Measures to Reduce the Influx of Ethnic German Remigrants (March 29, 1990)

Abstract

To curb the number of ethnic German remigrants moving to the Federal Republic, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble pushed for a law that would require applicants to apply for admission in their home countries and submit clearer proof of German ancestry.

Source

Admission of Ethnic German Remigrants from Eastern Europe only after Proceedings in their Home Countries

But benefits for them remain – More personnel for the embassies

In the future, ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe will only be allowed to come to the Federal Republic after they have been recognized as ethnic Germans in their country of origin. That is the gist of a draft law that was approved yesterday by the federal cabinet. According to Federal Minister of the Interior [Wolfgang] Schäuble, once this "very urgently needed law" receives Bundesrat approval, it should take effect as early as June 22.

The new law will not result in any restrictions in benefits for ethnic Germans remigrants [*Aussiedler*], assured Schäuble. He rejected the demand put forth by [Rudolf] Dreßler, chairman of the SPD working group on employee affairs, to cut the benefits paid through the Federal Expellee Law (BVFG), the Foreign Pensions Law, and the Equalization of War Burdens Act. People not recognized as ethnic Germans remigrants who come on their own initiative – by entering the Federal Republic with a tourist visa, for example – must reckon with being initially sent back to their country of origin, according to the minister.

The minister said that German missions and embassies would be made better equipped to deal with the added responsibilities associated with the shifting of admissions proceedings to the remigrants' home countries. The additional work would be absorbed by extra personnel, among other things.

According to the draft law, the certificate of admission [*Aufnahmebescheid*], which is a prerequisite for receiving the special benefits for ethnic German remigrants, should only be issued after approval has been given by the federal state that is admitting the immigrant. One point of contention between the federal states and the federal government is whether people who were registered on the "Volksliste 3" during the Third Reich should be recognized as ethnic German immigrants without meeting any additional criteria.[1] This list also includes some people who are not affiliated with any ethnic German minority. Whereas the federal government wishes to recognize the people on this list, all of the state governments reject [inclusion in] this list as grounds for admission.

According to a summary by the interior ministry, a total of roughly 380,000 ethnic German remigrants came to the Federal Republic last year. The total for this year, up to last Tuesday, is more than 99,000. With the opening of the Eastern bloc countries and improved travel options, "the number of people already in the Federal Republic of Germany who are trying to be recognized as ethnic German remigrants even though they don't meet the legal requirements has risen," said Schäuble. Many people came as tourists, he said, especially from Poland, and then wanted to be recognized as ethnic German remigrants. Last year, about fifteen percent of them were apparently sent back.

NOTES

[1] During the Third Reich, the SS Reich Security Main Office [*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*] tried to identify ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe in order to resettle them in newly conquered border regions as a bulwark against the local Slavic population. The screening involved an elaborate classification system in which category three was reserved for questionable cases – eds.

Source: “Aussiedleraufnahme nur noch nach Verfahren im Herkunftsland”, *Tagesspiegel*, March 29, 1990.

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