

## Autobahn Exit at Bonn with Directions to the Parliamentary Council (1948)

### Abstract

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On August 13, 1948, in accordance with an agreement made by the minister presidents of the western zone states, Bonn was chosen as the meeting place of the Parliamentary Council. For Konrad Adenauer, who would become president of the Council, the decision was extremely practical, since his private residence was in Rhöndorf near Bonn. (Hence the persistent rumors that Adenauer had personally chosen the location.) The opening ceremony for the Parliamentary Council took place on September 1, 1948, in the atrium of the König Zoological Museum in Bonn. The council consisted of sixty-five voting representatives, who had been elected by the parliaments of their *Länder*. Additionally, the western sectors of Berlin were represented by five, non-voting delegates who acted in an advisory capacity. On May 10, 1949, after the Council had adopted the Basic Law, it decided by a small, four-vote majority – 33 to 29 – to make Bonn the “provisional seat of the Federal Government,” the defeated alternative being Frankfurt am Main. The choice of the provincial town of Bonn, just like the use of the term “basic law” (and not “constitution”) indicated the provisional nature of the newly-founded West German state. Consequently, Bonn, with the deliberately restrained architecture of its public buildings, acquired the character of a technical-bureaucratic governmental center rather than that of a real capital. The sign in the middle reads, “Parliamentary Council; Bonn exit, 1000m”; the sign on the left provides directions to CDU headquarters in the neighboring town of Königswinter; the sign on the right provides directions to the SPD headquarters in nearby Bad Honnef.

### Source

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Source: Before the Bonn Autobahn exit: signs pointing to the Parliamentary Council. (Cows grazing in the

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background). Photo: Hanns Hubmann.

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