



BISMUN 2026



CONGRESS OF VIENNA



STUDY GUIDE



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Delegates,

It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you all to BISMUN 2026, in the Congress of Vienna Committee. This is a specialised crisis committee focussing on the restoration of political order in Europe following the defeat and escape of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Congress of Vienna will have large monarchies, independent countries, and kingdoms as a part of it, with the aim of deciding a stable political future for the entire continent.

As a member of this committee, you are expected to take on the political view of your delegation, and are expected to collaborate, negotiate, and engage in debate with other delegates in order to ensure your delegation's political status is safely and securely established.

This committee will operate under crisis procedure, meaning that there will be fast paced, and sometimes radical updates in committee, that require immediate responses. You will be challenged to think on the spot, quickly, and effectively. You will also be tasked with paperwork such as directives, working papers, and resolutions, which will decide the fate of committee.

This committee has a freeze date of 26th February 1815, where the congress is still in session, and Napoleon escapes from Elba. At this moment, major issues still remain unresolved, and it is the job of the delegates of this committee to resolve them. Also, any information occurring after the 26th of February will not be considered in this committee.

Now, a little about me. My name is Aadit and I just graduated from BIS. I have been participating in MUN's since I was in the 8th grade, and along the way, I have had opportunities to chair multiple committees and also be a deputy secretary general in my old school. I have also attended a lot of MUN's and it is now forged into a part of who I am. I have always been one with unique opinions, more often than not contradicting what my friends and family around me think. MUN has given me the skills and experience to voice my opinions, and also be open minded and know where I am wrong. Other than MUN, I play the piano and guitar and love mathematics and chemistry.

I hope to see some exciting and fruitful debate!

Regards,
Aadit Shah,
Director,
Congress of Vienna

LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Dear Delegates,

It is with immense pleasure that we welcome you to the Congress of Vienna at BISMUN 2026. Our names are Amatullah Poonawala & Arnav Jain, and we are so privileged to be your Assistant Directors at this conference.

Arnav is currently studying in Grade 11 at the Bombay International School, where his academic interests are maths and economics. He has also participated in various MUN conferences over the past 5 years. Outside MUN, his interests lie heavily in music, F1, and other sports such as football and cricket.

Amatullah is currently studying in Grade 12 at the Bombay International School, where she is passionate about politics and economics. She has also taken part in various MUN conferences over the years. Apart from MUN you'll see her talking about movies, tv shows, music and books.

For many of you in this committee, participating in MUNs may be relatively new, and for that reason, it may be very nerve-racking - but believe us, we've all been there. However, at the end of this conference, we are certain that you will not only gain a new love for MUN but also meet new people and build long-lasting friendships.

At BISMUN 2026, delegates of the Congress of Vienna will investigate and aim to resolve the political and economic fallout following the Napoleonic wars, eventually aiming to restore stability on the continent. The French Revolution had significant consequences for the entire continent, placing a new form of government at the forefront which threatened the existence of monarchies. Delegates should pay close attention to the approaches taken by each stakeholder politically and economically with the aim of compromising between their own interests and the interests of other nations, and thus align themselves accordingly.

Despite some conflicts being partially resolved by the time we walk into committee on 26th February 1815, there are still large questions surrounding the future of Europe. Delegates should closely address each issue individually and find creative solutions for them. During this weekend, your skills of diplomacy and adaptability will be tested, and it is your job to use these skills to secure a peaceful future for Europe.

We look forward to seeing you all in committee. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us or any of the EB members.

Best regards,
Amatullah Poonawala & Arnav Jain
Assistant Directors,
Congress of Vienna

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Congress of Vienna was convened between September 1814 to June 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, bringing together the major powers of Europe to negotiate the continent's political future. Napoleon's conquests had altered territorial boundaries, displaced dynasties and disrupted the balance of power in Europe, an issue that the Congress sought to restore. Their main purpose was ensuring a power balance in Europe after over 20 years of warfare, and to prevent the resurgence of French expansionism. The Congress operated through a series of negotiations, meetings and discussions rather than as a formal assembly.

In this Committee, delegates must debate territorial settlements, aspects of sovereignty, the restoration of monarchies and the future political organisation of Europe.

Charter

The Congress of Vienna is summoned to establish a stable political order in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. It will act as the principal diplomatic body of the continent and shall possess the authority to negotiate and determine matters concerning the balance of power among European states.

In accordance to this Charter, the Congress has the power to:

- Alter territorial boundaries and political jurisdictions.
- Recognize, or remove governments and ruling monarchies.
- Establish new states, unions and confederations.
- Negotiate alliances, guarantees, and collective security arrangements.
- Determine the political status of disputed territories and their peoples.

All decisions made by the Congress will be considered binding upon the participating members, unless altered through subsequent action by the committee.

BACKGROUND OF THE AGENDA

Context

By February 1815, the Congress had entered its final stages. Although the major powers agreed on the necessity of maintaining peace in Europe, there were significant disagreements regarding the political future of the continent. The Congress faced a challenge to not only draw new borders, but to also determine the principles upon which this new order would be founded.

The Future of Germany

The dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 transformed the political landscape of Europe. Prior to this, the Roman Empire acted as a political framework across multiple German states, principalities, bishoprics and cities. After Napoleon's reorganization of the region, many of these entities were consolidated, which reduced their number, and altered the balance of power. The Congress was tasked to determine the future political state of these entities. Many German states sought to preserve their sovereignty, fearing a domination by larger, stronger powers. Others favoured a closer political arrangement in order to provide security and stability to the states, unifying them as one. This issue was further complicated by the competing ambitions of Austria and Prussia. While Austria sought to preserve its influence over Germany and prevent a unification, Prussia viewed the unification as a way to expand its influence and strengthen its standing within Central Europe.

The Reintegration of France

Despite its defeat in the Napoleonic Wars, France remained one of the largest and most influential powers in Europe. It had a population of nearly 30 million, a strong economy, and a long history as a major power in the continent. The Congress faced the challenge of determining how France should be reintegrated into the European system while preventing the reign of another leader like Napoleon. The members of the Congress had differing opinions on the issue. Some argued that France should face rigid political and territorial restrictions as punishment for the devastation caused by Napoleon. Others believed that excessive punishment would cause resentment and prompt the rise of another ruler like Napoleon. By February 1815, France was gradually reintegrated into European diplomacy under the Bourbon monarchy. The new question was what role France would play in the European order, and what measures were needed to prevent the resurgence of French expansionism.

The Dispute of Poland and Saxony

The future of Poland and Saxony was one of the most important disputes that needed to be resolved in the Congress. Russia (under the rule of Tsar Alexander I), sought to establish a Polish kingdom under Russian influence, by acquiring the Duchy of Warsaw. Prussia supported these motives, and sought to acquire the Kingdom of Saxony. However, Austria and Great Britain opposed these territorial claims, fearing that it would increase Russian influence in Europe. The issue extended beyond just territorial disputes. Within Saxony, people were divided as to whether to remove the king from power, or to help reestablish his reign.

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

The French Revolution (1789-1799): The French Revolution was a societal change in France wherein the French people uprooted their political landscape, causing it to change dramatically. There was falling support of the feudal system as well as the monarchy due to poor response to economic policies set by King Louis XVI. King Louis XVI's support of the American Revolution led France on the brink of bankruptcy. Peasants and low income communities expressed their resentment towards the monarchy as there were high taxes, yet no relief provided in return. In August 1792, a group of insurgents led by extremist Jacobins invaded the French royal residence and captured the king. The following month, the

Legislative Assembly was replaced by the National Convention, which abolished the monarchy and called for the creation of the French Republic. The National Convention were the ones to send King Louis XVI to his death in January 1793. In June 1793, the Jacobins took control of the National Convention and introduced more radical measures, introducing the Reign Of Terror which lasted 10 months, and included the killings of thousands of potential enemies of the revolution. Most of these killings were led by Robespierre before his own execution in July 1794. His death marked the beginning of the Thermidorean Reaction, where the French people expressed their disgust of the Reign of Terror. In August 1795, the National Convention approved France's first bicameral legislature. It meant that executive power lied in the hands of a 5 member directory appointed by the parliament. This change was strongly opposed by insurgent groups such as the Jacobins, but their vocal opposition was silenced by the army, led by Napoleon Bonaparte. The Directory was largely unsuccessful, with their 4 years in power being defined by financial crises, discontent among citizens, and corruption. They relied heavily on the military to maintain their authority, and thus, had handed them a large proportion of the beacon of power. On November 9th, 1799, General Napoleon Bonaparte had grown increasingly frustrated with the Directory, abolishing it and claiming himself as the "first consul" through a rigged election

The Rise of Napoleon (1799-1804): Napoleon introduced several policies to stabilize the French Republic in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Several creations such as the Bank of France, the Concordat of 1801, and the Napoleonic Code proved Napoleon as a master of leadership. At the same time, his expansionist ambitions also led to several key victories such as the Battle of Marengo(1800). His popularity grew exponentially, till 1804, where he was popular enough to alter the constitution. In December 1804, at the Notre Dame Cathedral, he instated himself as the Emperor of the French.

Napoleonic Wars (1803-1814): Monarchies across Europe were afraid that the French revolutionary ideas would spread to their countries as well. These ideas included nationalism, and the abolishment of the monarchy as a whole. In 1805, Napoleon fought the Battle of Austerlitz, often claimed as his greatest victory. He defeated the Russians and the Austrians, defining his dominance and weakening the Old Holy Roman Empire. This led to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, which resulted in Napoleon creating the Confederation of the Rhine. Several hundred German states were merged, resulting in increasing German nationalism. Over the next few years, he conquered more lands during several battles such as the Battle of Jean-Auerstedt in 1806, defeating the Prussians, and the Peninsular War in 1808 against Spain and Portugal. As a consequence of this war, Britain was able to establish a hold over the continent, which had lasting implications on Napoleon's ambitions. Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 was the turning point of the Napoleonic wars, as the Russian winter and disease led to a significant proportion of the 500,000 men he had deployed having been killed. The Battle of Leipzig in 1813 saw several coalition forces from Sweden, Austria, Russia, and Prussia fight against France, defeating them and marking the end of French control over Germany. Eventually, in 1814, the coalition armies invaded France, forcing Napoleon to abdicate, and eventually saw him exiled.

The First Treaty of Paris (30th May 1814): This established peace between France and the coalition forces of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia. The borders of France were reinstated to that of 1792, and several important overseas colonies were handed over to Great Britain. France was not forced to pay war reparations to the coalition as a move to try to support the growth of the monarchy.

The Opening of the Congress of Vienna (September 1814): Victorious leaders all met in Vienna to discuss the redrawing of Europe's borders, restore stability, and prevent another era of Napoleonic wars. However, they found that there were several conflicts of interests. All victorious countries under the coalition had to seek a balance between self-interest and what was best for the continent.

September-October 1814: A key part of the Congress of Vienna was not what was discussed, but who was sent to discuss it. France, as part of their delegation, sent Charles Maurice de Talleyrand. It was expected that France would sit quietly and accept the repercussions that were decided by the other powers. However, Talleyrand immediately started questioning the powers. His argument was based on the fact that only four powers, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain were making the decisions, thus making it illegitimate. He asked that other smaller states, importantly including France, were also part of the decision making process.

October-November 1814: Alexander I and Russia were after the Duchy of Warsaw, wanting to create a Polish Kingdom. However, this was vehemently opposed by the Austrians, who believed that Russian troops would be far too close to Vienna. It was also opposed by Great Britain, who had one main concern: not having any single power in control.

December 1814: At this stage, the Congress of Vienna had reached a diplomatic standoff, as no compromise could be reached. It was often argued that Europe was closer to war at this point than at any point after Napoleon's first abdication.

3rd January 1815: This was a crucial turning point as there was a secret alliance formed between Austria, Britain, and France. This led to more compromises emerging as another war was not seen feasible by any side. Any Russian or Prussian escalation would be met by military cooperation from the alliance.

February 1815: By the time February arrived, several disputes had been mostly resolved. Poland was not given to Russia, Saxony was partially handed to Prussia, there was a newfound German Confederation, and France was reintegrating diplomatically.

DELEGATION STANCES

Austria

In terms of trying to achieve peace in Europe, Austria intended to restore legitimate monarchies and ensure the balance of power which existed prior to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Being a multi-national empire, it was very wary about nationalism and self-determination because such concepts threatened the stability of its territory. Thus, Austria was not interested in any movement that might incite nationalism amongst Germans, Italians, Hungarians, and Slavs; it preferred a weak political situation within Germany where Austria had an influential role to play. Austria also attempted to hinder the growth of Russia in Poland and Prussia in Germany as such a scenario threatened the balance of power in Europe.

Russia

Russia had to ensure its supremacy in Europe. The first goal of Russia was to make sure that it had control over the majority of the Duchy of Warsaw by forming a Polish kingdom associated with Russia. Russia

was still loyal to monarchism and imperialism. The aspirations of Russia towards Poland provoked serious resistance from Austria, Britain, and France.

Prussia

Prussia came to Vienna prepared to make its position stronger on the European map following its involvement in the defeat of Napoleon. The Prussian representatives, led by Karl August von Hardenberg, wanted to gain from the loss of their power, especially through acquiring Saxony and more land in West Germany. Even though Prussia was an advocate of conservative monarchism, it pursued its own national interests above all else. Prussia wanted to be a major influence among the German states and also a rival of Austria in Central Europe.

Spain

Spain was one of the countries that took part in the Congress as a restored Bourbon monarchy trying to achieve some degree of stability in the aftermath of the wars and the turmoil. In spite of the lack of influence compared to the great powers, Spain had traditionally been inclined towards conservative ideas, and dynastic legitimacy and traditional forms of government were favored by its representatives at the Congress.

Papal States

The Papal States were keen on reclaiming their rights and territory after the Napoleonic age. The Papacy was hostile to both revolutionaries and nationalists who threatened the stability of government or posed a challenge to the supremacy of the Catholic Church. This is why the Papal States were in favor of restoration of rulers and the maintenance of religious authority.

United Kingdom

The British were interested mainly in preserving the balance of power in Europe without trying to increase their territorial possessions. The representatives of the British Empire were concerned about avoiding the dominance of one country, including not only France but also other powers such as Russia. The British wanted to support the reinforcement of other countries near France to prevent potential aggression, and at the same time, they did not want Russia to have too much influence in Poland and Saxony.

France

Though defeated in the Napoleonic wars, the French had the concept of legitimacy on their side, meaning that no ruler could be arbitrarily deposed; this helped them to protest against the dismemberment of Saxony and the aggressive designs of the Russians in Poland. The main objective of France was to isolate itself, restore its prestige, and avoid dominance by other nations.

Kingdom of Bavaria

As a result of the Napoleonic Wars, the Kingdom of Bavaria gained some additional territories, and hence it aimed at protecting them. The representatives of Bavaria wanted to keep the kingdom independent and rejected any idea of dominance of Austria or Prussia in Germany. Bavaria preferred a system of government that would guarantee the autonomy of medium-sized states.

Kingdom of Wurrtemberg

Württemberg also shared the same fate with Bavaria, where it profited from the territorial adjustments during the Napoleon era. The country was against any undue interference by Austria and Prussia and preferred those solutions that would secure the freedom of small and medium-sized countries. Württemberg's stand was more concerned with territorial and political considerations rather than nationalistic ideals.

Poland

Polish goals were oriented towards the formation of an independent Poland that guaranteed autonomy and civil rights to Polish territories. The Polish delegation was one of the few delegations whose interests coincided with those expressed by the new concept of self-determination and national identity. At the same time, Polish interests contradicted the territorial claims of Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

Kingdom of Saxony

Saxony's position at the Congress was weak due to the fact that Prussia was seeking to annex its territories. Consequently, it was important for Saxony to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. For this reason, Saxon delegates depended a lot on their alliances with Austria, Britain, and France because all these countries were opposed to any move that would lead to the full annexation of Saxony by Prussia.

Kingdom of Sardinia Piedmont

Sardinia-Piedmont had ambitions to consolidate its strength in northern Italy and protect itself from further attacks by France. It was for this reason that it favored monarchical rule and was interested in expanding its influence in Italy. Though it is now considered one of the states that worked toward the unification of Italy, Sardinia-Piedmont was more concerned with gaining strength through consolidation rather than unifying into one single Italian state.

CRISIS EXPECTATIONS

Delegates in this committee will be expected to keep up with fast paced debate and changing scenarios. One communique can change the direction of the committee, and delegates should be able to react to these changing circumstances to ensure they are in the best position.

This committee's freeze date is on the 26th February, 1815. This means that Napoleon has escaped from Elba. However, this information should be assumed to be not known by any delegates in this committee. Hence, initial crises may not include Napoleon at all. Instead, delegates should focus on border redrawing, as well as settling conflict in Poland and Saxony. Moreover, the Executive Board will look favourably upon crises that may shift BLOC positions and help balance the committee, while also inviting interesting debate. Smaller countries should think about how they can ensure their sovereignty is not overshadowed by the greater powers, while the great powers need to strategically examine how they can place their own interests above all other countries so they are in a position of control.

Communiques should be detailed, but should also not drift vastly far from the point. It is important that the rationale behind decisions is clearly explained in the communiques, and the possible implications of the actions should also be listed.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

1. How should Germany be organized following the fall of the Holy Roman Empire?
2. How should France be reintegrated into the European political system while ensuring it does not pose a repeated threat?
3. How can Europe balance sovereign authority while preventing the rise of another Napoleon?
4. What degree of national self-determination should be granted to countries whose ambitions conflict with the needs of the continent?
5. How should the conflicts of Poland and Saxony be resolved while ensuring that the interests of stakeholders are met?
6. What borders need to be redrawn to ensure that political balance is maintained in Europe?
7. How can borders be fairly redrawn without unfairly sacrificing the sovereignty of states?
8. To what extent should foreign involvement be accepted in acts such as the French Revolution, and under what circumstances?
9. How can the sovereignty of smaller states be ensured in the face of larger victorious states?
10. How can Europe rebuild following the political and economic instability as a result of the Napoleonic war?

GUIDE TO FURTHER RESEARCH

To participate effectively in committee, delegates should develop a thorough understanding of the historical events that shaped Europe prior to the Congress of Vienna. The following resources provide useful starting points for research.

The French Revolution and the Rise of Napoleon

1. History.com – French Revolution
<https://www.history.com/articles/french-revolution>
2. Encyclopaedia Britannica – French Revolution
<https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution>
3. Students of History – The Rise of Napoleon
<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/the-rise-of-napoleon>
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica – Napoleon I
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Napoleon-I>

The Congress of Vienna and the Restoration of Europe

1. Vajiram & Ravi – Congress of Vienna
<https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/congress-of-vienna/>
2. EBSCO Research Starters – Congress of Vienna
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/congress-vienna>

The First Treaty of Paris (1814)

1. Napoleon Empire – Treaty of Paris (1814)
<https://www.napoleon-empire.org/en/official-texts/treaty-of-paris-1814.php>

Major Issues Before the Congress

1. EBSCO Research Starters – Congress of Vienna
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/congress-vienna>
2. Vajiram & Ravi – Congress of Vienna
<https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/congress-of-vienna/>

State Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and National Self-Determination

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica – French Revolution
<https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution>
2. Encyclopaedia Britannica – Napoleon I
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Napoleon-I>
3. EBSCO Research Starters – Congress of Vienna
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/congress-vienna>

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Klemens-von-Metternich/Leadership-of-the-Congress-of-Vienna>

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<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/the-rise-of-napoleon>

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<https://www.britannica.com/event/Congress-of-Vienna/Decisions-of-the-congress>

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2020). French Revolution | Causes, Facts, & Summary. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution>