Cisalpine Republic

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The **Cisalpine Republic** (Italian: ***Repubblica Cisalpina***) was a French client republic in Northern Italy that lasted from 1797 to 1802.

Repubblica Cisalpina
Cisalpine Republic

Puppet state of the First French Republic

1797–1802

The flag of the Cisalpine Republic was the Transpadane vertical Italian tricolour, with the square shape of the Cispadane flag.

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Birth

After the Battle of Lodi in May 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte proceeded to organize two states: one to the south of the Po River, the Cispadane Republic, and one to the north, the Transpadane Republic. On May 19, 1797, Napoleon transferred the territories of the former Duchy of Modena to Transpadania and, on Messidor 12 (June 29), he decreed the birth of the Cisalpine Republic, creating a Directory for the republic and appointing its ministers. France published the constitution of the new republic on Messidor 20 (July 7), establishing the division of the territory into eleven departments: Adda (Lodi), Alpi Apuane (Massa), Crostolo (Reggio), Lario (Como), Montagna (Lecco), Olona (Milan), Panaro (Modena), Po (Cremona), Serio (Bergamo), Ticino (Pavia), and Verbano (Varese).

The rest of Cispadania was merged into the Cisalpine Republic on July 27, with the capital of the unified state being Milan. On Brumaire 1 (October 22) Bonaparte announced the union of Valtelline with the republic, after its secession from the Swiss Three Grey Leagues. Austria acknowledged the new entity in the Treaty of Campoformio of October 17, gaining in exchange what remained of the Venetian Republic. On Brumaire 25 (November 15) the full international recognition and legality of the new state was ratified by the law governing the final annexation of the conquered territories.

The parliament, composed of two chambers (the *Great Council* and the *Council of the Seniors*), was appointed directly by Napoleon on Frimaire 1 (November 21). He justified this undemocratic action as a necessity of war. New departments joined the 11 original ones and Valtelline in the following months: Benaco (Desenzano) on Ventose 11 (March 1, 1798), Mella (Brescia) on Floreal 13 (May 2), Mincio (Mantua) on Prairial 7 (May 26), and five departments of Emilia. The structural phase of the republic was terminated on Fructidor 14 (August 31), when France dismissed all the authorities of the republic, replacing them by a stronger executive power under a new constitution.

The Cisalpine Republic (green) in 1799.

Capital	Milan
Language(s)	Italian
Government	Directorial Republic
Directory	
- 1797–98	First Directory
- 1798–99	Second Directory
Legislature	Legislative Council
- Upper house	Council of Elders
- Lower house	Council of Juniors
Historical era	Napoleonic Wars
- Decree of Napoleon Bonaparte	June 29, 1797
- Treaty of Campo Formio	October 17, 1797

Institutional form

> *The Cisalpine Republic was for many years under the domination of the Empire of Austria.*
> *The French Republic acquired it by right of conquest. She renounces dominion over it on this day, and the Cisalpine Republic is now free and independent. Recognized by France and by the Emperor, as it will soon be likewise by all of Europe.*
> *The Executive Directory of the French Republic, not content with having expended its influence and the victories of the republican armies to ensure the political existence of the Cisalpine Republic, pushes more faraway its promptnesses; and being convinced that, if liberty is first among all good things, a revolution leaves behind itself the worst of all scourges, now gives to the Cisalpine people its Constitution, which is the result of the knowledge of the most enlightened nation.*
> *From a military regime, the Cisalpine people must therefore pass to a constitutional regime.*
> *In order that this passage shall be effected without disruption, without anarchy, the Executive Directory has decided only this once to appoint the members of the government and of the legislative branch, so that the people shall not, until one year, appoint officials to fill vacant offices according to the Constitution.*
> *In reality, no republics have existed in Italy for many years. The holy fire of liberty was stifled, and the most beautiful part of Europe lived under the yoke of foreigners. It is up to the Cisalpine Republic to show to the world with its wisdom and energy, and with the good organization of its armies, that modern Italy has not degenerated, and that it is still worthy of freedom.*
> *Signed, Bonaparte.*
> —Preamble to the Constitution of the Cisalpine Republic, Messidor 20, year V (July 7, 1797).

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