

**The following list gives a more detailed overview of territorial changes to the German Reich during WWII:**

**a) Incorporated territories**

The Saarland

The Saarland was incorporated into the Reich as the Saar administrative district (*Saarverwaltungsbezirk*) in 1935. The administrative district was initially headed by a Reich Commissioner (*Reichskommissar*).

Austria

With the passing of the “Ostmark Law” on 1 May 1939, the federal states of Austria were reorganised into seven *Reichsgaue*, each governed by a Reich Governor (*Reichsstatthalter*) who answered directly to the Interior Ministry. The seven “Alpine and Danube Reichsgaue” were:

- Vienna
- Salzburg
- Styria (Steiermark, cap.: Graz)
- Carinthia (Kärnten, cap.: Klagenfurt)
- Lower Danube (Niederdonau, cap.: Vienna)
- Upper Danube (Oberdonau, cap.: Linz)
- Tyrol-Vorarlberg (Tirol-Vorarlberg, cap.: Innsbruck)

Areas and territories incorporated into existing administrative structures:

- The Prachalitz, Eisenstein and Berg Reichenstein districts of Czechoslovakia are incorporated into Bavaria in 1938
- The Memel Territory is incorporated into the Province of East Prussia as the Gumbinnen administrative region in 1939
- Also in 1939, the Suwalki or Sudauen district and the Zichenau administrative region are incorporated into the Province of East Prussia

- The German-speaking eastern Belgian cantons of Eupen, Malmedy and Moresnet are incorporated into the Rhineland Province in 1940.

Areas and territories incorporated into the Reich as independent administrative entities:

- The Sudetenland Reichsgau with its administrative regions of Karlsbad, Reichenberg and Troppau was incorporated into the Reich in 1938.
- The Danzig-Western Prussia (Danzig-Westpreußen) Reichsgau with its administrative regions of Danzig, Bromberg and Marienwerder was incorporated in 1939.
- The Wartheland Reichsgau with its administrative regions of Posen, Hohensalza and Litzmannstadt was also incorporated in 1939.

Note: The term “annexed eastern territories” (*eingegliederte Ostgebiete*) usually referred to the Danzig-West Prussia, Wartheland and Eastern Upper Silesia Reichsgaue, the Zichenau administrative region and the Suwalki district.

b) **Territories annexed to the Reich as “additional states” (*Nebenländer*)** with governments or administrations directly subordinate to Hitler:

- The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was annexed in 1939 with Reinhard Heydrich as Reichsprotektor; following his assassination, a German Ministry for Bohemia and Moravia is established on top of the existing Czech administration.
- The General Government, which was only indirectly part of the Reich (*mittelbares Reichsgebiet*), was created by a decree from Hitler issued on 12 October 1939. The decree stated that all territories under military occupation

that were not directly annexed to the Reich would pass under German civilian administration based in Krakow and headed by General Governor Hans Frank.

The General Government consisted of the following districts: Krakow, Lublin, Radom, Warsaw and Lemberg (Lviv, est. 1941). A Polish administrative structure only existed on the lowest level of administration, i.e. local courts and municipal councils.

- c) **Annexed territories** administered by civilian Reich administrative bodies headed by a Chief of Civilian Administration (Chef der Zivilverwaltung, CdZ) who was directly subordinate to the Führer and was usually also Gauleiter of a neighbouring Gau inside the Reich:
- Luxemburg; CdZ: Gauleiter of the Moselland Gau, Gustav Simon
  - Lorraine; CdZ: Reich Governor (Reichsstatthalter) and Gauleiter of the Saar-Pfalz Gau Joseph Bürckel
  - Alsace; Reich Governor and Gauleiter of the Baden Gau Robert Wagner
  - Upper Carniola-Kranj; CdZ: Reich Governor and Gauleiter of the Carinthia Gau Friedrich Rainer
  - Southern Styria; CdZ: Reich Governor and Gauleiter of the Styria Gau Siegfried Uiberreither
  - Bialystock; CdZ: Gauleiter of the East Prussia Gau and Oberpräsident of the eponymous Prussian province Erich Koch

According to international law, these were occupied territories. By introducing German as the official language, giving ethnic Germans Reich citizenship and drafting them into the Wehrmacht, the Reich was preparing their formal incorporation after the war. In 1943, following the surrender of Italy, the Operational Zone of the Alpine Foothills and the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral

were created as administrative regions and given similar status.

#### d) Occupied territories

The status of territories which were not or not openly earmarked for annexation differed considerably. Note: The term “occupied eastern territories” refers to the occupied Soviet territories.

Territories under military administration

- Army Group Rear Areas (*Rückwärtige Heeresgebiete*) like Smolensk
- Territories controlled by the Wehrmacht Commander South-East (Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Süd-Ost) based in Thessaloniki with subordinate commanders for Serbia (based in Belgrade), Thessaloniki and the Aegean (Saloniki und Ägäis, based in Thessaloniki) and Southern Greece (Südgriechenland, based in Athens)
- France with a Military Commander based in Paris
- Belgium and Northern France with a Military Commander based in Brussels

Under civilian administration

Reich Commissariats (*Reichskommissariate*, headed by a Reich Commissioner or *Reichskommissar*)

- The Norway Reich Commissariat (*Reichskommissariat für das besetzte Norwegen*) headed by the Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Norwegian territories
- The Dutch Reich Commissariat (*Reichskommissariat für die besetzten Niederlande*) headed by the Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Dutch Territories
- The Ostland Reich Commissariat (Reichskommissariat Ostland) made up of four General Districts (Generalbezirke): Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Belarus

- The Ukraine Reich Commissariat made up of the Brest-Litovsk, Zhytomyr, Kiev, Nikolayev and Dnepropetrovsk General Districts

As civilian administrative bodies, the Ostland and Ukraine Commissariats were subordinate to the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*). The Reich Commissioners were at the top of the administrative hierarchy, followed by General Commissioners who headed a General District. They delegated lower-level administrative tasks to local authorities.

Operational Zones were headed by High Commissioners (Oberste Kommissare):

- The Operational Zone of the Alpine Foothills was established in 1943 and consisted of the three provinces of Bolzano, Trento and Belluno.

Other offices associated with administrative bodies:

Reich Plenipotentiaries (Reichsbevollmächtigte, Rbm):

- Reich Plenipotentiary for Denmark
- Reich Plenipotentiary for Slovakia
- Reich Plenipotentiary for Hungary

Wehrmacht Commissioners (Bevollmächtigte Generale, Bvm.G.)

- Wehrmacht Commissioner with the Vichy Government (est. 1942)
- Wehrmacht Commissioner in Croatia
- Wehrmacht Commissioner in Italy (est. 1943)