
UNIT 31 GERMAN DIASPORA

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31.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will understand and learn more about

- The history of the German Diaspora
- The relationship of the German diaspora with homeland
- Diaspora policies and social protection in Germany

31.2 INTRODUCTION

The Germans as an ethnic group date back to the 10th century. This was when an independent kingdom of Germany was formed from the eastern part of the Frankish Empire under the dynasty of the Ottonians. This empire included the core of the Holy Roman Empire. The German population grew significantly in the following centuries, and many Germans resettled to the east and Northern Europe. Germany was divided into Roman Catholic and Protestant states immediately after the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. The early nineteenth century saw the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of German nationalism, with Prussia absorbing most Germans into the German Empire. At the same time, a sizable German population lived in Austria-Hungary. Many Germans immigrated to different parts of the world during this period which includes the Russian Empire which accepted a substantial German population.

31.3 HISTORY OF GERMAN DIASPORA

Austria-Hungary and the German Empire were partitioned during World War

I. This resulted in the ethnic relegation of many Germans from other nations. Adolf Hitler became ruler of Nazi Germany and launched a murderous drive to unite all Germans under his rule in the turbulent years of the 1930s. World War II and the Holocaust (systematic extermination of the Jewish people by the Nazis) arose from this endeavour. Germany was conquered and partitioned after its defeat in the war, and millions of Germans were driven out of Eastern Europe. Germany's West and East German states were reunited in 1990. In contemporary Germany, Holocaust memory has become ingrained in the national psyche. Germans are culturally varied and often have strong regional identities.. German culture is inextricably linked to the arts and sciences, and the Germans have produced several notable figures in various fields.

During the Middle Ages, German political control was imposed on eastern Slavic communities. This procedure was complemented by the Ostsiedlung, or migration of Germans into conquered regions. Some Slavic groups were absorbed by Germans through time, resulting in many Germans having significant Slavic heritage. The Swabian Hohenstaufen dynasty ruled the German kingdoms beginning in the 11th century. During this period, the German population grew dramatically. Trade expanded, and arts and crafts became more specialized. Numerous Germans immigrated as merchants and artisans in the Kingdom of Poland beginning in the 12th century, eventually becoming a considerable component of the population in many metropolitan areas such as Gdansk.

The Teutonic Knights started conquering the Old Prussians in the 13th century. The conquest resulted in establishing what would later become the great German state of Prussia. In the late Middle Ages, German territory expanded further. The size and wealth of major metropolitan areas grew. To safeguard their interests, they organized strong organizations like the Hanseatic League and the Swabian League, frequently backing the German monarchs in their battles with the aristocracy. These urban leagues made substantial contributions to the growth of German trade and banking. German merchants from Hanseatic towns settled in towns all throughout Northern Europe, well beyond the German borders.

In the 18th century, after centuries of political fragmentation, a wave of German unification started to develop. The Holy Roman Empire declined further until it was abolished entirely by Napoleon in 1806. The Napoleonic Wars brought about significant social, political, and economic changes in Central Europe, creating a national awakening among the Germans. By the late 18th century, German thinkers such as Johann Gottfried Herder established a German identity on a single language. This aided the German nationalist movement, which aspired to unite the Germans into a single nation-state. German nationality eventually came to be defined by common ancestry, culture, and language, excluding religion. The Napoleonic Wars came to an end with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which left the majority of German states loosely unified under the German Confederation. The Catholic Austrian Empire came to dominate the confederation, much to the chagrin of many German nationalists, who considered the German Confederation as an insufficient response to the German Question. The German Question was a debate in the 19th century regarding the unification of all or most of the land inhabited by Germans.

31.4 GERMAN DIASPORA RELATIONS WITH THE HOMELAND

German unification in 1871 had a tremendous influence on Germans who found themselves living outside or moving beyond the newly formed Empire's boundaries. The increase in numbers and destinations was followed by a steady rethinking of migrants' relationships with their countries of origin. They were increasingly portrayed as outposts of a 'Greater German Empire,' whose ethnic ties to the motherland had to be safeguarded for their own and the Empire's sake. Germans all throughout the globe were redefined from geographically dispersed and fragmented groupings to a purportedly cohesive transnational 'community of spirit.' As the primary sign of ethnic identity, the German language gained ideological overtones (Schneider, 2011). The affiliation of many exiles with their homeland's nationalist cause warrants the use of the diaspora notion. Due to persistent regional, religious, political, and socioeconomic loyalties, German ethnic groups' internal coherence was restricted. Germans found themselves in certain situations, resulting in hybrid identities and various host-minority relationships. The imaginary 'Greater German Empire' became ingrained in migrants' senses of national affiliation and ethnic identity (Panayi, 2016).

Germany's late unification as a modern nation-state in 1871 led to the formation of a federation of 26 states. This coincided with significant movement within those states and substantial emigration to the United States (US), with over 1 million immigrants to the US alone during the 1880s, and 5.5 million between 1816 and 1914. Throughout the postwar era, emigration was high, with net migration being negative until 1956, when guest worker recruitment overtook emigration. Net migration was negative in 2008 and 2009. Between 1967 and 2013, there was a net emigration of around 1.4 million German citizens, but it is uncertain how many of them returned to Germany. Germany continues to have a substantial number of emigrants, whether temporary or permanent, with 250,000 leaving in 2017 alone ; nevertheless, Germany, like many other countries in the Global North, has not established institutionally strong links with those emigrants.

While there is no specialized help or support for German people living abroad, the German government does give consolidated financing and support to German minorities residing in Central and Eastern Europe and southern Denmark. Typically, they are not German nationals. This is a discrete policy area overseen by the Ministry of Interior's Representative for Aussiedler and National Minorities. The representative is in charge of various German minorities, as well as minorities who move to Germany. This strategy is a continuation of a post-war reconciliation strategy. Thus, government policy toward German minorities, notably those in the former Soviet Union, is distinct from that toward German citizens residing abroad. While some minorities have had their German citizenship acknowledged, the vast majority are not German citizens. The German government has a strategy to alleviate the effects of World War II consequences on those minorities which involves support for the German language. It also promotes the preservation and development of ethnocultural identity, engagement with youth groups, and the promotion of minorities' self-organization. In the face of increased immigration of these minorities in the 1990s, the German government expressed that signified the move from

assisting their migration to helping them in their countries of residency was “Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe,” or aid for self-help. The number of so-called Aussiedler (or out-settler) migrants to Germany peaked in 1990. Approximately 400,000 migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union arrived in Germany before falling to 1800 in 2012.

German residents residing abroad may register for emergency notifications through the Foreign Office's Electronic Recording of Germans Abroad (Elefand). Elefand is intended for travellers and temporary migrants, and there is no need to de-register from a German domestic address. It also includes Germans who live abroad indefinitely or permanently to be reached in the event of a national emergency. On the registration page, a person is asked if they are travelling for a short time or residing abroad for an extended length of time or forever. Individuals are not asked if they want to stay registered in Germany when they register on Elefand, but they do agree to a standard data usage agreement. It is unknown if Elefand would crosscheck to see whether a person is registered in Germany, although it seems doubtful.

Check your progress 1

Note: Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. Explain the effects of German unification in 1871

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2. Explain “Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe,”

.....

31.5 SOCIO - CULTURAL PROFILE OF THE GERMAN DIASPORA

The 1975 Emigrant Protection Act (Auswandererschutzgesetz) revised the preceding Imperial Act on Emigration (Reichsgesetz über das Auswanderungswesen) of 1897, which protected immigrants against unscrupulous brokers claiming to promote emigration. The 1897 Act also imposed restrictions on emigration, particularly for individuals who had not yet finished military duty, for whom an arrest warrant had been issued, or for whose travel costs had been paid for or advanced by a foreign Government. The 1975 Emigrant Protection Act removed emigration restrictions and, indeed, was based on the premise of citizens' right to emigrate freely and sought to ensure that this right remained unrestricted and ensured that citizens are properly prepared for emigration without being charged for that service.

The Emigrant Protection Act, most recently updated in 2013, made regulations

standard throughout Germany, thereby legislates and limits who may counsel German residents on emigration. The Act firmly establishes the federal government's responsibility for emigrant protection. The responsible authority is the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women, and Youth, which coordinates advice through Caritas Diakonisches Werk and grants licenses to private providers. In 2018, the Act was evaluated to see if it achieves its purpose of adequately educating today's prospective migrants.

The four main political parties of Germany, Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD), Free Democrats (FDP), and Alliance 90/Greens have a small number of chapters overseas, which are run by German nationals residing abroad. The CDU maintains "Friendship Circles in Foreign Countries" (Freundeskreise im Ausland) in 21 countries, first created in Brussels in 1996. The Social Democrats refer to "Friendship circles abroad" (Auslandsfreundeskreise), with their most notable organization in Brussels, created in the 1970s and with over 240 members. There are 14 more SPD circles, with another eight being formed by German citizens living abroad. In 1969, the FDP created its first "Group abroad" (Auslandsgruppe) in Brussels. There are six more FDP organizations, all of which are based in Europe. Outside of Germany, the Greens have two "Local organizations" (Ortsverbände): one in Brussels and another created in 2008 at the Goethe Institut in Washington, DC.

Although Germany's rising cultural variety presents certain social and political obstacles, it also gives a chance to develop a new and prosperous type of cohabitation. The Germans are distinguished by a high degree of geographical variation, making it impossible to establish a singular German culture. For ages, the arts and sciences have been an essential component of German identity. German culture flourished through the Age of Enlightenment and the Romantic period. Germans from this era made significant contributions to the arts and sciences.

31.6 DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT POLICIES

There seems to be no coordinated cooperation among German ministries dealing with German people residing overseas. The Emigration Protection Act guarantees that accurate information is provided to persons contemplating a move overseas, which may explain why references to Germans living abroad appear in several Acts. There are significant disparities in rules and processes for German nationals residing abroad in the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) nations. These are minor distinctions for voting but more critical distinctions for consular protection and access to social safeguards.

Voting from abroad is one policy area with significant positive developments in recent years, in line with other countries' expansion of the right to vote from abroad. The right to vote was granted to German citizens living abroad (aged 18 and older) in 1985, with that right both expanded and facilitated since then. Germans living abroad have the right to passive suffrage and active suffrage (the right to vote). Any German living abroad – whether temporarily or permanently (de-registered from a previous residence in Germany) – who is 18 or older may vote in the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) elections. To be eligible to vote in federal elections, Germans living abroad must be at least 18 years old. They must have lived in Germany for at least three uninterrupted months after the age

of 14 within the last 25 years and demonstrate that they are personally familiar with and affected by the political situation in Germany.

Citizens must seek inclusion on a local voter registration list in order to vote. The request form may be obtained via the Federal Returning Officer's website (Bundeswahlleiter - the federal voting office) or through embassies or consulates. It will be released nine months before the election. It must be received at least 21 days before the election by the last place of residency in Germany or, for individuals who have never lived in Germany, by the location with the closest link or the last place of residency of parents. The ballot will be sent to the international address provided upon receipt of the request. On election day, the ballot must be received by the local voting office by 6 p.m. If the foreign postal service is untrustworthy, the request and ballot may be submitted and received via a consulate or embassy. The federal returning officer maintains a list of areas regarded to have unreliable postal service and those where such service is accessible. In practice, though, postal voting remains the sole option.

The Consular Act governs consular personnel's dealings with German nationals living in other countries. Consular officials are granted a great deal of latitude. Although the legislation does not specify whether the diplomatic authority may intervene, if intervention is permitted, the consular officer has considerable latitude in terms of form, kind, and degree. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains a webpage that details what consular and honorary consular staff may and cannot do for Germans living abroad.

A consular officer may give advice, provide a new passport, or help a person in contacting a friend or family in an emergency. He may advise him/her about ways of receiving money, arrange for a lawyer in the event of arrest, issue a certificate of death or birth, notify next of kin, and offer information about dealing with procedures in the event of the death of a German citizen. More common activities include registering German citizens' births abroad, issuing and renewing passports, issuing and signing various papers, and so on.

Children born abroad to a German citizen are granted German citizenship at birth if the birth is registered at a consulate within one year. If a child is born to a German and a non-German parent, or if the child is born in a nation with jus soli attribution of citizenship, he or she may have two or more citizenships from birth. From the standpoint of the Germans, there is no necessity to choose one of the citizenships at any time. Adult Germans who desire to gain another citizenship (other than that of the EU and Switzerland) must, in theory, relinquish their German citizenship. However, in conformity with the Citizenship Law, exceptions may be requested and granted on a variety of grounds.

Highly skilled Germans may apply for financial assistance to return to Germany in a variety of ways. The German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD) provides funding for Return Stipendien für Deutsche aus dem Ausland. There are a number of stipendiaries available for German scientists who want to return to Germany. These activities are funded by several German ministries, primarily the German Foreign Office, as well as EU money and others, both public and private. This effort is meant to promote the recruiting objectives of German academic institutions rather than to aid academics. Some German federal states are launching their own repatriation

campaigns; for example, Bavaria welcomes Germans living abroad to "Return to Bavaria," while Brandenburg holds former Brandenburg inhabitants to return, whether from inside Germany or from abroad. All training would take place after a successful application for such a program and upon a return to Germany, rather than in preparation for a return.

31.7 DIASPORA POLICIES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN GERMANY

Social security, except for pensions, is only provided to Germans residing abroad on a case-by-case basis. The Consular Act is the primary applicable statute, with "Assistance for Individuals" permitting consular personnel to take discretionary steps in emergency and uncommon cases. Above all, the principle behind social protection programs is that rights are awarded based on residency. These rights are accessible to German citizens. Exceptions extending protection to German citizens residing abroad may be considered only if the rights are not accessible or are not accessible to that person, in the place of residence. It is specifically stated that assistance would not be provided to dual nationals whose normal place of abode is the nation of their second citizenship.

This notion of residency-based rights also underpins and explains the large supply of pensions to German citizens living abroad — pension rights accumulate based on previous payments. Pensions are not awarded based on current residency or status. So far as this unusual protection upholds the logic of rights based on occupancy.

In terms of information tactics, the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Agency for Emigrants and Those Working Abroad have vast and considerable information about the availability – and lack thereof – of rights and protection abroad. Both contain connections to relevant Ministries, which offer more information on (the restricted) access to rights.

Concerning repatriation, the Consular Act stipulates that in narrowly limited specific circumstances, "if it is advisable," often in an emergency scenario, a consular officer's assistance may include allowing a person to return to his or her customary abode or another location. Any such expenses must be borne by the person. Furthermore, the Consular Act states that in broad crisis scenarios, such as natural disasters, war, or revolutionary changes, consular employees must take the required steps to provide assistance and protection. Any fees incurred must be returned. However, exceptions may be allowed if the country's position or an individual's circumstances make repayment impossible. The Foreign Office website carries a report on the evacuation of 200 German and EU people from South Sudan in 2016 when intense fighting erupted. They were evacuated to Uganda, and passage back to Germany or abroad was organized from there.

Unemployment benefits (Arbeitslosengeld) are not provided to Germans who have returned to Germany after working abroad and have lost their jobs. They should rely on their own country's unemployment system (although they may have lost that right by returning to Germany). In the event of relocation from an EU nation, an application may be submitted before migration to continue receiving assistance in Germany for a maximum of three months. In general, health insurance only covers treatment in Germany. On the other hand, German

people with health insurance in Germany are protected in EU and EEA nations with the presentation of the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card), although only for short visits. Individuals who regularly work in Germany who are transferred on a short-term work assignment to another EU/EEA state may continue to have health insurance in Germany. Individual access to pensions is the other policy area (apart from voting) in which German people living abroad are clearly included. Indeed, German residents who earned an income in Germany and now reside overseas have the same pension eligibility as those who dwell in Germany. To be eligible, a person of pensionable age must have worked in Germany for at least 5 years. A person who has achieved early retirement age (63 years old) must have worked for 35 years; however, there are several exceptions.

The Federal Child Benefit Act (Bundeskindergeldgesetz) provides for the payment of a monthly cash benefit to each child until they reach the age of 18. This benefit is available to all children registered in Germany, regardless of citizenship or income level. Parents of German children living abroad may be eligible for the cash benefit if at least one parent is a general taxpayer in Germany (e.g., has been sent abroad by a German employer for a defined period of time or is a foreign civil servant), or if at least one parent is paid as a development worker or missionary. In the event of divorced or separated parents, child benefit is provided to the parent with whom the child resides in Germany. If one parent resides outside of Germany and has primary custody of the child/children, the parent who resides in Germany is not eligible to receive child benefit. A parent who lives outside of Germany is entitled to child benefit solely in accordance with applicable national law, not with German law.

31.8 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

In Germany, the institutional and policy structure for controlling migration is complicated as a result of federal government entities, as well as law and duties. The three levels of government share responsibility for migration and asylum policy: state, federal, and municipal. Integration, asylum, and migration continue to be a concern in Germany, as they are in other EU member states, due to the country's growing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Citizenship, freedom of movement, immigration, emigration, extradition, passports, residence, registration, identity cards, and the settlement of foreign nationals are the primary themes addressed by German migration laws. These are primarily national problems. They affect diaspora organizations and participation because they affect people's residency status, access to public services, and engagement in German society (education and labour).

Germany currently lacks a unified structure and range of return counselling and assistance services. Instead, there is a patchwork of programs and measures spanning the various political subdivision levels in the German Federal Government, Federal States, and municipalities, and administered in part by public bodies and charitable organizations.

GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) created a Sector Project on 'Migration and Development' in 2007 on commission from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to develop and test new migration and development strategies. A GTZ pilot initiative was

developed under this framework to foster contact with not-for-profit diaspora groups. This initiative targets organized diaspora organizations in Germany and offered them the option to collaborate with GTZ on initiatives in their countries of origin. Apart from funding chosen initiatives, a secondary objective is to gather experiences of collaboration with diaspora groups to contribute to creating long-term policies and processes for inclusion. The primary purpose is to promote the growth and transfer of knowledge and skills from diasporas to their home countries via financial assistance and GTZ's development expertise. Similarly, GTZ and other development actors may benefit from migrant groups' unique expertise and fresh perspectives on the development agenda.

Apart from Germany's reputation as a secure and rich nation with generous refugee laws, the strong diaspora networks that have developed through time, notably with Middle Eastern nations, operate as a magnet for new entrants. Refugees and migrants come from a variety of sources, including civil wars, economic crises, and the collapse of political order in African nations such as Somalia, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, and Nigeria. However, the 2015 rise was mostly fueled by the civil conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and, most notably, the terrible conflict in Syria, the crisis's primary source nation. In aggregate, the flood of migrants into Germany has resulted in the largest population growth in more than two decades, increasing Germany's population by more than 1%. The surge has been fuelled mostly by the entrance of young males, particularly those with sufficient disposable income to pay human traffickers.

Check your progress 2

Note: Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

3. Which are the four main political parties in Germany?

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4. What are the German government's key engagement policies of German diaspora?

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5. What facilities does a diasporic German get upon repatriation?

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31.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the German diaspora. We had a brief historical overview of German migration. The initial period saw the spread and resettlement of Germans in eastern and northern Europe. Importantly, the early nineteenth century witnessed the movement of Germany into different parts of the world, including the Russian Empire. The major push in the movement of people was reported after the end of World War II. The end of World War II left a divided Germany into two parts—the West and East Germany. During this period, millions of Germans were reported to have moved from Eastern Germany. The unit discussed the initiative taken by the government for diaspora engagement. The unit briefly discussed the Emigration Protection Act. The Act guarantees that accurate information is provided to people contemplating a move overseas, which may explain why references to Germans living abroad appear in several Acts. It also discussed the right to vote for Germans living abroad. Children born abroad to a German citizen are granted German citizenship at birth with certain conditions. This is another step-in diaspora engagement. Towards the end, the unit discussed the institutional challenges that appear in controlling migration due to the functioning structure of the system.

31.10 KEY WORDS

Prussia - a former kingdom in north-central Europe including present-day northern Germany and northern Poland

European Economic Area - abbreviated as EEA, consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland).

Maastricht criteria - Convergence criteria (or "Maastricht criteria") are criteria, based on economic indicators, that European Union (EU) member states must fulfil to enter the euro zone and that they must continue to respect once entered.

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31.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

1. During the Middle Ages, German political control was imposed on eastern Slavic communities. This procedure was complemented by the Ostsiedlung, or migration of Germans into conquered regions. Some Slavic groups were absorbed by Germans through time, resulting in many Germans having significant Slavic heritage. The Swabian Hohenstaufen dynasty ruled the German kingdoms beginning in the 11th century. During this period, the German population grew dramatically. Trade expanded, and arts and crafts became more specialized. Numerous Germans immigrated as merchants and artisans in the Kingdom of Poland beginning in the 12th century, eventually becoming a considerable component of the population in many metropolitan areas such as Gdansk.
2. The German government has a strategy to alleviate the effects of World War II consequences on those minorities which involves support for the German language. It also promotes the preservation and development of ethnocultural identity, engagement with youth groups, and the promotion of minorities' self-organization. In the face of increased immigration of these minorities in the 1990s, the German government expression that signified the move from assisting their migration to helping them in their countries of residency was “Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe,” or aid for self-help.

Check your progress 2

3. The four main political parties of Germany, Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD), Free Democrats (FDP), and Alliance 90/Greens have a small number of chapters overseas, which are run by German nationals residing abroad. The CDU maintains "Friendship Circles in Foreign

Countries" (Freundeskreise im Ausland) in 21 countries, first created in Brussels in 1996. The Social Democrats refer to "Friendship circles abroad" (Auslandsfreundeskreise), with their most notable organization in Brussels, created in the 1970s and with over 240 members.

4. Voting from abroad is one policy area with significant positive developments in recent years, in line with other countries' expansion of the right to vote from abroad. Any German living abroad – whether temporarily or permanently (de-registered from a previous residence in Germany) – who is 18 or older may vote in the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) elections. To be eligible to vote in federal elections, Germans living abroad must be at least 18 years old.

A consular officer may give advise, provide a new passport, or help a person in contacting a friend or family in an emergency.

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Highly skilled Germans may apply for financial assistance to return to Germany in a variety of ways. The German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD) provides funding for Return Stipendien für Deutsche aus dem Ausland. There are a number of stipendiaries available for German scientists who want to return to Germany.

5. Highly skilled Germans may apply for financial assistance to return to Germany in a variety of ways. The German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD) provides funding for Return Stipendien für Deutsche aus dem Ausland. There are a number of stipendiaries available for German scientists who want to return to Germany. These activities are funded by several German ministries, primarily the German Foreign Office, as well as EU money and others, both public and private. This effort is meant to promote the recruiting objectives of German academic institutions rather than to aid academics. Some German federal states are launching their own repatriation campaigns; for example, Bavaria welcomes Germans living abroad to "Return to Bavaria," while Brandenburg holds former Brandenburg inhabitants to return, whether from inside Germany or from abroad. All training would take place after a successful application for such a program and upon a return to Germany, rather than in preparation for a return.