francis II) hosted the unprecedented congress, attended by Alexander I of Russia, Frederick William III of Prussia, and many lesser rulers and monarchs. Of even greater significance was the galaxy of diplomats present, including Viscount Castlereagh, representing Great Britain; Prince Karl August von Hardenberg, Prussia; Count Karl Robert Nesselrode, Russia; Prince Klemens von Metternich, Austria; and the highly flexible Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, foreign minister under Napoleon and now in service to the restored Bourbon government.

In the course of the congress, Napoleon made his dramatic return from Elba, landing at Cannes on March 1. The powers gathered in Vienna paid no heed to Napoleon's protestations of peaceful intentions but instead outlawed the returned exile and prepared for war. As massive Russian and Austrian forces assembled, Napoleon decided to act decisively to separate and defeat the Prussian and Anglo-Dutch armies in what is now Belgium. He did win several initial victories before

he met defeat at the hands of the duke of Wellington and Gebhard von Blücher at Waterloo on June 18, 1815.

Terms

In the meantime, Talleyrand had emerged as Europe's premiere diplomat and power broker. He played brilliantly upon the differences among the four dominant powers at Vienna and broke a deadlock over the demands of Russia for all of Poland, and of Prussia for all of Saxony. Talleyrand supported Castlereagh and Metternich to force Russia and Prussia to reduce their claims. The final result: Prussia was given two-fifths of Saxony, and Russia received most of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

As to the west, the aim of the dominant powers was to erect barriers against future French aggression. Belgium was given to the Netherlands; the Rhineland and Westphalia to Prussia; Nice and Savoy to Sardinia; and Lombardy and Venetia went to Austria. A new loose German Confederation was established, chiefly to facilitate defense. Switzerland was neutralized under an international guarantee that endures to this day. Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden in exchange for Lauenburg. In Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the pre-Napoleonic dynasties were restored.

The lengthy document of June 9 was in large part a detailed redivision of Europe. Typical was Article

ARTICLE XXIII

His Majesty the King of Prussia having in consequence of the last war, reassumed the possession of the provinces and territories which had been ceded by the Peace of Tilsit it is acknowledged and declared by the present Article that His Majesty, his heirs and successors, shall possess anew, as formerly, in full property and Sovereignty, the following countries, that is to say:

Those of his ancient provinces of Poland specified in Article II;

The City of Dantzic and its territory, as the latter was determined by the Treaty of Tilsit;

The Circle of Cottbus;

The Old March;

The part of the Circle of Magdeburg situated on the left bank of the Elbe, together with the Circle of the Saale;

The Principality of Halberstadt, with the Lordships of Derenburg, and of Hassenrode;

The Town and Territory of Quedlinburg (save and except the rights of Her Royal Highness the Princess Sophia Albertine of Sweden, Abbess of Quedlinburg, conformable to the arrangements made in 1803);

The Prussian part of the County of Mansfeld;

The Prussian part of the County of Hohenstein;

The Eichsfeld;

The Town of Nordhausen with its territory;

The Town of Mühlhausen with its territory;

The Prussian part of the district of Trefourt with Dorla;

The Town and Territory of Erfurth, with the exception of Klein-Brembach and Berstedt, inclosed in the Principality of Weimar, ceded to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar by Article XXXIX;

The Bailiwick of Wandersleben, belonging to the County of Unter-gleichen;

The Principality of Paderborn, with the Prussian part of the Bailiwicks of Schwallenberg, Oldenburg, and Stoppelberg, and the jurisdictions (*Gerichte*) of Hagendorn and Odenhausen, situated in the territory of Lippe;

The County of Mark, with the part of Lipstadt belonging to it;

The County of Werden;

The County of Essen;

The part of the Duchy of Cleves on the right bank of the Rhine, with the town and fortress of Wesel; the part of the Duchy, situated on the left bank, specified in Article XXV;

The secularized Chapter of Elten;

The Principality of Munster, that is to say, the Prussian part of the former Bishopric of Munster, with the exception of that part which has been ceded to His Britannic Majesty, King of Hanover, in virtue of Article XXVII;

The secularized Provostship of Cappenburg;

The County of Tecklenburg;

The County of Lingen, with the exception of that part ceded to the kingdom of Hanover by Article XXVII;

The Principality of Minden;

The County of Ravensburg;

The secularized Chapter of Herford;

The Principality of Neufchatel, with the County of Valengin, such as their Frontiers are regulated by the Treaty of Paris, and by Article LXXVI of this General Treaty.

The same disposition extends to the rights of Sovereignty and *suzeraineté* over the County of Wernigerode, to that of high protection over the County of Hohen-Limbourg, and to all the other rights or pretensions whatsoever which His Prussian Majesty possessed and exercised, before the Peace of Tilsit, and which he has not renounced by other Treaties, Acts, or Conventions.

The German Confederation was established by Articles 53-64, which provide a virtual constitution for the body:

ARTICLE LIII

The Sovereign Princes and Free Towns of Germany, under which denomination, for the present purpose, are comprehended their Majesties the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of Prussia, of Denmark, and of the Netherlands; that is to say:—

The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, for all their possessions which anciently belonged to the German Empire;

The King of Denmark, for the Duchy of Holstein;

And the King of the Netherlands, for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; establish among themselves a perpetual Confederation, which shall be called 'The Germanic Confederation.'

ARTICLE LIV

The object of this Confederation is the maintenance of the external and internal safety of Germany, and of the Independence and Inviolability of the Confederated States.

ARTICLE LV

The Members of the Confederation, as such, are equal with regard to their rights; and they all equally engage to maintain the Act which constitutes their union.

ARTICLE LVI

The affairs of the Confederation shall be confided to a Federative Diet, in which all the Members shall vote by their Plenipotentiaries, either individually or collectively, in the following manner, without prejudice to their rank:—

1. Austria	1 Vote
2. Prussia	1 Vote
3. Bavaria	1 Vote
4. Saxony	1 Vote
5. Hanover	1 Vote
6. Wurtemberg	1 Vote
7. Baden	1 Vote
8. Electoral Hessel	1 Vote
9. Grand Duchy of Hesse	1 Vote
10. Denmark, for Holstein	1 Vote

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11. The Netherlands, for Luxembourg	1 Vote
12. Grand-Ducal and Ducal House of Saxony	1 Vote
13. Brunswick and Nassau	1 Vote
14. Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Strelitz	1 Vote
15. Holstein-Oldenburg, Anhalt and Schwartzburg	1 Vote
16. Hohenzollern, Liechtenstein, Reuss, Schaumburg-Lippe, Lippe and Waldeck	1 Vote
17. The Free Towns of Lubeck, Frankfort, Bremen and Hamburg	1 Vote

Total 17 Votes.

ARTICLE LVII

Austria shall preside at the Federative Diet. Each State of the Confederation has the right of making propositions, and the presiding State shall bring them under deliberation within a definite time.

ARTICLE LVIII

Whenever fundamental laws are to be enacted, changes made in the fundamental laws of the Confederation, measures adopted relative to the Federative Act itself, and organic institutions or other arrangements made for the common interest, the Diet shall form itself into a General Assembly, and, in that case, the distribution of votes shall be as follows, calculated according to the respective extent of the individual States:—

Austria shall have	4 Votes
Prussia	4 Votes
Saxony	4 Votes
Bavaria	4 Votes
Hanover	4 Votes
Wurtemberg	4 Votes
Baden	3 Votes
Electoral Hesse	3 Votes
Grand Duchy of Hesse	3 Votes
Holstein	3 Votes
Luxembourg	3 Votes
Brunswick	2 Votes
Mecklenburg-Schwerin	2 Votes
Nassau	2 Votes
Saxe-Weimar	1 Vote
Saxe-Gotha	1 Vote
Saxe-Coburg	1 Vote
Saxe-Meiningen	1 Vote
Saxe-Hildburghausen	1 Vote
Mecklenburg-Strelitz	1 Vote
Holstein-Oldenburg	1 Vote
Anhalt-Dessau	1 Vote
Anhalt-Bernburg	1 Vote
Anhalt-Kothen	1 Vote
Schwartzburg-Sondershausen	1 Vote
Schwartzburg-Rudolstadt	1 Vote
Hohenzollern-Heckingen	1 Vote
Liechtenstein	1 Vote
Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen	1 Vote
Waldeck	1 Vote
Reuss (Elder Branch)	1 Vote

Reuss (Younger Branch)	1 Vote
Schaumburg-Lippe	1 Vote
Lippe	1 Vote
The Free Town of Lubeck	1 Vote
The Free Town of Frankfort	1 Vote
The Free Town of Bremen	1 Vote
The Free Town of Hamburg	1 Vote

Total 69 Votes.

The Diet in deliberating on the organic laws of the Confederation shall consider whether any collective votes ought to be granted to the ancient Mediatised State of the Empire.

ARTICLE LIX

The question, whether a subject is to be discussed by the General Assembly, conformably to the principles above established, shall be decided in the Ordinary Assembly by a majority of votes. The same Assembly shall prepare the drafts of resolutions which are to be proposed to the General Assembly, and shall furnish the latter with all the necessary information, either for adopting or rejecting them.

The plurality of votes shall regulate the decisions, both in the Ordinary and General Assemblies, with this difference, however, that in the Ordinary Assembly, an absolute majority shall be deemed sufficient, while, in the other, two-thirds of the votes shall be necessary to form the majority.

When the votes are even in the Ordinary Assembly, the President shall have the casting vote; but when the Assembly is to deliberate on the acceptance or change of any of the fundamental laws, upon organic institutions, upon individual rights, or upon affairs of religion, the plurality of votes shall not be deemed sufficient, either in the Ordinary or in the General Assembly.

The Diet is permanent: it may, however, when the subjects submitted to its deliberation are disposed of, adjourn for a fixed period, which shall not exceed four months.

All ulterior arrangements relative to the postponement or the dispatch of urgent business which may arise during the recess shall be reserved for the Diet, which will consider them when engaged in preparing the organic laws.

ARTICLE LX

With respect to the order in which the members of the Confederation shall vote, it is agreed, that while the Diet shall be occupied in framing organic laws, there shall be no fixed regulation; and whatever may be the order observed on such an occasion, it shall neither prejudice any of the members, nor establish a precedent for the future. After framing the organic laws, the Diet will deliberate upon the manner of arranging this matter by a permanent regulation, for which purpose it will depart as little as possible from those which have been observed in the ancient Diet, and more particularly according to the Reces of the Deputation of the Empire in 1803. The order to be adopted shall in

no way affect the rank and precedence of the members of the Confederation except in as far as they concern the Diet.

ARTICLE LXI

The Diet shall assemble at Frankfort on the Maine. Its first meeting is fixed for the 1st of September, 1815.

ARTICLE LXII

The first object to be considered by the Diet after its opening shall be the framing of the fundamental laws of the Confederation, and of its organic institutions, with respect to its exterior, military, and interior relations.

ARTICLE LXIII

The States of the Confederation engage to defend not only the whole of Germany, but each individual State of the Union, in case it should be attacked, and they mutually guarantee to each other such of their possessions as are comprised in this Union.

When war shall be declared by the Confederation, no member can open a separate negotiation with the enemy, nor make peace, nor conclude an armistice, without the consent of the other members.

The Confederated States engage, in the same manner, not to make war against each other, on any pretext, nor to pursue their differences by force of arms, but to submit them to the Diet, which will attempt a mediation by means of a Commission. If this should not succeed, and a juridical sentence becomes necessary, recourse shall be had to a well organized Austrial Court (*Austrägalinstanz*), to the decision of which the contending parties are to submit without appeal.

ARTICLE LXIV.

The Articles comprised under the title of *Particular Arrangements*, in the Act of the Germanic Confederation, as annexed to the present General Treaty, both in original and in a French translation, shall have the same force and validity as if they were textually inserted herein.

Annexed to the June 9 document was a series of 17 treaties, declarations, and protocols designed to enact the provisions of the Congress of Vienna. An "Epitome of the Seventeen Documents" outlined the relationship between the treaties among various powers and particular articles in the Congress treaty of June 9. The "Epitome" gives some idea of the extent and complexity of the issues the Congress of Vienna managed to resolve:



Epitome of the Seventeen Documents Annexed to the Congress Treaty of Vienna

ANNEX I

Treaty between Austria and Russia respecting Poland. Signed at Vienna April 21 / May 3, 1815.

Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 were embodied in the principal Treaty as, respectively, 5, 3, 4, 6, and 1. They had reference to the new Austro-Russian frontiers, &c. Article 6 enabled inhabitants to leave the country on its transfer. Articles 7, 8, 9 were embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 11, 12, and 13: general amnesty and sequestrations. Articles 10 to 23, property of proprietors having estates on both sides of boundary lines. Articles 24 to 29, navigation of rivers in Poland, tariffs, &c. (see Article 14 of principal Treaty). Articles 30 and 40 relate to loans and debts, surrender of documents, evacuation of territories, &c.

ANNEX II

Treaty between Russia and Prussia relating to Poland, signed at Vienna April 21 / May 3, 1815.

Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 are embodied in substance in the principal Treaty as Articles 2, 6, 11, 12, 13 respectively. The remaining provisions of the Treaty are very similar to those of the Austro-Russian Treaty (see Annex I).

ANNEX III

Additional Treaty between Austria, Prussia, and Russia relative to Cracow. Signed at Vienna April 21 / May 3, 1815.

Articles 1, 2, 3, 6, embodied in principal Treaty as Article 6, 7, 8, 9. This Treaty constituted Cracow a free, neutral, an independent town under the protection of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, with consequent conditions and privileges. [By a treaty between the same Powers dated November 6, 1846, the above additional Treaty was abrogated, the independence of Cracow was put an end to, and the territory incorporated with Austria dominions. The British and French Governments protested against this infraction of the Treaty of Vienna. The constitution of Cracow, which was appended to this Annex, disappeared with the Treaty which created it.]

ANNEX IV

Treaty between Prussia and Saxony (also between Austria and Saxony and between Russia and Saxony) on the subject of territorial reconstruction. Signed at Vienna May 18, 1815.

Articles 2, 4, 13, 16, 21, were incorporated in the principal Treaty as Articles 15, 16, 20, 21, and 22. They related to territorial changes, religious property, amnesty, emigration, &c.

Article 17 concerned the navigation of the Elbe. Article 18 supply of salt from Prussia duty free. Article 22, recognition by Saxony of sovereign rights of Austria, Prussia, and Russia in portions of Poland, &c. [Great Britain acceded to this Treaty.]

ANNEX V

Declaration of King of Saxony on Rights of House of Schonburg Vienna, May 18, 1815. Act of Acceptation by the five Powers May 29, 1815.

ANNEX VI

Treaty (territorial), Prussia and Hanover. Vienna, May 29, 1815

Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Reciprocal cessions. Prussia Hanover, Brunswick, Oldenburg, navigation of the Ems, debts &c.

ANNEX VII

Convention (territorial), Prussia and Saxe-Weimar. Vienna June 1, 1815.

Article 3 was embodied in the principal Treaty as Article 39

ANNEX VIII

Convention (territorial), Prussia and Nassau. Vienna, May 31, 1815.

This convention contains a stipulation (Article 5) relating to the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, enabling Prussia to erect military works within a certain radius of the fortress 'even in those communes which may remain under the Sovereignty of the House of Nassau.'

ANNEX IX

Act concerning the Federative Constitution of Germany. Vienna, June 8, 1815.

Articles 1 to 11, first paragraph, are embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 53 to 63. This Act established a Confederation of the Sovereign Princes and Free Towns of Germany (17 in number), including Denmark for the Duchy of Holstein and the Netherlands for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, forming together the Germanic Confederation for the maintenance of the safety of Germany and the independence of the confederated States. Austria was also a member of this Confederation. A Federative Diet was formed to sit at Frankfort, each of the 17 members having one vote, and a General Assembly in which the number of votes to each member was apportioned according to the respective extent of the individual States. The Act further contained stipulations on various matters bearing on the regulation of affairs.

ANNEX X

Treaty, Great Britain, &c. and Netherlands. Vienna, May 31, 1815.

Union of the Netherlands and Belgium, 33 cessions of territory, Luxembourg, boundaries, &c. Articles 1 to 8 were embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 65 to 73. Appended to the Treaty is an Act of the Netherlands Government of July 21, 1814, accepting the sovereignty of the Belgian Provinces.

ANNEX XIA

Declaration (8 Powers) respecting Helvetic Confederacy. Vienna, March 20, 1815.

Articles 1 to 8 are, with certain omissions, embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83. They deal with the integrity of the Cantons, the addition of 3 new Cantons, and stipulations for regrouping of territory, military roads and other internal arrangements.

ANNEX XIB

Act of Acceptance by Switzerland of the above Declaration. Zurich, May 27, 1815.

ANNEX XII

Protocol (8 Powers). Vienna, March 29, 1815.

Cessions by Sardinia to Geneva. Passage of troops. Protection of Catholic religion in ceded territory, &c.

ANNEX XIII

Treaty, Austria and Sardinia (also Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and France). Vienna, May 20, 1815.

Articles 1 to 8 embodied in principal Treaty as Articles 85 to 92. Boundaries of Sardinia, union of Genoa, fortifications, cessions to Geneva, neutrality of Chablais and Faucigny, passage of troops, &c. Appended to this Annex are the conditions respecting the government of Genoa, Geneva, &c.

ANNEX XIV

Conditions attaching to union of Genoa with Sardinia.

ANNEX XV

Declaration (8 Powers). Vienna, February 8, 1815.

Proposed universal abolition of the Slave Trade; to be a subject for separate negotiations between the Powers.

ANNEX XVI

Regulations. Vienna, March 1815.

Embodied in the principal Treaty as Articles 108 to 116. Navigation of rivers. General arrangements, uniformity of system, &c. The Rhine, Neckar, Maine, Moselle, Meuse, Scheldt.

ANNEX XVII

Regulations. Vienna, March 19, 1815.

Concerning the Rank and Precedence of Diplomatic Agents.



The above epitome gives roughly the purport of the 17 annexes to the Vienna Congress Treaty of June 9, 1815.

Consequences

The Congress of Vienna created a European settlement that endured for some 40 years, establishing a relatively stable balance of power. Yet it was shortsighted to the extent that it ignored nationalist yearnings, leaving the nations of Europe open to internal revolt, which culminated in the revolutions of 1848.