

## Statement by Eduard Ludwig on the issue of the seats in the Council of Europe (1956)

**Caption:** In 1956, following Austria's accession to the Council of Europe, Eduard Ludwig, Minister Plenipotentiary and official Observer of the Austrian Government at the Council of Europe, calls for an increase in the number of seats allocated to the Austrian representatives in the Consultative Assembly.

**Source:** Council of Europe-Documents of the Committee of Ministers. Confidential. 1956-I (January-June 1956) . 1956. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

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## Statement by M. Ludwig, Observer for the Austrian Government

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank you for your kind words welcoming the accession of the Federal Republic of Austria to the Council of Europe. I do not want to dwell on the long history of the occupation of Austria. In 1946 we succeeded in participating in the Gstaad and Interlaken conferences, followed by the big conference at The Hague, and after the foundation of the Council of Europe we attended Assembly Sessions and committee meetings as observers, with full rights other than the right to vote. But this representation was limited to the parliamentary plane. The Government could not consent to the accession of Austria. It was represented by an official Observer, but took no actual part in meetings of the Committee of Ministers, the Ministers' Deputies, etc. That was the position until recently.

After the signing of the State Treaty and the evacuation of our territory by foreign troops, the situation assumed a new complexion. We took our destinies into our own hands, and you know what discussions ensued on the letter and substance of our neutrality; it was this neutrality which enabled us to become a full Member of the Council of Europe. Our accession is based on the Preamble and Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe. But I would venture to make one observation. In pursuance of Article 6 of the Statute, Austria has been allotted 6 Representatives and 6 Substitutes in the Consultative Assembly. We do not wish to raise a protest against this decision but when we have ascertained the true extent of our population we shall ask to be granted a seventh seat, for it is impossible to estimate exactly how many displaced persons or refugees will be granted citizenship of our country.

My country's policy is directed towards European unification, the peace of our continent, and the welfare of all Europeans. That is our aim and purpose and we shall spare no effort to assist you in the accomplishment of this lofty task.