



## THE MASS MIGRATION OF ROMANIA'S GERMANS. PATTERNS, TIMEFRAMES AND ROMANIAN-GERMAN INTER-INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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**Abstract:** *The migration of Romanian Germans was one of the most significant ethnic migrations from Romania. It was a population movement that was conducted in three distinctive waves: during and in the aftermath of the Second World War, during communism, and in the first two years after 1990. This paper analyzes these migration waves by looking at the political, social and economic causes of this mass migration of ethnic Germans, after hundreds of years of residence on the territory of today's Romania. It discusses the institutional arrangement that made these migratory waves possible, namely the negotiations conducted and the agreements between the Romania and the West German states (also the former East Germany for a certain period of time) which provided the institutional basis for this migration. Thus, analyzing the evolution of this migration over a longer-term period of time, and detailing institutional arrangements during communism, we aim at providing a nuanced view on how both states of origin and destination influence such politically motivated migratory waves.*

**Key words:** *ethnic German migration, communism, interstate agreements, Securitate, Romania*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The migration of Romanian Germans was one of the most significant ethnic migrations from Romania. It was a population movement that was conducted in three distinctive waves: it started first during and in the aftermath of the Second World War. During communism, between 1950 and 1977, migration was reduced. It resumed from 1977 until 1989 with a second strong wave. After 1990 there followed the last

significant wave that led to the almost extinction of German communities in Romania. This paper<sup>1</sup> analyzes these migratory waves by looking at the political, social and economic causes of this mass migration of ethnic Germans. Furthermore, it shows the dominant role that inter-governmental negotiations had for the evolution of this migration. Similar to other processes of ethnic migration (Münz and Ohliger, 1999), the migration of Romanian Germans was supported by countries of destination (mostly West Germany, but also East Germany during communism), and for a long period of time, it was conducted due to the common agreements between Romania and the two destination states. The literature on East-West migration in Europe greatly developed in the past twenty years,<sup>2</sup> however much less is known on migration during communism.<sup>3</sup> This paper thus contributed to this literature with a case of mass migration. It contributes also to current debates in migration studies in yet another respect. Much of the current studies analyse migration selectivity by focussing on migration policies of destination states<sup>4</sup> and on how social capital (especially migrant networks) is used in migration.<sup>5</sup> This paper sheds a different light: it analyzes migration selectivity and its development looking at policies of emigration of origin states and how these policies were negotiated with states of destination.

In order to achieve these goals, we have used a combined methodology. In the first part of the paper, dealing with migration during and after the Second World War, we have relied on the review of the existing literature. For the analysis of migration during communism, we rely on both, archival research for the early communist period, as well as archival research and qualitative interviews for migration during late communism. In this respect one of the authors has conducted research in Nuremberg, Germany, and Timișoara, Romania, between 2004 and 2007, in order to capture the intricacies of emigration especially during the last years of communism and to unfold migration strategies and the risks associated with it. The analysis of post-communist migration was also carried out by relying on literature review and qualitative fieldwork. In this way, we combined methods from both history and sociology. This allowed us on the one hand to analyze how intergovernmental negotiations proceeded, as well as to unfold motivations for migration, migratory patterns and the risks of emigration from a totalitarian state. In the following we first analyze migration during and immediately after the Second World War. We continue with an analysis of migration during communism: we shortly assess the situation of ethnic Germans after the Second World War and discuss some general causes that led to their migration. We then analyze migration during the early period of communism between 1945 and 1965, and delve into how inter-state relations between West Germany and Romania were used to help Germans emigrate. We thus discuss the institutional arrangement that made these migratory waves possible, namely the steady negotiations conducted and the agreements between Romania, East and West Germany which provided the institutional basis for this migration. West Germany tried to convince communist Romania to allow ethnic Germans to migrate; communist Romania, in turn, tried to achieve its foreign policy and

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<sup>2</sup> For the Romanian case, see Anghel et al. (2016), for East-West migration, see also Favell (2008), Black et al. (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Bade (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Freeman (1995).

<sup>5</sup> Faist (2000).

commercial interests vis-à-vis West Germany by using the Germans' migration as a central element. In the analysis, we also pointed to the role of Securitate, the communist secret service, that greatly influenced migration to Germany in late communist period. Thus, analyzing the evolution of this migration over a longer-term period of time, and detailing institutional arrangements during communism, we aim at providing a nuanced view on how both states of origin and destination influence such politically-motivated migratory waves. The paper finally described the sudden migration occurring in the first years of post-communist period.

## **2. ROMANIAN GERMANS' MIGRATION DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

According to the 1930 census, the German population residing in the territory of Romania (including in territories that were afterwards incorporated into the USSR - Bessarabia, northern Bukovina) was of about 745,000 people (Trașcă and Anghel, 2018). At the time, Germans represented the third largest ethnic community, after the Hungarian and Jewish communities. The Second World War and its immediate impacts hit strongly the German community in Romania. Out of the 745,000 people living there in 1930, less than 400,000 have remained in 1944, on a smaller territory (Castellan, 1971). During the war this decrease was due to the relocations of ethnic Germans from Dobrogea (east Romania), Bessarabia and Bucovina<sup>6</sup> in 1940 on the actual territory of Poland, and to war losses and imprisonments.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Romanian Germans fought in the German army and many went to Germany towards the end of the war. Finally, a sizeable portion of German communities<sup>8</sup> left Romania when the German Army withdrew in the autumn of 1944 due to the advancement of the Red Army. After the war some of them have returned - in the summer of 1945 between 15,000 and 20,000 Romanian Germans residing in Austria, Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet and American occupied territories of Germany were sent back to Romania by the Soviet authorities (Schieder, 1957). Immediately after the war, another major setback for the German community was the deportation of the youth to the USSR, when all men between the ages of 17 and 45 and all women aged 18 to 30, about 75,000 people, were forcefully taken and deported overnight (Baier, 1918). 10,000 of them never returned, and many had health problems (idem).

The situation of the Germans in Romania, however, was not unique. Germans from all over Eastern Europe were experiencing similar hardships. 12 million people were expelled, or had to take refuge;<sup>9</sup> among them several hundred thousand have died (Tränhardt, 1996; Baier, 2018). After 1945, six million people were displaced from Poland, 400,000 from Hungary, 300,000 from the former Czechoslovakia and 200,000 from the former Yugoslavia. Due to this gloomy context, the post-war West German state asserted its responsibility for the fate of these people, whose only fault was that they were Germans (Weber et al., 2003). Consequently, the Constitution of the country, adopted in 1949, as well as a series of subsequent laws, gave the right to all Germans

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<sup>6</sup> Much of these two regions were later incorporated into the USSR

<sup>7</sup> Many were prisoners of war, and many were killed in action

<sup>8</sup> Such as the Saxon communities in Northern Transylvania, from the Bistrita region.

<sup>9</sup> Thus, Barbara Dietz estimates that about 12 million East Germans migrated to Federal Germany immediately after the end of the war, and another 2.6 million migrated between 1950 and 1961, until the construction of the Berlin Wall (Dietz, 1999).

from Eastern Europe and from the old German territories to repatriate to Germany. A new refugee law was adopted in 1953, by which these rights were further expended.<sup>10</sup> The German system of protection included three major categories of ethnic German beneficiaries: deported persons (called *Heimatvertriebene*), refugees from other Eastern and Central European states (*Aussiedler*) and refugees from East Germany (*Übersiedler*). The migration of Germans has often been regarded as an ethnic migration, in which people regarded the destination state as a putative *Motherland*. For Rogers Brubaker (1998), this type of migration is occurs as countries of destination attract people based on ethnic affinity; this social process leads to ethnic unmixing in both countries of origin and destination. Such migration policies were however, more complex. In this case, this migratory process was shaped by three main elements: it was essentially legitimized by post-war responsibility of Germany towards German population of Eastern Europe; during the whole period of communism, it was also ideologically driven – as it showed the superiority of Western Europe over the Eastern one in terms of living standards and peoples' rights to migrate; and finally it had also an ethnic motivation, which Brubaker initially supported. Ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe would qualify as *Aussiedler* as they were ethnic Germans, and had suffered as ethnic Germans. In the case of Romania's Germans, the consequences of post-war period were dire during the early phase of communism: not only that many lost their properties, they were also deported to the former USSR *en masse* because of their ethnicity and their rights as belonging to a minority were lifted for a number of years after the end of the war (Baier, 2018). All these not just legitimized their *Aussiedler* status in Western Germany, it also helped creating a growing tendency to out-migration that will last during the whole communist period.

### 3. MIGRATION DURING COMMUNISM

During communism, international migration was strictly controlled by the Romanian state, as the control of both internal and international mobilities were seen as a way of controlling the population (Ronnas, 1982; Chirot, 1978). International migration was under a very controlled regime and it was a politically salient issue. During communism, Romania was “a prison on a national scale” (Diminescu, 2003). People's passports were kept in the files of the Miliția,<sup>11</sup> visits abroad were controlled, and contacts with foreign citizens were seen by the communist state as politically dangerous for the regime (Gabanyi, 2000). Throughout this period of 45 years of communism, the migration of Germans was a highly visible and discussed form of international migration. Ethnic migration (of Jews, Hungarians and Germans) was the single important type of migration allowed by the regime. Ethnic Germans' migration was oriented mainly towards the Federal Republic of Germany, a country perceived at that time by the Romanian population less as an “enemy” but more as a prosperous country, and the Wonderland of Europe (Brubaker, 1998). Besides, migration entailed a movement in the other direction of Western consumption goods that were highly appreciated in a country marked by acute shortage of products. In addition, this mobility led to the departure of other Romanian citizens, friends, family members and relatives of German migrants.

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<sup>10</sup> The Law's name was Federal Refugee Law, Bundesvertriebenengesetz, BVFG. Published in Bundesgesetzblatt, Bonn, Teil 1, Nr. 22, vom 22 May 1953.

<sup>11</sup> Miliția was the name of the communist police.

After the first big wave of refuge and population relocation that ended with the war, and with the return of those deported in the USSR, the situation of German communities was somewhat stabilized. In 1956, there were registered 385,000 Germans, representing about 65% of the population living in the same territory before the war.<sup>12</sup> Despite the diminished number, there were still compact communities in southern Transylvania and Banat - 188,700 in Banat and 165,000 in southern Transylvania. Further on, migration during communism was divided into two main periods: the early communism period (from 1945 to the end of the 1960s) and the period between 1965-1989, when, after intense negotiations with the West German government, the Romanian government signed and implemented an agreement that allowed legal migration of ethnic Germans based on annual quotas. The legitimacy of this agreement was that many ethnic Germans were able to migrate for family reunification to relatives who already lived in Germany. Due to the large number of ethnic Germans who arrived in Federal Germany before and immediately after 1945, the number of potential migrants was very high. During early communism time, when emigration was low, the process was facilitated by the International Red Cross (Diminescu, 2003). In fact, after August 23, 1944, when Romania changed the side against Nazi Germany, the status of Germans changed and as a result, being German was considered a “collective guilt”: the community was subjected to unprecedented repressive measures meant to destroy its traditional solidarity and its historically-recognized position of social prestige. The successive measures taken until 1949 included the confiscation of houses and land based on the Agrarian Reform Law, from March 23, 1945; confinement in labor camps; deportation to reconstruction work in the USSR; suppression of voting rights for the November 1946 elections; laws meant to reform education and religion that discriminated them; deportation to southern Romania plain (Bărăgan) as well as political processes against some of its members in the 1950s (see Baier, 2018; Wien, 2018). These repressive measures were gradually lessened and Germans were finally recognized as having an important role in the Romanian socialist society. The right to education in mother tongue and the public use of German were restored, however a feeling of insecurity and injustice remained vivid.

The loss of properties, especially land and sometimes houses, massively affected German communities: in the agrarian reform of 1945 for instance, 97% of Germans from rural areas had the land confiscated by the state (Sterbling, 1997), a process that changed the position of Germans in Romania. Simultaneously, and partially because of properties losses, Germans have migrated to cities and became a class of socialist workers often involved in industry - technicians, engineers and laborers. This structural change within the German community, from a rich rural population to a population of industrial workers and engineers, coupled with the loss of properties, became important factors contributing to their later decision to emigrate. Later on, the economic difficulties in Romania, goods shortages especially after the mid-1970s, the economic growth of West Germany and a shared feeling that Germans will no longer be able to preserve their ethnic communities and way of life, all these factors led to an exponential growth of out-emigration to the FRG in the 1970s (Gheorghiu, 2015: 9). In the following we detail in two separate sections how this migration proceeded during

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<sup>12</sup> The difference may also come from the fact that, due to the end of the persecution period, more ethnic Germans freely declared their ethnicity. See Poledna (1998).

the early and late communism and how this was part of Romania's foreign policy and was institutionally agreed by Romania and West Germany.

#### **4. MIGRATION DURING EARLY COMMUNIST PERIOD AND ROMANIAN-WEST GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS**

As a result of Second World War and the arrival of many Romanian Germans in Germany, many families were separated. Between 1946-1949 to these there added many who, after being deported from Romania to the USSR for "reconstruction work", were released by the Soviet authorities to Germany and not to Romania (Weber et al., 2003). Applications for family reunification and requests for leaving Romania were filed by Germans since 1946; their transportation was under the Red Cross supervision. From 1949-1950 there was a systematic family reunification action put in place, however the paperwork was cumbersome and approvals were granted with great delays. In order to solve the cases of family reunification, Romanian authorities collaborated both with East German diplomats accredited in Bucharest and with the staff of the French Consulate in Bucharest (who at that time represented West Germany). In 1950 there were about eight transports to Germany. Between May and December 1951 there followed about 1,000 persons from Romania to reunite with their families. Operations were carried out under direct Soviet control, and most of those who left went to West Germany. In 1952, the transport of ethnic Germans was put to a stop, and in the next four years only 269 ethnic Germans from Romania settled in the FRG.<sup>13</sup> Probably their number was higher, as the Romanian authorities approved as well other departures of individual cases (Schieder, 1957: 114-115E). The reluctance of the Romanian authorities to allow Germans to leave the country was based on the possibility that, if too many Germans would leave, its external image would be harmed. Besides, Germans had an important economic role in the country, therefore the government did not want to lose them. Although the regime agreed to discuss the problem of family reunification, initially with the GDR (East Germany) and from 1954 with the FRG (West Germany), the regime tried to convince ethnic Germans to withdraw their applications by using local party officials, who had to conduct "a hard work of clarification" (Schieder, 1957: 150-151E). In spite of it, the number of applications for family reunification to the FRG grew since 1958. Only two years later, 2,384 applications were registered, while from January to May 1961 there were another 1,987 applications. After 1960, there was an increased tendency to use wider family ties to request family reunion and not only first-degree reunions (Schieder, 1957: 155-157E).

With the opening of the GDR<sup>14</sup> embassy in Bucharest, East German diplomats intervened in supporting families separated by the war, aiming to prevent the idea that only the FRG was interested in ethnic Germans' family reunifications. As a result, they have sent to Romanian authorities a list of 3,874 people requesting a visa to leave the country. In 1950, around 1,597 cases were favorably solved, especially for spouses and children, allowing them to settle in to relatives in the GDR. The settlement of the family reunion cases advanced by the East German authorities had long delays, even though the number of cases did not exceed several hundred. Thus, in 1954 the East German Embassy requested to open a negotiation process regarding the reunion of children and spouses with their families. In July 1954 the Romanian Embassy in Berlin wrote a note

<sup>13</sup> FRG, the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany are used interchangeably.

<sup>14</sup> GDR, East Germany or German Democratic Republic are interchangeably used.

in this regard, signaling the deep dissatisfaction of East German authorities, given that Romania was the only socialist country that did not seem willing to regulate the problem of family reunifications.<sup>15</sup> In August 1957, the GDR embassy in Bucharest criticized the Romanian authorities for solving only 720 family reunification cases since 1950, for which East German diplomats had intervened, which represented an average of 10 cases per month. Meanwhile the French consular authorities in Romania were granting on average two visas/day for ethnic Germans leaving to families for the FRG. The argument put forward by the Romanian authorities was that the number of applications submitted for the permanent leave to the FRG was incomparably higher (about 15,000 applications), hence the number of those able to leave for FRG by various routes was higher than those going to GDR.<sup>16</sup> It is also worth mentioning that some of the ethnic Germans who arrived in the GDR managed to settle ultimately in the FRG. Moreover, there have been cases of children whose parents were in the FRG for which East German diplomats have tried to obtain a favorable solution.<sup>17</sup>

Since 1954, Western German authorities discussed on several occasions the issue of family reunification, suggesting that the issue should be addressed by the Romanian and West German Red Cross agencies; Romanian authorities instead replied that this should be addressed by the two state representatives. Their interest was in reality that, by negotiating it to the state level, to establish political ties and in the future to further restore diplomatic relations. In 1956, negotiations between the two Red Cross agencies were held.<sup>18</sup> Further on, based on the approval of the Political Bureau of the Romanian Communist Party, in July 11th, 1956, the head of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Paris, Mircea Bălănescu, initiated contacts to his West German counterpart to begin negotiations on family reunifications. The West German government did not answer his call until September 1956. In the meantime the 1956 Hungarian revolution began and due to the new political context, the meeting was postponed between the representatives of the two governments.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the two Red Cross agencies held meetings in Geneva and Bonn in August 18th, 1956 resulting in an agreement between these agencies, which favored three categories of applicants: children under 18, spouses, the elderly and the sick.<sup>20</sup> A total of 13,000 ethnic Germans willing to settle in with their relatives in FRG were enrolled on the lists submitted by the West German authorities to their Romanian counterparts.<sup>21</sup> The Romanian side agreed with conditions: that family reunifications would not be carried out only in the FRG, but also in Romania, and that West German authorities will not advocate for emigration to West

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<sup>15</sup> Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter referred to as AMAE), fond Problema 31/1954 RDG, dosar nr. 180, f. 1-4. Notă privind propuneri în vederea reunirii familiilor unor foști cetățeni români aflați în Germania nr. 3135/02.07.1954.

<sup>16</sup> AMAE, fond Problema 20/1957 RDG, dosar nr. 261, f. 85. Notă de conversație nr. 45640/01.08.1957. (RFG), f. 45-46. Notă privind problema repatrierilor și a reunirii familiilor din RPR și RF Germană.

<sup>17</sup> AMAE, fond Problema 20/1955 RDG, dosar nr. 189, f. 73. Aide Memoire depus la MAE de Ambasada RDG la București în 8 februarie 1955.

<sup>18</sup> In August, in Geneva and Bonn, and in October in Bucharest.

<sup>19</sup> AMAE, AMAE, fond Problema 20/1956 RDG, dosar nr. 219, f. 53. Notă de audiență nr. 34403/19.10.1956.

<sup>20</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Tatonările Crucii Roșii vest-germane privind reunirea familiilor, f. 9. Copy of the minutes of the ICRC headquarters on 18 August 1956.

<sup>21</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 14. Report on the issue of family repatriations and reunification

Germany but will have a neutral tone on the matter.<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, during the process, several thousand ethnic Germans have returned to Romania in order to reunite with their families.<sup>23</sup> The lists issued by West Germans to the Romanian authorities contained about 13,000 cases of family reunification, however between 1952 and 1956 the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Red Cross had registered only about 2,920 requests. One of the reasons for this wide difference is that there were many persons whose cases were registered by their relatives in Germany, but who did not want to leave Romania.<sup>24</sup> Also, Romanian authorities were always careful not to create the perception that there would be an exodus of the Romanian Germans to the FRG.<sup>25</sup>

Later on Romanian authorities cut off the contact between the two Red Cross agencies indefinitely arguing that the West German press has published details about the discussions held in 1956. Three years later, in 1959, Dr. Heinrich Weitz, the head of the West German Red Cross, would address a letter to his Romanian counterparts. He argued that he acted as an emissary of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and of the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked to meet the Romanian foreign minister. The letter remained unanswered.<sup>26</sup> After the Revolution in Hungary in 1956, in the new tense political context, the number of requests for family reunification dropped dramatically, to just four applications in November-December 1956. As a result, the Bonn authorities stated that they will not conclude a new trade agreement with the Communist Romania if the reunification process would not proceed at a faster pace. To prevent such an outcome, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested starting the discussions on family reunification in February 1957, in Paris, in accordance with the format agreed in October 1956. In the first four months of 1957, over 100 requests for family reunification were approved, and the number of approvals to leave Romania doubled<sup>27</sup>. There was also a difference in attitudes within the Romanian government. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has permanently argued for a speedy settlement of family reunification cases, underlining the fact that this would improve bilateral relations, and that this would be a first step towards restoring diplomatic relations. The settlement of this issue was instrumental for the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in attaining its foreign policy objectives. As a result, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was set not only to solve the cases of spouses, minor children, of the elderly or the sick; they frequently intervened to the Romanian Ministry of Interior for cases that were of interest to political personalities in FRG or to persons having

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<sup>22</sup> Buletinul Oficial, nr. 18 din 30.06.1955 (Official Bulletin of the Peoples Republic of Romania nr.18/30.06.1955). Decretul nr. 253/1955 din 26.06.1955 al Prezidiului Marii Adunări Naționale a RPR pentru înlesnirea repatrierii unor cetățeni sau foști cetățeni români și amnistierea celor repatriați. Decree number 253/1955 from 26.05.1955 of the grand National Assembly of Romania.

<sup>23</sup> By the term "family" the Romanian authorities designated first degree relatives and not persons with a more distant degree of kinship. However, in the case of the elderly and minors who have lost both parents, their requests to settle with more distant relatives in the FRG were favorably solved.

<sup>24</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 67. Notă privind plecări în RFG.

<sup>25</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR

<sup>26</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 2-3. Extras din Raportul Ambasadei RPR la Berlin nr. 3703/1955. (Excerpt from the report of the Romanian Embassy in Berlin nr. 3703/1955)

<sup>27</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 84-85. Notă privind problema reunirii familiilor.



important roles in the FRG's economic, cultural or mass-media environment.<sup>28</sup> During discussions with West German authorities, representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that these cases were the exclusive competence of the Romanian authorities, which for humanitarian and legitimacy reasons, gave Germans permission to leave the country. However, they also stressed that the existence of diplomatic relations between the two states would bring a quicker resolution of these cases.<sup>29</sup>

In 1957 a total of 2,662 applications for family reunification were submitted, representing the equivalent all the cases of the previous four years taken together, but the rate was still slow. Therefore, between October and December 1957, West German authorities increased the pressure on Romanian government, culminating with the decision to abort the renewal of the commercial agreement with Romania in the absence of substantial progress.<sup>30</sup> Faced with Bonn's stricter attitude, Romanian authorities solved 377 applications in December 1957, during that year granting permission to leave for 923 cases. Representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that many people from the lists submitted by the German authorities had not submitted a request for family reunification in Romania. Romanian authorities exemplified this with a list submitted by the West German government in October 1957, where, out of 600 persons, only 180 persons had submitted family reunification applications in Romania too. Out of those 180 applications, 150 cases received a favorable answer.<sup>31</sup> West German authorities were continuously dissatisfied with the slow pace of cases processed by the Romanian side; in the first part of 1958 only 600 cases were settled in the first five months of the year, this situation delaying the bilateral economic negotiations until May 1958. In September 1958 the number of solved cases reached 1,400, but the pressure of the Bonn government continued, stating that in the absence of clear indications that the family reunion process will be carried out at an accelerated rate, it will refuse to sign the commercial agreement between the two countries.<sup>32</sup> Also, West Germany suggested the creation of a unitary mechanism for submitting requests for family reunification: setting up clear criteria for solving pending cases, a monthly quota of approved applications, and a deadline (possibly January 1, 1960) until which the issue of family reunification would be finalized. They also proposed that Red Cross agencies of the two countries would conclude the issue of family reunifications. These suggestions were vehemently rejected by the representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who reaffirmed that this topic was a strictly internal issue of the Romanian state in relation to its citizens. However, they restated that the re-establishment of diplomatic relations would

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<sup>28</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 79. Notă privind reunirea familiilor.

<sup>29</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 127. Tabel cronologic privind documentele și contactele oficiale și semioficiale româno-vest-germane în problema reunirii familiilor.

<sup>30</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 128

<sup>31</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 131. Scrisoarea MAE nr. 3105/25.02.1958 către Crucea Roșie din RPR.

<sup>32</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 138. Notă referitoare la începerea tratatelor comerciale cu delegația RFG.

significantly contribute to speeding up the family reunification process.<sup>33</sup> The flexible stance of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on family reunifications was constantly opposed by the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs, which mentioned that there were increased risks of propaganda actions abroad against Romania on the issue of family reunification. In May 1958 there were 8,426 requests for family reunification and, due to the constant increase in the request's numbers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs elaborated a set of proposals presented to the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party,<sup>34</sup> pleading for a settlement of cases of first degree relatives. The party initiated a large propaganda campaign in areas inhabited by ethnic Germans, especially among those who did not have first-degree relatives in the FRG, in order to convince them to not leave in large numbers. They highlighting that the rights of the German minority were well respected and their ethnic identity well – preserved (Ciobanu and Radu, 2007).

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 1958, the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party decided to approve the proposal to settle the family reunion requests for first-degree relatives (spouses, children, and parents unable to care for themselves) and to use this opportunity to restore diplomatic relations with the FRG. At the same time, stronger actions were taken against those with no first-degree relatives in the FRG who filled requests for family reunification. If they were party members, special party meetings were organized in order to criticize and exclude them from the party (Ciobanu and Radu, 2007). In October 1958, as a result of an espionage act, Romanian authorities blocked the family reunification process. West German authorities tried to discuss with representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, but they were unsuccessful. Therefore, they resorted to mass media campaigns and official statements, announcing that, in the event of maintaining the deadlock, the trade agreement with Romania would not be renewed. This situation further irritated the political regime in Bucharest. Between January and February 1959, more than 500 news articles were published on this topic in West-German media, with titles like “human trafficking”, “Germans against goods”, “trade policy with hostages”, etc.<sup>35</sup> As the Romanian government did not change its position, the media campaign slowed. In 1959, only 480 ethnic Germans from Romania received approval for permanent departure to the FRG.<sup>36</sup> In addition to the official channels for solving family reunion requests, there were unofficial ones too. Ewald Garlepp, a lawyer from Stuttgart, was one of the lawyers that intensively fought in the defense of ethnic Germans who were arrested or imprisoned in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania for political reasons. Garlepp acted through local lawyers who made the necessary legal steps; in some cases, in exchange for money, German citizens or ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe were allowed to leave to FRG (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 24). He conducted these activities in a context where, after the end of the Second World War,

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<sup>33</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 152. Notă de convorbire din 22 mai 1958 între reprezentanți MAE și șeful delegației vest-germane.

<sup>34</sup> This will be later renamed in Romanian Communist Party.

<sup>35</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 171. Notă privind reflectarea în presa vest-germană a problemei reunirii familiilor și a relațiilor comerciale între RPR și RFG, datată 21 februarie 1959.

<sup>36</sup> AMAE fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 180. Tabel aprobări de plecare definitivă din RPR în RFG în anul 1958, f. 180.

Germans from Central and Eastern Europe created organizations to facilitating migration to West Germany, obtaining travel permits, etc. They were dissolved in 1946 by the Allied authorities, but they were restored in 1947 under the aegis of the Church. From 1949 to 1957, Ewald Garlepp collaborated with the Evangelical Church providing legal assistance in over 5,000 cases. In Romania, Garlepp collaborated with the lawyer Crăciun Șerbănescu (an agent of the Romanian Securitate<sup>37</sup>). Garlepp's collaboration with Șerbănescu began in the early 1950s with cases related to German prisoners of war and to German citizens or ethnic Germans investigated for political reasons. Their collaboration further expanded to cases of family reunion. After the settlement of some of these cases presented by Garlepp to his Romanian counterpart, he deposited in the State Bank of Romania various amounts of money representing the value of the Romanian lawyer's fee. Between 1957 and 1968, Ewald Garlepp worked in the Central Office for the Rights Protection, which operated between 1952 and 1970 (Gheorghiu, 2015: 359).

In 1960, FRG estimated that there were about 23,000 requests for family reunification among ethnic Germans, out of which 12,300 were considered urgent, being first-degree relatives (children, spouses, parents, siblings). By the end of 1959, the Romanian authorities had only resolved 1,402 cases from the urgent category.<sup>38</sup> In May 1960, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that the pace of approvals should be around 150-200 cases per month, in order to avoid further interference of the West-German part on economic negotiations or the involvement of the Red Cross Agency.<sup>39</sup> As a result, in 1960, 2,388 applications for family reunification were approved, but in 1961 only 1,603.<sup>40</sup> The Romanian authorities proposed to settle several hundred cases each year. In this rhythm the process would have lasted at least another decade, to solve the pending cases. As a result, the Bonn government began to search for ways to settle at least several thousand cases a month, with the aim of establishing, in agreement with the Romanian side, a constant flow of approvals, in exchange for economic support, through the delivery of machines and industrial technologies and by granting preferential loans. The Western German government was aware that economic pressures or mass media campaigns would not achieve the desired result, so it resorted to the payment of sums of money, according to the model used in relation with the GDR, regarding the persons investigated and convicted for political reasons. The Department of State Security (the Romanian Securitate) seized the possibility of obtaining significant amounts in foreign currency in exchange for solving cases that were anyway analyzed and solved through normal administrative procedures and they have obtained the agreement of the Romanian Ministry of Interior for organizing this operation. In May 1962, Garlepp visited Romania at the invitation of the Romanian State Bank and during the meeting with the lawyer Roman Porăstău (he also being agent of the Securitate) he promised to help with cases of inheritance that interested the

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<sup>37</sup> The Romanian Securitate was the Romanian communist secret police.

<sup>38</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 198. Agerpres, Buletin informativ, datat 5 februarie 1960.

<sup>39</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 179. Notă privind solicitarea președintelui Crucii Roșii vest-germane de a efectua o vizită în RPR, datată 23 mai 1960.

<sup>40</sup> AMAE, fond Dosare Speciale, Problema 220 Germania 10, Dosar Problema repatrierii și reunirii familiilor de origine germană din RPR (RFG), f. 184. Tabel aprobări de plecări definitive din RPR în RFG pe anii 1960 și 1961.

Romanian state in the FRG, in exchange for settlement of some family reunification cases for which he agreed also to pay between 20,000 and 50,000 West German marks (Dobre et al., 2011: XXXI). In July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1962, the Interior Minister Alexandru Drăghici approved a report prepared by the Directorate I of the Department of State Security (Securitate) on “initiating a plan of allowing the migration of the persons of German nationality that have relatives in the FRG, which will allow our state to bring in significant amounts of foreign currency, without leaving any direct trace of our agency in these actions” (Dobre et al., 2011: 41-42). In a report to the West German Foreign Ministry, Garlepp did indicate that the Bucharest regime is favorably resolving requests for family reunification on humanitarian grounds, and estimated that only 10% of the cases would require monetary payment in order to obtain the goodwill of authorities (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 32-33).

In August 1962, Garlepp made the first payments of 95,000 marks (in the account of the lawyer Porăstău, opened at the State Bank of Romania, subsequently the funds were transferred to the accounts of some Romanian state-owned enterprises) for three families which were allowed to leave in FRG (Dobre et al., 2011: 46-47). Shortly after that, the Directorate of the Department of State Security proposed to the heads of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to use the connection with Garlepp for solving all the cases of ethnic Germans who want to settle in the FRG and thus to reduce the number of cases solved by normal administrative procedures. As a result, the permission to leave the country for family reunification was no longer granted by the Commission of Passport, Visa and Repatriation (which was part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) but based on reports prepared by the Department of State Security Directorate I, with the approval of the management of Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Commission was only informed, having to issue the approval of permanent departure visa and to send the decision to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which was further implemented by the Consular Directorate (Dobre et al., 2011: 43). In November 1962, Garlepp handed over to his Romanian colleague a list of 106 persons, agreeing that in exchange for their departure to FRG he will pay the sum of \$ 150,000. The intention of the West German side was to present long lists in a short time span, but the Department of State Security delayed this process. Garlepp specified that the funds, disguised as a fee for the services of Porăstău, came from several sources: Catholic and Evangelical Churches Associations, the Red Cross, the federal government and from relatives of ethnic Germans from Romania who were settled already in FRG. Garlepp stressed that in the case of people without financial means, the process of solving family reunification should be free, but for the Germans with compulsory domicile or in detention he was willing to pay additional sums. He also requested the agreement of the Romanian party for the payment by the FRG of some allowances for about 300 persons who were considered to be war victims. In this regard he advanced a proposal regarding opening a commercial agency of the FRG in Bucharest, following the model of Romania which was opened one in Frankfurt am Main. The agent of the Department of State Security avoided giving an answer (Dobre et al., 2011: 54-55).

During 1963 and 1966, Garlepp continued to make payments in exchange for leave permissions. Surprisingly, even people with previous denied requests, or those convicted for political reasons who were now pardoned were allowed to leave. At the same time, addressing the Romanian authorities, Garlepp drew attention to the fact that granting the permission to leave only in exchange for payments, and the blocking of the usual administrative procedures will generate a deep level of dissatisfaction. His

warnings were ignored and, after the launch of a mass-media campaign in the FRG, ethnic Germans convicted for political reasons were no longer allowed to leave Romania (Dobre et al., 2011: 63-64). Garlepp's activity within the Bureau ceases in 1968, when the Secretary of State, Gerd Lemmer from the Federal Ministry for Displaced Persons appointed the lawyer Heinz-Günther Hüscher as negotiator for the issue of family reunification from Romania. This choice was due to the fact that he was a member of the CDU and of his previous experience in working with lawyers from Romania when he had regulated commercial disputes regarding the quality of goods imported from there. His professional reputation and discretion, as well as his close relations with the Catholic Church still further recommended his services. Also, since 1966 the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was planning to distance itself from the "ransom" of ethnic Germans from Romania, intermediated by Garlepp, probably due to the high amounts of money that were paid and the suspicions that his activities were not conducted in a "completely disinterested manner" (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 39).

## 5. MIGRATION DURING THE LATE COMMUNIST PERIOD

After 1965, the new Romanian communist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, tried to improve his relations with the West. In this new context, in January 1967 Socialist Romania was the first country in the communist bloc to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG (Denize, 2016: 16-38). Starting with 1969, Romania allowed a larger number of ethnic Germans to leave the country, consisting of approximately 5,000 people annually. In 1978, the Romanian and German governments signed an agreement that allowed about 11,000 Germans to leave Romania yearly.<sup>41</sup> In fact, their number varied between 12,000 and 15,000 people. For every ethnic German that emigrated, the German state was obliged to pay a certain amount of money. In 1978 the amount was about 5,000 German marks. Since 1983 the amount has been 7,800 German marks, reaching 11,000 German marks in 1988. The Romanian communist state argued that the emigrants benefited from education in Romania, which had costed the Romanian state substantial amounts of money. In fact, this was a bargain in which the Romanian state, greedy for foreign currency, obtained money by selling its own citizens.

Since 1967 the negotiations have taken place between Heinz-Günther Hüscher, the negotiator of the FRG, and Romanian officers of the Romanian Securitate. In more than 20 years of activity, Hüscher had 313 official meetings with the representatives of the Department of State Security. The number of meetings was actually almost 1,000 if the informal talks were taken into account (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 62). The talks ended with agreements, most of them written. The verbal agreements were concluded in particular between February 1968 and March 1969. The last agreement was signed in Bucharest, December 4th, 1989, its validity being expected to last until 1993. Based on these agreements, which had a standard format, the Romanian side had committed to allow a certain number of persons to leave in an agreed time period, and the West German side was responsible to provide the adequate amounts of money. As a result of these negotiations, between 210,000 and 236,000 ethnic Germans left the country (Gheorghiu, 2015: 489). The first written agreement was signed on March 7, 1969 in Stockholm and facilitated the departure of 3,000 ethnic German in a year, with the

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<sup>41</sup>See Weber et al. (2003: 142-143); Bulletin des Presse-und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung. Bonn. nr. 3, 10 Januar 1978; nr. 100, 4 Dezember 1995; nr. 34, 2 Mai 1996.

possibility that their number would increase the 4,000. The expectation was that 1,700 marks would be paid for the persons in group A (no education degrees), 5,000 marks for students who had not completed their studies (category B) and 10,000 marks for the persons with higher education (category C) (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 63). The second agreement was concluded in March 1970 in Stockholm, valid for three years, based on which about 4,000 Germans left the country. The following year the figure rose to 6,000 people, in 1972 the same quota was kept, and in 1973 it dropped to 4,000 people. Gradually, the amounts paid by the West German authorities increased, new categories of persons were introduced, as well as financial incentives between 600,000 and 800,000 West German marks if the Romanian side would strictly respect the agreement (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 64). In April 1973 a third agreement was signed in Köln. In this document the term “family reunification” was no longer used; it was replaced by the term “legal emigration” of ethnic Germans from Romania. It was specified that those who were leaving Romania illegally will be “subsequently legalized” which entailed that West Germans will pay the corresponding amounts. The agreement was valid until June 1978 and it facilitated the emigration of 40,000 ethnic Germans from Romania. It was signed by Hüsich and the head of the Foreign Intelligence and Security Directorate, Nicolae Doicaru. In addition, the FRG’s government granted the Romanian authorities a loan of 200 million West German marks, with preferential interest rate (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 66). In January 1978, in preparation for the Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s visit to Bucharest, negotiations were held between representatives of the West German Foreign Ministry and the Romanian Department of State Security regarding the legal emigration of ethnic Germans, establishing the payment of a global amount of 4,000 West German marks per person. The two parties also agreed on granting a loan worth of 800 million West German marks by the German government to the Romanian government (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 67). Discussions led to a setback in the process of emigration of ethnic Germans, as the terms of the agreement did not mention the number of persons that would migrate, or a time frame. As a result, in October 1978, in Vienna, Hüsich resumed talks with the representatives of the Securitate and reached an agreement valid until 1983, which stipulated that annually 11,000 ethnic Germans could leave the country in exchange for the payment of a global sum of 4,000 West German marks per person (idem: 69). The fifth agreement was signed in May 1983 in Bucharest, valid for another five years. The annual share of ethnic Germans allowed remained the same, but the overall amount paid by the West German authorities increased substantially, reaching 7,800 West German marks per person (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 70). The meeting from October 3rd, 1988 held between Hüsich, as representative of Chancellor Kohl, and Ceaușescu, fails, and the West German proposals were unequivocally rejected (idem: 76). The last agreement was concluded in November 1988, valid until 1993. The agreement provided for an annual quota of 14,000 people and a global amount/person of 8,950 West German marks. On December 4th 1989, Hüsich was informed that ethnic Germans would be allowed to leave the country without paying any money in return (idem: 69).

Under these inter-institutional agreements, theoretically, anyone wishing to emigrate had to file a claim, then the process would go on. In reality, the process was tedious. Some of the necessary documents were difficult to be procured by Germans from rural areas. In most cases, potential migrants lost their jobs and were forced to sell their homes often at ridiculous prices (Weber et al., 2003: 447-448). Applications were

followed by a series of interviews with the Miliția and /or the Securitate. In a dictatorial regime such as in communist Romania, these interviews were a major psychological stress. Procedures took a long time. In many cases, those submitting applications had to wait months and even years until they received approval for their applications (idem: 445). Also, approvals were often not granted for the whole family and in many cases emigrants had to wait a long time to see or reunite with their families. Due to the large number of Germans wishing to emigrate, applications exceeded the number allocated in the annual quotas each year (Verdery, 1985: 82). This kind of pressure led to the creation of an informal market fueled by the exploitation of German emigrants. While the Romanian state was receiving an official emigration tax from the German state, the informal migration industry was receiving significant informal taxes. In order to have a chance to emigrate, Germans had to have relatives in Germany or sufficient financial resources. This was necessary not just for the submission of immigration applications; resources were needed for informal payments and they were often provided by their relatives in West Germany. Research conducted in different areas of Romania mentioned that potential migrants were paying employees of the Ministry of Interior or Securitate in order to obtain the approval (Anghel, 2013; Weber et al. 2003). In many cases this was obtained in exchange of several thousand marks; in other cases, migrants reported granting favors to those who facilitated their leave, including visits to Germany for Miliția or Securitate staff, or in exchange of consumption goods (Anghel, 2013). The difficulty of migrating within the annual quota and the political and social pressures in the country were often mentioned as main obstacles for migration during communism (idem; Weber et al., 2003).

In the context of the 1980s, economic situation in Romania worsened. The shortage of goods was apparent and the regime became very oppressive. Access to basic goods was severely limited. Food items were “rationalized” and developed an informal market for consumption goods (Chelcea and Lăteș, 2000). Access to meat, milk, bread and other products of strict necessity became extremely difficult and for most products like blue jeans or Western cigarettes and sweets, that existed before, were almost impossible to obtain. Queues for food or clothing had become widespread. In the context of the intense migration of ethnic Germans, there emerged a circulation of goods in the opposite direction from Germany, to Romania, German emigrants sending goods to their friends and relatives. These were usually quality products and included clothes, cigarettes, food - chocolate or coffee, household items, as well as magazines such as *Burda* or *Neckermann*. These were feeding a culture of migration to West Germany, both within the German community, and among Romanians, Hungarians or Roma friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbors.

Life during Ceaușescu's Romania became increasingly difficult, and for the members of the German community the thought of leaving the territories where they lived for hundreds of years became increasingly pressing (Weber et al., 2003). In such a state, emigration practices were diversifying. Although the legal channels for migration remained the most used there were also people who used other strategies: trips abroad, visits to relatives or illegal border crossings. Thus, between 1977 and 1988, there was a 10% difference between the recorded data of German emigration from Romania and that of immigrants recorded in Germany.<sup>42</sup> This difference represented, on one hand, the non-German family members, and on the other hand, ethnic Germans who arrived in

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<sup>42</sup> See Annex 1.

Germany outside the agreed scheme, but who qualified for *Aussiedler* status (Germans or German family members). The most dangerous of these emigration strategies was the illegal border crossing, especially to Yugoslavia. In a recent book, Steiner and Magheți (2017) described the border with the former Yugoslavia as Europe's bloodiest border during communism, showing that the number of victims was higher than in the case of the Berlin Wall (idem). In the difficult context of the 1980s, the tendency towards migration greatly increased (Vultur, 2018), and many people tried their chances by employing all means. Most of those trying to cross the border were ethnic Romanians, but there were also many Germans who managed to migrate irregularly. For the Germans living in the immediate vicinity of the border, the crossing was easier because they knew some of the border guards, as well as the border area. For those who were living further away from the border, risks were numerous. Crossing the border into open field was dangerous, border guards were firing on those trying to cross illegally. Therefore, the number of ethnic Germans trying to illegally leave the country was not large as the legal procedures did not involve the same risks. But those who were managing to cross the border were able to go directly to Germany without being returned to Romania.<sup>43</sup> Those who were caught by the Romanian border guards were followed by the *Miliția* and *Securitate*, sent to trial and risked being imprisoned.

During communism, potential migrants had to prove their German ethnicity through a certificate from the Catholic or Evangelical Churches, the so-called *RU Nummer*. The *Aussiedler* status was conditioned by German ethnicity and that these people had suffered because of German ethnicity.<sup>44</sup> *De facto* this did not happen and ethnicity was sufficient to obtain the *Aussiedler* status and German citizenship. After arriving in Germany, migrants were supported by an array of institutions and mechanisms: specialized courses, their studies were automatically recognized (despite differences in educational curriculum), they could follow German language courses. The government was encouraging entrepreneurship through tax exemptions, compensation for years of political prison and even for confiscated or lost homes. Pensioners had received pensions. During the entire communist period, social integration and labor market integration were not difficult for these people (Gronendijk, 1997). This supportive regime was maintained throughout communism and the government could maintain this effort as the overall number of ethnic Germans coming from Eastern Europe was about 80,000 people every year.<sup>45</sup> Since 1988, however, East European Germans started to arrive in larger numbers, mostly from Poland and the former USSR. Only afterwards the context of reception and the immigration laws guiding it had started to change, but still remained favorable for the *Aussiedler* integration.

## 6. POST-COMMUNIST MIGRATION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1989 the fate of Romania as well as that of ethnic Germans changed. Until that time annual migration was limited by the communist state, after December 1989 everything happened very fast. While before December 1989

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<sup>43</sup> In a study conducted in 2007, we have analyzed how migrants from the Banat area passed through Yugoslavia, pointing out migration strategies. See in this regard Anghel (2013).

<sup>44</sup> Bundesvertriebenengesetz, BVFG. Published in Bundesgesetzblatt, Bonn, Teil 1, Nr. 97 vom 17.09.1971.

<sup>45</sup> Bundesverwaltungsamt, Aussiedlerstatistik.



people waited months and years for the opportunity to leave Romania, from December onward migration was quick. The months and years of waiting, as well as the pressure of the communist state, the houses sold on nothing, were all stories of the past. Most of the ethnic Germans who were still in Romania by that time and had the intention to leave, left the country within a few months to a year. Thus, in 1989 and in 1990 the German authorities registered 135,000 Germans arriving from Romania, compared to the 145,000 who arrived during the previous decade.<sup>46</sup> The pressure posed by migration increased enormously in Germany in the early 1990s. As opposed to the 80,000 ethnic Germans coming yearly from Eastern Europe, in 1989 there were 377,000 ethnic Germans migrating there (Dietz, 2002). That was also a time when Germany started to revisit the migration law regarding the *Aussiedler*, political asylum seekers and migrants in general. The existing support system for ethnic migrants underwent legislative and administrative changes. The arrival of 1.2 million *Aussiedler* between 1988 and 1991 generated housing problems and exerted pressure on the federal budget (Tränhardt, 1995: 29). Public speeches that used to be favorable to ethnic Germans during communism started often to change and become resentful (Groenendijk, 1997). Due to the fact that 68% of Eastern European migration to Federal Germany took place during Cold War (Fassmann and Münz, 1994), migration control measures were becoming increasingly elaborate and stricter. Moreover, until then East European migrants were allowed to enter Germany easily; after 1989 migration control tightened and many migrants were sent back to their countries of origin. On the other hand, before 1989 the motives for emigration were a mixture of economic and political reasons, after 1990 the reasons for emigration were essentially economic (Dietz, 1999). At the same time, the Germans in Romania considered that their previous community life was hardly possible after the massive emigration that had taken place. The question in the minds of many remaining Germans was the same as in the late 1980s, "Are we staying or leaving?" It was not an individual dilemma, but it reflected the ethnic and cultural destiny of the entire German community in Romania, as well as the difficulty of preserving the old ethnic community life. The migration of 1990 was like an exodus, recalled by the Romanians and the Germans who stayed behind as a social drama, a hurried departure of people who packed overnight and left.

However, this emigration rush was justified, as the German state began applying stricter and more selective migration control. After 1989, in particular, many mixed families or persons with mixed Romanian-German ethnicity migrated. Their official recognition as Germans was more problematic than in the case of those coming from ethnically homogeneous families. The sudden migration from the beginning of 1990 proved to be an inspired move for many: later on, especially after 1993, one could only migrate to Germany with a letter issued by German churches attesting German ethnicity. Another change in the reception and integration of East European *Aussiedlers* was concerning language proficiency; during communism, many migrants had very good German language skills, whereas those who started coming after 1990 were from mixed families and had weaker German knowledge (Dietz 1999). Additionally, support program became very costly - \$6 billion yearly for accommodation only (Kurthen, 1995). New legislation was introduced in order to reduce previous benefits,<sup>47</sup> and from

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<sup>46</sup> See Annex 1.

<sup>47</sup> Gesetz zur Anpassung von Eingliederungsleistungen für Aussiedler und Übersiedler, Eingliederungsanpassungsgesetz vom 22 Dezember 1989, published in Bundesgesetzblatt, Bonn, Teil 1, Nr. 61 vom 29.12.1989.

August 1990 it regulated<sup>48</sup> the migration procedures, migrants being accepted only after completing some applications in their countries of origin. Since 1991, newcomer's pensions have dropped by 30%, continuing to decrease even more after 1996 (Münz and Ohliger, 1999: 241). In the early 1990s, due to budgetary and accommodation constraints the German federal government had to keep under control the number of ethnic Germans arrivals. Thus, in 1993 a new law regulated the arrival of ethnic Germans,<sup>49</sup> with clear guidelines about ethnic identification (knowledge of the German language, German origin and participation in German culture, as well as the public recognition of German ethnicity of the individual, see Groenendijk (1997)). At that time, the term *Spätaussiedler* (meaning "late colonist") was replacing the term "Aussiedler" while the number of migrants was limited to 220,000 people yearly (Dietz 1999).

The emigration wave of 1990 and 1991 was *de facto* the last migratory wave from Romania; in the country there remained only about 60,000 Germans, mostly elderly or those who did not intend to migrate. Although the ethnic German migration continued until 1997-1998, the number of migrants was much smaller. After 1998 for instance, less than 1,000 people were migrating yearly and numbers dropped to less than 100 in 2005. Given the high rate of interethnic marriages during communism (Verdery, 1985; Poledna, 1998), many non-German family members left to Germany. Also, while before 1990 Romanian Germans did not keep in touch with the country because of the negative, often tragic memories linked to their "escape", this changed after 1990. Migration had no longer a negative connotation and it was no longer accompanied by dramatic experiences; migrants no longer needed relatives in Germany to migrate; they no longer had to sell their properties before emigrating. In fact, as Michalon observes (Michalon, 2003), postcommunist migration to Germany included mobility to Romania as part of the migration project and many migrants retained their house properties in order to ensure presence in their communities of origin. After 1989, transnational practices to Romania continued through regular visits to friends and relatives, marriages with Romanian citizens, return migration, investments and connections with the networks of Romanian migrants who facilitated their migration. In addition, compared to the situation before 1989, Germans could retain their Romanian citizenship. Thus, especially at this late stage, German emigration led to the development of Romanian migration to Europe, especially by facilitating visas when Romanians' access was strongly restricted. It was also a decisive factor that led to the emergence of large Romanian communities in southern Germany. To a great extent, the ethnic Germans helped their Romanian relatives and friends to integrate into German society, establishing lasting transnational networks and links between Romania and Germany. Although for most people migration was permanent, there is a number of German migrant associations who developed projects in Romania (Oltean, 2019; Oltean, Anghel and Schuster, 2017), mainly in their villages and cities of origin, supporting "roots tourism" to Romania and often taking care of the churches or communities left behind.

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<sup>48</sup> Gesetz zur Regelung des Aufnahmeverfahrens für Aussiedler vom 30 Juni 1990, publicat în Bundesgesetzblatt, Bonn, Teil 1, Nr. 32 vom 30.06.1990.

<sup>49</sup> The Law's name was Gesetz zur Bereinigung von Kriegsfolgesetzen (Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz) / Law regulating the consequences of war / of 21 December 1992, published in the Bundesgesetzblatt, Bonn, Teil 1, Nr. 58 vom 24.12.1992.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The uprooting of ethnic Germans from the places that have been their homeland for hundreds of years has been a difficult process that occurred over a period of fifty years. By combining different data sources, especially archival sources and fieldwork, we provided a complex picture of this migration and showed the pivotal role played by institutions in the country of origin and the inter-state negotiations. The analysis of the early communist period was mostly conducted using archival sources and literature review as we could not rely on interviews, as it happened with the analysis of late communist period. In the latter case we have obtained a more thorough understanding of the period and were thus able to come with a more comprehensive view of migratory strategies and migration motivations. As we have shown above, this migration had several distinct periods: a massive migration during and immediately after the Second World War; emigration during the communism time, which was in most cases negotiated inter-institutionally - with two main periods, during the early communism and during the period of Nicolae Ceaușescu; and the post-communist migration. Thus, in the first years after the war, the German community had to adapt to extremely harsh conditions: an alarming decline in community size, the loss of properties, deportations to the former USSR and refuge of many to Germany, along with the loss of ethnic minority rights. All of this took place while anti-German sentiments were growing in Eastern Europe. The situation of the German community normalized during the socialist regime. Many of their rights were restored, along with access to education and the right to have their own publications. But in the new socialist context, the German community could no longer keep their status and properties owned before the war. Post-war migration started to develop among those left behind in socialist Romania. Various inter-institutional agreements have facilitated migration of people which had family members in any of the two German states (West and East Germany) and over time, the tendency to leave the country has increased. West Germany's economic success, the so called "economic miracle of Europe" in the 1960s and 1970s, was a major attraction for potential migrants from Eastern Europe. All of these were motivations for emigration and shaped a culture of migration among ethnic Germans. During early communism time international mobility level was low. Migration was conducted based on inter-state institutional agreements and with the involvement of the Red Cross.

After 1965 though, with the coming to power of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the inter-institutional agreements between Romania and Germany regarding the migration of ethnic Germans took a new turn. Between 1968 and 1989, based on arrangements between the representatives of the Romanian Securitate and the lawyer Heinz-Günther Hüscher (representing the Bonn Government), between 210,000 and 236,000 ethnic Germans left Romania, in exchange for payments made by the federal government, worth of 1,4 billion West German marks. The six agreements had a similar structure, namely the Romanian side pledged to grant permission to leave the country to a certain number of ethnic Germans within a certain time frame, while the West German government was paying the negotiated amounts (Baier and Meinhardt, 2013: 62). The widespread shortage that began to crush the Romanian economy along with an increasingly oppressive regime pushed for further migration. The culture of migration, prevalent in regions with German population, has been developing fast since 1960s, migration to Germany becoming the *de facto* plan for the future for many of the

community's members. Migration, though, was a very difficult process and the pressure exerted by authorities, including the Securitate, has greatly influenced migrants' lives.

With the fall of the communist regime, the last phase of this population movement was occurring. In less than two years, many of the remaining Germans left Romania. The old compact communities of Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Suabians almost disappeared, and their place was taken by the local non-German population. The irony of this last massive migration was that, exactly when the German community could have reorganized their community and associative life according to its own needs and wishes in a democratic context, and could have claimed an important economic role, there were not many people left to do it. Effects of this mass migration on communities of origin, ethnic and demographic balance (Crețan, Turnock and Woudstra, 2008) were significant, yet, not entirely understood (Oltean, Anghel and Schuster, 2017). Although large German communities vanished, there remained, surprisingly, a continuous presence of a German community, growing active in Romania's economic and political life.

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## ANNEXES

Annex no. 1. Number of Ethnic German that emigrated from Romania<sup>50</sup>

Year	Registered in Germany	Year	Registered in Germany	Registered in Romania
1950	13	1978	12.120	10.993
1951	1.031	1979	9.663	8.617
1952	26	1980	15.767	13.608
1953	15	1981	12.031	9.948
1954	8	1982	12.972	10.954
1955	44	1983	15.501	13.441
1956	176	1984	16.553	14.425
1957	384	1985	14.924	12.809
1958	1.383	1986	13.130	11.034
1959	374	1987	13.994	11.639
1960	2.124	1988	12.902	10.738
1961	3.303	1989	23.387	10.738
1962	1.675	1990	111.150	14.598
1963	1.321	1991	32.178	60.072
1964	818	1992	16.461	15.567
1965	2.715	1993	5.811	8.852
1966	609	1994	6.615	5.945
1967	440	1995	6.519	4.576
1968	614	1996	4.284	4.065

<sup>50</sup> Source: Bundesverwaltungsamt; Anuarul statistic al României, București, Institutul Național de Statistică, 1993, p. 143; Anuarul statistic al României, București, Institutul Național de Statistică, 1994, p. 150; Anuarul Statistic al României, București, Institutul Național de Statistică, 1995, p. 136-137. For the difference between the registered numbers two periods of time were important: during communism time, when the difference could represent largely the irregular migration, after 1990, when the majority of migrants were not all recorded by the Romanian authorities. As well, from 1978 onwards Romanian authorities were registering the number of legal German emigrants as these numbers were negotiated upon within the bilateral negotiations between Romania and Germany. Therefore, we provide the data available after 1978, less the data from 1950 onwards.