



Kingdom of France

Status: Great Power.

Monarch: His Majesty King Louis XVIII (left).

Delegate: Prince Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand (right).

Background

By 1814, French politics had changed forever. Over the last 25 years, France had abolished the monarchy, abolished the church, abolished feudalism, abolished the calendar, guillotined the royals (and 16,000 others), and gone through 6 constitutions, ending, full circle, with an absolute monarchy under Napoleon Bonaparte. Simultaneously, they had invaded nearly every country in Europe several times, sending hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen to die in battle. When Paris eventually fell, the victorious powers **restored the monarchy**, but, recognising that France was not the country it was, imposed a **new constitution** upholding some of the revolutionary reforms.

The rationale for inviting France to the Congress of Vienna was that **France remained a great power**, and reintegrating the new French government into the international order would be essential for its long-term survival. In short, if the allies punished France too hard, they would probably overthrow the government and go to war again.

The 1814 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Napoleonic Wars and served as the starting point for the Congress, restored France to its **1792 borders** (with a couple of extensions).

Objectives

France's priorities were, unsurprisingly, to **avoid losing any more territory or money**, and to **reclaim their status** as a coequal great power. Their diplomatic strategy was orchestrated by their highly competent delegate, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, a diplomat of Napoleon's who defected to the allies as a spy in 1808. Talleyrand's strategy was to insert himself into disputes between the allied powers, fight for the voice of minor nations, and use the promise of French influence to gain favour from the great powers.