

# The Imperial Diet in Regensburg on June 13-23, 1653 (1653)

## Abstract

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In the aftermath of the devastating and disruptive Thirty Years War (1618-48), Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III (r. 1637-57) convened the Imperial Diet [*Reichstag*] in Regensburg in 1653. His initial aim in doing so was to settle imperial obligations that had not been defined by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Diet confirmed the right of the territorial princes to raise funds from their subjects to maintain fortresses and garrisons, and thus enabled them to establish standing armies independent of the estates. It rejected a proposal put forth by Ferdinand that would have required all estates to pay imperial taxes toward common objectives if such taxes were voted for by the majority of the Imperial Diet. Here, resistance by Brandenburg's Elector Frederick William (r. 1640-88) was an important factor.

Imperial Diet at Regensburg was dismissed in the middle of 1654. On the whole, it failed to reverse the fragmentation and relative powerlessness of the Empire. The Diet only gained renewed effectiveness as an imperial political tool in 1663, when it was transformed into the Permanent Imperial Diet under Ferdinand's son and successor, Emperor Leopold I (r. 1658-1705). The Permanent Imperial Diet met regularly in Regensburg until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806.

This engraving, one of two motifs from a contemporary leaflet, shows the imperial estates before the emperor at the Regensburg city hall. By 1663, this Gothic structure had become the fixed meeting place for the Permanent Imperial Diet. The caption at the top of the engraving reads: "Actual sketch of the solemnities of the Imperial Diet, on 13-23 June in the year 1653 in Regensburg in the usual Great Hall in City Hall, made at the opening of the Emperor's Proposition." ["Eigentlicher Abriß der Reichstages Solennitet, so den 13.=23. Junij Anno 1653 in Regensburg auf dem gewöhnlichen großen Rhathauß=Saal, beij eröffnung der Kajserlichen Proposition angestellet und gehalten worden."]

## Source

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Source: The Imperial Diet in Regensburg on June 13-23, 1653, convened by Emperor Ferdinand III.  
Copperplate engraving, artist unknown.

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