

Draft resolution submitted by the MPs Pittermann and Stürgkh on the accession of Austria to the Council of Europe (15 December 1953)

Caption: On 15 December 1953, several MPs, led by Bruno Pittermann and Barthold Stürgkh, submit to the Austrian National Council a draft resolution in which they argue for Austria's accession to the Council of Europe.

Source: Council of Europe-Consultative Assembly (Strasbourg, 31 January 1954) AS/AG (5) 65, A 15.824. 31.01.1954. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

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Draft Resolution relating to the accession of the Austrian Federal Republic to the Council of Europe, submitted to the Austrian Parliament by MM. Pittermann, Stürgkh and colleagues (15 December 1953)

The Federal Government is requested to consider whether the preliminary conditions exist for the accession of Austria to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg as a full Member and to inform the Upper Chamber of the result of that investigation.

Since 1947 the Austrian Republic has, together with seventeen other States, been a Member of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, whose seat is in Paris. Fifteen of those States are Members of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg: fourteen are full Members and the Territory of the Saar, whose international position is still undecided, is an Associate Member. Of the Members of O.E.E.C. only Portugal, the Swiss Confederation and the Austrian Republic are not yet Members of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg.

In 1951, in response to an invitation by M. Paul-Henri Spaak, at that time President of the Consultative Assembly, the Austrian National Council decided to appoint representatives of the National Council and the Federal Council to attend meeting of the Consultative Assembly and its Committees as observers. Austria may not, however, take part in the discussions of the Committee of Ministers, which is, under the terms of the Statute the executive organ of the Council of Europe.

Since the Statute of the Council of Europe stipulates that matters relating to armaments and other military questions do not fall within the scope of the Council of Europe, full membership of that Organisation appears to be quite compatible with political neutrality.

Sweden, whose political neutrality cannot be questioned, is a full Member of the Council of Europe.

Accession to the Council of Europe as full Member would not, therefore, imply participation by the Austrian Republic in any system of military alliances.

It is, moreover, undeniable that the vast majority of the Austrian people sincerely desires that Austria shall take part as a full Member in the initial efforts to build a politically and economically united Europe by peaceful means.

The Austrian people and its leaders can contribute to the building of a united Europe the fruit of their centuries-old experience of the political co-operation of several nations within a single State.

A prime condition of such co-operation is that Austria shall participate unreservedly as a full Member.

For these reasons, the undersigned Representatives request the Federal Government to consider the conditions governing accession as outlined in this draft.

With regard to procedure, the Government is urged to refer this draft Resolution to the Committee on European Questions and to waive a First Reading.