



BUNDESPRÄSIDENTIALAMT

**Subject to change.
Translation of advance
text.**

**The speech online:
www.bundespraesident.de**

Berlin, 21/06/2016
page 1 to 2

**Speech given by Federal President Joachim Gauck
on a visit to the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania
during his state visit
in Sibiu, Romania, on 21 June 2016**

Mr President,

Mr Chairman,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of Germany, I wouldn't want to let a visit to Romania go by without calling on the people of Romania who have German origins.

You have organised politically to raise your profile within your country, calling yourselves the Democratic Forum. I think that's great – apart from anything else, because an important opposition initiative of freedom-loving citizens in the GDR called themselves something very similar in 1989. But I also think it's great because, in running the Forum, you demonstrate your desire to work for your state actively, loyally and committedly. I have heard that your ranks supply a disproportionately high number of local politicians.

Even your President was one of them, once elected Mayor as a member of the Democratic Forum.

This indicates that, while you like to nurture your own cultural identity and do so passionately, this does not prevent you from serving your wider society and community.

I am delighted to have had the opportunity today to visit two historic sites that bear witness to the rich culture of the Transylvanian Saxons. I have been to Brukenthal College, where I was able to speak to teachers and pupils in German. You don't need me to tell you that your President was once a teacher there. I imagine you're rather proud of the fact.

ADDRESS	Bundespräsidialamt 11010 Berlin
TEL / FAX	+49 30 2000-2021/-1926
E-MAIL	presse@bpra.bund.de
WEBSITE	www.bundespraesident.de

After that, I also went to the Lutheran Church – which is pretty much built on Roman foundations. How much symbolism one can find if one has eyes to see it! The Romans were the first to unify Europe in some form, and the Romanian language preserves clear traces of their presence to this day. The Protestant, reformed faith, meanwhile, originated in Germany. In the coming year, we will be commemorating the Reformation in a big way. Roman and German legacies, Romanian and Transylvanian Saxon culture – long may that combination continue in peace and fruitful coexistence.

You are right to be proud of what you have built here and of your ongoing achievements, as well as of your culture, without which Romania and indeed Europe would be the poorer.

Thank you very much!