

The 'Geneva spirit'

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From 18 to 23 July 1955, the Heads of Government of the four Great Powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the USSR) met in Geneva. It was their first summit meeting for ten years. The negotiations focused on European security, disarmament and East-West relations. Although the four powers did not reach agreement, especially as far as the fate of Germany was concerned, the meeting closed in a climate of détente between the various protagonists. There was even talk of a new 'Geneva spirit', referring to the peaceful climate which had inspired the League of Nations in the interwar years.

Other signs that hinted at this desire for peaceful coexistence included the visit of FRG Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Moscow in 1955, the trip by Khrushchev to the United States in 1959 and his meeting with US President John F. Kennedy in Vienna in 1961.

But despite these encouraging signs, the distrust and ideological opposition between the two blocs continued.