



Swiss Confederation



*Charles Pictet de
Rochemont, Delegate for
the Republic of Geneva*

Government: Federal Diet (*Tagsatzung*).

Delegate: Charles Pictet de Rochemont, delegate for Geneva.

Background

Before the Congress of Vienna, the Swiss Confederacy was one of the most **decentralised states** on the continent. The 13 cantons were effectively sovereign, and the weak Federal Diet had no jurisdiction over the several 'Swiss Associate' states, which were aligned with Switzerland but formally independent. This latter category included the Republic of Geneva, whose delegate – Charles Pictet de Rochemont – was one of the most prominent Swiss figures at Vienna.

The Napoleonic Wars saw a brief but radical change in which Switzerland, invaded by France, was reorganised into the **Helvetic Republic**: a radical, centralised state which abolished the feudal cantons and introduced French-style revolutionary reforms. The republic collapsed in 1803, but Switzerland remained a French puppet until it was liberated by the Austrian army in 1813. Swiss independence was confirmed in the 1814 Treaty of Paris, and the Federal Diet was reconvened to address the constitution. By the time of the Congress of Vienna, the diet was deadlocked, and each canton sent its own delegate.

Objectives

Despite its internal divisions, Switzerland was united by a conviction for **independence and neutrality**, and its main objective at the congress was to have this recognised and **confirmed by the great powers**. Territorially, Switzerland wanted The **Canton of Valais** back, which Napoleon had annexed in 1810, and the **dependencies of the Three Leagues** (a Swiss associate) which were lost in 1792.