

Academic Migration and Cultural Diplomacy During the Cold War. Humboldt Fellowships for Romania in the Context of Eastern Europe*

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Abstract: Romania was the first country in the Eastern bloc to initiate diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. On January 31, 1967, the Embassy of the FRG was opened in Bucharest, Romania. In this context, which marked the intensification of the cultural exchange between the two countries, with special attention paid to the exchange of students and researchers, in this article I aim to tackle the situation of the Humboldt fellows from Romania during 1965-1989, as agents of knowledge transfer and actors of soft-power strategies between the two blocks.

Keywords: Romania; Federal Republic of Germany; academic migration; cultural relations; Humboldt fellowships

Among the signatories of the Warsaw Pact, Romania's place in the post-World War II geopolitical system was clear: it was among the Eastern Bloc states, alongside USSR, GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania, with a policy oriented towards the Soviet Union. In this context, Romania's relations with Western countries were very limited in the first decades after 1945.

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This changed with the coming to power of Nicolae Ceaușescu. Keen on strengthening his position, especially in the first years after becoming leader, Ceaușescu showed a greater openness to Western democracies compared to his predecessors, as well as compared to the other leaders of Communist countries. His efforts in this regard were meant to create the image of a man of his time, open to values other than the Communist ones and far more independent in relation to the Soviet Union than the authorities in Moscow at the time would have expected. On the other hand, beyond the ideological and PR component, this openness to the West concealed a “Realpolitik” approach: Ceaușescu was interested in Romania developing economic relations with economic powerhouses and eventually benefiting from a privileged status in relation to them; there was thus an economic and financial interest involved. The evolution of the cultural relations of Romania after 1965 followed the same logic: the Socialist Republic of Romania (SRR) was getting closer to the West because it was in the country’s interest to import knowledge and technology from Western states, rather than from its Eastern neighbors. Moreover, after some rather unsuccessful attempts at technological espionage, the USSR itself came to the conclusion that the best way to procure advanced technology from the West was to strengthen cultural relations and send students to these countries (Autio-Sarasmo and Miklossy 2011, 66-82).

The first signal of this openness was becoming close to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In the context of the initiation of diplomatic relations between the SRR and the FRG and the intensification of the cultural exchange between the two countries, with special attention paid to exchange of students and researchers, this article aims to offer a comparative perspective on the situation of the Humboldt scholars from Romania, who benefited from research fellowships in the Federal Republic of Germany from 1965 to 1989.

Relations between SRR and FRG between 1965 and 1989

Romania was the first country in the Eastern bloc to initiate diplomatic relations with the FRG. The situation in this regard was delicate: the German Democratic Republic (GDR), a state which was among the Warsaw Pact countries, claimed to be the only legitimate German state entity, proclaiming itself the only successor of the old Germany; therefore, it was a sign of friendship and solidarity from other Socialist countries not to recognize the FRG, which signified disputing the legitimacy of the GDR. However, there were some political developments that facilitated the rapprochement between the two countries: Romania, under the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu starting in 1965, initiated an open policy towards the Western countries, while West

Germany gradually distanced itself from the Hallstein doctrine¹ and welcomed relations with countries from the Soviet bloc².

In this context, on January 31, 1967, the Embassy of the FRG was opened in Bucharest. The event was marked by tensions between Romania and the rest of the Socialist countries, especially the USSR and the GDR; however, Ceaușescu presented his allies with a *fait accompli*. Thus, Romania became the first country in the Soviet bloc where FGR benefitted from diplomatic representation; other Communist states would soon follow suit (see: Buga 2015, Florian and al. 2009).

Started with enthusiasm by both parties, the relations between the two countries only functioned as expected in the first few years. More interested in obtaining substantial amounts of money in the form of hard currency, the authorities in Bucharest allowed the repatriation of ethnic Germans in exchange for consistent sums of money and without allowing them to take most of their belongings (Dobre and al. 2011); they demanded – and received – significant amounts from the West German state to care for the graves of German soldiers fallen during World War II; and they tried to obtain financial compensation for the victims of the Holocaust in Romania – for whom the Romanian state was ultimately to blame. The latter was a source of tension between the two countries until the mid-1970s, when Romania was convinced, on the one hand, that it would not receive the desired compensation, and ceased, on the other hand, to “manufacture” additional files for several alleged victims (Matei 2016). But the biggest challenge for the relationship between the two countries was brought about by the paradigm shift in Romania: the July Theses of 1971, which tightened the ideological control and reinforced state propaganda; the decree no. 95 of July 29, 1975, which imposed much more restrictive criteria for going abroad; and a reorientation of Ceaușescu’s foreign policy to Africa, Asia and Latin America. All of this led to a stagnation of the Romanian-West-German collaboration. And during the 1980s, a period marked by economic crisis and total political and ideological control, made the West Germans regard relations with Romania as completely “frozen.”

In any case, the truly significant collaboration between the two countries – as admitted by both parties – was the cultural and academic one, and especially the exchange of students and researchers.

Cultural and academic relations between SRR and FRG

Romania had benefited from relatively significant academic relations – especially exchanges of students and researchers – with the West even before Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power. Despite the proximity to the Soviet Union,

Romania's main academic exchange partner throughout the Communist period was France, a natural bond given the cultural tradition of Romania, oriented towards France since the 19th century. This was in addition to a good overall knowledge of the French language and the academic networks that had not completely broken down after World War II. Beyond the cultural tradition, however, pragmatic reasons determined the cultural orientation of Romania towards the Western countries in particular, even during the Cold War, when the country was in the Soviet camp: the West was much more scientifically and technologically advanced, which made relations with Western countries much more useful. As the West German authorities noted in 1968, "Romanians behave in their cultural relations – as in all other fields – completely pragmatically. They seek the greatest benefit. That is why their scientific links with all the Western countries are so close, especially in the most developed fields of each such country" (PAAA, 13328, 29 February 1968).

Along with France, Romania still had relatively strong cultural relations – for a Communist state – with countries such as the United Kingdom or the USA. By 1964, for example, it had signed cultural agreements or had developed programs for cultural cooperation with Algeria, Belgium, France, UK, India, Indonesia, Italy, Turkey and the USA (PAAA, 13328, 26 May 1965). By 1965, four to five Romanian students were leaving the country every year to study in France, Italy, Great Britain or the USA (PAAA, 13328, 6 May 1966). The number of researchers was usually smaller, with the exception of research visits to France: tens of Romanian professors were going there, although these were usually short-term visits.

After 1965, Romania's academic cooperation with the West intensified. In 1967 alone, Romania signed no fewer than eighteen cultural agreements, with the Netherlands, USA, USSR, UK, Italy, Yugoslavia, North Vietnam, Denmark, Iran, Syria, Norway, Sudan, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Somalia (PAAA, 13328, 29 February 1968). The focus on the Western world was obvious.

In this context of relative cultural openness towards the West, cultural relations between Romania and the Federal Republic of Germany started to develop. As early as 1964, the German authorities remarked that "Romania is extremely interested in establishing cultural relations with the Federal Republic" (PAAA, 13328, 12 October 1964), although the key moment of cultural proximity coincided with the negotiations between the SRR and the FRG concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations: "The connection between the two countries has definitely strengthened as a result of political developments, especially in the last months of 1966" (PAAA, 13328, 14 April 1967). Initially, these relationships consisted of mutual visits, concerts, book presentations, translations of some West German writers in Romania, as well as of Romanian authors in German, art exhibitions, plays, organizing sports

competitions with participants from both countries etc. From the first period, special attention was paid to academic cooperation: in 1966 an agreement was signed, which mandated that Romania would send ten students annually to the FRG; several young West-Germans were also attending Romanian universities, two of them in 1966 (PAAA, 13328, 14 April 1967). It was during this period that the system of exchange students and researchers, funded through scholarships, was established.

Much like the Romanian-German political relations, the cultural ones started in the mid-1960s in an enthusiastic atmosphere, only to stagnate and even regress in the following decades. It was a dynamic that the West German authorities quickly became aware of: since the beginning of the 1970s, the annual reports of the German Embassy in Bucharest mentioned that no matter how satisfactory and useful, the cultural relations between the two states could not develop too much, given that Romania remained a Socialist state (PAAA, 13348, 19 March 1972).

A symbolic key moment of the start of Romanian-West-German cultural relations was the visit to the FRG on June 4-9, 1970, of the delegation of the Union of Communist Youth (UTC) from Romania, led by Ion Iliescu, the Minister of Youth. For many years, the UTC had developed relations with the Federal Youth Council of the FRG, which involved sixteen youth organizations. At the invitation of its West German counterpart, Käte Strobel, the delegation from Romania visited on this occasion several youth institutions and organizations in Frankfurt am Main, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Bonn and Hamburg (PAAA, 13316). The event was more of a protocol, considering that the “closeness” of young Romanians to the West Germans was limited in the following period.

Both parties had made efforts to sign a cultural agreement. Indeed, one of the goals of the West German government in the 1960s and 1970s, in the context of FRG’s “Ostpolitik,” was to seal such agreements with as many Socialist states as possible, including the USSR. Efforts in this direction did not materialize, however, several protocols for scientific and academic cooperation were adopted with countries from the Soviet bloc, especially. As a result, a “German-Romanian joint commission for cooperation in scientific research and technological development” negotiated the signing, on June 29, 1973, of the “Agreement for cooperation in the field of scientific research and scientific development between the government of the SRR and the government of the FRG.” The activities of the commission – several colloquiums – stated the main areas of interest: agriculture, health, nuclear energy, geology, geophysics (PAAA, 13345). The exchanges of specialists in the field of agricultural research and nuclear energy were particularly intense in the 1970s (PAAA, 13346). The same 1973 agreement also provided for the establishment of a West German Cultural Institute in Bucharest; a branch of the Goethe

Institute³ would only be established on November 26, 1979, yet it was still the first Goethe Institute opened in the capital of a Communist country (PAAA, 13418, 21 April 1980). In 1973, a third German language department was opened in Bucharest, after the two existing ones in Cluj and Iasi (PAAA, 13353, 19 February 1974).

In the absence of a broader cultural understanding, specific partnerships between different institutions of higher education were set up. Agreements were thus made regarding the collaboration and exchange of students and teachers between the University of Hamburg and the University of Bucharest; The University of Freiburg and the University of Iasi; the University of Tübingen and the University of Cluj; between the Agricultural Institute of Giessen and the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of Bucharest; as well as between the Technical University of Darmstadt and the Polytechnic University of Bucharest (PAAA, 13348, 19 March 1972). These partnerships did not only express the scientific, technological and human resource exchanges between institutions; they also represented an important financial aid that the FRG was offering for education and in-depth research facilities, which were constantly underfunded by the Romanian state.

The scholarship system

Along with the obvious component of international academic cooperation represented by student migration, hosting students from other countries was one of the most utilized strategies of cultural diplomacy in the 20th century. Ever since the interwar period, France, Germany, Italy, the US and the United Kingdom had discovered the potential of “Kulturpropaganda” that foreign students had. Beyond the attachment they developed towards their hosts, they “transported” models and cultural values back home, contributing to drawing their homeland closer – from a cultural perspective – to the country in which they had studied.

The Cold War period is no exception. It was then that the Soviet Union became host for many students from the Eastern bloc. The pro-Western cultural traditions of many of the Warsaw Pact states could not, however, be erased overnight; many young people from these countries still aspired to go to the universities of Western Europe. This explains, for example, the continued student and academic migration from Romania to France or from Poland to West Germany (Pick 2010): these young people followed the traditional cultural routes of their respective countries. From this perspective, the resumption of migration from Romania to Germany may seem like a natural evolution, despite the intricate international context.

Negotiations regarding the establishment of student and researcher exchanges between Romania and the FRG started as early as 1964, under

Gheorghiu-Dej: this was also a symbol of the fact that the openness to the West had already been initiated by Nicolae Ceaușescu's predecessor. But the first Romanians didn't go to study and research in the FRG until 1966. Initially there were only a handful of them, their number increasing year after year between 1966 and 1971.

There were several cases of young Romanians who went to study in West Germany on their own: traveling and maintenance costs were borne by their parents from back home. However, this was a huge financial effort for a family in Romania, even a well-off one. Therefore, most of those who left with the purpose of studying or specializing in the FRG during the Communist period benefited from scholarships or other forms of financial support, either from the Romanian state or, more often, from the Germans. The West German government was investing considerable sums in supporting the students and researchers in Romania: approx. 50% of the total amount dedicated to Romanian-German relations were invested in this type of academic exchange (PAAA, 13348, 21 February 1972).

The main scholarship systems granted by the German state to the Romanians were: the scholarships of the German Academic Exchange Office (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst - DAAD); the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellowships; scholarships offered by the Goethe Institute for German language learning; and the scholarships of the Inter Nationes Association (Osteuropa Program)⁴. There were also other institutions willing to fund Romanians – for example the Heinrich Hertz and Fritz Thyssen foundations, the Carl Duisberg Society, the Institute for Foreign Relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) in Stuttgart, the Südosteuropa Society in Munich, the Bavarian regional government and so on, most of them funded by the German Foreign Affairs Ministry or other German federal institutions - but the funding provided by them was sporadic, the number of beneficiaries being limited to only a few tens of people.

Without a doubt, the most numerous were the DAAD scholarships. Students received one-year scholarships to attend courses at West German universities; Romanian university professors and researchers benefited from scholarships lasting up to three months; and those who wanted to learn or improve their German language skills could receive funding to attend language summer schools in West Germany. In 1969, for example, DAAD awarded 10 one-year scholarships for young people in Romania (including two extensions), 45 scholarships for Romanian professors and researchers and 10 scholarships for summer courses. In that same year, the Goethe Institute funded 9 German-language teachers to improve their language skills and teaching methods in Germany (PAAA, 13328, 20 January 1970). The commitment of the German authorities towards the academic collaboration with Romania was clear: two years later, in 1971, DAAD scholarships for

Romanians had already increased in number: 62 for professors and researchers and 22 one-year stipends for students. In the same year, no less than 409 West German researchers came to Romania for research internships.

The attitude of the SRR towards the relationship with West Germany changed abruptly in 1971, with the tightening of control and the limiting of the number of Romanians leaving to FRG. Of the 22 Romanian DAAD scholarship holders with one-year stipends, for instance, seven were not allowed to leave the country. Moreover, five of them had made direct applications to DAAD, without receiving approval from the Romanian authorities and without being recommended by any Romanian academic forum (PAAA, 13348, 21 February 1972). In other words, the Communist authorities were not willing to allow free, honest, meritocratic academic migration, and so control, mistrust and corruption affected the selection process of Romanian scholars in the FRG:

The Romanian planning strategy has hitherto prevented adapting the application procedure for some scholarship programs and academic residencies to international practices: Romanians want to select their own candidates as much as possible, although the gaps in the system have allowed a few exceptions. Excluding direct applications for certain programs allows for increased political control of candidates, burdensome bureaucracy, and often personal resentment and nepotism (PAAA, 13328, 20 January 1970).

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the exchange of students, researchers and professors between the two countries soon showed its limits, due to political and ideological mismatches and misunderstandings. If the Romanians wanted to send people with a certain political profile, supporters of the Communist regime or party members, and in some cases even Security informants, the West Germans wanted professional scholars. The Romanian authorities insisted on recommending the future scholarship recipients, while the success rate was much higher in the case of direct applications – without the involvement of the educational and research institutions in Romania. This created a tension between the two countries, which hampered academic migration from the very beginning. On the one hand, scholarships to West Germany were awarded to the best applicants, those who usually made direct applications. However, they were much less likely to be allowed to leave the country. On the other hand, those recommended by the Romanian authorities were seldom funded by the West-German foundations, especially from the 1970s onwards. Thus, initially, between 1966-1971 – due to the concessions made by Germany regarding the way the applications were submitted and the quality of the recommendations, and because of the concessions made by Romania in allowing direct applicants to go to the West – the academic exchanges worked

well, intensifying from year to year and generating hope, especially in the Romanian academic environment.

After 1971, however, the increasing control of applications and of those receiving the scholarships resulted in a drop in academic exchanges. There were two key moments that drew the coordinates for how the collaboration would work further and which significantly curtailed the cultural exchanges between the two countries. The first was represented by the so-called “July Theses” (July 6, 1971), which marked the tightening of control and a new ideological soar in the direction of the formation of the “new man.” Culture became an instrument of propaganda and intellectuals were subjected to rigorous political and ideological checks. The ideological control over the content of cultural assets from the West was also tightened. Moreover, in December 1971 a new law was adopted regarding the “defence of the state secret” (Law 23/1971 regarding the defence of the state secret), which intensified the surveillance of foreigners and restricted the possibility of going abroad for some Romanians.

The second moment was the adoption of decree no. 95 of July 29, 1975 (Decree 95/1975 regarding studying, specializing and obtaining a PhD abroad), which imposed restrictions and limitations on Romanians’ access to study and research in other countries. The decree stipulated that those who receive scholarships abroad longer than three months must meet additional criteria. Thus, Article 8 mentioned that “the referral to specialize abroad is made at the proposal of the National Council for Science and Technology, in collaboration with the ministries and other central institutions concerned,” which meant that the scholars had to receive approval from many more institutions, including from the State Security. The desire of the Romanian authorities to fully control any academic exchange with a foreign country and to be the only decision-making bodies regarding the number, profile and fields of study of the scholars is clear from Article 11, which stipulated that “for studying, obtaining a doctorate and specialization, perspective plans for 3-5 years and annual plans are drawn up, which will include the number of scholars, fields of study and specializations, as well as the countries where they will be sent.”

The consequences of these two measures were obvious: the Romanian-German academic relations decreased dramatically. The scholars and participants in the excursions could not leave the country and a large number of Germans were also no longer allowed to enter Romania. Especially after the 1975 decree, the consequences were immediate: due to the excessive controls, in 1975 the files of the candidates for a one-year DAAD scholarship arrived in the FRG a few months after the deadline expired, the Romanians never receiving the scholarships; DAAD scholars already in Germany who received an extension of the scholarship in 1975 were urgently called in the country, being asked to report to their jobs. That same year, many Romanians either scholars of the Goethe Institute or young people who were going on trips to Germany,

were not allowed to leave the country (PAAA, 13353, 24 March 1976). In the long term, these measures led to a considerable decrease – less than half compared to the period 1966-1971 – in the number of Romanians studying or doing research in the FRG. The number of scholarships from the German state also decreased, as it became increasingly difficult to send a direct application and the German authorities stopped making so many concessions regarding the professional level of those recommended by the Romanian authorities.

Humboldt scholarships for Romanians during Ceaușescu's regime

After World War I, Germany tried to re-enter the international circuit and rebuild its reputation as a great cultural power, developing “Kulturpropaganda” strategies and investing in academic collaboration with other countries. The most important German institutions for the coordination and financing of foreign students and researchers in Germany date from the interwar period. They were the DAAD (created in 1925 under the name of AAD – Akademischer Austauschdienst / Academic Exchange Office – and transformed in 1931 into DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst / German Academic Exchange Office) and the Humboldt Foundation (Nastasă-Matei 2013).

Established in 1925, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awarded very prestigious fellowships to researchers from abroad, usually university graduates who aspired to a doctorate. With a high scientific background in the 1920s, the Foundation replaced the academic criteria with the political and ideological ones after 1933, so that during the Third Reich it served the Nazi propaganda more than the cultural cooperation (Impekoven 2013). Consequently, the institution was abolished at the end of the war, to be re-established in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1953.

The new Alexander von Humboldt Foundation looked completely different from its predecessor. It was created – as its previous version – with the aim of demonstrating that Germany continued to be a great cultural power and to mark its place on the international arena, but this time using another type of criteria for granting fellowships: academic excellence and lack of quotas. Unlike the previous period, the new Foundation funded postdoctoral researchers and established scientists. The support given to them was also much more substantial: besides the generous fellowships, the scholars entered the alumni network, which worked – as it still does today – on the basis of the slogan “Einmal Humboldtianer, immer Humboldtianer” (Once a Humboldtian, always a Humboldtian). This meant that they could benefit, until their withdrawal from their professional activity, of re-invitation fellowships in Germany, in order not to lose contact with the collaborators there, and the institutions where they worked, in

their countries of origin, received, at the request of the fellow, funds for the purchase of equipment, renovation of laboratories, improving libraries, etc.

Most of the funds available to the organization came from federal sources, mainly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, with a very small percentage of the budget coming from private donations. Although the political factor does not seem to have played a part in awarding grants – the Foundation benefiting from total administrative autonomy and using independent commissions for the scientific analysis of applications – the activity of the institution, as well as the distribution of the fellowships, reflected to some extent the orientation of the foreign policy of the FRG in the various stages of the Cold War. This was quite natural given that it was unlikely there would be too many applications from countries with which Germany did not maintain diplomatic relations and reaching the FRG from such states could be problematic. All this in the context where, analysing the number of stipends offered in different decades of the period discussed here, it is clear that the Foundation's budget had increased from year to year and with it its ability to support an increasing number of scholars from as many countries as possible. Thus, for example, in the period between 1964 and 1973 the number of fellowships was double (2948) compared to the period 1953-1963 (1502), and in the third decade of existence of the Foundation no less than 4567 researchers were funded (see Table I). This increase was consistent with the raise in the number of applications received, the success rate going up only slightly from one decade to the next.

The Humboldt Foundation's relationship with the countries of Eastern Europe developed on the aforementioned background of the East-centred policy (*Ostpolitik*) and the opening of Socialist countries to the West. Only Tito's Yugoslavia made an exception, which is understandable given the neutrality policy that it adopted after 1948 in the context of the Cold War. Some applications for Humboldt fellowships were received from Poland and Hungary in the first decade of existence of the Foundation, and the unusually high success rate for these two countries, over 60%, confirms the interest of the institution – and of the FRG in general – in developing relations with Eastern Europe.

The mid-1960s marks the beginning of the Humboldt Foundation's intense collaboration with the countries of the Soviet bloc. Romania was especially privileged in this second decade given the large number of fellowships granted (164); only the stipends for Yugoslavs were slightly higher during this period (178), but this in the context in which Yugoslavia was much larger and the success rate was still lower (27.7% compared to 34.7%, see Table I). It is especially noticeable that the Foundation was beginning to receive more and more applications from Communist countries, a sign that information about this academic opportunity was circulating, and interested researchers were able to apply or, in some cases, even have an infrastructure available to submit fellowship

applications. Success rates for applications from these states also mark the Foundation's increased interest in promoting researchers from this area: thus, the percentage of winning applications from the Eastern Bloc countries was the same or even higher than those from Western states such as France, Great Britain or the United States. Or, considering that, theoretically, the only selection criteria was scientific excellence and that there were no quotas, the fact that a professor in Bucharest, Sofia, Warsaw or Budapest had at least as high chances as a professor in Oxford, Paris or Chicago to win the fellowship proves that there was a willingness on the part of the German authorities to host as many scholars from Eastern Europe as possible in Federal Germany. In the long term, the great beneficiaries from this region proved to be the Poles; having a centuries-old tradition of studying and researching at German universities, the number of Polish fellowship recipients grew steadily, from year to year, exceeding the number of fellows from any other country in Europe.

Table 1: Humboldt fellows from various countries, 1953-1993 (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung 1993, 279-283)

Country	1953-1963			1964-1973			1974-1983			1984-1993		
	A	B	%	A	B	%	A	B	%	A	B	%
Romania	-	-	-	472	164	34,7	177	49	27,7	181	38	21
Bulgaria	1	-	-	305	111	36,4	236	74	31,4	447	86	19,2
Poland	13	8	61,5	286	118	41,3	1176	434	36,9	1898	400	21,1
USSR	-	-	-	5	2	40	78	48	61,5	10	7	70
Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1057	345	32,6
Hungary	26	17	65,4	134	57	42,5	211	93	44,1	411	175	42,6
Yugoslavia	260	88	33,8	642	178	27,7	254	76	29,9	260	54	20,8
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	123	38	30,9
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49	14	28,6
France	65	19	29,2	111	44	39,6	158	72	45,6	392	189	48,2
Great Britain	72	35	34,7	226	95	42	369	173	46,9	300	152	50,7
USA	168	50	29,8	764	280	36,6	1302	674	51,8	1136	594	52,3
Egypt	264	68	25,8	484	103	21,3	487	88	18,1	339	41	12,1
India	567	121	21,3	774	177	22,9	2256	450	19,9	1724	272	15,8
China	-	-	-	-	-	-	546	172	31,5	1149	323	28,1
Taiwan	69	16	23,2	76	15	19,7	75	27	36	49	10	20,4
Japan	520	247	47,5	1003	433	43,2	1281	593	48,7	921	438	47,6
Argentina	178	65	36,5	142	48	33,8	161	60	37,3	171	69	40,4
Total	4746	1502	31,6	8860	2948	33,3	12632	4567	36,2	15456	4897	31,7

A – Number of applications

B – Number of fellowships awarded

% - Success rate

Romania also had a previous tradition of student and academic migration to Germany: since the second half of the 19th century, German universities had become the preferred place of study for Romanians, after the French ones. There was even a moment when Germany was the main cultural (and political) partner of Romania: in the late 1930s and during World War II (Nastasă-Matei 2016). That was the period of the first Romanian fellows of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation: in 1931/32, when three doctoral students from Romania received the fellowship. Due to the incomplete sources and the fact that many documents were lost during the war, we do not have exact figures regarding the number of fellowships granted in this first stage of existence of the organization; there were probably around 35 Romanian fellows from 1931 to 1945, among them famous names of Romanian culture: philosophers Emil Cioran, Ovidiu Papadima, Alexandru Dima and Alexandru Dragomir, Germanist Jean Livescu, archaeologist Ioan Nestor, sociologist Anton Golopenția, musician Ioan Delu and others. Beyond their undeniable professional value, they were also selected on the basis of political and ideological considerations, and in some cases, the Nazi regime tried to influence and instrumentalize them (Nastasă-Matei 2014).

Although the Foundation was re-established in 1953, the relationship with Romania was resumed after more than a decade, amid the start of negotiations on the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Thus, already in October 1964, the director of the commercial representation of the FRG in Bucharest, Paul Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, recommended “the inclusion of Romania among the countries for which fellowships from the Humboldt Foundation are made available” (PAAA, 13328, 12 October 1964). The German Foreign Ministry’s response was prompt: The Foundation decided to give the green light to receive Romanians’ applications, while reaffirming the selection and procedure criteria: “The selection of applicants is carried out in cooperation with the academic institutions of the host country, does not depend on annual fees or on the country, and is based only on scientific qualifications” (PAAA, 13328, 26 October 1964).

Steps to build a relationship with Romania were taken, in the first years, by the Foundation itself. Thus, some of the first Romanian fellowship recipients did not submit applications, but were invited to become fellows. These were mainly fellows from 1931-1945: in 1969, Alexandru Dima, Jean Livescu and Ovidiu Papadima received the invitation to undertake research fellowships of 6 weeks in Germany (PAAA, 13350). In the coming years, they will be in constant attendance at the academic institutions in Federal Germany, regularly benefiting from the financial support of the Humboldt Foundation. Thus, although re-established on a completely new basis, the German organization did not completely break ties with the past, remaining true to the principle “once Humboldtians, always Humboldtians.” In addition, not only did some

of the fellows from 1931-1945 receive re-invitation awards, but they contributed to the creation of networks that supported this type of academic collaboration between Romania and Germany. Thus this explains how that the Romanian fellows in the humanities – although a minority after 1966 compared to those in the fields of natural or technical sciences (see Table II) – usually worked in the field of philosophy (Mircea Flonta, Gabriel Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu), history (Mircea Babeș, Alexandru Zub, Grigore Ploeșteanu) or Germanistics (Mihai Isbășescu, Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Jean Livescu): they benefited from the Romanian-German networks the base of which was laid by previous fellows during the interwar period or during the World War II.

Once the relationship “thawed,” the collaboration was a fruitful one in the first decade, one could even say exceptional in the first 5 years (1966-1971). Romanians suddenly became some of the main beneficiaries of Humboldt fellowships. Thus, between 1964 and 1973, the Romanian researchers constituted the fifth group of scholars, by size, after those from Japan, the USA, Czechoslovakia and India, and before Poland and Bulgaria (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung 1993, 230). This was due to the proximity between the two countries, which allowed a large number of applications from the Romanians, but was also the result of a policy of “favouring” them by the German authorities. Thus, in the 1967 annual report of the German Foreign Ministry dedicated to Romania, it was stated: “Humboldt fellowships: we should offer places to a larger number of young, capable Romanian researchers. Clearly, the Romanians’ interest has grown in the last year after the first experiences of the fellows could be evaluated. In any case, the number of applicants has increased.” (PAAA, 13328, 14 April 1967)

The 1970s, however, brought stagnation, then the decline of academic collaboration. In 1972, so after the adoption of the so-called “July Theses,” the number of all scholarships in the FRG decreased. In the case of Humboldt fellowships, the impact was even more drastic: not only did the number of applications decreased, fewer Romanians being recommended by the educational and research institutions in Romania, but, more seriously, so did the number of direct applications. In the context where the success rate was much higher in the case of applications that came to the Foundation independently, the immediate consequence was the overall decrease of the success rate of applications from Romania. For example, in 1972 the Humboldt Foundation received 42 applications from Romania, 25 submitted through the Romanian Ministry of Education or the FRG Embassy in Bucharest, and 17 applications sent directly. Of the 25 “recommended,” 5 received the stipend, while of the 17 “independent” ones, 8 became Humboldtians (PAAA, 13348, 19 March 1972). In other words, in that year, the success rate of direct applications was almost 50%, while that of the ones mediated by the Romanian institutions was 25%.

The control exercised by the Romanian authorities over the scholars was another impediment in the development of the relationship with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Once the fellowship was received, the holder had to obtain various approvals in order to leave the country: from the party organization to which he/she belonged, from the National Council for Scientific Research and from the Visa and Passports Commission (ANIC, 3/1970, vol. II). The file also contained a “characterization” from the workplace, which referred to both the professional abilities of the scholar and his/her political conduct (ANIC, 7/1969). Even under these conditions, the possibility of honouring the fellowship was high in the early years of the Ceaușescu regime, but it declined sharply thereafter. Adopting Decree no. 95 of July 29, 1975 was a blow to many who hoped to do research in the FRG: that year, control became much tighter and Humboldt fellows needed additional approvals, often from the Securitate itself. This meant that it was necessary to collaborate in some cases with the secret services in order to honour the fellowship. Another consequence was the fact that many Humboldtians could not actually go to West Germany (without forfeiting their status as fellows, according to the rules of the Foundation). By 1976, for example, there were already over 20 Humboldt fellowship holders waiting to receive permission to travel (PAAA, 13353, 24 March 1976); some obtained it after years of negotiations with the state bodies – especially with the Securitate, which implied some concessions – some never did.

A quantitative approach to the situation of Humboldt fellows from communist Romania is difficult to pursue. The figures offered by the documents differ significantly: in general, the statistics made by the Humboldt Foundation mention a higher number of scholars from Romania, compared to the documents from the Romanian National Archives or from the German Foreign Ministry. I think the main explanation is the fact that the Foundation considers as a Humboldtian any winning researcher of the fellowship, including him/her in statistics, while the documents produced by the Romanian authorities – more precisely the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania – probably have in mind those scholars who have completed their research internship in FRG. Similarly, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mainly dealing with the financial support of the fellows in the host country, presents figures closer to those from the Romanian National Archives. Moreover, even the sources produced by the same authority vary, offering different figures from one document to another. In these circumstances, quantitative considerations can only be approximate.

What is certain is that a scholar won the first fellowship in 1966 and in the following years the number of beneficiaries from Romania increased at an astonishing rate; thus, the statistics of the Foundation place Romania in the decade 1964-1973 in 5th place among the countries that benefited from the

most fellowships. The peak moment seems to have been established in the years 1970-1971, when more than 60 Romanian researchers received annual funding (including re-invitation fellowships). There were a few years in which the number of Romanian fellows decreased slightly (40-50 /year between 1972-1974), their quantity drastically reducing after 1977: between 10-20 / year. In total, I am evaluating the number of Humboldt scholars from Romania during the Cold War at approx. 350 (many of them benefiting from re-invitation fellowships, thus including them in the total number of fellowships in several years). The percentage of women did not exceed 15%⁵ (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung 1993, 86) and, unlike the interwar or post-socialist period, most of the fellowships were granted in the technical fields and in the natural sciences, with only a minority doing research in the humanities (see Table II).

Table II: Percentage of Humboldt fellows according to their field of study, 1953-1993 (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung 1993, 288-289)

Country	Humanities	Natural sciences	Engineering
Romania	20,3 %	62,6 %	17,1 %
Bulgaria	11,9 %	71,4 %	16,7 %
Poland	29,7 %	52,6 %	17,7 %
USSR	14,4 %	75,8 %	9,9 %
Hungary	20,8 %	71,6 %	7,6 %
Yugoslavia	32,5 %	52 %	15,5 %

Instead of conclusions

The fact that several hundred researchers and university professors from Romania were able to carry out research internships during the Cold War in the universities and institutes of West Germany is remarkable both for their subsequent professional developments, as well as for their contribution to the transfer of Western know-how and technology to our country. The subject of the Romanian Humboldt fellows in the FRG can justifiably be approached from this perspective of cultural and knowledge transfer, while still being taken aback by the strategies of soft power and cultural policies of the two countries, which animated this process of academic migration.

As with any approach that involves a totalitarian regime obsessed with control as was Ceaușescu's Romania, the research can waddle into grey areas. Smokestacks can hide certain historical realities – because of the corruption of documents or lack thereof, because of the scarcity of sources or, on the contrary, the existence of a multitude of counterfeit sources, such as those used for propaganda. An eminently dark area, however, is that of the secret services

(the Securitate), which, once tackled, reveals alternative valences and hidden purposes to any historical event or phenomenon in that period.

The case of Romanian Humboldt fellows was no different. If they had not been involved with it previously, once they became Humboldtians they were automatically forced to develop a relationship with the Securitate. However, a typology for this relationship between the scholars and the secret services is now difficult to establish, due to the incomplete sources available at CNSAS (The Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives). We know that scholars were required to write at least one report to the Securitate or SIE (Foreign Intelligence Service) upon their return. In the case of those who had submitted direct applications, information surveillance files were opened on their behalf. Even without these, they were being monitored because during their stay in the FRG they had contact with foreigners and Romanians in exile. They could not escape the specific surveillance of the Communist regime.

Much more sensitive is the topic of the status of informants of the Securitate or of the SIE that these fellows had or had not acquired. Here the typology varies: some were already informants, enjoying the confidence of the Romanian authorities and thus receiving both recommendations for the fellowship and the permission to leave the country without any trouble. Others, however, would not be allowed to leave for the FRG unless they agreed to become informants. This is the case of several fellows who were refused visas for a number of years until they accepted to make these concessions, carrying out their research internship with a delay of several years. Of course, there were also cases where, although they had become informants, the authorities continued to refuse their visa for an indefinite period. These fellows were providing information for the secret services based on promises that were never honoured. There was also the reverse: once they had left and then returned from their studies, some people boldly refused to provide any information outside of a completely benign report in which they only addressed their topic of research and readings abroad, insisting that they had not met anyone and had not engaged in any relevant discussions during the stay in the FRG. They were themselves prosecuted and occasionally investigated, being subsequently banned from accessing new scholarships abroad.

Since leaving the country was so difficult and the relationship with the secret services was mandatory, it remains to analyse the reports or informative notes given by the fellows, to see if and to what extent they caused harm to the people pursued by the Securitate or if they were engaged in political policing. Here things get even more complicated because of the limited access to the Securitate files. First of all, we cannot rely in our research on the surveillance and network files from CNSAS because not all of them still exist. It is thus impossible to determine the complete list of informants. A disclosure of those who have such network files available in the reading room would be an

injustice, given that the files of many other informants are still secret and cannot be consulted, if they exist at all. Secondly, the available files are not complete, as they do not contain the informative notes. If these notes exist, their place is in the files of those that were placed under surveillance. Therefore, at this stage of our research, but especially due to access to the secret service archives, the issue of the Humboldt fellows' collaboration with the Securitate cannot be elucidated yet. It is, however, an essential aspect of any scholarly undertaking aimed at academic migration from Romania to the West during the Cold War.

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Endnotes

- 1 The so-called “Hallstein doctrine” was a key principle of the FRG foreign policy between 1955 and 1970, which prescribed that the FRG would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the GDR (German Democratic Republic).
- 2 This was the *Ostpolitik* promoted by Willy Brandt, Foreign Affairs Minister between 1966 and 1969 and Chancellor between 1969 and 1974. It marked the restart of the FRG-GDR collaboration and the recommencing of the FRG’s relations with Soviet bloc states.
- 3 The Goethe Institute is an institution aimed at promoting the German language and building cultural relations with other countries. Founded in 1951, on the infrastructure of the older German Academy, dating back from 1925, the Goethe Institute opened branches worldwide, the first being set up in Athens in 1952; currently 159 such institutes are operating.
- 4 *Inter Nationes* was an association founded in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1952 meant to promote German cultural institutions abroad, as well as supply the public with information about Germany. In 2000 they merged with the Goethe Institute. They gave scholarships to journalists during the Cold War.
- 5 13%, placing Romania on the 12th place in this regard (while the female fellowship holders from France made up 24,9%; from Bulgaria 23,1%; from Poland 14,3%; from Hungary 9,1% etc.).