Europe in 1648: The Peace of Westphalia

Abstract

The Peace of Westphalia was actually two treaties, signed on October 14 and 24, 1648, and each negotiated in a different seat of an Imperial prince-bishop in the land of Westphalia. The treaty between Emperor Ferdinand III and Queen Christina of Sweden and their respective allies was signed at Osnabrück; the treaty between Ferdinand III and King Louis XIV of France and their respective allies was signed at Münster. For the Holy Roman Empire, the Peace meant an official settlement to the political and territorial disputes that had begun with the German Reformations and an end to the conflicts sparked by the Bohemian conflict of 1618 and the Swedish invasion of June 1631.

This map shows Europe's territorial divisions as they had been determined in the peace settlement. The treaties resulted in territorial gains for Sweden, whose monarch acquired half of Pomerania as well as other lands which gave it control of the Baltic Sea and the estuaries of the Oder, Elbe and Weser rivers; Brandenburg gained the prince-archbishopric of Magdeburg and the other half of Pomerania; Bavaria retained the Upper Palatinate and the electoral title from the Palatine line of the Wittelsbachs. France obtained sovereignty over Alsace and retained possession of several other territories, which stabilized its border west of the Rhine. The United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Swiss Confederation were formally recognized as independent republics.

Source

Source: Original cartography by Cherie Norton/Mapping Solutions in collaboration with William Hagen, 2009. Revised cartography (WCAG-compliant) by Gabriel Moss, 2022.

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