The Six Articles (June 28, 1832) and the Ten Articles (July 5, 1832)

Abstract

The political unrest following the Paris Revolution in July of 1830 and the liberal-democratic demonstrations at the Hambach Festival of 1832 prompted new measures by Prince Clemens von Metternich, the Prussian government, and the leading ministers of the mid-sized German states. The Six Articles of June 28, 1832, limited the rights of the Diets in constitutional states and stipulated that federal law superseded individual state law, thus further restricting the ability of individual states to express their own political will. The Ten Articles of July 5, 1832, sought to maintain peace and legal order in the German Confederation; these articles forbade political organizations, meetings, appeals, and festivals.

Source

I. The Six Articles from June 28, 1832

In grateful recognition of the care repeatedly taken by His Majesty the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia for what is most beneficial to the German fatherland, all the federal governments have jointly agreed to the following provisions:

Art. 1. Since, according to Article 57 of the Vienna Final Act, the whole authority of the state must remain united in the head of state, and [since] the sovereign can be required to permit the constitutionally guaranteed assembly of the estates of the land to participate only in the exercise of certain rights, a German sovereign is also, as a member of the Confederation, not only justified in dismissing a petition of the estates contradictory hereunto, but the obligation toward such a dismissal derives from the very purpose of the Confederation.

Art. 2. Likewise, since—according to the spirit of the above-mentioned Art. 57 of the Final Act and the conclusion ensuing from this, which Art. 58 articulates—no German sovereign may be refused the means required to conduct a government in accordance with federal obligations and the constitutions of the individual states, [those] cases in which assemblies of the estates would want to require the approval of taxes needed to conduct the government in an indirect or direct manner by implementing other wishes and proposals are to be counted among those to which Art. 25 and 26 of the Final Act would have to be applied.

Art. 3. Domestic legislation of the German federal states may neither place any kind of obstacle before the aims of the Confederation, as articulated in Art. 2 of the Federal Act and in Art. 1 of the Final Act, nor may impede the fulfillment of other federal constitutional obligations toward the Confederation, and especially toward the payment of monetary contributions belonging thereunto.

Art. 4. In order to guarantee the dignity and prerogative of the Confederation and of the Assembly representing the Confederation against all kinds of intrusions, but at the same time to alleviate the management of existing constitutional relations between the governments and their estates in the individual federal states, the Federal Diet [*Bundestag*] shall appoint a commission, for an initial period of six years, whose purpose shall be to take special and continual note of the discussions among the estates in the German federal states, to make the obligations toward the Confederation—or the proposals and resolutions contradicting the governmental rights guaranteed by the federal treaties—the object of their attention, and to notify the Federal Assembly, which consequently, when it finds the matter appropriate

for further deliberations, is to arrange such with the participating governments. After six years have passed, agreement on the continuation of the commission will be reserved.

Art. 5. Whereas, according to Art. 59 of the Vienna Final Act, in those cases where the constitution permits the deliberations of the provincial estates to be made public, the limits of free expression cannot (either during the deliberations themselves, or by their publication in print) be exceeded in a manner that endangers the peace of an individual federal state or that of Germany as a whole, and this is provided by the rules of procedure; therefore, too, shall all federal governments, as they are obligated to their federal relations, offer each other—for the prevention of attacks on the Confederation in the assemblies of estates and for the guidance of the same, each in accordance with its domestic provincial constitution—to enact and apply the appropriate orders.

Art. 6. Whereas the Federal Assembly is already called upon, according to Art. 17 of the Final Act, to uphold the true meaning of the Federal Act and the provisions contained therein whenever there should be doubt about their interpretation in accordance with an explanation of the federal purpose, therefore it is self-evident that only and exclusively the German Confederation is entitled to an interpretation of the federal and the Final Act that has legal effect, which [Confederation] exercises this right through its constitutional organ, the Federal Assembly.

Source: *Protokolle der Bundesversammlung*,1832, 22nd session; reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente, 1803–1850*, vol. 1, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1978, pp. 132–33.

Translation: Jeremiah Riemer

II. The Ten Articles from July 5, 1832

In consideration of circumstances at the current time and for the duration of the same, the Federal Assembly, in accordance with the obligations incumbent on it to confer about common disciplinary rules for the maintenance of public peace and legal order, after listening to expert opinion from a commission selected from among themselves, has resolved as follows:

Art. 1. No newspaper or other published writing of less than twenty sheets containing political content, written in German, and published in a state not belonging to the German Confederation may be permitted or distributed in a federal state without prior approval of the government of the same; there will be proceedings against violators of this prohibition as well as against the distributors of prohibited published writings.

Art. 2. All associations that have political purposes or are used under another name for political purposes are to be prohibited in all federal states, and proceedings shall be undertaken against their authors and the participants in the same with appropriate punishment.

Art. 3. Extraordinary popular assemblies and popular festivals, namely those whose time and place were previously neither customary nor permitted, may not take place, no matter under what name and to what purpose, in any federal state without prior approval of the competent authority.

Those who give occasion to such assemblies or festivals by appointment or announcement are subject to an appropriate punishment.

Even at permitted popular assemblies and popular festivals, it should not be tolerated that public speeches with political content are held; those who are guilty of this are to be forcefully punished, and whoever abuses any popular assembly in order to propose addresses or resolutions and have them approved by signature or oral consent is to have more severe punishment imposed on them.

Art. 4. The public carrying of insignias on ribbons, rosettes, or the like, whether it be by natives or foreigners, in colors other than those of the country to whom the carrier belongs as a subject—the unauthorized hanging of banners and flags, the erection of liberty trees and similar rebellious symbols—is to be strictly punished.

Art. 5. The provisional resolution prepared on September 20, 1819, in accordance with the additional resolution of August 12, 1824, about the disciplinary measures to be undertaken with a view toward the universities, will be—both in general, and especially with regard to the provisions contained in §§ 2 and 3 of the same,—unfailingly applied in the appropriate cases, in so far as this has not already happened.

Art. 6. The federal governments will have continuously provided the most exacting police surveillance on all local residents who have made known—through public speeches, writings, or actions—their activities or participation in seditious plans; at any time, most promptly and readily, they will provide reciprocal support about all discoveries of subversive secret associations and the individuals involved in them, including following up on evidence in these cases.

Art. 7. Special attention is to be directed toward foreigners who have proceeded to one of the federal states owing to political offenses or crimes, as well as toward natives and foreigners who come from places or regions where associations for overthrowing the Confederation or German governments have formed and are suspected of participation therein; to this end, current passport rules everywhere in the federal lands are to be scrutinized most exactly and, where need be, sharpened.

The federal governments will see to it that suspicious foreign arrivals who cannot sufficiently identify the purpose of their stay will not be permitted.

Art. 8. The federal governments commit themselves, upon a requisition having been carried out, to deport without delay those who have committed political offenses or crimes in a federal state and who, in order to escape punishment, have fled to another federal land; [no federal government is obliged to deport its own subjects].

Art. 9. The federal governments reciprocally assure each other of the most prompt military assistance on demand and, in that they recognize that circumstances, currently no less urgent than in October 1830, require extraordinary precautions because of the employment of the Confederation's military forces, they will let themselves be seriously concerned with carrying out the resolution of October 21, 1830—concerning disciplinary measures for the establishment and maintenance of peace in Germany—even under current circumstances, and for as long as the maintenance of peace in Germany makes it desirable.

Art. 10. All federal governments commit themselves, without delay, to notify the Federal Assembly of those decrees that they have undertaken in order to carry out the aforementioned disciplinary measures in accordance with the exigencies resulting in the different federal states.

Source: *Protokolle der Bundesversammlung*, 1832, 24th session; reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente, 1803–1850*, vol. 1, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1978, pp. 134–35.

Translation: Jeremiah Riemer

Recommended Citation: The Six Articles (June 28, 1832) and the Ten Articles (July 5, 1832), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/from-vormaerz-to-prussian-dominance-1815-1866/ghdi:document-236> [October 13, 2026].