

The Peace of Hubertusburg of 15 February 1763

The Peace of Hubertusburg ostensibly ended the so-called Third Silesian or Seven Years' War (1756-1763), but also a German and European power struggle that threatened to involve the whole of Europe in a war.

The great lesson for the Saxon elector and Polish king, August II, was that instead of pursuing his own plans for great power, he would rather deepen his relations with the imperial family as guarantor of his power. So he let his son marry the Habsburgess Maria Josefa and elected him his successor also in Poland-Lithuania. This, however, was contested by France and part of the Polish estates: With the Polish War of Succession to the Throne (1733-1738) a series of disputes began, which concerned the rivalry between Vienna and Versailles. When Emperor Charles IV died in 1740, Brandenburg-Prussia occupied Silesia and thus terminated the Pragmatica sanctio, which had previously been laboriously negotiated. Officially, Prussia did not recognise the succession of Maria Theresa to the throne by occupying the richest province of the Habsburgs, but in the end it was a question of supremacy in the empire. King Frederick II forged plans with Bavaria, France, Saxony, Spain, Sweden and Naples to smash the Habsburg monarchy. In the First Silesian or Austrian War of Succession (1740 -1742) Frederick Silesia also received a treaty. But Maria Theresa won the powers Great Britain, Poland-Saxony and the Netherlands for herself and instigated the Second Silesian War (1744 -1745), but the war remained unsuccessful.

The British-French colonial wars in North America and European power struggles led to the Third Silesian or Seven Years' War (1756-1763): Vienna won France and Russia as allies, but Potsdam won Great Britain. When Tsar Peter II had ended the war against Prussia in 1762, Saxony, which was occupied by Prussia, tried to bring about peace: on 24.11.1762 it requested an armistice, and on 30.12.1762 negotiations began in Hubertusburg Castle, i.e. on a "neutral territory". Formally, the disputes between Potsdam and Vienna were ended: for example, the evacuation of the occupied lands without compensation or freedom of religion in Silesia was agreed or the assignment of Silesia was practically confirmed. Saxony had to make a separate peace. Brandenburg-Prussia thus formally rose to become a great power in Europe and became part of a concert of five powers in the European system. At the

same time, a hundred-year rivalry between Vienna and Potsdam within Germany began. Finally, Prussia was able to successfully strengthen Britain's back in the colonial war.

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