

Memorandum of the Netherlands Government concerning the Treaty to be made with Austria (January 1947)

Caption: In January 1947, the Dutch government drafts a memorandum detailing the position of the Netherlands on the question of the settlement of the future Austrian statute.

Source: Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Question allemande. Traité de paix avec l'Autriche 1947, AE 4166.

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The Netherlands Government have set out in detail their views on the German question in three memoranda, dated November 5th, 1946, January 14th, 1947 and January 25th, 1947.

In the memoranda, dated November 5th, 1946 and January 25th, 1947, the Netherlands Government dealt, in particular, with Netherlands views and desiderata with regard to the future relations between the Netherlands and Germany.

In the memorandum of January 14th, 1947 concerning the policy to be followed by the Allied powers with regard to Germany, the Netherlands Government have striven to treat the German problem as a general European question. They endeavoured to indicate in this memorandum on the one hand, the way in which effective guarantees to ensure peace and security ought to be created, and, on the other hand, what measures ought to be taken for the re-establishment of economic conditions in Germany, in so far as necessary to the general prosperity of Europe and the rest of the world.

1. The Netherlands Government wish to avail themselves of this opportunity to outline briefly their views concerning the treaty to be made with Austria, as a contribution to a proper solution of the Austrian problem and to the furtherance of peace, security and prosperity in Europe.

2. The Netherlands Government are of the opinion that a definite solution to the German and Austrian problems cannot be found without taking into account the special relationship existing between these two countries. History has proved, especially in recent years, that Austria, not only geographically but also by language and racial affinities, has a different relationship with Germany than Germany's other neighbouring states. This factor will have to be taken into consideration both in making a treaty with Austria and with regard to the policy to be followed in Germany.

3. The Netherlands desire the establishment of a free, independent and democratic Austria. To achieve this it is necessary, in the opinion of the Netherlands Government, to restore in a general way the former Austrian frontiers and to avoid further restriction of the already narrow economic basis of the country. Experience, during the -years -1918—1937, has shown that Austria already then had insufficient resources to achieve a reasonable level of prosperity and to guarantee her subjects permanent employment, without aid from abroad. It would, therefore, be desirable for the United Nations to examine in what way practical and effective help can best be offered to Austria in this respect. In view of the geographical position of Austria in the centre of Europe and at the crossroads of the east to west and north to south communication lines of this continent, it seems indicated that the United Nations, in consultation with Austria, should determine and carry out the measures which will enable that country, in the present circumstances, to achieve gradually a satisfactory level of prosperity. In this way it will be in the interest of the United Nations to cooperate with Austria to maintain a truly free and independent Austria. Thus it should be possible to avoid that Austria, in future, because the means to achieve reasonable economic conditions are denied to her, gravitates again exclusively towards Germany and so loses sight of her true function in Europe.

4. It is the opinion of the Netherlands Government that effective guarantees will have to be included in the treaty, which ensure that Austria acquires a truly democratic form of government. In this respect particular attention will have to be paid to the following: on the one hand, the denazification process must be carried through rigorously and thoroughly, on the other hand, effective guarantees must be obtained that Germany will not have the opportunity under whatever camouflage to pursue in Austria political, economic, cultural and military aims, which are contrary to the letter or spirit of the future German obligations.

5. The Netherlands Government are of the opinion that Austria, being a riparian Danube state, should give guarantees in so far as her territory is concerned, that the navigation on that river shall be free and open on terms of entire equality to the nationals, vessels of commerce and goods of all states.

In the treaty stipulations will have to be made especially containing the principles of free navigation on the

Danube for ships of all nationalities and the principles of no flag discrimination and the prohibition of toll and other duties, as well as stipulations explicitly forbidding discriminatory measures of any kind.

6. Notwithstanding the fact that many individuals originally of Austrian nationality, were the accomplices and instruments of the Germans in their reign of terror in the Netherlands, and consequently have done the Netherlands incalculable material and moral harm, the Netherlands Government do not want to lay claim to reparations from the State of Austria. The Netherlands Government, however, reserve the full right to demand compensations for all losses, damages and expenses which Netherlands subjects and Netherlands institutions have had to bear as a result of the „Anschluss" and during the course of the war. The Netherlands Government also reserve the full right to ask for indemnification in individual cases of misdemeanour against the people or the State of the Netherlands effected by persons, originally of Austrian nationality.