



Programm für lebenslanges Lernen

Immigrants Past and Present ; Towards Greater Integration?

Heritage Centre Letter (Board 4) The Saxon Immigrants in Romania and
and their exodus.
(Siebenbürger Sachsen und Banater Schwaben)

Transsylvania (Siebenbürgen) is geographically the centre of Romania. It is limited by the southern and eastern parts of the areas of Walachia and Moldova/Bucovina) and the eastern and southern Carpathian mountains that form a bow. In the west the Apuseni mountains form the boundary of this area.

From the 12th and 13th centuries onwards German colonists settled in Transsylvania. Throughout centuries this population had been granted special minority rights and laws.

After an eventful and vicissitudinous history this area – once part of Austria, Hungary or Romania- became definitely Romanian in 1918.

When Romania changed sides and joined the Allies at the end of World War 2 and since the beginning of Communist rule, the rights of the ethnic German minority were severely cut or abolished.

Their property was nationalized and many were deported and forced to do convict labour.

At the end of the 1950ies emigration to Germany began.

In 1941 about 298000 ethnic Germans lived in Transsylvania, whereas their current number has declined to 14000.