

“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY CLUJ NAPOCA
Faculty of History and Philosophy

- PhD Thesis Summary -

*The Relationship Between Romania and Hungary
in the Perspective of the European
and Euro-Atlantic Membership*

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*The Relationship Between Romania and Hungary in the Perspective of the
European and Euro-Atlantic Membership*

- SUMMARY -

European political environment lived dramatic transformation after the collapse of communism, European reconstruction and expansion of its values and principles to the area behind the "Iron Curtain" becoming one of the most important values of the world today.

Thus, it is noted that Soviet changed policy, following the Soviet Communists came to power led by Mikhail S. Gorbachev, by triggering actions perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness), caused the end of communist regimes in Central Europe. Moreover, promoting greater openness to the West resulted accelerated erosion of the communist structures, both internal pressure exerted from among their own parties and civil society.

In this context, the fall of Communist regimes became imminent, receiving characteristics of a game of "dominoes", beginning with changes in Hungary (February 1989), followed by free elections in Poland (June 1989), tearing down the Berlin Wall in East Germany (October 1989) peak changes in Bulgaria, "velvet revolution" in Czechoslovakia (November 1989) and ending with the bloody revolution in Romania (December 1989).

As a reaction to the collapse of totalitarian ideological system, democracy has entered regions characterized by a high degree of ethno-cultural diversity, regions where stability has been provided until recently by such dictatorial methods. In these countries, who regained independence, the transition to democracy has encountered numerous obstacles, many of which are likely ethnic, linguistic or cultural. In this context, there can be a sensitive gap between some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, characterized by a lower degree of cultural diversity, linguistic, and other countries in the region, where the diversity is increased, sometimes operating as a brake while maintaining the path of democratization and outbreaks of regional instability.

The end of the East-West conflict has brought a new series of open questions concerning the nature and role of human communities, the independent states, the activities of "old" great powers in which the development is required to be followed by former socialist countries, from which the Western countries adopt attitudes that differentiated them (some received in NATO, other European Union - EU, while others ignored)¹.

However, in the early '90s, the diplomatic and academic discussions about the Central Europe were related to the problem of security in Europe, particularly the fears caused by the Yugoslav conflicts and disputes in the Czech-Slovak space, context in which there was a series of historical and political assessments of the soundness of European construction as it resulted after the Paris Peace Treaties (1919-1920).

Paris Peace Treaties have established a new organization of Central Europe. Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919 between the Allies and Germany, established the loss of Eastern Silesia and Breslau (Poznan) area for Poland and the creation of a Polish corridor to the Baltic Sea, which included the Free City of Danzig (Gdansk). The Treaty of Saint-Germain, with Austria, signed on September 10, 1919, stated the annexation of Bukovina to Romania, lost of Bohemia to the new Czechoslovak state, the southern Poland, Carniola (Slovenia) for Serbia and the South Tyrol for Italy. There was also prohibited the union of Austria with Germany (Anschluss). A very important issue was the signing of the Treaty of minorities, which initially granted protection for the great powers for them. Pressed by Romania and the other winning

¹ Zăpârțan, Liviu-Petru – *Poziția Uniunii Europene în relațiile internaționale*, în Pop, Flore și Gherghina, Sergiu (coord.) – *Provocarea Europeană. Proceduri și implicații ale aderării României*, Editura Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 80;

countries, the treaty was amended to provide equal rights and freedoms in the states. Thus there was respected national sovereignty and collective security conditions and settles ethnic disputes².

In this international context, appears the U.S. Central concept, a concept that draws a geopolitical representation with several wings: South Central Europe (Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria), Central Middle (Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland), and North Central (Baltic States)³. This form of Central Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Black Sea was meant to signal that the U.S. is seeking cooperation in the area, not excluding ab initio a member from NATO integration. But how the American concept was introduced, one of the leading specialists / diplomats used by Washington in Central Europe and in the Balkans suggested the idea of phasing potting region into NATO. First the core, and then flanks. As you know, Central and Middle Europe was covered by the umbrella of Euro-Atlantic security since the Madrid (1997), and flanks from the summit in Prague (2002).

It also develops French concept of "Central and Eastern Europe"⁴, heir of the prewar concept of "sanitary cordon" which involves the inclusion of all states of the EU's eastern border with Russia in this vast region. The concept will be developed later to justify the EU's eastward expansion, and it is now evident as the European Neighborhood Policy, regarding the relations with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

The dynamic of Etnopolitical conflict, a relatively large number of secessionist movements, autonomist claims, and examples of devolution or tensions among communities speaking different languages shows that the system of guaranteeing universal human rights is not enough to give a sense of collective security for ethnic minorities and cultural need⁵.

The international community has tried to respond to these issues through the development and state imposition of standards of behavior that were meant to supplement existing human rights protection system. In 1991, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe⁶ issued a statement about the need to protect minority rights and the institution of High Commissioner for

² Titulescu, Nicolae - *Politica externă a României – 1937*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1994, pp. 265-277;

³ Holbrooke, Richard - *America, a European Power*, în *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, Number 2, March/April 1995, pp.38-51;

⁴ Chereji, Cristian-Radu - *The Meaning of Central Europe in the 90s*, în Vasile Pușcaș (editor) - *Central Europe since 1989*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, p. 20;

⁵ Salat, Levente - *Multiculturalismul liberal: bazele normative ale existenței minoritare autentice*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2001;

⁶ Currently the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – OSCE;

National Minorities was founded in 1993. In 1992 the United Nations (UN) sign a declaration regarding the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and the Council of Europe⁷ drafted the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, presented to the membership of the Member States at the end of the same year. Also under the Council of Europe, was adopted in 1994 by the Council of Ministers, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (document essential for relations between majority and minority), which was provided to Member States' accession in 1995. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities stated that it is part of the international protection of human rights and as such constitutes an area of international cooperation and Contracting Parties undertake to promote conditions for national minorities to preserve and to develop cultural traits, the essential elements of their identity such as religion, traditions, cultural heritage, refraining from any policy or practice that these people be treated against their will, those persons have the right to freedom of expression (of opinion, communication in their own language, without consideration of borders and without interference by public authorities, according to art. 9) Contracting Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population on a geographical area where minorities live, in order to achieve the rights and their freedoms⁸.

After the fall of communism, relations between Romania and Hungary have developed mainly under the influence of geopolitical considerations, depending on the convergence of common interests. And these considerations have been seen differently from one side or the other, from different perspectives, in recent years.

The presence of ethnocultural diversity in Romania is a reality that can not be ignored. In Romania there is an ethnic Hungarian minority (cca.7% of total population) in some localities in Transylvania representing over 50% of the total population⁹ or even 90%.

Romania's historical past, characterized by numerous conflicts, often extremely bloody, is closely related to relations between majority and minority ethnic Hungarian population, and to relations Romania has established over time with neighbors, Hungary in particular¹⁰.

⁷ At a time when the European Union had no criteria for monitoring the processes of democratization (until the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997), Council of Europe was a sufficiently prestigious institution that the belonging to it also meant a guarantee of democratic journey for recently emerged from totalitarianism members;

⁸ Zăpârțan, Liviu-Petru – *Relațiile Internaționale*, Editura Studia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pag. 232;

⁹ Hungarians from Romania is one of the largest ethnic minorities in Europe. According to official 2002 census, 1,431,807 people, 6.6% of the population, were said to be Hungarians;

¹⁰ Hungary also had a past full of conflicts of this kind;

Romanian-Hungarian relations problem was, is and probably will be a very important issue for peace in Central Europe region and for European security.

Over the centuries there were numerous examples of cooperation and conflict between the two countries.

The history of the Romanian-Hungarian relations in the twentieth century proves that present and future problems can't be solved by widening conflicts.

The current international context, characterized by the states fight to avoid conflicts of ethnic nature has made its mark upon the bilateral relations between Romania and Hungary, and the disputes between the two countries is a prerequisite for their existence in the European and Euro- Atlantic.

In recent years, Romania and Hungary have proven that they are aware of the need for peaceful coexistence in this space on a side of Europe, which had been for centuries a source string of armed conflict. Also showed that the two countries know their vocation and their right to membership of EU in this civilization.

***Conclusion on
"Romanian-Hungarian relations in the perspective of integration in
European and Euro-Atlantic structures"***

Romanian-Hungarian relations have always been direct subordinated to the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, whose provisions have hampered the relations between the two countries. Also, the relations were dominated by "Transylvanian question", the object of the dispute being to whom this space belongs: to Hungary or Romania, and the situation of the Hungarian population in Romania.

After signing the Treaty of Trianon, a part of the population of ethnic Hungarians remained outside Hungary which led to defining a new component in domestic and foreign policies of a neighboring state that is the protection of the Hungarian minority outside Hungary, especially since there are relatively numerically significant Hungarian minority in all seven countries with which Hungary has borders.

In 1920, the Treaty of Trianon provided annexation of Transylvania, Partium and a part of the Banat to Romania. In addition to Romanian and Saxon, about 1.3 million Hungarians were living in the territory newly formed in the surface of 102.200 km². Moreover, the treaty was accompanied by a convention of nationality, signed at Paris in 1919 to stabilize the situation of so many nationalities. Article 11 of the Convention specified that Romania would agree that the Saxons and Szeklers of Transylvania have autonomy in matters of education and religion under state control, but it was not ratified by the Convention.

However, considering the number of Hungarians in Romania, about 1.4 million people, none of the bilateral relations of Hungary in the late 80s and early 90s has attracted international attention as did the relationship with Romania. Remarkable in the relations from the late '80s is that, under its policy aimed at "protecting Hungarians everywhere", Hungary has managed a series of steps in addition to international organizations, succeeded, in February 1989 to establish the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva to adopt a resolution were convicted Romania for abuses in violation of human rights.

We do not intend here to resume the issues raised along Thesis, especially since a number of conclusions and observations were proposed at the end of some chapters, yet it must summarize the main aspects of the analytical steps taken by Romania and Hungary as the (re) establish a framework conducive to bilateral relations.

Thus, given the past history of the two states, and "Trianon shadow" which was (and still is) the center of bilateral relations, however, we try to distinguish several stages in the Romanian-Hungarian relations in the period after 1989. We must make a clear distinction to Hungary, the Treaty of Trianon is not a treaty but a "dictator", after which Hungary have been abducted territories which are considered as Hungarian.

The first phase, the "transitional phase" in the bilateral relations plan covers the 1990-1996 periods, when between the two countries there were only relations alternating periods of optimism with strong concern.

Thus, although in the early '90s, there is an optimist climate in the relations with Hungary, recorded in signing of military and cultural agreements (1990) and in an agreement "Open Skies" (1991), there were a number of concerns in the rise of Romanian nationalist parties in this case Romanian Hearth.

While Romania and Hungary had strained relations, military cooperation was very good. In fact, Romania had twice as many joint military activities with Hungary than with any other Eastern European country. Military cooperation between the two countries was revealed by the military cooperation treaty signed during the visit of Defense Minister Gheorghe Tinca, in 1994 in Budapest, when the Romanian official has proposed cooperation in the production of military equipment, mutual exchanges for officers and regular consultation at Defense Ministers level.

Also, early 90s was marked by ethnic tensions in Cluj-Napoca, especially the violent episode in March 1990 in Targu Mures. It is worth noting that events in Tirgu Mures, which escalated into an ethnic conflict had attracted the attention of the international community, Romania was ordering internationally to provide greater respect for minorities.

However, the bilateral relations have been encumbered by an inability to overcome the populist rhetoric, Romanians promoting an intolerant rhetoric regarding the rights of national minorities and Hungarians promoting a revanchist rhetoric, marked by "Trianon Syndrome."

The Treaty of Trianon is the main axis around which revolves historiography of the relations between the two countries, namely Romania and Hungary. In general, the treaty is out of the context of the

system of treaties of Versailles (1919-1920), which really changed the political geography of the most contentious areas of twentieth century Europe - Central and South Est. If the Romanian historical studies, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have positive effects of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungarian historiography is far from accepting its beneficial role, namely the recognition of Hungary as an independent sovereign nation state. Furthermore, a constant number of studies made by the Hungarian researchers in the Treaty of Trianon had a single perspective: the provisions on border changes given to the new political entities which led to the ruin of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Hungarian perspective by which Treaty of Trianon was a great injustice to Hungary, the idea was amplified by historians, and political, and made the interests of Central European states can not be harmonized for a period of 80 years, this being mentioned in the international symposium in Satu Mare in May 1998 – “1918 - End and beginning an era ”- by an analyst of this period, a Hungarian historian Tibor Hajdú:" In the periodicals in Hungary there was a period of eight decades of nonsense polemics for the responsibilities of political parties in Hungary on the Treaty of Trianon. It now seems that scientific principles can replace passions... "¹¹

Furthermore, during the period which we refer, bilateral relations have been constantly affected by Hungary's concerns in terms of Romanians attitude towards the Hungarians, which increased with the inclusion of PRM and Unity Party in the coalition government from 1994 to 1995 period.

Given that along Thesis we presented how Romania and Hungary have been received in NATO and the European Union, we note that, while Romania and Hungary were disputing about the situation of Hungarian minority in Romania, two international organizations thought of a plan which included securing the Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, in 1993, the Copenhagen European Council, European Union announced the principle of EU enlargement to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but has defined the criteria that candidate countries will have to meet to become members of the Community. Previously, in 1989, the PHARE program was launched, which was originally thought to stimulate Poland and Hungary in order to rebuild national economies (PHARE is the acronym in English the word "Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy).

Copenhagen European Council not only endorsed the principle of EU enlargement to the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but it also defined the criteria that candidate countries will have to meet to become members of the Community.

These criteria relate to the stability of the institutions which guarantee democracy, rule of law, human rights, respect for minorities and their protection (political criteria), there is a functioning economy

¹¹ Ghişa, Alexandru – *Romania & Hungary at the Beginning of the 20th Century – Establishing Diplomatic Relations (1918-1921)*, Romanian Cultural Institute, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, pag. 14;

*market and the ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union EU (economic criteria), the ability to assume obligations of EU membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (criterion concerning adoption of the *acquis communautaire*).*

Moreover, both Romania and Hungary were headed towards NATO to ensure the security in this part of Europe, marked by conflicts and ethnic tensions, being relevant in January 1994 that Romania was the first post-communist country which joined the Partnership for Peace, a program designed to enhance stability and security in Europe.

To ensure its security requirements, Romania was the first post-communist country that has signed the Partnership for Peace (Partnership for Peace - PFP) in January 1994¹². Partnership for Peace is a program of bilateral cooperation between NATO countries and individual organizations. However, documents of PFP framework establish a number of areas of cooperation, including "transparency on defense plans and budgets, ensuring democratic control of defense forces, development of cooperative military relations with NATO, long-term development of armed forces compatible with those of NATO members."

Given the international context and European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Romania and Hungary, and the awareness of both countries of the importance of establishing bilateral relations to ensure security in the area, we identify **the second stage**, which most researchers have called it a "**historic reconciliation**" and signing the Treaty of Understanding, cooperation and good neighborly relations between Romania and Hungary, on September 16, 1996.

Thus, in the international context of Central Europe marked by the signing of Hungarian-Slovak treaty in March 1995, Romania was faced with a special situation, threatening to be addressed internationally as a no democratic country, one potential source of tension in the region. To deal with this situation, political leaders in Bucharest had to find a way to make a deal with Hungary, which like to thank both the international community: the majority population, but the Hungarian community in Romania, too.

After a period of intense pressure and diplomatic isolation¹³, political relations between the two countries have improved¹⁴ beginning with 1994, Romania and Hungary developing specific political and

¹² Also in that year was the second country after Poland, which joined the Individual Partnership Program and entered into a bilateral dialogue with NATO;

¹³ During 1994 there have been a number of vindictive statements of some Hungarian officials, one of these speeches is the Hungarian Foreign Minister of that period, Laszlo Kovacs, the view that "the border between Romania and Hungary may be amended by peaceful means";

¹⁴ In 1995 the trade between the two countries exceeded 400 million dollars;

*military relations*¹⁵. Coming to power of a socialist government in Budapest with a moderate political orientation and more obvious expression of the desire to Bucharest to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic structures led to an obvious change in the relations between the two countries.

*The idea of being accepted under the umbrella of Western security structures and alternative isolation led governments of both countries to try overcoming the divergences. Solving the problem of relations between the two countries was of interest to political leaders of the times, relevant to the fact that since 1993, Foreign Minister Melescanu said that "a considerable part of the Romania's roads into Europe pass through Hungary."*¹⁶

*Also, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn, in a government's political platform presentation made to Parliament said: "... this government will complete the process of accession to EU and NATO ... the government will subordinate everything else to that purpose."*¹⁷

In this context the signing of a bilateral treaty became mandatory; especially the desire to Euro-Atlantic integration of the two countries transferred in an international plan the relations between them. Thus, during 1994 and 1995, Romanian and Hungarian negotiators have completed several meetings to draw up a bilateral treaty of good neighborliness.

In this context, the power in Bucharest, led by President Ion Iliescu has endorsed the project to achieve a "historic reconciliation" with Hungary, which meant reconciliation and improved relations between majority and ethnic Hungarians in Romania.

The project designed by Romanian leaders was favored by the coming to power in 1994 in Budapest of Socialists, led by Gyula Horn, aspect that changed the regional climate and ethnic relations, the left government having a more moderate vision. We must point out the optical gap of the new prime minister since his predecessor, Jozsef Antall declared before his appointment as prime minister that "... in my soul, I think that will be prime minister for 15 million Hungarians". In fact, neo-conservative governments of Hungary (József Antall and Boross Péter during May 1990-July 1994) led a largely symbolic policy, arguing that the revival of the Hungarian nation, freshly released from communism, can not be complete without reunification at least spiritual, of The Great Hungary.

¹⁵ In 1992, Romania and Hungary signed a new bilateral agreement within the cartel "Open Skies";

¹⁶ Phinnemore, David - *Romania and Euro-Atlantic Integration since 1989: a Decade of Frustration?*, în *Post-Communist Romania. Coming in Terms with Transitions*, Light, Duncan and David Phinnemore (ed.), Palgrave, 2001, New York, p. 256;

¹⁷ Atanassova Nedeva Ivanka - *The Impact of Ethnic Issues on The Security of South Eastern Europe*, Report Commissioned by the NATO Office of Information and Press, June 1999, p. 50;

Given these issues it is noted the moderate vision of the new government, framework that made possible the understanding between Budapest and Bratislava in 1995, in the treaty signed by Hungary and Slovakia, there are mostly covered the issues on the bilateral agenda.

Returning to the Romanian-Hungarian relations we noted that the issue regarding the completion of a political agreement between the two countries was closely linked to the dissent in respect of the Council of Europe Recommendation 1201, the Romanian authorities with the view that it would serve as a framework for legal requests for territorial autonomy of the Hungarian ethnics. Fear of the Romanian authorities in this regard had some foundation because Article 11 of the Recommendation stipulates that "in regions where the majority, persons belonging to national minorities have the right to autonomous adequate local governments or a special status properly specific historical and territorial situation and in accordance with its national legislation."

Also, the Hungarians refuse to introduce in the Treaty any reference to recognition of the borders between Romania and Hungary. Hungarian party refusal was regarded in Romania as another attempt to revise the boundaries in the context of transition to democracy of Central and Eastern European states.

After lengthy internal and interstate debates, Romania and Hungary have reached a consensus on how to be prepared a basic treaty, so that in September 16, 1996, it was signed in Timisoara.

As I stated along the Thesis, the awareness that the treaty was necessary for both countries in order to have a real chance to accede to the European and Euro-Atlantic structures has led to the Treaty, art. 7 to be explicitly provided the mutual support for joining NATO, EU and Western Europe.

ARTICLE 7 - Treaty of Understanding, cooperation and good neighborly relations between Romania and Hungary (Official Gazette no. 250/16 October 1996)

- (1) *Contracting Parties shall expand relations and cooperation in international organizations, including regional and sub regional. They will support each other in their integration into the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Western European Union.*
- (2) *The Contracting Parties, together with other interested European countries, will work together to achieve regional and sub regional cooperation projects and other forms of collaboration to accelerate the development of participating countries to encourage them in areas of common interest - economic, industrial agriculture, ecology, transport,*

telecommunications and others. They will encourage participation of those directly concerned, in accordance with the laws of the Contracting Parties to these projects and forms of cooperation.

The signing of the Treaty was an important signal launched in the West, the historic reconciliation between the two countries is a positive example, contrasting with Yugoslavian image.

We appreciate that in the "historical reconciliation" stage restoring a positive climate is a big part, in which majority-minority relationship, that the Romanian-Hungarian relations, since shortly after the normalization of Romanian-Hungarian relations, the main party representative Hungarians DAHR was part of the ruling coalition.

To be clearly revealed the importance attached by both countries ethnic minorities has made clear that "national minorities living in Hungary / Romania ... have the right, exercised individually or jointly with other members of their group, to freely express, preserve and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity. Accordingly, they have the right to establish and maintain their own institutions, educational, cultural and religious organizations and associations, which may use the voluntary financial and other contributions and public support in accordance with law "(Article 15, section 2). Also, the Treaty recognized "the right of persons belonging to the Romanian minority in Hungary and the Hungarian minority people in Romania to freely use their mother tongue in private and in public, orally and in writing. The two countries will take measures to ensure that they can learn their mother tongue and have adequate opportunities to be educated in that language, in the State education system at all levels and forms, according to their needs. Contracting Parties shall ensure the conditions to enable and use minority languages in dealings with local authorities, administrative and judicial, in accordance with current national legislation and international commitments made by both Parties. These people have the right to use their full name in their native language and enjoy their official recognition. In areas inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to those minorities, each Party shall allow the display in the minority language, traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public "(Article 15, section 3).

Also in the Treaty was provided that persons belonging to the Hungarian minority in Romania and Romanian minority in Hungary have maintained the right "contacts across frontiers, and the right to participate in national and international activities.

Given the past history and attempts to assimilate ethnic minorities made both Romania and Hungary, the Treaty was specified that the two states shall refrain from policies or practices aiming the assimilation against the national minorities will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation "(Article 15, section 9). Also, as stipulated in the bilateral act, Romania and Hungary will

not perform actions to change the proportion of population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities.

Thus, DAHR's participation in central government in Romania led to a purge process boosting exclusive ethnic content of the relationship between Romania and Hungary. Since then I consider that DAHR can be considered as an actor able to handle not only the aspirations of the Hungarian communities, with no intervention of the "parent state."

As expressed before, we can clearly say that the double reconciliation plan Romanian-Hungarian and majority-minority plane was a passport to European Union, especially NATO, both for Romania and for Hungary.

How the two countries have tried a historic reconciliation through the Treaty of understanding, cooperation and good neighborliness can lead to a conclusion as simple as it is important for the future existence of the two countries, namely: the importance of the bilateral treaty Romanian-Hungarian consists primarily of mere existence. Without signing the treaty the chances of Hungary and Romania to be invited to join NATO would be minimal¹⁸. Thus, the common aspiration to join NATO and the activities of the Partnership for Peace cooperation led to the strengthening of mutual trust, which makes both governments to need the treaty, the parties being willing to make sacrifices even for adopting it.

The third stage identified in the analysis of the relations between the two countries and their international situation have called a "**NATO stage**", given the steps which both countries have done immediately after the Treaty basis for accession to NATO.

Changing of power in Bucharest in late 1996 meant the start of a race of "recovery" for NATO, in light of the Madrid summit. In the regional policy plan this meant an intense campaign near Central European states, including Hungary.

Signing The Treaty on good neighborly relations and cooperation between Romania and Ukraine and its ratification in July 1997 was another clear signal given by Romania regarding the intention to join NATO - ratification of the Ukrainian Treaty took place only a few days before the Madrid Summit.

Also, the new Romanian government attempt to bring evidence on Romania's eligibility for membership. This policy was reflected in the country's participation in UN and NATO forces in efforts to maintain peace in Bosnia, Albania, the Persian Gulf, Angola and Somalia. Moreover, the new leadership of

¹⁸ Hungary joined NATO in March 12, 1999, and from May 1, 2004 is a member of the European Union. Romania became a NATO member in March 29, 2004, and in January 1, 2007 became a member of the European Union;

the country has distanced Romania from the Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia. This approach to foreign policy has clearly contributed to its image and has facilitated access to negotiations.

Another priority of the new government after elections in 1996 was the economic reform, given the damaged state of Romania. Thus, active involvement in reform, including price liberalization and privatization has a number of positive signals abroad. In addition, the government firmly stated that one of the main goals of economic and social measures implemented was to “create conditions for that Romania to be admitted into NATO and to be allowed to clear negotiations regarding EU integrations”¹⁹.

However, before Romania, Hungary 'efforts were successful in 1997 when at the July summit in Madrid, the country was invited along with the Czech Republic and Poland to join NATO. Even though Romania has not been invited to join Madrid, our country has been nominated among countries that have made significant progress on the line that the criteria for NATO membership.

This step is relevant because, by including Hungary into NATO in 1999, during the March summit in Washington, western border of Romania was the line of the Alliance, which predicted our future quality. Also, the quality gained by Hungary offered a new framework defining the Romanian-Hungarian relations.

Also, the integration of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into NATO in March 1999 created the belief that the project of a united Europe, free and democratic begins to be implemented.

In 1997, the impact of enlargement was predominantly psychological; it is remarkable that for the first time, NATO countries co-opt the military-ideological countries that belonged to The Soviet Bloc. Integration of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into NATO²⁰ created the belief that the project of a united Europe, free and democratic begins to be implemented. After the admission of the three states at the Madrid summit, for the NATO states was clear that the transformation process and their assimilation within the organization will not be simple and they estimated that the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary will reach the stage of maturity around 2009. Thus, a report appeared in 1999 in which it was a first assessment of the performance of the three countries invited to the Madrid NATO framework, show that "only Poland from the three countries lived up to expectations, while the Czech Republic was on the edge, and Hungary was a lost case, being a passenger traveling on the free (free-rider)"²¹.

¹⁹ Phinnemore, David – *op. cit.*, p. 259;

²⁰ Ratify acceptance of the three took place in April 30, 1998;

²¹ Pașcu, Ioan Mircea – *Bătălia pentru NATO*, Editura Proiect, București, 2007, p. 143;

One of the most interesting **stages** of the Romanian-Hungarian relations, **the IVth**, is the analysis phase “**the return to the past**”.

At this stage we refer to the Hungarian approach aimed at "Statute Law" legislative act that created major conflicts not only between Hungary and Romania but also between Hungary and neighboring countries.

The Romanian-Hungarian relations were strongly affected by the adoption of this law which was intended initially to come into force on January 1, 2002. The law provides special rights to Hungarian ethnics in neighboring Hungary or Romania, Slovakia, Yugoslavia and Slovenia (originally Austria was included in the list of neighboring states). These rights were to be offered through a "Hungarian certificates", which in fact was the equivalent of Hungarian identity.

Generic, the benefits and various forms of support offered to the "Hungarian certificate holders, programs and organizations outside the Hungarian borders meant to preserve their identity, culture and language" can be divided into five main categories²²:

1. *Cultural rights. This refers to free access in some public institutions in Hungary and archives, museums and collections, public libraries; the right to receive scholarships or training for teachers of Hungarian language, the latter are entitled to receive training in their country too; the right of the professor card, which grants the holder certain benefits, including the ability to buy educational materials at a reduced price; the right to become a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences or receive awards State;*
2. *Educational aid. These include the right to attend university, doctoral, postdoctoral at any school in Hungary; the possibility of obtaining scholarships to these institutions, under the law; aid if attending institutions other than the state network; student card, teacher or primary school teacher with some related benefits: discounts on public transport, discounts up to 50% approx. 200 operators (for monographs, etc.); aid for the creation of new departments in universities / colleges in neighboring countries of Hungary, in collaboration with a partner institution in Hungary; material aid for families who have children enrolled in schools with Hungarian teaching language; financial aid for students.*
3. *Facilities for public transport. It is granted free of charge for those under six years and people over 65 years in local public transport across Hungary; offsetting the price by 90% by rail, four times a year for people aged between 7 and 64 years; facilities for groups containing at least ten children.*
4. *Funding for the media. TV news programs for the Hungarians outside the borders can receive funding; may also qualify for partial coverage of costs for office or TV studios.*
5. *Community Development. It can be financial sustained a part of the operational costs of the running programs or organizations outside the Hungarian borders.*

²² Chiriac, Marian - *Provocările diversității. Politici publice privind minoritățile naționale și etnice din România*, CRDE, 2005, Cluj-Napoca , pp. 70-71;

In my opinion the approach of Hungary was strictly populist and electoral, given that those who passed the law, the Fidesz government led by Viktor Orban had a strong sympathy towards autonomist nationalist movements in Hungary and the countries in the region. It is also noted that Fidesz proposal came in a year preceding the 2002 general elections in Hungary, Viktor Orbán hoping to attract new voters in that law.

Hungary has relatively brutal occurred and violated the agreements between the two countries and this restored, at the time, in question a number of issues from the past like that, before Hungary tried to block Romania's accession to NATO, which entitles us to say that at this stage there were chances that the Romanian-Hungarian relations to be back in time, a phenomenon that would be seriously affected European interests of Hungary and the European and Euro-Atlantic interests of Romania.

The Hungary approach was not legitimate and it was seen internationally how the European Commission recommended the authorities in Budapest to "refrain from applying the law which might cause unwanted tension in the region", warning otherwise that "Hungary's accession negotiations to the EU could be affected".

We appreciate that this phase is interested because, although "Statute Law" risks to diminish whole edifice of relations between Hungary and neighboring countries so difficult created, how the authorities of both countries have made a deal through a Memorandum in which it has been provided clear procedures for implementing "Status Law" so it does not produce tensions, has become a landmark of stability and good neighborliness in Central Europe.

Thus, as we have noted throughout the paper, paradoxically, the tensions generated by the authorities project in Budapest in the plane of bilateral relations has led to a rapprochement between the two countries, proven internationally that they have learned a new lesson for conciliation under international law, in particular the EU, both countries wanted to join to that space at that time.

The fifth step we suggest is the "**confirmation of the European Union and NATO membership**".

At this stage it was the invitation of Romania to join NATO at the Prague Summit in 2002 and Hungary's accession to the European Union in the historic enlargement of May 1, 2004.

It is interesting in this stage that, since March 2004, when Romania became a formal member of NATO, Romania and Hungary were the first allies in a position which opened a new chapter in the bilateral relations. Also, the new position of Hungary obtained in the same year as a member of the European Union has defined a new context of discussion on Hungarian-Romanian relations.

Although at the European and Euro-Atlantic levels activities that are violated domestic laws of other Member States are not approved, Hungary took advantage of the new position, returning to the concepts of the '90s, saying again that it is in a position to be a State that must take care of all Hungarians from abroad, who are legal citizens of Hungary, which would give the right to be citizens of the European Union even if they live in states which are not part of the EU.

In this context, we reach a new **stage** in Romanian-Hungarian relations, **the sixth**, in which Hungary has again generated a number of tensions in relations with Romania, by announcing its intention to offer citizenship to ethnic Hungarians outside Hungary borders.

Thus, Hungarian World Federation project aimed at granting Hungarian citizenship to Hungarians living outside Hungary has rekindled the spirits in Romanian-Hungarian relationship.

In order to "symbolic reunification of the Hungarian nation", World Federation of Hungarians - a civic organization founded in 1938 with the intention to defend the interests of Hungarians everywhere²³ - has gathered 200,000 signatures in favor of a dual citizenship, which made the Parliament in Budapest to vote unanimously for a referendum on September 13, 2004. The Constitutional Court has rejected several motions in Parliament and approved the referendum. Finally its date was set for December 5, the same year.

At this stage it is important to note that the Romanian-Hungarian relations have a different dimension since the meantime, in May 1, 2004 Hungary was accepted to the EU. In the opinion of many Hungarian political leaders, membership of the Union seemed a definite advantage in relations with Romania, which could mean that Romania could not counteract this, just as it had partially managed to offset the "Statute Law".

It is also interesting to note at this stage that the proposal of The World Federation of Hungarians, also adopted by Parliament in Budapest managed again to create a tension in the

²³ The organization is currently campaigning for the revision of the Treaty of Peace of Trianon in 1920, taking the decisions adopted on that occasion as "unfair" for Hungary. President MVSZ is Patrubány Miklós;

Romanian-Hungarian bilateral relations, but it also managed to divide Hungarian policy, creating conflicts between socialists in power and Fidesz, in opposition.

In our opinion this is the first time when an approach aiming at the Hungarian minority in neighboring countries of Hungary has managed to divide the Hungarian political spectrum, even if this initiative was seen by Hungarians in diaspora as a measure designed to demonstrate that the "mother country" strategy offers guarantees to Hungarians ownership outside Hungary.

We also note that Hungary's approach was closely monitored by the European Union, since its success could lead to a series of changes in Hungary's representation in various bodies. We consider here that Hungary had been accepted into the Union as a state with a population of about 10 million people, but by granting citizenship to Hungarian ethnic in neighboring countries, Hungary's population will grow by 50%.

Also, note that Hungary's approach has been treated differently by the Hungarian elite in Romania. Thus, although they were aware of the symbolic "reunification of the Hungarian nation" by obtaining the Hungarian citizenship of Hungarians outside Hungary, DAHR political leaders have avoided open support to this initiative, being aware that it is possible that much of Hungarian ethnic in Romania to emigrate to Hungary which would have considerably reduced the election.

What is interesting at this Romanian-Hungarian relations stage is that, although they were not diplomatic deeply affected, the Romanian approach treated it as another step in Budapest election, it were significantly affected the relations between the Hungarian from Romania and Hungarian State, reaching up to a series of denials by the Hungarians to participate in "the great Hungarian nation." Thus, I presented throughout the paper examples of escalating tension between Hungary and representatives of the Hungarian state. You should also note that efforts of Hungarians in Romania have been directed toward individuals considering the fact that, after all, not just politicians were to blame for the negative outcome of the referendum, in December 5, 2004.

However, in our opinion relatively weak involvement of Romania in "dual citizenship" problematic can be explained based on three considerations.

First, the opinion polls in Hungary confirmed that it will not reach a positive outcome of the December 5, 2004, but in the second and the most important consideration, Romania awaited

confirmation, from the European Council Summit in Brussels from 16 to 17 December of that Romania has concluded negotiations with the EU, context in which the leaders in Bucharest did not want a new tension in relations with Hungary. Third reason is the fact that much of the Hungarian approach to a "dual nationality" was superimposed on the election campaign in Romania, the context in which none of the candidates or the parties had the courage to express a clear-cut position for or against the Hungarian initiative.

The seventh stage that I have identified and I have presented it during the work is "**a return to normality**" stage, governed by political and diplomatic dialogue resumed a higher plane, resulted in organizing joint government meetings.

Thus, if over time a lot of problems off the Romania-Hungary relations have not been solved, by organizing joint meetings of the Government of Romania and Hungary have entered a new stage, so that the normalization of relations as mentioned several times were adversely affected by a number of internal or external factors of the two countries.

However, representatives of the two countries have shown that, at least in statements, they have realized that the situation of minorities, Hungarian in Romania and Romanian in Hungary largely depends on cooperation between the two countries and joint efforts to develop international standards on the rights minorities.

On this phase it is noted that the October 2005 meeting was a first in the bilateral relations. Also was a first in bilateral relations of the states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Referring to relations between Romania and Hungary in the context of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the two states should be noted that the November 2007 meeting is a new premiere of a the relationship between the two countries, since that was the first time when both countries were members of the two international bodies, under the supervision of which international relations have developed in recent years. Both, Hungary and especially Romania were present at the joint meeting of the governments in Sibiu in 2007 as both the NATO states and EU countries.

This brings us to **the eighth stage** of the relations between the two countries, namely a stage in which Romania, since 2007, has access to the EU. In this context, it became clear that,

under the umbrella of NATO and the EU it is less likely to cause major fractures in the Romanian-Hungarian relations, although there is constant "teasing" made mainly by the Hungarian side.

We should not minimize the importance of Romania's EU accession, in the relationship with Hungary, as this new context provides a new framework for "*strengthening the unity of peoples and nations that make up the European Union*"²⁴, which obviously reflect on the Romanian-Hungarian relations.

If we review the steps taken by Romania and Hungary in terms of establishing a framework for a benefic dialogue in terms of economic, social and political development, we note that there were **four main stages** in the post-communist period: two which have strained relations, and two that have improved them. We refer here to the "Status Law" stage and the "dual citizenship" stage (periods of stress) and to the two key moments in our opinion, in creating a climate of security in the Central and Eastern Europe, when signing that Treaty of understanding, cooperation and good neighborliness and joint government meetings stage.

Also, if we look carefully at times of tension in the relations between the two countries we noted that they were fundamentally influenced by Fidesz, on the position of party in power ("Statute Law") or in Opposition ("Dual Citizenship").

We want to conclude here, not without expressing that in the current global situation dominated by economic and financial crisis, there are likely to be repeated a number of nationalist movements, especially in the Central and Eastern Europe, even if the states in the area are now members of the European Union²⁵.

²⁴ Zăpârțan, Liviu-Petru – *Consolidarea construcției europene, în Pop, Flore și Gherghina*, Sergiu (ed.) – *Uniunea Europeană după 50 de ani. Între entuziasmul extinderii și aprofundarea integrării*, Editura Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 31;

²⁵ So we arrive in 2010 when, after winning April elections, Fidesz has come again in power, which makes one of the first laws passed by the new government led by Viktor Orbán referred to granting Hungarian citizenship to Hungarians living abroad Hungary.

Thus, in June 4, 2010, symbolic moment since that at that time we are "commemorating" 90 years from the "dictate of Trianon", Fidesz has passed a law stating that "Hungarians and Hungarian communities under the authority of other states are in the united Hungarian nation ... their unity across state borders is a reality. " The law itself has clear provisions regarding the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship; the applicants must prove the Hungarian origins and they speak Hungarian. Law does not offer applicants the right to vote.

We note that since the beginning the law intentionally succeeded to produce a series of conflicts in the region, particularly in the relationship of Hungary with Slovakia, where Prime Minister Robert Fico described the Hungarian approach as a threat to internal security of Slovakia.

However, while recognizing the importance of the steps already completed successfully, we must ask whether the road in the definition of bilateral relations between the two countries is somehow insufficient, if the rapprochement between the two countries and between the two nations is still an open chapter with many opportunities, resources, and unexplored requirements.

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