

## **The Treaty of Berlin, 1878**

### **Excerpts on the Balkans**

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Treaty Between Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Turkey. (Berlin). July 13, 1878.

Article I. Bulgaria is constituted an autonomous and tributary Principality under the suzerainty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan. It will have a Christian government and a national militia.

Article XXIII. The Sublime Porte undertakes scrupulously to apply in the Island of Crete the Organic Law of 1868 with such modifications as may be considered equitable. Similar laws adapted to local requirements, excepting as regards the exemption from taxation granted to Crete, shall also be introduced into the other parts of Turkey in Europe for which no special organization has been provided by the present treaty. The Sublime Porte shall depute special commissions, in which the native element shall be largely represented, to settle the details of the new laws in each province. The schemes of organization resulting from these labors shall be submitted for examination to the Sublime Porte, which, before promulgating the Acts for putting them into force, shall consult the European Commission instituted for Easter Roumelia.

Article XXV. The provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. The government of Austria-Hungary, not desiring to undertake the administration of the Sanjak of Novi-Pazar [modern Kosovo Province], which extends between Serbia and Montenegro in a South-Easterly direction to the other side of Mitrovitza, the Ottoman administration will continue to exercise its functions there. Nevertheless, in order to assure the maintenance of the new political state of affairs, as well as freedom and security of communications, Austria-Hungary reserves the right of keeping garrisons and having military and commercial roads in the whole of this part of the ancient vilayet of Bosnia. To this end the governments of Austria-Hungary and Turkey reserve to themselves to come to an understanding on the details.

Article XXVI. The independence of Montenegro is recognized by the Sublime Porte and by all those of the High Contracting Parties who had not hitherto admitted it.

Article XXXIV. The High Contracting Parties recognize the independence of the Principality of Serbia, subject to the conditions set forth in the following Article.

Article XXXV. In Serbia the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honors, or the exercise of the various professions and industries, in any locality whatsoever. The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all persons belonging to Serbia, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be

offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.

Article XLIII. The High Contracting Parties recognize the independence of Romania, subject to the conditions set forth in the two following Articles.

Article XLIV. In Romania the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honors, or the exercise of the various professions and industries, in any locality whatsoever. The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all persons belonging to Romania, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs. The subjects and citizens of all the Powers, traders or others, shall be treated in Romania without distinction of creed, on a footing of perfect equality.

Article XLV. The Principality of Romania restores to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia that portion of the Bessarabian territory detached from Russia by the Treaty of Paris of 1856, bounded on the West by the mid-channel of the Pruth [River], and on the South by the mid-channel of the Kilia Branch and the Sary-Stamboul mouth [now the modern state of Moldova].

Article LVIII. The Sublime Porte cedes to the Russian Empire in Asia the territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batum [modern Armenia and Georgia, with a bit of Northeastern Turkey], together with the latter port.

Article LIX. His Majesty the Emperor of Russia declares that it is his intention to constitute Batum a free port, essentially commercial.

Article LXII. The Sublime Porte having expressed the intention to maintain the principle of religious liberty, and give it the widest scope, the Contracting Parties take note of this spontaneous declaration. In no part of the Ottoman Empire shall difference of religion be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honors, or the exercise of the various professions and industries, in any locality whatsoever. The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.

Ecclesiastics, pilgrims, and monks of all nationalities traveling in Turkey in Europe, or in Turkey in Asia, shall enjoy the same rights, advantages, and privileges.

The right of official protection by the Diplomatic and Consular Agents of the Powers in Turkey is recognized both as regards the above-mentioned persons and their religious, charitable, and other establishments in the Holy Places and elsewhere. The rights

possessed by France are expressly reserved, and it is well understood that no alterations can be made in the status quo in the Holy Places. The monks of Mount Athos, of whatever country they may be natives, shall be maintained in their former possessions and advantages, and shall enjoy, without any exception, complete equality of rights and prerogatives.

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Source:

From: R. B. Mowat, *Select Treaties and Documents to Illustrate the Development of the Modern European States-System*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), pp. 79-83.