

## Austria's neutrality agreement

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On 15 May 1955, the USSR, together with the three Western powers occupying Austria (USA, Great Britain and France), signed a treaty which officially put an end to the state of war in the Alpine country. Post-war Austria often served as a forward post for the Americans and the Soviets when they wanted to prove their readiness to talk to one another. In accordance with the new State Treaty, the Austrian government had to proclaim the country's military neutrality in exchange for the withdrawal of the occupation forces. Accordingly, the Soviet occupation zone in eastern Austria, together with Finland, northern Norway and the Danish island of Bornholm, was the only region in Europe from which the Red Army finally agreed to withdraw. That same year, Austria joined the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe.