

# MINORITIES IN GERMANY

## GENERAL INFORMATION: GERMANY



Total population	82,532,000 (2003)
Official languages	German
Minorities	Danish (0.1%), Sorb (0.06%), Frisian (0.06% - able to speak), Sinti-Roma,
Migrants	Turkish, Serbian and Montenegrin, Italian, Greek, Polish, and other (8.9 %)

Apart from Sinti and Roma minority, estimated up to 70,000 in number and dispersed throughout the national territory, Danes, Frisians and the Sorbian people dwell in their traditional settlement areas in several federal states (Länder) of the Federal Republic of Germany. Approximately 50,000 members of the Danish minority dwell in the German part of Schleswig, in the border region with Denmark. Today's border between the two countries was established in 1920 on the basis of the results of two plebiscites at the Treaty of Versailles.

#### THE DANES IN GERMANY

#### THE DANISH ETHNIC MINORITY IN THE REGION OF SOUTH-SCHLESWIG

The Southslesvigian Organization SYDSLESVIGSK FORENING is the cultural headorganization of the Danish minority in Southslesvig.

Its Secretary General is placed at the Flensborghus in Flensburg.

The southern border of the continuously built-up nordic area (names of villages and of fields) runs north of Eckernförde via Friedrichstadt up to the river mouth of the Eider. Still today this line forms an important dialect border between the original Low German in the Lower Saxon Holstein and the originally Danish and Frisian area.

North Frisians live along the west coast from the present national boundary up to the Eider that here forms a distinct ethnic border to the Low Saxon Dithmarschen. In the south of the above mentioned line Eckernförde-Friedrichstadt mainly a Low Saxon population does live.

Danish and Frisian language and culture are the original ones in South Schleswig but have been partly covered up by the German language and culture. About the year 1800 Danish and Frisian were still spoken up to the area of the Schlei, Schleswig and Husum.

Nowadays the linguistic border is identical with the national boundary. However, the knowledge of the Danish language has increased after 1920 and particularly after 1945 when teaching in Danish schools started again.

Today, about 50.000 inhabitants of South Schleswig master the Danish language. The number of people speaking Frisian on the isles and at the west coast are indicated with about 10.000.

#### HISTORY

About 650 The construction of the oldest "Dannevirke", an ancient Danish defencewall against the Southern triber, starts.

811 The river Eider is recognized as the national boundary between Franconia and Denmark (Eidora Romani Terminus Imperii)

826 The missonary Ansgar arrives at Haithabu.

About 1115 Knud Lavard becomes Jarl.

1375 The house of Duke Abel dies out.

1386 The Count of Holstein is enfeoffed hereditarily with the dukedom of Schleswig.

1460 King Christian I is elected Duke of Schleswig and Count of Holstein at Ribe by the knights of Schleswig-Holstein ("Up ewig ungedeelt" = For every undivided)

1721 Frederik IV unites the Gottorf part of Schleswig with the royal part.

1830 Uwe Jensen Lornsen demands a "Constitution for Schleswig-Holstein".

1832 The connection of Sønderjylland (North and South Schleswig) with Denmark is emphasized by Christian Paulsen.

1848 Provisional government of Schleswig-Holstein. The Three-Years Danish German War 1848-50.

1863 New Constitution for Denmark and Schleswig.

1864 Prussia and Austria demand that the new constitution should be cancelled. War against Denmark. The Danish army retreats from the Dannevirke.

1866 The Peace of Prague with a promise of plebiscite in article 5.

1867 Danish majority at Flensburg when electing to the North German Reichstag.

1869 The Danish newspaper "Flensborg Avis" is founded. Schleswig-holstein becomes a Prussian province.

In the following severe measures against the Danish by the Prussian administration (Köller - policy) .

1920 10.2: Voting in the 1st. zone (North Schleswig): 75,431 Danish votes and 25,329 German votes.

14.3: Voting in the 2nd. zone (Middle Schleswig): 51,700 German and 12,800 Danish votes.

1933 Seizure of power by Adolf Hitler. Increased pressure.

5.5.1945 English troops move into South Schleswig.

9.5.1945 The Danish government declares: "The boundary is fixed".

1946 A provisional Landtag (= state parliament) assembles at Kiel.

1947 The first elected Landtag with 6 representatives of the Danish minority.

1949 Foundation of the Federal Republic.

1949 - 53 Danish representative at the Bundestag.

1949 Kiel - Declaration referring to the rights of the minority.

1955 Declarations of Bonn and Copenhagen. The SSW is freed from the barring clause of 5% determined in the electoral law.

## **THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE DANISH MINORITY**

### **SYDSLESVIGSK FORENING**

"Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF)" (The Society of South Schleswig) is ethnically and culturally the main organization of the Danish minority.

Being founded in 1920 as the "Den slesvigske Forening (The Society of Schleswig) it worked until 1933 as well as a political party. "Sydslesvigsk Forening" is responsible for a vast field of tasks.

In the humanitarian field the SSF keeps flats for retired people at Flensburg, Schleswig, Eckernförde and Rendsburg.

In many places it runs clubs for old people offering leisure time for members. The "Sydslesvigsk Forening" is as well responsible for many assembly houses all over the region, like "Flensborghus" at Flensburg, "Husumhus" at Husum, "Amtmandsgården" at Rendsburg and "Paludanushuset" at Friedrichstadt. Moreover, "Skipperhuset" at Tönning that as well is used as a school, and a press service which among others publishes member pages at the "Flensborg Avis" and provides information to Danish and German mass media referring to Danish work.

"Sydslesvigsk Forening" as subdivided in about 100 districts which again are united in 7 district associations with about 13.500 members.

"Sydslesvigsk Forening" closely cooperates with the "Forening for nationale Friiske" (Society of the National Friisians).

Moreover, 25 societies with about 12.000 members are associated with the "Sydslesvigsk Forening". In 1971 an advisory committee ("Det Sydslesvigske Samråd") was founded being a coordinating organ for the Danish ethnic group.

## SSW

The "Südschleswigscher Wählerverband" (the Voters' Association of South Schleswig) is the political representation of the danish population and the national Frisians.

At the same time, the SSW represents the interests of the entire territory of Schleswig.

Elections for the Kreistag (District parliament) 2003: 30,481 votes

Elections for the Landtag (State parliament) 2005: about 53.000 votes

## SSW - MANDATES:

In the Landtag: 2005 - 2 (status of parliamentary group)

In the Town Parliament of Flensburg: 2003 - 11 (out of in total 42)

In the Kreistage of South Schleswig 2003:

6 in the district of Schleswig-Flensburg (out of in total 45)

4 in the district of North Friesland (out of in total 45).

0 in the district of Rendsburg-Eckernförde.

The SSW is represented in the parliaments of the districts, towns and municipalities of the region with altogether 155 representatives (1998: 161).

Since 1965 the SSW has no more taken part in the elections for the Bundestag. The connection to the federal government is guaranteed by a contact committee. At elections for the Landtag the SSW is discharged from the restrictive clause of the 5 percent. However, the party has to achieve on number of votes at least corresponding to the number of votes for the "last" mandate in the Landtag according to the method of Hondt.

## FLENSBORG AVIS

The Danish press of South Schleswig contains "Flensburg Avis" (since 1869). During the period 1948-74 a Danish newspaper written in the German language: "Südschleswigsche Heimatzeitung" (Home Newspaper of South Schleswig) was edited as well. Since 1. April 1974 this newspaper has been a supplement of the daily newspaper "Flensburg Avis".

## DANSK SKOLEFORENING FOR SYDSLESVIG

The Danish school system:

"Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig" has run 48 schools (one of them is a grammar school called Duborg-Skolen at Flensburg) with altogether about 5.800 pupils and about 610 teachers. The number of the newly admitted pupils has shown a stable tendency within the last years.

Additionally, the secondary schools consist of 2 Realschulen (= Schoolleading to the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level) situated at Flensburg. At Schleswig and at Husum there is a Danish Realschule, too.

Moreover, there are an home adult education centre at Jaruplund near Flensburg and a boarding school for young people at Ladelund (District of North Friesland).

The Danish schools are subject to the supervision of the ministry of education and arts at Kiel.

58 kindergardens with about 2.000 children. This number has as well remained rather stable during the recent years.

## DANSK KIRKE I SYDSLESVIG

The Danish church at South Schleswig:

The "Dansk Kirke i Sydslesvig" has about 40 parishes with about 6.500 entered members. They are served by 24 pastors. There are services at about 60 places.

## DANSK CENTRALBIBLIOTEK FOR SYDSLESVIG

The Danish library system:

"Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig" at Flensburg serves with 2 branch libraries at Schleswig and at Husum. There are two busses lending books and lending libraries e. g. at schools of the entire region.

In 2002, about 600.000 books, MCs and CDs were borrowed.

The "Schleswigsche Sammlung "The Selection of Schleswig" (Local History) and the "Studienabteilung/Archiv" (The Study Section an Archive) dealing with studies in the field of local history are affiliated with the Central Library.

#### SYDSLESVIGS DANSKE UNGDOMSFORENINGER

The Danish youth organizations at South Schleswig:

The "Sydslesvigs danske Ungdomsforeninger (SdU)", holding organization for about 70 individual societies with about 12.500 members; 12 young people's homes and leisure clubs (6 of them at Flensburg) and 28 youth clubs at schools, kindergardens and assembly homes.

Affiliated are the "KFUM/K" (YMCA), "FDF/FPF" (Voluntary Associations of Boys and Girls), "Dansk Spejderkorps Sydslesvig" (Scouts), "Menighedernes Børne- og Ungdomsarbejde" (The youth work of the parishes), rowing clubs at Flensburg and Schleswig, a yacht club at Flensburg, the popular dance club, "Det lille Teater" etc.

Moreover, the SdU runs 2 sport halls at Flensburg and Schleswig the course centre "Christianslyst" at Süderbrarup and the Scouts' centre "Tydal" at Eggebek.

#### DANSK SUNDHEDSTJENESTE FOR SYDSLESVIG

The Danish health service:

The "Dansk Sundhedstjeneste for Sydslesvig" runs social stations at Flensburg, Schleswig, Husum and Leck. Altogether 21 nurse stations in the entire area as well regular medical and dental examinations at the kindergardens and schools. Additionally, an old people's home containing 80 places and 18 protected flats at Flensburg and flats for retired people at Flensburg, Leck and Bredstedt are at disposal.

#### OTHER ORGANIZATIONS/ INSTITUTIONS

The "Fælleslandboforeningen for Sydslesvig" (Agricultural Society) with 4 individual associations, 2 consultants and about 350 members.

The "Sydslesvigske Husmoderforeninger" (The Housewives' Associations of South Schleswig) with 12 individual associations and 1.200 members.

"Den slesvigske Kvindeforening" (The Women's Association of Schleswig) with 29 individual associations and about 950 members.

Moreover, at Flensburg there has been a "Borgerforeningen" (Association of citizens) since 1835; the "Sankt Knuds Gilde" (Saint Knud's Guild) since Middle Ages.

The "Sønderjysk Arbejderforening" (The Workers' Association), 1 credit co-operative "Slesvigsk Kreditforening", an Danish bank ("Union-Bank" with three branches at Flensburg, Schleswig and Harrislee), a trade association ("Dansk Erhvervsforening i Sydslesvig") and an art society ("Sydslesvigs danske Kunstforening").

The Danish adult education at South Schleswig organized about 500 courses which had been attended by about 5.000 persons. Partly, those courses were courses teaching the Danish language, but Frisian was on the programme, as well.

At the popular university a number of associations and institutions work together. Annually, 30-40 lectures dealing with different subjects are offered within the entire region.

Every year, about 400 Danish pupils from South Schleswig spend their summer holidays with families in Denmark.

The "Südschleswigsche Verein" (The Society of South Schleswig) is a member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), a union of about 75 European ethnic groups with about 100 million people, whereas the Danish Youth Association (SdU) is affiliated with the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN). The FUEN has got its general secretary at Flensburg (Schiffbrücke 41).

The SSF is as well a member of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL). The European Bureau is subsidized at Bruxelles by the EC.

Danish theatre and music life by SSF:

During the season there are about 20 theatreperformances with about 5.500 visitors and about 50 theatreperformances for children with about 3.000 visitors. Also there were 10 symphonyconcerts with nearly 3.000 visitors as well as 10 concerts on the Danish schools played for about 900 children, 2 concerts for all schools with about 800 visitors and the great family-concert with about 750 visitors.

Besides theatre performances (opera and ballet) and concerts the “Sydslesvigsk Forening” arranges Danish lantern-slide lectures and other lectures, visits to orchestras and choirs at the district associations and districts.

Performances of solo singers, amateur theatres etc. and bigger and smaller member assemblies showing manifold entertainment.

In the season about 1.800 general events with altogether about 50.000 participants are performed. Additionally, there are about 1.000 events for older people with about 20.000 participants.

Every year, since 1921 the “Dänisches Jahrestreffen” (Danish Annual Meeting) has taken place a weekend in May/June with 40 evening events on Friday and Saturday and 3 open air events at Flensburg, Schleswig and a changing places at the Westcoast on Sunday with altogether about 20.000 participants.

A number of official guests from Denmark take part in that annual meeting: The primeministers of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein and other ministers. Most of the main speakers were politicians from Denmark and members of the ethnic group. Orchestras, choirs, gymnasts and artists from both sides of the border provided the entertainment.

**Links:** [www.sydslesvig.de](http://www.sydslesvig.de), [www.syfo.de](http://www.syfo.de)