



German History in Documents and Images

Volume 3. From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866
Program of the German Reform Association (1862)

The pro-Austrian German Reform Association was founded in October 1862 in Frankfurt. In contrast to the National Association, it aimed at uniting the German population of the Habsburg Empire and reaching a "greater German" solution to the German question. The association's founding declaration follows.

- 1) The reform of the constitution of the German Confederation is an urgent and irrefutable need, in order to promote more energetically than heretofore both its position of power abroad and welfare and civic freedom at home.
- 2) This reform must preserve for all German states the possibility of remaining entirely in the community.
- 3) It will find completion only in the creation of a powerful federal executive authority with national representation.
- 4) Under current conditions, the only possible form of a federal executive authority is a concentrated collegial executive with a properly measured balance of votes.
- 5) As a first step toward the creation of a national representation, an Assembly of Delegates commissioned by eight governments should be recognized – provided that the governments lose no time shaping this assembly into a periodically recurrent representation at the Confederation with expanded authority.
- 6) In order to secure the necessary moral authority, it is essential to have a larger number of members. The method of election should be left to legislation in the individual states, yet electoral eligibility should not be restricted to members of the representative bodies in the individual states.
- 7) The reform must be brought about only by agreement and on the basis of the current confederal constitution.
- 8) Even if a confederal court whose independence is guaranteed proves to be an essentially useful institution, the most recent proposal made in this respect is not appropriate.

Source: *Verhandlungen der großdeutschen Versammlung zu Frankfurt a.M. [Proceedings of the Greater German Assembly in Frankfurt a. M.]*, 1862, p. 11.

Original German text reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente 1851-1900* [*German Constitutional Documents 1851-1900*], vol. 2, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* [*Documents on German Constitutional History*], 3rd ed., rev. and enl. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986, pp. 109-10.

Translation: Jeremiah Riemer