

Eisenach Declaration of the National Association (1859)

Abstract

In its founding declaration from August 14, 1859, the National Association emphatically calls for a “small German” solution to the question of national unification under Prussian leadership. Founded by National Liberals, the association dissolved in 1867 after Prussia had attained supremacy in Germany with its victory over rivaling Austria and pushed ahead to unify Germany.

Source

The current dangerous state of affairs in Europe and Germany and the need to subordinate politically partisan demands to the great common cause of German unification have brought together a number of men from different German lands—some belonging to the democratic, some to the constitutional party—to reach an agreement on bringing about a uniform German constitution and on what needs to be done to achieve such a goal.

The same have—following up on the Eisenach Declaration of the 17th and the Hanover Declaration of the 19th of July 1859—come to an agreement on the following points:

1. In the current international political situation we perceive great perils for the independence of our German fatherland, which tend to be increased rather than decreased by the peace concluded between Austria and France.
2. These perils are ultimately caused by Germany’s flawed overall constitution, and they can only be eliminated by a prompt alteration to this constitution.
3. To this end it is necessary for the German Federal Diet [*Bundestag*] to be replaced by a solid, strong, and lasting central government for Germany, and for a German national assembly to be convened.
4. Under the current circumstances, the most effective steps toward achieving this end can only emanate from Prussia; it is essential, therefore, to work toward getting Prussia to assume the initiative.
5. Should Germany be directly threatened from abroad in the near future, the leadership of German military forces and the diplomatic representation of Germany abroad are to be transferred to Prussia until such time as a German central government is definitively constituted.
6. It is the duty of every German man to support the Prussian government to the best of his ability, insofar as its efforts proceed from the assumption that the mission of the Prussian state essentially coincides with Germany’s needs and mission, and insofar as its activity is directed toward the introduction of a strong and free overall constitution for Germany.
7. From all German patriots^[1], whether they belong to the democratic or the constitutional party, we expect that they will place national independence and unity above the demands of their party, and that they will work together harmoniously and tenaciously to attain a powerful constitution for Germany.

NOTES

[1] *Vaterlandsfreunden*: literally, friends of the fatherland—trans.

Source: R. Le Mang, *Der deutsche Nationalverein*. Berlin, 1909, p. 18ff; reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente, 1851–1900*, vol. 2, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986, pp. 104–5.

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