MEMBER PROFILE

SAVOY

Provisional Government of the State of Savoy
Status: Underrepresented territory

Population: 1,166,000, Savosian is the demonym for people living in the States of Savoy: the County of Savoy (1027-1416), the Duchy of Savoy (1416-1713), the States of Savoy or Kingdom of Sardinia (1713-1860). Savoyard is the demonym for people who live in the department of Savoy, since French annexation in 1860.

Area: 10,416km²

Capital City: Chambery

Language: Arpitan (or Franco-Provencal), French

Religion: Catholic

OVERVIEW

Covering roughly the Western Alps region, between Lake Geneva in the north and Dauphine in the west, Savoy is a mountainous territory with altitudes ranging from 200 to over 4,800 meters. A key passage through the Alps, Savoy has always been coveted by its European neighbors.

Savoy was an independent and self-governed territory from the 11th century until 1860, when it was annexed to France. Today, Savosian people are a minority in their own territory and their claims are not taken into account by the Government of the French Republic.

The nickname “Savoyard” was given by the French in the middle of the XIXth century to denigrate Savosians. It became the name given to the inhabitants of the department of Savoy. However until 1960, it was used as an insult, meaning a boorish person.

UNPO MEMBER PERSPECTIVE

The Provisional Government of the State of Savoy would like the claims of the Savosian people to be taken into account by the Government of the French Republic and by European Member States. The State of Savoy’s core mission is to raise international awareness of the cause of its people. On 18 September 2013, the Savosian Minister of Foreign Affairs ratified the Vienna conventions of 1961 and 1963, along with the 1969 Convention of Geneva. Additionally, the Government has signed the 1945 United Nations Charter and recognized the competence of the International Criminal Court for all international affairs that might implicate the people of Savoy. Furthermore, the Provisional Government of the State of Savoy considers improving its Constitution and empowering itself with relevant tools in order to become a model State in Europe.

CURRENT ISSUES

Since the annexation of the Duchy of Savoy by France, the Savosians have become a minority on their own territory. Currently, Savoy consists of two French departments, namely Savoie and Haute Savoie. According to a survey conducted in 2000, between 41% and 55% of the population were in favor of the proposal for a separate Savoy region.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the State of Savoy dates back to the 10th century. In the 9th century, the territory of Savoy was part of the Kingdom of the Franks. Later, in 843, the territory of Savoy became part of the Kingdom of Middle Francia, as a result of the division of Francia. The death of Lothair I in 855 resulted in the division of the kingdom and the consequent rise of the House of Savoy, which became one of the oldest royal families in the world.

Well known and recognized across Europe, the royal family, including Dukes, Counts and Countesses of the Kingdom of Savoy married Kings and Queens of France, Prussia, Austria and Spain. Symbolic to the nation, the creation of the flag of Savoy dates back to 1147, making it the oldest flag in Europe. Given this rich history, the Savosian people have a great historic, cultural, architectural, gastronomic and linguistic heritage.

The rise of the house of Savoy

The County of Savoy was created around year 900, with Umberto I, also known as Umberto the White-Handed, as the first Count of Savoy. Between 900 and 1416, the power of the House of Savoy increased and new territories were added to the County of Savoy. These include but are not limited to the County of Nice in 1388, and the County of Geneva in 1401.
On 19 February 1416, the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund, declared the creation of the Duchy of Savoy, with Amadeus VIII as the first Duke of Savoy. The Duchy of Savoy lasted from 1416 to 1714, at a crossroads between North Italy and France, two competing spheres of influence.

In 1713, following the Spanish War of Succession, the Treaty of Utrecht rewarded the Duchy of Savoy with large pieces of land in North-eastern Italy and with the crown of Sicily, under the rule of Victor Amadeus II. Seven years later, Savoy exchanged Sicily for Sardinia, which then took the name Kingdom of Sardinia. This newly formed country, called the States of Savoy or the Kingdom of Sardinia, included several States: Savoy, Piedmont, Aosta Valley, Nice, Oneglia and Sardinia. From then onwards, the rulers of the House of Savoy were known as the Kings of Sardinia.

Towards the annexation of Savoy

From 1792 to 1815, following the French Revolution of 1789, the French revolutionary forces occupied Savoy and renamed it department of Mont Blanc. Nevertheless, Savoy, Piedmont and Nice were given back to the Kingdom of Sardinia after the French defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. The Kingdom of Savoy functioned as a buffer state on France’s south-eastern border and in order to avoid another war, the Congress of Vienna bestowed neutrality upon the northern part of Savoy. To remain outside French rule, the Canton of Geneva chose to join the Swiss Confederation in 1815: 23 Savoian cities were given to the new Canton and a new bilateral treaty was signed in 1816 to ensure neutrality between the State of Savoy and the Swiss Confederation.

In 1848, a first attempt by the French Second Republic to annex Savoy failed. Ten years later, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia and the French emperor Napoleon III met in secret to secure an alliance against Austria in the Italian unification war. It was agreed that Sardinia would cede the County of Nice and the Duchy of Savoy to France in exchange for French military support in an intended war against Austria. In March 1860, the treaty of
Turin declared the annexation by France of the County of Nice and the Duchy of Savoy. The annexation of Savoy was officially promulgated on 14 June 1860.

Nevertheless, Savoy was ceded to France under three conditions: first, enlarging the free trade zone to the northern part of Savoy; second, respecting the perpetual neutrality of Savoy; and third, guaranteeing the security of the judiciary in Savoy. Yet in 1932, France was condemned by the international court for noncompliance with the measures of the Treaty of Turin, whereas in 1960, the word ‘annexation’ having pejorative overtones in France, it was renamed ‘rattachement de la Savoie a la France’ (‘meaning incorporation of Savoy to France’).

**IMPORTANT FACTS**

From 1992 to 2012, the Savosian League was the main organization representing Savosian interests. When it entered into politics in the late 1990s, many were disappointed and disillusioned by some of the decisions made by those in charge of the Savosian League. Consequently, a large number of splinter organizations were formed, each claiming to represent the Savosian people. In May 2012, the organization calling itself the Provisional Government of Savoy, invited four representatives of each group to attend a meeting in Switzerland, with the aim of bringing all these organizations together. The Provisional Government of Savoy was then elected with the approval of the attending organizations and is currently comprised of eight Savosian organizations.