

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF EASTERN EUROPE: A HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN CONSULATE IN CZERNOWITZ

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Abstract: *The author provides a historical overview of the Royal Consulate of Romania in Czernowitz (Cernăuți, now Chernivtsi), as it appears in the work **A Royal Consulate in Chernivtsi...: The Royal Consulate of Romania in Chernivtsi – 130 years since its establishment 1892-2022**. The Royal Consulate of Romania in Czernowitz was the third Romanian diplomatic institution in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, after the legation in Vienna and the consulate in Budapest. Established in 1892 during an era marked by significant political and national movements, it experienced a gradual evolution from consulate to consulate general in 1905. Its establishment would serve the ethnic communities of Bukovina, located at a great distance from the political-administrative centre of the empire, as well as the development of cultural and economic relations in this part of Eastern Europe. This review summarizes the activities of the Romanian diplomatic service in Chernivtsi throughout two periods of operation: 1892-1916 and 1999-2022.*

Keywords: *Bukovina, Royal Consulate of Romania, Czernowitz, international relations, Austro-Hungarian Empire.*

Rezumat: *Scurtă privire asupra istoriei estului european: o istorie a Consulatului României la Cernăuți. Autorul prezintă o schiță istorică a Consulatului Regal al României de la Cernăuți, așa cum este ea redată în lucrarea **Un Consulat Regal la Cernăuți...: Consatul Regal al României la Cernăuți – 130 de ani de la înființare (1892-2022)**. Consatul Regal al României de la Cernăuți a fost cea de a treia instituție diplomatică românească în Imperiul Austro-Ungar, după legația din Viena și consulatul din Budapesta. Înființat în anul 1892, într-o vreme marcată de mari mișcări politice și*

naționale acesta a cunoscut o evoluție treptată, de la statutul de consulat la cel de consulat general, în anul 1905. Înființarea acestuia avea să servească intereselor comunităților etnice din Bucovina, aflate la mare depărtare de centrul politico-administrativ al imperiului, precum și pentru dezvoltarea relațiilor culturale și economice din această parte a estului european. Recenzia surprinde datele esențiale ale activității personalului diplomatic românesc de la Cernăuți, în cele două perioade de funcționare: 1892-1916 și 1999-2022, prezentate de autori.

On the 130th anniversary of the establishment in 1892 of the Royal Consulate of Romania in Chernivtsi, some history enthusiasts – Irina-Loredana Stănculescu, Florin C. Stan, Maria Toacă-Andries and Stefan Hostiuc – published in 2022 a book dedicated to this event: ***A Royal Consulate in Chernivtsi...: The Royal Consulate of Romania in Chernivtsi – 130 years since its creation (1892-2022)***.¹ The volume contains a “Foreword” by Dr. Irina-Loredana Stănculescu, Consul General of Romania in Chernivtsi and a “Note on the edition”.

The work is divided into two parts: the first summarizes historical events that occurred during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, i.e., from 1892 to the First World War; the subsequent part focuses on the institution’s activity, re-established after the fall of the USSR.

The historical sketch “Bukovina – «a small homeland» of European standards” illustrates the evolution of the northern part of Moldavia, from part of the Moldavian historical territory to that of the Austrians in the years 1774-1775, which they called Bukovina. The Austrians thus severed the newly created province's geographical, economic, social, and cultural ties from the land of its historical genesis, causing significant alterations over the 144-year rule. According to the authors, this region “concentrated in amazing way steps of voivodes, impetuous sovereigns, simple toilers of the place, travellers and foreigners, faiths and believers who bowed their heads for a clearer sky, regardless of whether they belonged to the majority or the minority.” Such notions define the multi-ethnic and multilingual territory known as Bukovina during the Austrian domination and, currently, “as a legacy of Romanian history or part of the Ukrainian state”. To properly tell the history of Bukovina, part of which is in Ukraine, it is essential to understand Bukovina’s values, and the past that should

¹ Irina-Loredana Stănculescu, Florin C. Stan, Maria Toacă-Andrieș, Ștefan Hostiuc, *Un Consulat Regal la Cernăuți...: Consulatul Regal al României la Cernăuți - 130 de ani de la înființare (1892-2022)*, București, Pro Universitaria, 2022, 376 p.

encourage partnership rather than conflict, as well as to acknowledge the contributions of each ethnic group.

An important part of this chapter is devoted to the presentation of the territory of Moldavia, from its beginnings to the fateful years of the struggle for supremacy between Moldavia's neighbouring great powers, the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austria. A substantial section examines in this context the historical events that led to the convention of April 6 / May 17, 1775, signed in Constantinople on May 1 / 12, 1776, reflecting the understandings between the two signatory parties regarding northern Moldavia. The work mentions the province's organizational measures during the Austrian rule, the demographic reports from 1775 to the middle of the 19th century, the events of 1848-1849, the activity of some hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in Bukovina, the institutions and the evolution of the administrative organization of Bukovina, the affirmation of national movements in the province, the development of education and the role of the University of Chernivtsi, the union of Bukovina with the Kingdom of Romania, etc.

To help the reader form a better picture of the Royal Romanian Consulate in Chernivtsi, the authors have included the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the era of the Old Kingdom (1881-1918)" analysis. It includes a passage taken from the "Appeal to the Voters", published by the Conservative Party on January 4, 1892, set as the chapter's motto: "In friendly relations with all foreign governments, Romania cannot have any other policy than that which guarantees the independence and integrity of its territory". The authors included in their survey the provisions of Romania's 1883 treaty with the Triple Alliance, then the gradual detachment from the Central Powers alliance, the participation in the second Balkan war and the peace of Bucharest (1913), the proclamation of neutrality (1914) and the 1916 world war entry on the side of the Entente.

Following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania, Carol I and his governments focused more on the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The authors highlighted Law 1216 / May 1, 1882, in this context, followed by a series of amendments aimed at adapting diplomatic and consular operations to the requirements of constantly changing realities. Later amendments (1881) increased diplomatic personnel's powers, specified the terms of their activity, the internal organization of the ministry, the structure and operation of the ministry's archives, etc. These and other organizational reforms were included in the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reorganization Act", published on February 13, 1894. The authors briefly present the organisational aspects of the ministry, the minister's exclusive powers, the diplomatic and consular offices, the ministry's

central administration, the diplomatic missions and their structure in different countries, the organization of consulates (including the one in Chernivtsi), the personnel structure of the central administration and the diplomatic and consular offices, etc. With some amendments on April 1, 1898, and March 15, 1912, the law remained in force until World War II. This chapter provides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff list as of the reorganization in 1894.

A brief review of foreign relations concludes the chapter, whose defining passage refers to the assessment made, at the time, by Princess Maria of Romania: "Berlin and Vienna were in the first row, the behaviour towards France was courtly, and Russia, though untrustworthy, was treated with the most thorough consideration and politeness, but the politeness was due more to concern than to benevolence. England at that time was a distant nation, had no close connections with Romania, both countries shared few common interests" (p. 65-66). When discussing the transition from an alliance with the Central European powers to one with the Entente, the authors acknowledged that Romania was forced to prioritize "supporting the national interest" in its foreign policy (p. 67) after the rise of "Austro-Hungarian offensive plans".

The chapter "Historical Overview of the Royal Romanian Consulate in Chernivtsi" contains essential information about the "Establishment of the mission". Such information concerns Lascăr Catargiu's conservative government (November 1891 – October 1895), which took important steps towards normalization when there were many obstacles to good relations both within the country as well as with Austria-Hungary. The Consulate in Chernivtsi was part of this policy of improving Romanian-Austro-Hungarian relations. Let us recall, in this context, that on October 9 / 21, 1893, the two states granted each other the status of the most favoured nation and that, on October 30, 1891, the secret treaty of alliance, which had been concluded on October 18 / 30, 1883, had expired and had to be renewed. Alexandru N. Lahovary, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, and Emil I. Ghika, Minister Plenipotentiary in Vienna, were the ones who took the necessary steps to establish the consulate. Temporary obstacles were overcome during the various stages of the negotiations thanks to the skill and tenacity of those involved. It has mainly been argued that the establishment of a Romanian consulate in Chernivtsi was a matter of reciprocity since 16 Austro-Hungarian consular offices operated on the territory of the Kingdom of Romania (p. 71) – while Romania had only three diplomatic offices in the empire, including that of Chernivtsi. The Chernivtsi consulate was necessary in the context of an intense anti-Semitic policy of the Tsarist Empire, which caused the transit of a large number of Jews from Bukovina to Romania, as well as to promote trade relations

in this part of Europe. At first, the Austrian side formulated the idea of an Honorary Consulate, as an intermediate form, but they finally accepted a General Consulate in Chernivtsi (p. 74). The hesitations of the government led by Taaffe were linked to the 'nationalist' activity of some of the people proposed for the posts of honorary consuls. They were Nicolae Cârste, Mihai Pitei, Alecu Grigorcea. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary, Count Kálnoky, suggested to the Romanian side that if a person was refused the position of consul, the Romanian government could appoint another candidate "beyond current political passions". This was related to the political struggles determined by the trial of the Romanian Memorandum authors in Transylvania. Agenor Gołuchowski, on December 1/13, 1892, sent the approval to establish a Romanian consulate in Chernivtsi. On December 18, 1892, King Carol I signed Decree 4073, which officially created the consulate (p. 76).

Sub-chapter "The activity of the mission during the first consul, Stamate Stamatiadi (1893-1897)" reveals new information on the exchange of official documents concerning the establishment of the consular mission, the first headquarters ("Schwarzer Adler" Hotel in Czernowitz), the oath taken by the head of the consular office, the archives of the mission, information concerning the social and political life of the Duchy of Bukovina, the Chernivtsi press, etc. Important historical information can be found in the sub-chapter "Aspects of the activity of the Consular Office during the tenure of Consul Constantin M. Kogălniceanu (1897-1908)" concerning the Romanian National Party, the passage through Bukovina of King Carol I, the "Unirea" Society, the activity of the governors of Bukovina - Konrad Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürts and Oktavian Regner von Bleyleben, the 1904 national celebrations that took place at Putna, the Diet of Bukovina, the Society for Romanian Culture and Literature in Bukovina, the Society of Romanian Ladies, the "Romanian School" Society, the electoral campaigns in Bukovina, the Chernivtsi consulate raised to a higher rank of Consulate General (1905), etc.

The 30th anniversary of the student society "Junimea"'s founding on April 26 / May 10, 1908, the 500th anniversary of Chernivtsi's first documented attestation, initiated by Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, the Romanian press in the Duchy of Bukovina, and operational communications during the First World War were all topics covered in-depth by the authors. The consulate ceased operation when Romania joined the war.

The section "Consuls General. Biographical data" includes biographies of consuls and other categories of diplomatic service personnel in Chernivtsi:

Stamate Stamatiadi, Constantin M. Kogălniceanu, Dimitrie Georgescu, Gheorghe D. Gallin, Ștefan Mărgăritescu-Grecianu et al.

Twenty-two documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive are reproduced in the "Annexes". Among these, the document contained in Annex 10, dated February 23 / March 4, 1898, is of particular importance because it concerns the history of the Romanian National Party in Bukovina (pp. 174-181): "Report of the interim manager Gh. D. Gallin sent to Dimitrie A. Sturdza, president of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs".

Part II contains relevant data about the Consulate General of Romania in Chernivtsi, Ukraine during 1999-2022. In the context of establishing diplomatic relations between Romania and Ukraine, the Romanian Embassy in Kyiv was established on February 1, 1992, and Decree No. 588 of the President of Romania created the Consulate General of Romania in Chernivtsi on November 12, 1997. The need to represent the Romanian State's diplomatic interests in a region where the Romanian community is indigenous arose as a result of Chernivtsi and a piece of Bukovina becoming part of Ukraine in the new geopolitical reality, which accepted after World War II the borders drawn by the USSR in 1940. The pages of this work recall the establishment of the consulate, the visit of Romanian President Emil Constantinescu to Chernivtsi and some data about the activity of the first Romanian Consul General, Ilie Ivan, in Chernivtsi. In the section "Consuls General of Romania in Chernivtsi (1999-2022)" readers are offered biographical references of the Consuls General of Romania in Chernivtsi, as follows: Ilie Ivan (1999-2002), Romeo Săndulescu (2002-2008), Dorin Popescu (2008-2009), Tatiana Popa (2009-2012), Eleonora Moldovan (2012-2018) and Irina-Loredana Stănculescu (since 2018).

Interviews taken from the media or unpublished, illustrating aspects of the activity of Chernivtsi consuls general and diplomatic personnel during their service, complemented, in some cases, the biographical section. Beyond the naturalness of the related events, primarily aimed at assisting the Romanian community in the Chernivtsi region, what stands out is the evolution towards the Europeanization of the inhabitants of this province, the many hopes they had with the fall of the USSR, the national cultural events, the struggle for the preservation of the Romanian language and the Romanian language school.

Undoubtedly, the volume is a commendable work in that it presents general information about the history of the Romanian Consulate in Chernivtsi. Written in the spirit of political correctness, the authors – some of whom are active in the diplomatic service – avoided, even for the years 1892–1918, the topics that divide the national histories of the ethnic groups residing in the Bukovina region. The

national projects of the Romanians and the Ukrainians of Bukovina then came into sharp conflict over issues relating to historical law, the division between the Romanians and the Ukrainians of the Archdiocese of Bukovina into two bishoprics, the equal rights and representation in the Bukovina diet, the educational policy of the Bukovina imperial authorities, Bukovina Ausgleich, etc. The archive of the Royal Consulate in Chernivtsi contains diplomatic reports that could supplement the data used up to this point in writing the history of this region and Eastern Europe, and this volume could benefit from the publication of documents that have been unused or unpublished.

Given the private nature of the diplomatic discourse, only cultural or ethnic celebrations supported by or attended by the aforementioned diplomatic employees have been documented. The future will come with new findings when the opening of archives reveals information currently prohibited by law. The path travelled by the diplomats of Chernivtsi was surely not only one of cordial companionship and openness to Europeanism, with concern for the respect of rights, as they are mentioned in the “Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”, of Rome on November 4, 1950, and other documents that serve as the foundation of international relations. One could argue that for as much information as there is about cultural and national events in the Chernivtsi region in which diplomatic personnel participated, there could be as much more and equally stimulating information about events known at the time that is still secret, indicating a not entirely continuous upward trajectory of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in the Chernivtsi region.

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