

FAMOUS EVENTS: What happened on ... ? Was ist am 15. Mai 1955 geschehen?

Austria's Independence Day / Österreichs Staatsfeiertag Austria celebrates treaty of independence



Belvedere Palace.

The treaty for the re-establishment of an independent and democratic Austria was signed at Belvedere Palace in Vienna 59 years ago today.

Federal President Heinz Fischer marked the occasion at a gala concert in the Hofmusikkapelle (Imperial Court Chapel) on Wednesday.

"During these past 59 years, all in all, Austria has taken a good, peaceful and successful path," said President Fischer.

"Austria is still an independent country, but also a loyal member of the European Union and a staunch supporter of the European idea. The state treaty of Vienna has helped us to successfully follow this path," he added.

The Austrian Independence Treaty was signed on May 15th, 1955 by the foreign ministers of the Austrian government and the allied occupying powers - France, Britain, the US and the Soviet Union.

In addition to recognizing the sovereignty of the Austrian state, the rights of Austria's Slovene and Croat minorities were outlined, unification with Germany was prohibited, and Nazi and fascist organisations were banned.

The treaty officially came into force on July 27th, 1955, and the last of the allied troops left Austrian territory on October 25th, 1955. Austria declared permanent neutrality on the following day, which is now celebrated as a national holiday.