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**The idea of European unity from conception to
achievement (1918-1958). Romanian perspectives and
contributions**

ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL THESIS

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The removal of the Iron Curtain brought a fundamental reorientation in the foreign policy of Romania and other Eastern European states, guided by two major vectors – the integration in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2004) and the accession to the European Union¹. The enlargement process, the driving force of the European Union, comprised, in its fifth wave, 12 countries, including Romania². It generated a vast modernization of the administration and legislation, but also in respect to social field and the mentalities. The benefits have been twofold, with positive effects for the European Union, which strengthened its profile at international level, as an actor endowed with symbolic "soft power" capital and for the accelerated evolution of the Romanian society.

Despite all challenges of the last decade – the war in Ukraine, COVID-19 pandemic, the economic, social and energy crisis, UK's withdrawal from the European Union (2020), pressures generated by illegal migration, terrorism, proliferation of Euroskeptic, xenophobic and radical tendencies –, the European Union continued to enjoy a relatively high degree of trust among the Romanian public opinion.

Sometimes tendentiously explained by a mimetic or deficient assimilation of European values and practices, the public's receptiveness of the European idea has its roots, *de facto*, in a solid tradition. *The Europeanization* of Romanian society,

¹ The main stages in the accession process to the European Union were, after the establishment of official relations with the European Community in March 1990, the entry into force of the Association Agreement on February 1, 1995, the presentation of the official application for membership on June 22, 1995 and the launching of the negotiations with the European Union, on February 15, 2000. The negotiations ended, technically, at the Ministerial Accession Conference of December 14, 2004. The European Council in Brussels, from December 16-17, 2004, confirmed the conclusion of the negotiations and acknowledged the calendar Romania's accession, which included the signing of Accession Treaty on April 25, 2005, in Luxembourg, alongside Bulgaria. After the conclusion of the Treaty ratification process, in the Parliaments of EU member states, the European Council in Brussels confirmed on December 14-15, 2006 Romania's accession to the European Union. Romania joined EU 1 January 2007.

² The fifth wave comprised 10+2 countries. The first ten countries – Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia – joined the EU on May 1, 2004. Romania and Bulgaria were next countries joining EU on January 1, 2007, followed by Croatia on July 1, 2013.

accelerated in the 19th century by the impact of French Revolution and the idea of nation, experienced various stages. The Union of the Principalities, the massive modernization of society during the reigns of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Carol I, the independence of Romania and the Great Union from 1918 represent fundamental landmarks for connecting Romania to Europe. The European theme reached a peak in the interwar period, continued after the Second World War through the representatives of exile, and was resumed after 1989 as a major political project. Since the 1990s, the books on European subjects have generally lacked the epic thread proving the continuity of EU aspirations and unity projects in the Romanian space.

With a few notable exceptions, the European idea has been approached either fragmentarily or tangentially, within treatises on contemporary history or dedicated to international relations. In the first category, we mention the following thematic studies: *Mica Înțelegere*³, *Înțelegerea Balcanică*⁴ and *Ideea federală în perioada interbelică*⁵, by Eliza Campus. In the second category, including general studies, we cite *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* by Florin Constantiniu⁶ and *Scurtă istorie a României*, by US historian, Keith Hitchins⁷.

There are, of course, exceptions proving the rule. In this category we include the study *Românii și proiectele federale europene interbelice*⁸ by Gheorghe Sbârnă and the anthology *Europa în gândirea românească interbelică*⁹ by Ovidiu Pecican. The volume *Europa Centrală. Nevroze, dileme, utopii*¹⁰, coordinated by Adriana Babeți and Cornel Ungureanu, bears a particular relevance in relation to Central-European region. A more recent work, *Europa Centrală și tentația federalismului. Istorie și diplomatie în perioada interbelică*, by Daniel Citirigă, is noteworthy for its thematic orientation and original perspectives.

We highlight, as well, the studies dedicated to prominent politicians and diplomats, such as Nicolae Titulescu and Grigore Gafencu or the works of George Ciorănescu, approaching major directions of Romanian foreign policy and the debates

³ Eliza Campus, *Mica Înțelegere*, ediția a 2-a, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1997.

⁴ Eadem, *Înțelegerea Balcanică*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1972.

⁵ Eadem, *Ideea federală în perioada interbelică*, București, Ed. Academiei Române, 1993.

⁶ Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, ediția a IV-a revizuită și adăugită, București, Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2010.

⁷ Keith Hitchins, *Scurtă istorie a României*, București, Ed. Polirom, 2015.

⁸ Gheorghe Sbârnă, *Românii și proiectele federale europene interbelice*, București, Editura Sylvi, 2002.

⁹ Ovidiu Pecican, *Europa în gândirea românească interbelică*, Iași, Institutul European, 2008.

¹⁰ Adriana Babeți și Cornel Ungureanu (coord.), *Europa Centrală. Nevroze, dileme, utopii*, Polirom, Iași, 1997.

on the European unity, encompassing perspectives of Romanian exile after the Second World War. The last category includes the volume *Grigore Gafencu și proiectul Europei unite, Documente (1944-1956)*¹¹. The evolution of European idea in the interwar period can be found in the studies *Europa unită. De la idee la întemeiere*¹² and *România și ideea federalistă*¹³ by George Ciorănescu. Their value primarily derives from the author's profile as both theoretician and practitioner of the European federal idea. We also recall the contributions of Ștefan Delureanu to describe currents and tendencies that underpinned the debates on European unity after World War II.

The history of Europe and the ideas of European unity enjoy a vast bibliography. A complex overview, combining historical perspectives with cultural, economic and sociological reflections, is offered by the monumental work *O istorie a Europei*, by Norman Davies¹⁴. *Istoria Europei. Lupta pentru supremație de la 1453 până în prezent*, by Brendan Simms¹⁵, is remarkable for its dense and overarching information.

Multiple sides of the European idea can be found in the excellent collections of studies such as *Europe in crisis. Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917-1957*¹⁶ and *The idea of Europe from antiquity to the European Union*¹⁷.

After 1947, the European idea ceased to exist in the Romanian public space, except for marginal commercial and economic aspects, treated in the characteristic ideological key. On the other hand, as an atypical note, we recall that Romania was the first country in Central and Eastern Europe that established official relations with the European Community¹⁸.

¹¹ Mioara Anton, Laurențiu Constantiniu și Dan Taloș, *Grigore Gafencu și proiectul Europei unite, Documente (1944-1956)*, București, Editura Curtea Veche, 2013.

¹² George Ciorănescu, *Europa unită. De la idee la întemeiere*, București, Ed. Paideia 2004.

¹³ Idem, *România și ideea federalistă*, București, Ed. Enciclopedică, 1996.

¹⁴ Norman Davies, *O istorie a Europei*, București, Editura Rao, 2015.

¹⁵ Brendan Simms, *Europa. Lupta pentru supremație de la 1453 până în prezent*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2015.

¹⁶ Mark Hewitson și Matthew d'Auria (editori), *Europe in crisis. Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917-1957*, Berghahn Books, 2015.

¹⁷ Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The idea of Europe from antiquity to the European Union*, Cambridge, Woodrow Wilson Center Press și Cambridge University Press, 2002.

¹⁸ The main stages were the establishment of official relations between Romania and the European Community in 1967 by initiating negotiations for the conclusion of a series of technical-sectoral agreements for food products. They were followed by the inclusion of Romania in the Generalized System of Community Preferences (1974) and the signing, in 1980, of the Agreement on the establishment of the Romania-EEC Joint Commission and the Agreement on Industrial Products.

The topic of European unity was taken over entirely by certain representatives of the Romanian exile in Europe and USA. Despite some inherent constraints, they got involved in the debates preceding the European Communities, the cornerstones of the present European Union.

We center on a comprehensive, transversal approach to the idea of Europe and unity projects in Romania, through mirroring the main trends, currents and plans in the Central and Eastern European region or at continental level. We outlined relevant aspects for the cooperation within the League of Nations. Their main role is to contextualize and enlarge the perspectives on various unity projects in Europe, focusing on the Romanian direct involvement (*The Little Entente, The Balkan Entente*) or contributions (Aristide Briand's plan for a *Federal European Union, Paneuropa* project of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the *Danubian Confederation* etc.).

We will follow the lineage of the European idea and its remarkable moments through a comparative analysis of developments in Romania and Europe, relying on diversified documentation (unpublished or published archive documents, specialized works, memoirs, the press of the time, etc.). A large share of consulted documents came from the Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest. Other sources were various published diplomatic volumes (for example, *Documents Diplomatiques Français, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, the American official documentary fund *Foreign Relations of the United States, I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* etc.).

One of the novelties of our demarch resides in the comprehensive approach of the European idea, emphasizing the Romanian contributions. We start from the premise that a correct perspective of the idea of European unity in the Romanian space can result from a comparative analysis, with multiple angles of approach, illustrating the entire formative path, the conceptions and visions regarding Europe and its unity. We paid attention to stressing and framing, in a wider, regional and European context, some original Romanian elements and proposals regarding the ideas of unity that broadly circulated between wars. The evolution of Little Entente epitomizes the European profile of the foreign policy conducted by Romania and its small allies. Through constructive and balanced approaches, which avoided the temptations of assuming utopian models or being blocked in a rigid realism, Romania consolidated, in the 1920s and 1930s, its distinct voice and made notable contributions to the reflection on the European idea.

The first chapter, *Romania and the idea of Europe before World War I*, with an introductory role, presents a few conceptual clarifications, a brief history and a presentation of the idea of Europe in the Romanian society, drawing parallels with the Western Europe. A versatile concept, in continuous metamorphosis, the word Europe encapsulates geographical denotations and a wide array of connotations. They refer to founding mythologies, symbols, the Greek-Latin cultural and civilizational cradle, continued by Christianity, imperial-type fragmentations and unifications, the Enlightenment period and the leap forward into modernity, the scientific avant-garde, the revolutions, the nation, and lastly, the European Union project. The interconnections of interests and ideas, the exchanges and interactions between the Romanian spaces and Europe were permanent. In the first part of the 19th century, it was a programmatic engagement, among the ruling classes, on the path towards the Western civilization and culture, under the impact of the French Revolution and the idea of nation. We traced the line of Europe idea by framing key moments for the Romanian space and the continent until the achievement of national unity through the act of Great Union from 1918.

The second chapter, *Romania and Europe in the new order from Versailles*, focuses on the transformations generated at the end of the First World War following the dispartition of Empires, the reconfiguration of Europe map, with emerging new states.

We briefly presented the participation of Romania in the Paris Peace Conference and the new course of international relations built upon Wilsonian principles, the peace ideal and the preeminence of collective cooperation, facilitated by the international platform of the League of Nations. In a fluid space, marked by potential conflicts and the "resilience" of imperial mentalities, it rapidly became evident the need to cover the potential *vacuum* in Central and Eastern Europe, as well to make up for the absence of solid security guarantees, illustrated in the Covenant of the League of Nations or, later, in the Locarno Treaties (1925).

Taking into consideration these innovative trends in the European and international politics, but also the challenges derived from the deficiencies of the preventive-coercive resources of the new regional and multilateral peace architecture, we analyzed major Romanian political-diplomatic orientations carried out on multiple, interdependent bilateral-regional-multilateral levels.

We emphasized the impetus of the Romanian political decision makers, led by Nicolae Titulescu, to get involved in the construction of viable cooperation formulas, responding both to political and strategic interests, in the short and long run.

The new course that Romanian diplomacy promotes in foreign relations is summarized by the metaphorical formula of "spiritualization of frontiers", launched by the great Romanian diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu.

Titulescu privileged the creative efforts to keep the peace, security and stability of Romania by expanding cooperation and integration in various fields and policies, starting from economy, abandoning autarkic practices and opening spaces. In essence, the "spiritualization of frontiers" symbolized a climate of peace and trust, based on deep cooperation and elimination of anachronistic models in favor of extensive circulation and exchanges in all areas, across Europe.

The third chapter, *The faces of Europe in interwar Romania*, is dedicated to the maturity era for the Romanian debate related to the idea of Europe and various federalization projects on a regional or continental scale. These topics descend in the Romanian public arena, causing controversies, different positionings and attitudes from top politicians and intellectuals. Grouped around two currents, *Europeanism* and *traditionalism*, each with its own subcurrents, the participants in the big debate on Romania's development directions in Europe find themselves in a creative opposition. This ensures vitality and substance to the Romanian reflection on the place and role the country should play in Europe. The Europeanists, represented particularly by the literary critic Eugen Lovinescu and the economist Ștefan Zeletin, nourished the conviction that Romania's development was inextricably linked to the economic and societal model of the urbanized and industrialized West. The traditionalists or „gândiriști”, represented by Nichifor Crainic, the editor of "Gândirea" magazine, Lucian Blaga or Dumitru Stăniloae, reinforced the need to cultivate the traditions, values and autochthonous culture and to reorient towards Orthodox spirituality. We highlight the contributions and, above all, the impact of Romanian cultural values from the perspective of European and universal cultural heritage. This era is favourable to exchanges and interactions that mould a genuine common public and cultural space. This framework brings in a broader perspective the attempts to stimulate the European and international economic cooperation, with Romania having a substantial participation by following the tactic of encouraging multi-level dialogue.

The increase of awareness of the Romanian public regarding the unity projects in the European space occurred against the background of a political activism dedicated to peace, cooperation and security.

In conclusion, the interwar period marked a big step forward for the reflection and action processes in Romania. The ideas of unity in Europe constituted no longer external notions, landmarks and values. They were internalized in the public consciousness, and thus the pernicious logic of reactivity left space to a pro-European activism.

The fourth chapter, *Europe of the "small ones" and the game of alliances. Little Entente. Romanian hypotheses and perspectives of cooperation in Europe*, concentrates on on the first years after World War I – a key period for the rebirth and reconfiguration of Europe. In a very dynamic and yet fluid Central and Eastern European region, where revisionist impulses and imperial temptations from the defeated states coexist, Romania engaged itself in a complex game of alliances. The Romanian vision regarding the organization of the Central and Eastern European space is illustrated by the project of federation from Baltic to the Aegean Sea. The project included five states and was tenaciously promoted, at political and diplomatic level, by Take Ionescu.

On the other hand, Romania skilfully shunned federal "temptations" like the Danube Confederation, fervently promoted by France through formulas with a "variable geometry". One of these projects, with five states, would have comprised Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – with Hungary playing the role of "regional pivot". Other variant was limited to three states – Poland, Romania and Hungary.

The strategic concepts of France reshuffled along the evolution of the security environment and the Polish-Russian war, but they remained subordinated to the primordial interests: capitalizing on economic opportunities and blocking, mainly, the German expansionism and, subsidiarily, the Bolshevik advance, through the construction of a "Eastern barrier".

All these projects failed due to the practical impossibility of integrating states with structurally divergent interests into a federal cooperation structure – some victorious, others defeated, the former interested in preserving the *status quo*, the others fuelling a revisionist agenda. In this context, we analyzed the Polish "case", the premises and causes of the failure for the federalist projects supported by Józef Piłsudski, aiming to restore the borders of the old Polish-Lithuanian Union, *Rzeczpospolita*, as a basis for a larger federation, *Międzymorze* (in translation "between the seas") or *Intermarium*.

In the end, the approach among states with compatible interests naturally prevailed. They formed a common front to counteract some repeated attempts to restore the Habsburg monarchy. In this logic, three Defensive Alliance Conventions between Czechoslovakia and

Yugoslavia (August 14, 1920), Romania and Czechoslovakia (April 23, 1921) and Romania and Yugoslavia (June 7, 1921) were signed, resulting in the *Little Entente*.

Although the extended formula of alliance, promoted by Take Ionescu, did not materialize, the foundation of Little Entente marked a diplomatic success and, for Romania, the initiation of a European scope policy. It was based on the construction and integration of political-diplomatic action, but also on other plans, in a complex web of treaties and alliances.

The establishment of Little Entente resulted from the desire of Romania and its anti-revisionist allies to cooperate, on an equal footing, in an organization answering individual interests, coincident in fundamental lines: the *status quo*, peace and security in the region. The defensive factor represented an important, but not the singular, resort. The letter and spirit of founding treaties of Little Entente, as well as the European vocation proved by the three allies, display the subsequent evolution of the organization towards a regional structure with federal vocation.

The fifth chapter, *Romania and Europe in the context of comprehensive peace efforts*, briefly presents the international demarches for peace, the contributions of Romania and its small allies and the pinnacle marked by Briand-Kellog Pact. Against this background, Romania strengthened its bilateral framework and, crucially, as a member state of the Little Entente, it took important steps towards a new paradigm of action in Europe. This came into being through the Pact of Organization of the Little Entente, signed on 16th of February 1933.

The sixth chapter, *Quo vadis, Europe? The European federal project between the apotheosis and "The Great Depression"* is dedicated, on one hand, to the most important large-scale federalization projects such as the plan conceived by the Prime Minister of France, Aristide Briand, to create the *Federal European Union* or *PanEuropa*, designed by count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. A large space was dedicated to Romania's perspectives and contributions in the debates generated by these initiatives, particularly Aristide Briand's plan. The federal idea experienced a meteoric apotheosis. It was followed by an accelerated drawback compounded by intensified effects of the Great Depression, the gliding of certain democratic regime to extreme right, the fragmentations and the new order announced by the *directorate* of the Four Powers.

Against the background of some regional projects in a crisis context, such as the *Austro-German customs union* and the *Tardieu Plan*, Romania opted for the consolidation of alliance policies meant to guarantee its immediate and long-term interests.

The seventh chapter, *The Age of Extremes. The strength of unity for the small versus the law of force for the big ones. An avant la lettre cooperation model for a united Europe: The Little Entente*, concentrated on two dimension. We presented the flourishing period of the Little Entente as an organization which, by the efforts of Romania and its allies, witnessed a gradual development and progressive openings from the initial dominantly defensive core.

The Organization Pact represented a genuine treaty to reposition the Little Entente on a new basis, as a *sui generis* regional federative structure. This act was remarkable for its condensation and clarity but, above all, for its unique way to organize and adopt decisions.

The signing of the Organization Pact was possible due to the vision and political will proved by Titulescu and his Yugoslav and Czechoslovak homologues. The Pact was, however, the result of a gradual process of evolvement not only at political level, but also in the profound social layers of Romania and its partner countries.

Through the actions of the little and strengthened alliance, Romania and the neighboring states built a common front of action in Central and South-Eastern Europe, opposed to policies of force, revisionism and the tendency to divide Europe into blocks. It mainly focused on the philosophy of cooperation and integration. The institutional and legal framework of the two organizations was almost similar. It relied on stable structures such as the Permanent Council and the Secretariat, clear rules such as rotation, equality, unanimity and the veto right. As a distinct note, the Little Entente, as a "higher international unity" and an increased internal cohesion derived from longer practice, had a more prominent integrative profile.

The Pact of Organization of Little Entente and its principles that were extensively replicated in the Balkan Entente (1934), represented the democratic reaction of the small states to the tectonic movements that shook the Wilsonian principles and the Versailles order. By their principles and action methods, Little Entente and Balkan Entente evolved beyond the scope of classic treaties or larger but uncompleted projects, such as the *European Federal Union* and *Pan-Europe*.

As member of two organizations, Romania acted as a balancing and mediating between the allied states in central and southeastern Europe. In this context, focusing on identifying formulas to strengthen cooperation on the "Eastern flank" of Europe, we included the proposal of a "Oriental Locarno" supported by Paris and Moscow and the negotiations carried out by Titulescu to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the USSR.

The tension of the European scene, the "failure of the Stresa front", the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy (October 1935) and the occupation of Rhineland demilitarized zone by Germany (March 7, 1936) proved the collapse of the Versailles system. The final blow was given at Munich Conference (September 29-30, 1938), the climax of Franco-English conciliatory policies towards Germany.

Circumstantial "crisis" projects, such as the *Hodža Plan* or the endeavours of the small allies to preserve a climate of security and cooperation in the Danube basin, by respecting the treaties and maintaining the *status quo*, counted for little in the European security equation. At a time of increasing cleavages and fragmentations in Europe, amid the emphasis on the policies of "the right of force" instead of "the force of law", the course of events leading to the outbreak of the Second World War proved irreversible.

Among the allies and the governments in exile from London, in the first years of the conflagration, there was an effervescence of federalist projects, concentrated around the *Federal Union* and illustrated by numerous thematic publications. Among the Eastern European exiles, we mention the meteoric initiative of a *Free Romanian Movement*, launched on May 4, 1941 by V. V. Tilea, which could have brought interesting contributions to the debates among exiles, the negotiations on a *Czech-Polish Union*, undermined by the recurring problem of Teschen and the Yugoslav-Hellenic negotiations, burdened by similar disputes, regarding the establishment of a *Balkan Union*.

The federal projects evolved along with the front. In the summer of 1940, London took into consideration a series of projects such as a union with France (June 1940), the idea of a post-war Europe made up of "five great nations". Three "confederations" would have been added, consisting in small states from Northern and Central Europe and Balkans and united in a Council of Europe (1940). No less than 8 Memoranda were consequently drafted between September 1942 and February 1943, which included the issue of Transylvania. In USA, the Consultative Committee for Postwar Foreign Policy presented, in June 1942, the proposal to create a *Union of Eastern European states*.

The attitude of Moscow to the federal projects had the following red lines: the assurance of strategic glacis, the spheres of influence and the recognition of territories occupied by USSR. The Eden-Stalin talks in Moscow (December 1941), held during the most difficult times for the Russian front, highlighted a circumstantial openness from Kremlin. It gradually faded away as the allies were making progress on the front. At Foreign Ministers Conference hosted in Moscow (October 18 - November 1, 1943), the federation projects were

abandoned amid Stalin's fear that they would have provided a "sanitary cordon" against the USSR. After Teheran, the shift in the balance of forces was reflected by a declining Soviet appetite for federal projects. The central Soviet interest, reflected in a series of documents such as the "Maiski plan" (January 11, 1944), aimed at creating the security belt.

The Second World War generated enormous human and material losses. It destroyed the balance of power and separated Europe into political-ideological blocs. What kind of Europe? At the end of conflagration, this was the big question, obviously encompassing the dynamics of relations between allies and with those defeated and, above all, the way to solve the German "problem".

In the **last chapter**, *Europe united from concept to achievement. Perspectives and contributions of Romanian exile*, we focus on the impact of Cold War and evolution of two Europes, separated by the Iron Curtain.

Allied unity swiftly disappeared and gave way to a structural ideological antagonism between the Western and Eastern blocs. It was highlighted by the famous "Long Telegram" sent from Moscow by George Kennan in February 1946 and by the syntagm "Cold War". In 1947, the launching of "Marshall Plan" was followed by a Soviet reply, exposed by Zhdanov. It was the final step before the beginning of "Cold War", with USA and USSR as main protagonists. A dense network of supranational institutions was created in the West, including the World Bank (July 1944), the International Monetary Fund (December 1945), the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (1947) – grouping participants from "Marshall Plan", the "Brussels Treaty" (March 17, 1948) and the North Atlantic Treaty (April 4, 1949). The "Soviet reply" consisted in a progressive domination of the satellite countries and the establishment, in 1947, of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform). The reconstruction of Western Europe was carried out starting from the desire to avoid a new conflagration, under the banner of unity and driven by economic incentives, the primary catalysts for political action.

After long negotiations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been launched on April 8, 1949. Important agreements on Germany were initialed in Washington with the major purpose of granting an autonomy compatible with the occupation exerted by the allies. They kept supreme authority and could modify any legislative or administrative decision made by the German authorities. The allies acted exclusively in areas such as disarmament and demilitarization, reparations, decartelization, decentralization, controls in the Ruhr,

restitutions, foreign interests in Germany, Foreign Affairs, compliance with the federal and states constitutions, trade control.

As regards Romania and other countries caught on the Soviet orbit, the idea of European unity was transferred, by force of circumstances, to the representatives of exile, in main European capitals or USA. Despite the fragmentations caused by political-doctrinal differences, partisan or personal interests, the Romanian exile, through a series of prominent representatives, ensured a distinct and original voice within the great project of European unity. Contributions had been brought by previous experiences, derived from the Europeanization of Romanian society, started in the first part of the 19th century and enhanced through the following process of accelerated modernization, the reflexes of democratic cooperation created by the activities within the League of Nations. The debates on large scale initiatives like the United States of Europe and Pan-Europe, but especially in organizations such as Little Entente and the Balkan Entente. They produced, on a small scale, *avant la lettre*, institutional frameworks and principles of cooperation that preceded with a potential role of model, in our view, the emergence of European Communities.

The Congress of Europe, organized between May 7-10, 1948, in The Hague, under the leadership of Winston Churchill, provided, after the war, the most important platform to promote in an organized framework the visions of European unity. On this occasion, Grigore Gafencu, in his capacity as designated member of the Congress Presidium alongside personalities like Paul van Zeeland, Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, Hendrik Brugmans, stated that Europe could not exist as long as the "arbitrary divisive line" was kept and lacked the "validity of a legitimate border". During the congress meetings, other members of exile such as Nicolae Caranfil, Leontin Jean Constantinescu, Emil Ghilezan, Mihail Fărcășanu and Iancu Zissu defended the cause of a united Europe. The efforts to coagulate Romanian exile in support of the European unity project are illustrated by Grigore Gafencu's initiative to create, on June 1, 1948, the *Romanian Group for a United Europe* - the first Eastern European organization affiliated to the European Union of Federalists.

Other platforms for the European voice of Romanian exile were the *Commission for the Integrity of Europe*, established at the end of 1948 under the leadership of Gabriel Bădărău or the *Commission for Central and Eastern Europe*, a structure within the *European Movement for Eastern Europe*, launched on August 25, 1949, in Strasbourg, under the chairmanship of Harold Macmillan. In this framework, Leontin Constantinescu elaborated the report *Eléments d'une politique de l'Est Européen*. He pleaded in favor of European unity

on moral, political and historical grounds, by also joining the agricultural and industrial resources of East and West. We also mention the Youth Commission, with rapporteur George Ciorănescu, who distinguished himself within the Commission for Central and Eastern Europe.

The European unity did not constitute *prima facie* of the actions carried out by the Romanians exiled in the USA. The representation of exile gained a clearer profile, as the exiles merged in structures such as the *Romanian National Committee* (RNC), founded on April 6, 1949. RNC acted as a Romanian section of the *Assembly of Captive European Nations* (ACEN), the general forum of all the National Committees in exile, subordinated to the *National Committee for Free Europe*. As the Soviet domination was gaining ground in Central and South-Eastern Europe, the cause of European unity asserted itself more and more prominently in Western Europe, under the umbrella of the European Movement, with strong echoes in the USA. We emphasized the endeavours of Grigore Gafencu, supported by other members of the Romanian exile, former diplomats and politicians, to coordinate with structures of the East-European exile for promoting the causes of democracy and European unity. They were reflected in the "Declaration of the Aims and Principles of Liberation of the Central and Eastern European Peoples" drafted on Gafencu's initiative and issued on February 11, 1951. The cause of the future integration of Central and Eastern Europe with Western Europe was also fostered by ACEN, a body established in 1954, including Raoul Bossy as "coordinator" for the Romanian exile. In this context, we also mention the resolution *European integration and accession to the Council of Europe* (December 19, 1954), drafted on the basis of a report by Brutus Coste.

Involving the exiles on a large scale proved to be impossible due to limited interest emphasized by organizational difficulties, lack of resources, fragmented objectives and political disputes between the exile groupings. Nevertheless, Romania was represented, in the European Movement through the programmatic action of emblematic personalities such as Grigore Gafencu, George Ciorănescu, Gabriel Bădărău, Leontin Constantinescu, V.V. Tilea and others.

Considering the aspects resulting from the research of presented documentation, we can affirm that the European idea had, in the Romanian society and mentalities, a solid tradition and an uninterrupted course, starting from the first decades of the 19th century. Especially in the early period, the duplications of normative and institutional practices or local adaptations of cultural models from Western countries were present. However, in our

view, Romania's approach to Western Europe, was far from being tributary to a mechanical and univocal reception and it involved *de facto* exchanges and interferences with mutual advantages in political, economic and cultural terms.

The path of the European idea remains nonuniform, with cyclical periods of impetus, stagnation or even regression, inherent challenges, resulting from the process of building a *sui generis* organization or the tendency to return to lowest common denominator, particularly visible during periods of crisis. There are opportunities as well, in need of a tactful and courageous valorization, by correctly assessing the realities of an international environment swiftly reshaping.

First and foremost, we emphasized the actions of exiled personalities and the *continuity factor* underlying the Romanian perspectives on the united Europe project, even after the installation of the communist regime in Romania. The moment of maximum assertion of the united Europe desideratum in the West was marked by the construction of the European Communities. This topic was removed from the official agenda of the Eastern satellites. In practice, Romania, through pro-European exiled leaders such as Grigore Gafencu, had a credible voice, a thematic portfolio and initiatives bringing added value to the evolution of the European idea. The actions designed to coalesce the Eastern European exile enjoyed the Romanian support provided by different representatives. This entered the paradigm of building a common front of the East as an alternative to the policies, ideology and official narratives of Soviet origin.

The period we concentrate on, between the end of the First World War and the 1950s, until the creation of European Communities, represents the founding stage and, from Romania's perspective, the eloquent proof of the added value created by extensive cooperation for the unity of Europe.