

Germany and German Minorities in Europe

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0. Introduction

Before the collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany, Germans constituted the largest divided nation in Europe by far, a position today occupied by Russians. After 1990, seventeen million citizens of the former GDR accounted for more than twenty percent of the enlarged population in reunited Germany. Nonetheless, large number of ethnic Germans across Central, Eastern, and Western Europe are still resident outside the borders of the expanded Federal Republic, a legacy of history and conflict that remains a factor in European politics.

Occupying a problematic position in the geopolitical center of Europe (the so-called *Mittellage*), latecomer Germany divided itself in the process of nation-state formation. The three wars of German unification in the 19th century – Austria and Prussia against Denmark (1864), Austria against Prussia (1866-1867), and the Prussian-led alliance against France (1870-1871) – led to territorial expansions and contraction: there were gains in Schleswig (1864-1866) and Alsace-Lorraine (1870-1871) but also the exclusion of Austria (1866-1867) from the unification project.

Thus, in the 20th century, the territorial losses and divisions of 1919 and 1945 affected a nation already divided. Moreover, during several hundred years of imperialism, Germans had been sent to conquer and colonize vast and distant lands. Following the collapse of empires in 1919, their descendants suddenly saw their fate changed from that of a dominant minority to a population resented, hated and often collectively victimized across various (re-)constituted successor states. Moreover, in 1945 the restoration of pre-existing borders and the imposition of new frontiers went hand in hand with mass flight and expulsion, as well as subsequent mass emigration. As a result, the German people remain a nation divided in the 21st century, though the degree of division is one much diminished after two world wars, the Cold War, and German reunification.

This paper considers the various causes, consequences, and responses to the ‘German question’. Demographically and geographically complex, the dynamics of the divided German nation are now apparent in the context of European integration.

Following a brief historical account of German minorities in Europe, section one of this paper develops a model of what constitutes a German national identity. The second section examines the impact of European integration on the status of German minorities, focusing primarily on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Section three discusses the role of Germany as a kin-state and its varying policies toward external minorities and their host-states through the past century. The concluding section provides a broad-brush summary assessment of the status of German minorities in contemporary Europe.

There are four things this paper does not do. First, there is no discussion of German populations outside Europe, such as the significant numbers of Germans in South America. Second, Germans in Switzerland are also excluded from the examination. While one could easily make an argument about cultural affinity, Swiss Germans have developed a very distinct community since 1291 and, as part of the Swiss confederation, a political identity that ranks Swiss first and German second. Third, the paper makes only

passing reference to Austria. Until 1867, Germans in Austria (the House of Habsburg) were an integral, and at times the dominant, part of the German nation. Austria's exclusion from the *Norddeutscher Bund* (1866-1871) and then from the German *Reich* marked the beginning of diverging identities, heightened by a post-1945 historiography that painted Austria and Austrians as the first victims of the Nazis. To the extent that many of today's German minorities trace their origins back to the Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian empires, the paper considers Austria and its predecessors as an important dimension of the 'German question', but for the post-1919 period, the focus is essentially on the various incarnations of Germany proper. Fourth, the issue of German reunification post-1945 does not feature as part of this analysis: neither in the sense of the reunifications that did happen (Saarland in 1957; former East Germany in 1990), nor the reunification that did not happen with the *Ostgebiete*, i.e. one-time German territories placed under provisional Polish and Soviet administration in 1945 that remained in legal limbo until the 2+4 (Unification) Treaty and the German-Polish border treaty of 1990.¹

1. The Relevant Nation

How to define the German nation is both a cultural and political question. It requires first a definition of a German culture to determine a German identity, and thus to decide who is a *bona fide* German. The connection of cultural and political dimensions in the German question has changed over time. For several hundred years, "Germanness" was defined primarily (if at all) in cultural terms. As such, a German identity was ethnocultural, depending on language, custom, and traditions to set it apart from other identities. Ironically, Germanness became politically significant only *after* the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in 1806, but it soon proved a powerful tool of mobilizing "Germans" during the Napoleonic Wars. This "nationalization" of German politics was one manifestation of a wider European development.

For centuries prior, ethnocultural differences between people(s) had neither been a problem nor a source of mobilization; it was the emergence of nationalism and the nation-state that elevated ethnicity as a factor in domestic and international politics. Naturally, rival nations that claimed the same territory for their own state clashed: here we find the roots of many national questions in Central and Eastern Europe, and consequently the origins of the German question, too.

The issue of citizenship also connects the cultural and political dimensions of the German question. For most of the twentieth century, German citizenship was determined according to descent. The 1913 *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (Citizenship Act) determined that all descendents of Germans could be citizens of Germany. The legal principle of *jus sanguinis* was adopted deliberately to promote and preserve the ethnic tradition of the German nation-state and to maintain links with ethnic Germans beyond its borders. Essentially, this meant a German ethnocultural identity was a necessary condition for full political participation, a requirement that persisted until end of the twentieth century.²

The link established between *Volkszugehörigkeit* (ethnicity) on the one hand, and *Staatsbürgerschaft* (citizenship) plus *Staatsangehörigkeit* (nationality) on the other, raised questions of conflicting loyalties for ethnic Germans who lived outside a German nation-state. The period between the two world wars is probably the best-documented example of how such conflicting loyalties were instrumentalized into

¹ A more detailed treatment of these issues is found in Wolff (2002a) and Wolff (2003).

² However, German citizenship was also conferred to those who descended from German *citizens*, thus including ethnic minorities living in Germany.

self-fulfilling prophecies. The rise of the Nazis and the way they established links with ethnic Germans outside Germany was perceived as a threat by many governments in Europe. They responded by curtailing the rights of German minorities. The policy backfired as more and more minority Germans hoped for help from Hitler. This was most obviously the case with the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia, but also (though to a lesser extent) with German minorities elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe.

This association—real or imagined—between German minorities and Nazi foreign policy had the worst consequences for the German minority in Russia, whose members were collectively deported to Siberia and Central Asia. Ironically, even though the ethnonational component of *Staatsangehörigkeit* and *Staatsbürgerschaft* indirectly invited disaster, the unfortunate consequences – namely the expulsions and the discrimination against remaining Germans in Central and Eastern Europe – made it practically and politically impossible to change German law, since this would have prevented ethnic Germans fleeing Central and Eastern Europe after 1950 from acquiring German citizenship automatically and with it the privileges it entailed. Thus, the complexity of the German question over time includes two dimensions: an ethnocultural/political axis that crosses a domestic/international axis. In different ways, the German question has typically occupied this intersection, particularly following the first and second world wars. Nonetheless, developments after 1945 and again after 1990 cannot be understood completely without considering the historical developments that “created” ethnic Germans outside Germany.

Three distinct processes explain why the German nation still extends well beyond the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany: border changes, conquest and colonization, and migration. Border changes are primarily a phenomenon of the twentieth century, connected most obviously with the peace settlements of Versailles and St Germain (1919) and with the reconstitution of Europe after 1945. By contrast, conquests and colonizations started many centuries earlier. In the middle of the twelfth century, for example, German miners and vintners were invited by Hungarian King Bela IV to settle in the Carpathian Mountains (now in Slovakia). These colonists enjoyed significant privileges, including tax relief, property rights, market access, and the right to hold local offices (Marcus 2000: 99).

A similar scenario developed for Germans in Transylvania and the Banat region (now in Romania), around the middle of the thirteenth century. Contemporaneously, the same may be said of Pomerania, East Brandenburg, Bohemia and Moravia, and Silesia, where local aristocrats were keen to develop their vast lands via colonization. Also in the thirteenth century, the Teutonic Order (*Deutscher Ritterorden*) conquered the Baltic regions, i.e. Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia, as well as East and West Prussia. Similar to German colonists in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, Teutonic knights were invited to Masovia (Poland) by Prince Konrad in 1225. In return for sovereignty, they were charged with the task of subduing pagan Baltic tribes, converting them to Christianity and then colonizing their lands. Hence, following conquests between 1231 and 1283, the German colonization of conquered territories began with the settlement of farmers, craftsmen and merchants.

The first stage of colonization and conquest in Central and Eastern Europe ended in the fifteenth century: for the next several hundred years relatively little actually happened. In southeastern Europe, this was mostly due to the fact that by the middle of the sixteenth century large parts of Hungary and almost all of the Balkans had been conquered by the Ottoman Empire. However, new opportunities for colonization arose starting in the late seventeenth century with the withdrawal of the Ottomans from Hungary and some parts of the Balkans, thus leading to the recruitment of Germans to settle the Banat, Slavonia and Hungary. The three so-called Swabian Tracks of 1722-6, 1763-73, and 1782-7 brought tens

of thousands of Germans to areas that now belong to Romania, Hungary, and the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, German settlements also emerged in the Bukovina, and in the early nineteenth century in Bessarabia and in the Dobrudja. As all these areas were part of the Habsburg Empire (after 1867 the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy), German settlers acted on behalf of the emperor by not only colonizing undeveloped regions but also representing the central power to ensure the preservation of the (multiethnic) empire.

The final stage of German settlements in Central and Eastern Europe started in Russia during the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1762 and 1763, the Russian Empress Catherine the Great issued two decrees granting significant privileges to German settlers colonizing areas around the lower Volga River. By the end of the 1760s, more than 20,000 colonists had settled in these areas as free farmers. Their privileges included several years free from taxation, exemption from any military draft, the use of German as the administrative language, the establishment of German schools, and religious freedoms (Stricker 2000: 165f.). A second wave of settlers arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century, settling on the coast of the Black Sea and in the Caucasus.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, ethnic Germans could be found in settlements across the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires as well as in Russia; but where former colonists remained a minority, they began to lose their privileged status and relations between them and other ethnic groups and nations became more tense. There were many reasons for these increasing tensions and they differed across Central and Eastern Europe. Among the most prominent ones were the rise of competing doctrines of nationalism among different ethnic groups. This resulted in demands for an end to political privileges based on membership in particular ethnic groups (Hungarians, Germans, Russians, etc.) and in the increasing appeal of the concept of popular sovereignty. To some extent, there was also growing competition for scarce economic resources.

With the exception of Russia, where ethnic Germans had always been in a minority position, their status as members of the dominant ethnic group in the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires was only revoked at the end of the First World War. The peace settlements of Versailles and St Germain resulted in significant changes in the political geography of Central and Eastern Europe. The break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire yielded several new states, each of which became a host-state of a number of ethnic minorities, including Germans. The size and political significance of these minorities differed vastly as did the treatment they received under their new rulers. After the Treaty of Trianon (1920), there were only a few hundred thousand ethnic Germans left in Hungary and in the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but in Romania they numbered almost a million. In Czechoslovakia there were more than three million ethnic Germans in 1919, a figure that made them the second largest ethnic group in the country. The German Empire, too, lost territories in Central and Eastern Europe. The so-called Polish Corridor, which gave Poland access to the Baltic Sea and separated East Prussia from the rest of the territory of the Weimar Republic, also contained large numbers of Germans who had been citizens of the Second Empire before 1919. Upper Silesia was divided between Poland and Germany, leaving another significant ethnic German minority in Poland. In all, the territorial changes in Central and Eastern Europe after the end of the First World War left approximately five million ethnic Germans in countries outside Germany and Austria, while almost two million more lived in various parts of the emerging Soviet empire.

Despite these dramatic shifts, the changes after the Second World War were even more costly to Germany in terms of territory and population.³ As a result of the inter-war manipulation of ethnic German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and as a consequence of the numerous atrocities committed by the Nazis as part of their 'total war', Germany was geographically truncated. In terms of territory, the country lost all of West Prussia to Poland, all of East Prussia to Poland and the USSR; what remained of Germany proper was divided into four occupation zones (and subsequently into two states). In terms of population, at least one million Germans died following their flight and expulsion from the state's lost territories, as well as from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and what was then Yugoslavia (if they had not already fled the advance of Tito's partisans or the Red Army). While estimates of those displaced vary considerably, a conservative figure is between 10 and 12 million ethnic Germans affected: of these, approximately 10% did not survive the ordeal. Nonetheless, attempts to ethnically cleanse entire states of their German populations were never wholly successful and they often remained in significant numbers.

German minorities in Western Europe were relatively much smaller in number, yet politically significant. In contrast to some of the minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, their minority status was due exclusively to border changes following the First World War. Austria-Hungary lost South Tyrol (and Trentino) to Italy and Germany lost Eupen and Malmedy to Belgium. France regained Alsace and Lorraine, an area that had been disputed between Germany and France for centuries, but had been most recently acquired by Germany in 1871 as part of the settlement after the Franco-German war of 1870. Between Germany and Denmark, a new border was established using local referenda. These arrangements were all confirmed after the Second World War. In contrast to Central and Eastern Europe, there were virtually no expulsions from the countries of Western Europe with the largest German populations: Belgium, Denmark, France, and Italy. However, small numbers of ethnic Germans, fearing prosecution for war crimes and collaboration, chose to flee before the end of the war.

The Cold War division of Europe had a powerful impact on the prospects and aspirations of ethnic German minorities. European integration in the western part of the continent provided an environment in which human rights, minority rights, democracy, and economic prosperity eventually benefitted all citizens regardless of their ethnic identity. This environment enabled German minorities to express, maintain and develop their identity. No such opportunities existed behind the Iron Curtain, where discrimination and exclusion persisted for much of the time before the end of the communist bloc. Thus, emigration rather than integration became the predominant aspiration among the majority of ethnic Germans in Central and Eastern Europe.

2. The Effects of European Integration⁴

2.1. Western Europe

For German minorities in Belgium, Denmark, France, and Italy, the economic and democratic environment of post-1945 Western Europe assisted the process of political and social integration. All

³ Space constraints do not permit a detailed discussion of Nazi Germany's *Heim ins Reich* policy. For a more extensive examination of this, see Wolff (2003).

⁴ The integration of the Federal Republic of Germany into the political, economic and military structures of the West, also had an effect on the way in which Germany acted as a kin-state. This particular effect of European integration is examined in detail in the next section.

four countries enjoyed relative economic prosperity and participated in the various projects of European and Western integration. No German-speaking population in any of the four countries harbors significant secessionist aspirations or feels subordinate because of their different ethnic and/or cultural identity. In the context of ever closer European integration, Germans in all four states can now maintain close ties with Germany as travel and employment restrictions decreased tremendously in the decades following the Second World War. However, though it now appears that all four groups are very well integrated, the process in each country differed and yielded distinct effects on each minority population.

With respect to Denmark, the German minority has developed a trans-ethnic identity that is both German and Danish, while retaining a German national identity. This *Zweiströmigkeit* (Pedersen 2000) finds its obvious expression in such group self-perceptions as “German North Schleswigians” among older generations, or “German South Jutlanders” among younger generations. The effects of favorable conditions afforded ethnic Germans in Denmark are illustrated by the fact that it has been possible for a relatively small minority of between ten and fifteen thousand members (about 5 percent of the administrative region) to maintain such a strong sense of its German origins. The framework of the 1955 Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations secures the position of the German minority in Denmark politically by guaranteeing its members full and equal access to the rights and liberties accorded to all Danish citizens. Subsequently, increasing cross-border cooperation and support provided by the Federal Republic of Germany allowed the German minority to maintain its identity as a distinct national group in Denmark. Given the high level of tolerance for (if not to say indifference to) the German minority’s insistence on its distinctiveness, the social climate in Denmark is no less favorable than the political conditions. Their social and economic integration is aided by a long-standing tradition in minority education, a system designed to prepare each new generation for a life in Denmark as well as Germany. As Europe integrates most closely, the importance of regions defined by social history rather than politics is increasing at the expense of conventional concepts of nationality, enhancing further the opportunities for the German minority in Denmark to preserve its trans-ethnic identity appear secure.

The German-speaking population in Belgium is estimated to be around 74,000 people. Most of them fall under the jurisdiction of the German-speaking community (one of the three recognized linguistic communities in the country) and enjoy special rights and protections: the community has autonomy in all matters related to culture, education, electronic broadcasts, health, welfare, research and technology, and language use. The German community’s authority also extends to international relations in these areas of competence and to inter-community affairs related to matters of culture and education. Even though one-third of German-speakers in Belgium fall under the jurisdiction of either the French or the Flemish community, some of them can still make use of special linguistic facilities provided in areas where German-speakers account for 25 percent or more of the population. For administrative purposes, the German-speaking community is part of the Francophone region, Wallonia. Despite these rather advantageous political conditions, the German-speaking community finds itself in a complex linguistic situation. In the Eupen and St. Vith areas of East Belgium, German has official status and is the language of instruction in schools. Elsewhere in Belgium, with the exception of the Malmédy area where it is taught as compulsory first ‘foreign’ language, German has to compete with Dutch and French as the two dominant languages in Belgium, and increasingly also with English.

Alsace, for centuries a disputed border country between France and Germany, is firmly integrated into the French state today and its Germanic population is progressively assimilated into French culture. This is demonstrated by the degree to which French has spread in Alsace at the expense of German and/or the Alsatian dialect: there are very few older people who speak dialect only, while interest in the language among the younger generation is declining steadily. European integration has brought

significant economic gains to Alsace and Alsatians are increasingly confident about their place in France and Europe. Under these conditions, political integration combined with partial cultural assimilation are successful policies for managing ethno-cultural differences that had escalated in the inter-war period (Wolff 2002a). Nevertheless, there remains a distinct regional identity based on the cultural and linguistic traditions of historical Alsace, as well as the region's development since 1945.

Franco-German reconciliation and the process of European integration affected developments in Alsace significantly. With Germany no longer perceived as dangerous, the existence of a local Alsatian culture based on Alemannic traditions is no longer interpreted as a threat to French territorial integrity and sovereignty. While institutional support for German is minimal, the decline in the number of German-speakers after the Second World War also suggests little demand for such support (Trouillet 1997). The local dialect, however, enjoys a significantly higher economic, social, and language status. Given that it is one of the primary focal points of an Alsatian identity that distinguishes it from both Germany and France, Broadbridge (2000) has concluded that the future of the Alsatians as a distinct ethno-cultural/ethno-linguistic group looks more promising.

Despite a history of repeated conflicts with both Germany and Italy, the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol is today the best protected and most empowered of all German communities in Western Europe. As a result of complex internal and external developments after 1945, Italy's German-speaking minority enjoys an extensive catalogue of rights and liberties within a regional and provincial framework of autonomy that grants the minority full self-government (Wolff 2002a, b).

This minority's ethno-cultural identity is now protected, but was threatened in the past, when provincial tensions between Germans and Italians resulted in an increased vote share for ethnocentric parties in the 1980s and early 1990s. Over the past decade, however, an increasingly neutral civic identity has emerged shared by all peoples in South Tyrol; rather than ethnicity, this common identity manifests primarily as pride in and loyalty to the autonomous institutions of South Tyrol. Following the revisions to the autonomy statute in 2001 (cf. Wolff 2002a and 2007), the institutions are now more inclusive and representative of all three ethnic groups than ever before.

German minorities in Western Europe have overall benefitted from three broad developments in the post-1945 era that are closely connected to the process of European integration. First, the fact that host-states remained firmly anchored in the community of democratic states and committed to the protection of individual human rights has ensured that ethnic Germans in these countries are equal citizens, further aided by the development of European norms and institutions concerned with the protection of human rights at a European level, as well as by the high levels of economic development in all four countries in question. A second factor relates to the softer borders across Europe, easing travel and employment restrictions. Again, this is a dimension of the broader integration process, not a specific measure to protect ethnic German minorities. Third, the inclusion of Germany in the integration process has eliminated fears in Western Europe that ethnic Germans might be used as fifth columns by an aggressively revisionist Germany (as was the case in the inter-war period, albeit more in relation to Central and Eastern Europe). This can also be seen as the process of 'socialising' Germany into the European family of democracies, and it has had a profound effect on Germany's kin-state policy, as we will see below. A fourth aspect, relatively unrelated to European integration, are domestic constitutional developments in the western European host-states. As detailed above, this has afforded Germans in Belgium and Italy very specific and enhanced rights of representation and participation, more so than as a consequence of regionalisation in France or within the unitary, and highly centralised state of Denmark.

2.2. Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union

For more than four decades after the end of the Second World War, the situation of German minorities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has been fundamentally different from that of ethnic German communities in Western Europe. Subjected to deportation, forced labor, detention, and expulsion in the immediate aftermath of the war, their ability to develop, express, or even preserve their ethno-cultural identity was severely limited under the communist regimes of their host-countries. With the partial exception of Romania, members of all these minorities were subjected to various assimilation pressures ranging from the simple denial of their existence as a distinct minority group (in Poland) to the repression of their cultural, linguistic, and religious identities (in the Soviet Union). Apart from the malign neglect of conditions necessary for the preservation of minority identities, ethnic Germans suffered additionally because they had often supported the Nazis in the infliction of enormous suffering on the people of their current host-state, who, in turn, exercised a prolonged revenge after 1945.

In addition to internal pressures, increasing opportunities to emigrate afforded by the provisions of Article 116 of the Federal Republic's Basic Law prompted the exit of the most consciously German members of minority communities in Central and Eastern Europe. Any remaining barriers to emigration were removed during the democratization process that began in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, which, however, over time also improved the general conditions for minorities in the region. Thus, before the changes in German legislation in the early 1990s could take effect by limiting immigration, the community structures of German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe were weakened significantly by a mass exodus of ethnic Germans, particularly from Romania, Poland, and the former Soviet Union.

Since the late 1980s and particularly after 1990, Germany's federal government raised barriers to immigration but supported ethnic Germans in their host countries, a point detailed in a separate section below. For the moment it is sufficient to note that bilateral treaties and other agreements now include mechanisms for the provision of substantial material and financial aid to German minority communities across Central and Eastern Europe.

2.2.1. Ethnic German Minorities in the Former Soviet Union

The smallest groups of ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union live in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In terms of their origins, they come from diverse backgrounds, including remnants of historic German population in the Baltics, several thousand Memel Germans, and ethnic Germans from Russia who migrated to the Baltic Republics during the Soviet era. The latter group faces severe difficulties in obtaining citizenship rights in Estonia and Latvia as a consequence of a discriminatory citizenship policy targeting the sizeable Russian population. Similarly, small groups of ethnic Germans still reside in Georgia and Moldova. All of these groups are very well assimilated into their host-states, even though they retain an interest in German language and culture. Ethnic Germans in Central Asia are relatively stronger numerically, but have for the most part resolved to leave their host-states because they are denied conditions essential to the preservation of their identity, feel discriminated against because of their previously close affiliation with ethnic Russians, or because of their Christianity in a Muslim region. The origins of ethnic Germans here lie predominantly in their deportation from European parts of the Soviet Union following the outbreak of war with Germany in 1941. Only in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan had there been settlements since the nineteenth century. Even though the favored destination of most

émigrés remains Germany, a growing number of them settle temporarily or permanently in ethnic German settlements in Russia, especially in the two German rayons in Western Siberia.

In all former Soviet states, the future of German communities is rather bleak. There is, however, one notable exception (in aspiration, but not in achievement yet): the German minority in Ukraine is seeking to restore its traditional settlement areas, an effort supported by the German federal government and a 1996 bilateral agreement. Elsewhere without exception elsewhere, two scenarios foreshadow the demise of ethnic German communities. In some cases, the shrinking number of Germans has simply lost the critical mass needed to sustain a community. In other cases, the resuscitation of a waning community is precluded by a number of factors, including a degree of assimilation that has passed the point of no return, governments that are indifferent to minority rights, populations that resent ethnic Germans, and sometimes a lack of support from Berlin.

The situation of ethnic Germans still living in the Russian Federation bears the legacy of mass deportations in 1941, decades of repression following, and ultimately emigration. Despite recent efforts by the German government to improve the living conditions of the ethnic German minority in Russia, and despite cooperation by the Russian government, ethnic Germans are either exiting or assimilating. There are now aid programs to support their economic development, and to promote German language and culture, but their success ultimately depends on the will of the minority to consolidate and survive as a distinct ethno-cultural group in Russia.

2.2.2. Ethnic German Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe

Outside of the former Soviet Union, the future prospects of German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe are very diverse. Leaving aside the small groups still resident in the former Yugoslavia—Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia—the external and internal factors that shape the conditions for the minorities in Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Czech and Slovak Republics are very different. They are probably best in Hungary, where more than 60,000 ethnic Germans find advantageous political conditions within a model framework of minority legislation. They are fairly well integrated into Hungarian society and have widely preserved or recently revitalized their ethno-cultural identity. The political stability of Hungary and the country's success in the transformation of its economy certainly contributed to this process, as did improved relations with Germany and the country's integration into European institutions. In addition, there has always been an attempt by Hungary to set a precedent with its own minority policy for neighboring states with sizable ethnic Hungarian minorities. This has led to a very advanced framework of minority protections, including cultural/non-territorial autonomy arrangements that benefit ethnic Germans. Moreover, since the early 1990s Hungary has accommodated German (and Austrian) policies toward external ethnic German minorities, a move that improves the odds of its own engagement with external ethnic Hungarian minorities and their host-states.

In contrast, the future of the German-speaking population in Romania is far from certain, even though current conditions are vastly improved since the end of the Cold War, in significant measure because of Germany's role as an active kin-state.⁵ This more active role, however, was also facilitated by important domestic factors in Romania. The minority is no longer subject to any significant level of discrimination: ethnic Germans in Romania are more accommodated linguistically than in any other Eastern or Central European state. The Romanian government has long recognized the 'value' of its German population to attract foreign investment and to establish mutually beneficial bilateral relationships with Germany, and

⁵ For a more detailed assessment, see also Cordell and Wolff (2007b).

thereby improved relations with NATO and the European Union. Also, the German minority in Romania had not been subjected to the kind of aggressive assimilation practiced elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe and predominantly German-speaking settlements remained throughout the post-1945 period.

Based on the German-Romanian treaty of April 1992, the aim of German policy was to secure and improve the living conditions of the German minority in the country in order to provide its members with a viable future in their host-state. As there have never been border or territorial disputes between Germany and Romania, German policy has a primarily humanitarian dimension. Because the Romanian constitution does not allow for positive discrimination as a means to remedy the situation of historically disadvantaged minority groups, article sixteen of the German-Romanian treaty states specifically that all concrete measures, taken jointly by the two governments to secure the continued existence of the German minority and to support it in the reconstruction of its social, cultural, and economic life, must not disadvantage other Romanian citizens. As this coincides with one of the objectives of Germany's external minority policy – contributing to an environment of inter-ethnic harmony – this has not limited its humanitarian aid efforts. German government support falls broadly into three categories – social, economic, and cultural. About seventy cultural centres have been set up since 1990, enabling the German minority to preserve, develop, and express its cultural identity. Language teaching plays an important role, but it is primarily aimed at preserving the already existing relatively high level of knowledge. Part of the aid package, therefore, is infrastructural support, such as the reconstruction of the main building of the Honterus secondary school in Kronstadt. Social projects have included the provision to hospitals in area where ethnic Germans live of medical equipment, spare parts, and medication. The economic aid programme has focussed on small businesses and the agricultural sector, including loans for start-up companies on preferential conditions, and the supply of technology and machinery, which support around seventy companies founded or run by ethnic Germans in Romania every year. Particular emphasis is placed on the agricultural sector where a support programme has been co-ordinated and administered by two German experts since its inception the early 1990s. Yet, the overall effectiveness of these measure to obtain their objectives—to create viable and sustainable living conditions that would incentivise members of the minority to remain in Romania—is in some doubt. In spite of the relatively favorable minority policy conducted by the Romanian government and the tangible support from Germany, there was a mass exodus in the late 1980s and early 1990s that not only diminished the size of the minority considerably but also fractured community structures and disaggregated formerly compact settlement patterns. Moreover, as the young and well educated were more like to emigrate, ethnic Germans remaining in Romania are disproportionately older, and it is unlikely that minority will recover from these demographic losses. As a distinct and active community, the days of ethnic Germans in Romania are clearly numbered, even though individuals of ethnic German descent are likely to continue living in the country, albeit in ever dwindling numbers.

The situations of ethnic Germans in the Czech and Slovak Republics are similarly difficult. Despite wide-ranging constitutional guarantees for the protection of national minorities, historical memories complicate the relationship between Czechs and minority Germans. The part this minority played in the dismemberment and subsequent destruction of Czechoslovakia in 1938-1939 poisoned their relationship with the host-nation and predicated post-war repercussions, including their persecution and near-complete expulsion. In turn, the displaced diaspora in Germany remains resentful and tries repeatedly to influence bilateral relationships between Germany and Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic (cf. Wolff 2002b, and Cordell and Wolff 2005a, b, and Cordell and Wolff 2007 a, b). Successive Czech governments remain very reluctant to make concessions relating to the status of the republic's German minority. Despite the demands of the diaspora community, Prague rejects claims for restitution of property or compensation for losses and suffering, or even the right to resettle in their former

homeland. In 1997, the German and Czech governments managed to reach some consensus and issue a joint declaration. However, this did not signal the start of the comprehensive reconciliation process hoped for. The legacy of World War Two still has a remarkable potential to disrupt bilateral relations seriously. This was illustrated clearly in early 2002 when remarks by Czech Prime Minister Milos Zeman implied the collective guilt of Sudeten Germans for the events in 1938-1939 and justified their collective punishment by expulsion. In response, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called off a planned state visit to the Czech Republic. In 2005, however, the Czech government apologized to those ethnic Germans who had been expelled despite their active resistance against Nazi occupation.

In Poland, the German minority is no longer under any officially sanctioned assimilation pressure. Favorable political conditions, including parliamentary representation and opportunities to organize political parties and cultural associations, have enabled ethnic Germans to maintain viable community structures to preserve, develop, and express their ethno-cultural identity. Relations between Germany and Poland have their legal basis in the 1990 border recognition treaty, in which the Federal Republic explicitly guaranteed the Oder-Neiße line as the common border, and in the 1991 treaty on good neighbourly relations and cooperation. Prior to that, in 1989, a joint declaration by the German Chancellor and the Polish Prime Minister acknowledged the existence of a population of German descent in Poland and of the need to protect its cultural identity.⁶

Substantive material aid has been a significant dimension of German policy vis-à-vis the ethnic German minority in Poland.⁷ In the areas of culture and education, this is in the responsibility of the Foreign Office, economic reconstruction programmes are funded and administered by the Ministry of the Interior, and social and community work is handled by the German Red Cross (as well as before 1990 also through the Ministry of Inner-German Affairs). Material aid had been committed to the German minority before 1989, but in comparatively smaller proportions. The changes in Poland after 1989/90 and the increasingly closer political and economic relationship with Germany and the country's integration into European and transatlantic structures have allowed the allocation of larger funds, through different channels, and for new purposes. Geographically, material support has always been concentrated on Opole Silesia and to a lesser extent Upper Silesia proper.

Funding in the education and cultural sector has included a variety of activities. The German government has provided staff support to improve the quality of German language teaching in Poland. Between 1994 and 1999 alone, the number of teachers sent to Poland increased from just one to 111. In addition, four federal government-sponsored experts on German language teaching have been working in Poland since 1994; the German Academic Exchange Service is funding twenty-six lecturers at Polish universities, and the Goethe Institute has supplied eight lecturers for the further training of Polish teachers of German. Since 1993, members of the German minority in Poland have had access to a special grant programme to study in Germany for a period of up to twelve months. The federal government also provides partial funding for TV and radio broadcasts and print media of the German minority and supplies German newspapers and magazines to the friendship circles of the minority. Financial aid channelled through the Ministry of the Interior was given to various associations of the minority, but by far the largest amount of support has been spent on projects to support the economic recovery of the areas in which members of the German minority live, thus benefiting not only the minorities but also these regions and their (other) population as a whole. Efforts here were concentrated on infrastructural improvements, e.g., water supply systems, and on promoting small

⁶ Successive Polish governments had never denied the existence of a German minority. There was, however, serious disagreement between the two sides over its number.

⁷ A more detailed elaboration of German government aid to ethnic Germans in Poland can be found in Cordell and Wolff (2007).

businesses and private farms. For the distribution of these funds, the federal government uses the Foundation for the Development of Silesia, a private body registered in Opole, and partly funds three staff positions there.⁸ Support for social services has seen German government funding for the improvement of medical services in Upper Silesia and for the setting-up of a network of *Caritas*-operated centres to care for the elderly (*Bundestagsdrucksache* 13/1116).

Thus, despite the exodus of ethnic Germans in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Cordell 2000; Cordell and Wolff 2005a and 2007b), the outlook for the German minority in Poland is quite good. For the past two decades, the German minority has striven successfully to become a bridge between Poland and Germany. This was made possible by a German federal government that placed great emphasis on its relationship with Poland, and by a Polish government that has recognized the 'value' of the German minority as a catalyst of reconciliation aiding Poland's accession to NATO in 1999 and to the European Union in 2004.

German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe thus have been affected in very different ways by the process of European integration. If we define this process broadly as the opening-up and (partial) democratisation of the former communist countries, ethnic Germans have benefitted individually in most countries from greater adherence to international and European human rights norms within a more secure legal and institutional framework in a way not dissimilar to post-1945 developments in Western Europe. Greater openness in Central and Eastern Europe, however, and in contrast to the situation in the western part of the continent, has also led to mass emigration and a dramatic decline in the numbers of ethnic Germans in the region. This is despite the considerable political and material efforts of Germany's external minority policy vis-à-vis the host-states in Central and Eastern Europe after 1990, as we shall see in the next section.

3. Kin-state Politics: Continuity and Change in German External Minority Policy⁹

Germany's foreign relations during the early years of the Cold War were constricted by the Iron Curtain, but it was determined to pursue a foreign policy agenda that would ensure the country's integration into the Western Alliance. Initially preoccupied with the integration of ethnic German refugees and expellees from Central and Eastern Europe, external minority policy only became an important foreign policy area from about the mid-1950s onwards. As a result of public pressure and political lobbying by the various expellee organizations, the Federal Republic committed itself to a foreign policy that incorporated humanitarian efforts to improve the situation of ethnic Germans in Central and Eastern Europe. Until 1989, the possibilities of direct involvement were however, extremely limited: the main mechanism of German external minority policy was the negotiation of terms with host-states that would allow ethnic Germans to emigrate.

A first step in this direction was the Soviet-German treaty of 1955. This was followed by a verbal agreement in 1958 that those persons of ethnic German origin who had been German citizens before 21 June 1941 were entitled to repatriation. This policy was continued by all successive governments and, after 1970, it began to include a variety of other states in the Soviet sphere of influence. Treaties with

⁸ Similar foundations exist in Romania, Russia, and the Czech and Slovak Republics.

⁹ As a kin-state, Germany focused its activities in the post-1945 period on Central and Eastern Europe and the (former) Soviet Union; therefore, the following section is concerned with German *Ostpolitik*. For a discussion of German external minority policy before and during the inter-war period, see Wolff (2000, 2003).

Poland (1970) and Czechoslovakia (1973) specifically addressed the sensitive issue of borders, confirming that the German government of the day respected the territorial *status quo*.

Against the background of the political realities of the Cold War, *Ostpolitik* priorities of promoting peace, reconciliation and 'change through rapprochement' left the West German government with no other option but to facilitate the emigration of ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe to the Federal Republic, including ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union, Romania, and Poland. German external minority policy instruments were also limited in part by western expectations of an appropriate *Ostpolitik*, and by the pragmatic recognition of what was or was not possible via bilateral engagement during the Cold War. In terms of broader European integration, it was Germany's promotion of the peace and reconciliation agenda through the CSCE process, culminating in the 1975 CSCE final act, that provided a framework for further bilateral engagement on issues concerning ethnic German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Though opportunities arising in this context might have been limited, they were consistent with Germany's new approach to external minority policy.

The transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, which began in earnest in 1989-90, provided an entirely different framework of new and increased opportunities for Germany's external minority policy. On the one hand, democratization meant the granting of such basic rights and liberties as the freedoms of speech, association, and political participation, allowing ethnic Germans in their host-countries to form their own parties, stand for election as candidates of such parties, and actively advocate the interests of their group. On the other hand, it also meant that there were no longer any restrictions on emigration, and given the experience of at least the past forty years, many ethnic Germans, particularly in Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union and its successor states, seized this opportunity and emigrated to Germany. Both developments required a measured and responsible policy response from Germany: domestically to cope with the enormous influx of resettlers; internationally to assure neighboring states in Central and Eastern Europe of Germany's continued commitment to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. These policies also had to ensure support for German minorities at qualitatively and quantitatively new levels, and guarantee their protection as national minorities. All this had to happen within the framework of general German foreign policy premises, such as the support for the transition process to build democracy, a market economy, a new collective security order embracing all states in Europe, and respect for international law and human rights (cf. Wolff 2006).

The most important domestic law passed in response to the vast increase of ethnic Germans¹⁰ leaving their host-states for Germany was the 1993 War Consequences Conciliation Act. Formerly automatic, entitlement to German citizenship was rescinded: in order to qualify, ethnic Germans now had to prove their long-standing affinity to German culture, language, and traditions, and that they suffered ethnic discrimination in their host-states. Furthermore, the annual intake of ethnic Germans was limited to a maximum of about 250,000 people (the average of the years 1991 and 1992 within a 10 percent margin). A 1990 law that required ethnic Germans to apply for German citizenship while still resident in their host-states helped enforce this quota. Since 1996, applicants also have to pass a language test to demonstrate connection to the German language and culture. Together, these new regulations considerably reduced the influx of ethnic Germans to the Federal Republic: from around 220,000 each year between 1993 and 1995, the immigration figures dropped to 178,000 in 1996 and 134,000 in 1997. Since then, yearly immigration numbers have further declined, reaching a historic low in 2007 of just 5,800, almost all of them from the former Soviet Union.

¹⁰ Figures for ethnic Germans 'returning' to Germany include: 200,000 in 1988; 377,000 in 1989; and 397,000 in 1990.

Realizing that conditions after 1990 required a fundamentally different foreign policy, the German government also embedded its external minority policy into a wider framework promoting European integration. While peace and reconciliation remained two key objectives of *Ostpolitik*, 'change through rapprochement' gradually gave way to aiding and consolidating democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe. Cultural, social, and economic measures to support German minorities were 'aimed at an improvement of the living conditions of ethnic Germans in their host-countries' but would also benefit whole regions, thus promoting inter-ethnic harmony and economic prosperity while strengthening the emerging democratic political structures (Bundestagsdrucksache 13/3428 and Bundestagsdrucksache 13/1116). Thus, by encouraging the successful (and equitable) integration of ethnic Germans into the societies of their host-states, the German government hoped to provide an alternative to emigration (Bundestagsdrucksache 13/3428). In the immediate post-Cold War era, the emphasis was on the creation of large-scale structural projects. In recent years the, emphasis has shifted to youth work, the construction of community centers, and promoting 'twinning' projects between towns, villages and provinces in Germany with their counterparts in East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.¹¹

Notwithstanding the German federal government's increased opportunities for a more active and multi-faceted pursuit of *Ostpolitik* after 1990, there is also a significant degree of continuity in the assumptions underlying external minority policy. Germany has remained committed to peace, reconciliation and regime change (i.e. democratic transition and consolidation), so policies regarding German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union also consider these aims. This becomes clear in the context of EU accession, and European integration more generally, which presented another important turning point for *Ostpolitik* and external minority policy. In light of its national, political, economic and security interests, Germany fully supported EU and NATO accession for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. A long-trusted instrument of external minority policy, bilateral treaties with host-states were concluded as early as 1990. These presented comprehensive ways of addressing important issues in relation to ethnic German minorities, especially the level of support they could receive directly from the German government.

The EU operates on the principle of shared sovereignty, regional co-operation, malleability of borders and the freedom of movement. Yet equally important in the EU is a community of shared values and norms: as clearly stated in the Copenhagen criteria, these include respect for, and protection of, minorities. From this perspective, European integration and German external minority policy were merely two sides of the same coin. At the same time, however, one also needs to bear in mind that it has been primarily bilateral efforts of the German government that have resulted in concrete improvements for ethnic German minorities. This is the case in countries that are members, may soon become members, or even those with only distant chances of membership. External minority policy, however, has developed in the broader context of European integration, thus improving opportunities for bilateral efforts, but also constraining policy choices within a set of parameters that spell out standards of kin-state and host-state politics vis-à-vis minorities in general.

Thus, we can identify three important links between Germany's kin-state policies and the process of European integration. First, the socialization of post-1945 Germany into the emerging order of democratic norms and values, combined with the domestic re-evaluation of Germany's troubled past relations with Central and Eastern Europe, fundamentally changed the country's view of its own role as a kin-state. The emphasis, on the one hand, for the principles of state sovereignty and territorial

¹¹ Some of these projects and programmes are detailed in Cordell and Wolff (2005b and 2007b).

integrity, and, on the other hand, for the need to engage constructively with host-states on arrangement of legacy 'issues' has resulted in a policy that is founded (in an almost typically EU-European fashion) on the contractual basis of bilateral treaties between kin- and host-states. These treaties have been standard-setting for a range of other such agreements across Central and Eastern Europe that were inspired by the Balladur initiative.¹² These treaties specifically allowed for formal links between ethnic German minorities and Germany, and enhanced the opportunities for the federal government of Germany and individual state governments to support minorities in their settlement areas.

Second, the 'moderation' of German kin-state policy after 1945 and the fact that Germany resisted a more assertive policy after 1990, both a result of the fact that German foreign policy in general, and its *Ostpolitik* in particular, were bound by European norms, combined with opportunities for cross-border cooperation in the framework of European integration in such a way that host-states contiguous with Germany saw little reason to reject closer cooperation. This, in turn, strengthened links between ethnic German minorities in the border regions with their kin-state, especially in the German-Polish-Czech border triangle.

Third, the incentive of getting into European Clubs, such as NATO and the EU, and specifically in the case of EU accession the Copenhagen criteria, has caused governments of aspiring EU members in eastern Europe to improve the position of their minorities in a variety of ways. This has also benefitted ethnic Germans. In the cases of Poland, ethnic Germans have been the primary beneficiaries; in the cases of Hungary and Romania, ethnic Germans have benefitted from the process alongside other, and often more numerous minorities. In the case of Hungary's domestic minority policy, European integration has had another effect, as a parallel incentive to improve the position of ethnic minorities in Hungary has been at work: the fact that Hungary was keen to set a precedent for treating its minorities well in the expectation that this would benefit its own external minorities in countries like Romania and Slovakia.

4. Conclusion

There are three important conclusions to this analysis of Germans as a divided nation. The first is that the conditions ethnic German minorities experience in Western Europe are fundamentally different from those in Eastern Europe, even if those host-states are now EU members. Second, there are no realistic prospects for the long-term survival of ethnic German communities as distinct ethno-cultural groups in Central and Eastern Europe, or in the former Soviet Union. This is despite the fact that for the past several decades, Germany has expended tremendous diplomatic and financial efforts to improve the situation for ethnic Germans in these regions. Third, the weakness of ethnic German communities in these regions is due in part to the success of past German policies welcoming ethnic émigrés into their kin-state. Let us consider these three issues in some more detail.

As indicated in Table 1a, ethnic German minorities in Western Europe, including Belgium, Denmark, France, and Italy, are very well integrated in their host-states, fully recognized as minorities, and protected by significant linguistic and cultural rights. Moreover, in Belgium and Italy, ethnic Germans enjoy various forms of autonomy; in France, ethnic Germans form the overwhelming majority in the Alsace region (and its two constituent departments) and can thus make use of devolved powers, even though these are considerably more limited than in Italy and Belgium. The ethnic German minority in

¹² The Balladur initiative, named after its originator, the then French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, is formally known as the Pact on Stability and was adopted at the March 1995 OSCE conference in Paris.

Denmark is too small, even locally, to have any significant level of autonomy, but as with the three others it has benefitted from a range of cross-border cooperation mechanisms resulting from European integration since the late 1950s. Thus, all four minority groups retain a degree of ethnic vitality that virtually guarantees their survival as distinct ethno-cultural groups in their host-states. Notably, this is to a large extent due to domestic policy aimed, by and large, at minority accommodation, and less so a result of bilateral arrangements or the implementation of European minority rights standards.

The situation of ethnic German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is profoundly different as very few of the remaining communities have any realistic prospect of long-term survival as distinct ethno-cultural groups. Still, there are two possible exceptions: the ethnic German minorities in Hungary and Poland. In Poland, the remaining group is still relatively large and regionally concentrated. Although significantly smaller, the decline in numbers among ethnic Germans in Hungary has been far less dramatic compared to other countries in the region. Thus, in both Poland and Hungary the German minorities have a demographic structure that is relatively stable; while they are politically well integrated into their respective host-states, their degree of assimilation, especially linguistic assimilation, is low enough to ensure their continued existence as distinct groups. The situation for other ethnic German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe is less promising. Even though they no longer experience systematic discrimination, the legacy of poor social, economic, and political conditions has taken a toll. Emigration levels are much higher. Almost half a million ethnic Germans have left Romania since 1950; more than 100,000 from the former Czechoslovakia; and nearly 100,000 from the former Yugoslavia. This is a very clear trend bolstered by the fact that remaining Germans are now overwhelmingly elderly and/or assimilated (cf. Tables 1b and 2a). The prospects for ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union are uniformly bleak. Since 1950, emigration from the (former) USSR has brought almost 2.5 million ethnic Germans to the Federal Republic, with almost 90% of them coming after 1990 (cf. Table 2b). Sizable groups remain only in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and only in the former two are the domestic conditions and bilateral relations such that there is any prospect of even a mid-term future for the minorities (cf. Table 1c). Everywhere else, remaining members of ethnic German communities have largely assimilated, including linguistically.

The final point to make is about Germany's role as a kin-state. While the state of affairs in western Europe would broadly suggest that domestic conditions (and indirectly the benefits of European integration) account for the comparatively positive conditions enjoyed by ethnic German minorities in Belgium, France, Denmark and Italy, the picture with respect to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is more complex. Whatever improvements ethnic German minorities have seen there – not just since the collapse of communism but also more generally since the end of the Second World War – is mostly the result of Germany's bilateral efforts. Treaties and agreements have brought change for the better, if only in the sense that more direct support from Germany became available for members of the minority communities. This holds across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, even though the net results of bilateral efforts differ vastly from Poland to Tajikistan. In this sense, the process of European integration has been helpful in that it has enhanced and consolidated bilateral gains. At the same time, however, bilateral efforts are also responsible for the steep decline of ethnic German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Decades of preferential immigration laws for ethnic Germans, and limited opportunities for bilateral efforts to create viable alternatives in the host-states before the early 1990s, are the main reasons. For individuals who were willing and able to emigrate, this has doubtlessly been beneficial; for many of those left behind, assimilation has become the only option available.

In sum, Germans as a divided nation are shrinking. Over time, ethnic German communities in Western Europe, in Poland and Hungary, and possibly in Russia and Ukraine will remain the only 'outposts' of a divided nation, a far cry from the situation 100 or even 20 years ago. Cynically, one might argue that this 'solution' to the German question has been to the benefit of European and international security. However, considering the causes of this shrinking process, and the human suffering entailed, the German case of managing a divided nation does not easily lend itself as a model for others.

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Table 1a: Ethnic German Minorities in Western Europe

	German minority (% total population)¹	Political Status of Minority	Signatory to²	Bilateral Agreement
Belgium	74,000 (0.7)	One of three 'communities' within the Belgian federation with its own community government, German is one of three official languages.	FCNM (not ratified)	German-Belgian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1956) ³
Denmark	15,000 (0.2)	Official recognition as national minority, use of German as an official language alongside Danish in the South Jutland region.	CRML, FCNM	Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations (1955)
France	600,000 (0.9) ⁴	Official recognition as regional/linguistic minority.	CRML (not ratified), FCNM	No specific agreements.
Italy	300,000 (0.5)	Official recognition as national minority, territorial autonomy in province of Bolzano, including use of German as an official language alongside Italian and Ladin.	CRML (not ratified), FCNM	No specific agreements with Germany, but significant Austrian involvement.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, population figures are taken from latest available census figures.

² In the context of European integration, two documents are of key significance: the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (CRML). Signatures and ratifications are up to date as 18 August 2008.

³ This implementation of this agreement now belongs into the competences of the Belgian Regions and Communities. As the other two communities, the German community in Belgium, moreover, has limited foreign affairs powers which it has used to conclude agreements of its own, for example, on cross-border cooperation with neighbouring German states Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine Westphalia.

⁴ This figure relates to speakers of Alsatian, a variety of German.

Table 1b: Ethnic German Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe

Country	German minority (% total population) ¹	Political Status of Minority	Signatory to ²	Bilateral Agreement
Croatia	2,800 (0.06)	Official recognition as national minority ('Germans and Austrians'), one reserved seat in Croatian parliament.	CRML, FCNM	German-Croatian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1994), also Austro-Croatian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (2004)
Czech Republic	41,000 (0.4)	Official recognition as national minority, recognition of German as a minority language.	CRML, FCNM	German-Czech(oslovak) Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1992), German-Czech Declaration (1995)
Hungary	62,000 (0.62)	Official recognition of minority, cultural/non-territorial autonomy.	CRML, FCNM	Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1991)
Poland	153,000 (0.4)	Official recognition as national minority, use of German as an official language alongside Polish in the voivodship of Opole in south-western Poland.	CRML (not ratified), FCNM	German-Polish Border Treaty (1990), Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1991)
Romania	45,000 (0.2)	Official recognition as national minority, recognition of German as a minority language.	CRML, FCNM	Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1992)
Serbia	4,000 (0.06) ¹	Official recognition as national minority.	CRML, FCNM	No specific agreements.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, population figures are taken from latest available census figures.

² In the context of European integration, two documents are of key significance: the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (CRML). Signatures and ratifications are up to date as 18 August 2008.

Slovakia	60,000 (1.0)	Official recognition as national minority, use of German as an official language alongside Slovak in the municipality of Krahule in central Slovakia.	CRML, FCNM	German-(Czecho)Slovak Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1993), German-Slovak Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1997)
Slovenia	7000 (0.3) ²	Official recognition as national minority.	CRML, FCNM	German-Slovenian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993), also Austro-Slovenian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (2002)

¹ Estimate based on author's research.

² Estimate based on author's research.

Table 1c: Ethnic German Minorities in the Former Soviet Union¹

Country	German minority (% total population) ²	Political Status of Minority	Signatory to ³	Bilateral Agreement
Estonia	1,000 (0.08)	Official recognition as national minority.	FCNM	German-Estonian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993)
Georgia	2,000 (0.04)	No information available.	FCNM	No specific agreements.
Kazakhstan	230,000 (1.5)	Official recognition as national minority.	n.a.	German-Kazakh Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1994), German-Kazakh Agreement on Support for Citizens of German Nationality (1996, not yet ratified by Kazakhstan)
Kyrgyzstan	15,000 (0.3)	Official recognition as national minority, recognition of German as a minority language.	n.a.	German-Kyrgyz Declaration on Principles of Cooperation and Good Relations (1992), German-Kyrgyz Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993)
Latvia	1,000 (0.04)	Official recognition as national minority.	FCNM	German-Latvian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993)
Lithuania	1,000 (0.03)	Official recognition as national minority.	FCNM	German-Lithuanian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993)

¹ There is some evidence that further very small numbers of ethnic Germans also exist in the other successor states of the Soviet Union, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. Yet, apart from some emigration data (see Table 2b), no further information was available on them.

² Population figures based on author estimates for Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, otherwise taken from latest available census figures.

³ In the context of European integration, two documents are of key significance: the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (CRML). Signatures and ratifications are up to date as 18 August 2008. The former Soviet Republics of Central Asia are not members of the Council of Europe, and while both FCNM and CRML are open to accession by non-member states, none of these four states with German minorities have made use of this option.

Moldova	3,000 (0.1)	Official recognition as national minority.	CRML (not ratified), FCNM	No specific agreements.
Russia	600,000 (0.4)	Official recognition as national minority, two autonomous districts with limited self-governance and government financial support.	CRML (not ratified), FCNM	Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations (1993)
Tajikistan	1,200 (0.05)	Official recognition as national minority.	n.a.	German-Tajik Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1994, ratified by Tajikistan in 2003)
Ukraine	33,000 (0.07)	Official recognition as national minority.	CRML, FCNM	German-Ukrainian Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993)
Uzbekistan	5,000	No information available.	n.a.	German-Uzbek Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science (1993, ratified by Uzbekistan in 2002)

Table 2a: Emigration of Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union¹

	Soviet Union	Poland	Romania	(former) Czechoslovakia	(former) Yugoslavia	Hungary	Others	Total
1950-1989	255,323	1,238,296	242,326	101,099	88,112	18,594	55,459	1,999,209
1990-2007	2,092,354	206,681	187,836	3,505	2,271	2,818	265	2,495,730
Total	2,347,677	1,444,977	430,162	104,604	90,383	21,412	55,724	4,494,939

¹ The following figures are based on statistics supplied by German Federal Office of Administration (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*) for *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler* and their dependents. Over time, the number of non-ethnic German dependents has increased, particularly for the period after 1990 and from the former Soviet Union. By the 2000s, approximately only 25% of those admitted under German return migration legislation were in fact of ethnic German descent. Figures do not include ethnic German émigrés from the region to destinations other than Germany.

Table 2b: Emigration of Ethnic Germans from the Former Soviet Union¹

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Armenia	6	22	83	42	16	29	47	66	58	52	92	25	4	10	4	1	557
Azerbaijan	52	39	53	44	25	20	4	30	20	54	23	32	43	34	0	10	483
Belarus	175	176	136	227	186	168	161	172	189	331	313	273	275	236	32	43	3,093
Estonia	446	283	366	363	337	136	69	116	80	77	79	69	47	32	0	5	2,505
Georgia	283	514	155	165	127	72	72	52	29	27	35	35	41	22	3	13	1,645
Kazakhstan	114,382	113,288	121,517	117,148	92,125	73,967	51,132	49,391	45,657	46,178	38,653	26,391	19,828	11,206	1,760	1,279	923,902
Kyrgyzstan	12,618	12,373	10,847	8,858	7,467	4,010	3,253	2,742	2,317	2,020	2,047	2,040	1,634	840	183	211	73,460
Latvia	334	266	267	360	248	124	147	183	182	115	44	45	51	43	10	6	2,425
Lithuania	200	166	243	230	302	176	163	161	193	97	178	123	87	30	14	9	2,372
Moldova	950	1,139	965	748	447	243	369	413	361	186	449	281	220	130	26	31	6,958
Russia	55,875	67,365	68,397	71,685	63,311	47,055	41,054	45,951	41,478	43,885	44,493	39,404	33,358	21,113	5,189	3,735	693,348
Tajikistan	3,305	4,801	2,804	1,834	870	415	203	112	62	56	32	26	27	15	6	10	14,578
Turkmenistan	304	322	485	587	463	442	365	255	239	190	126	120	168	72	23	2	4,163
Ukraine	2,700	2,711	3,139	3,650	3,460	3,153	2,983	2,762	2,773	3,176	3,179	2,711	2,299	1,306	314	244	40,560
Uzbekistan	3,946	3,882	3,757	3,468	2,797	1,885	1,528	1,193	920	990	844	714	646	307	62	96	27,035
Total	195,576	207,347	213,214	209,409	172,181	131,895	101,550	103,599	94,558	97,434	90,587	72,289	58,728	35,396	7,626	5,695	1,797,084

¹ The following figures are based on statistics supplied by German Federal Office of Administration (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*) for *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler* and their dependents. Over time, the number of non-ethnic German dependents has increased, and by the 2000s approximately only 25% of those admitted under German return migration legislation were in fact of ethnic German descent.