



Empire of Austria

Status: Great Power.

Monarch: His Majesty Emperor Francis I (left).

Delegate: Prince Klemens von Metternich (right).

Background

Austria was one of the countries most heavily affected by the Napoleonic Wars, being invaded, defeated, and shorn of territory several times until the eventual allied victory. Throughout this process, Austria lost their hegemony in Northern Italy, possession of the Netherlands, influence in Germany via the Holy Roman Empire, and much of their heartland.

One of the reasons behind Austria's military inefficiency was that it **wasn't really a country** – the Austrian Empire was actually a hodgepodge of various ethnically diverse kingdoms, duchies, and principalities, all ruled by the Archduke of Austria, but with different legal systems, traditional privileges, and constitutional limitations. This respect for **precedent and the rule of law** gave Austria great international respect (particularly among the small German states), but made it extremely difficult to collect taxes or recruit soldiers.

Objectives

Austria was keen to maintain its status as a great power by **reclaiming territory and spheres of influence** in Germany, Italy, and beyond. However, to maintain their international image as the defenders of precedent, the Austrians wanted to **avoid directly annexing new territory** wherever possible (i.e., just create puppet governments instead). Additionally, domestic pressure from non-Germans meant that Austria wanted to **avoid increasing its German population** without somehow compensating its various other ethnic groups.