

The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs policy regarding the edition of diplomatic documents

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The edition of diplomatic documents in Romania started even before 1989 because of the need of the communist leadership to have an objective insight over the evolution of the Romanian foreign relations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Taking into consideration the peculiar constraints of a communist regime such as the Romanian one, those editions were downsized in number of copies, were using mainly one source (the MFA's archives) and their circulation was limited to senior officials and a couple of strictly controlled historians.

The reorganisation of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after 1990 and the need to restore the status once enjoyed by the Romanian diplomacy meant also a new approach of the history of the evolution of the Romanian foreign relations.

In this regard, in 1991¹, the Romanian Government issued a Decision which regulated the whole activity in the diplomatic documents publishing field and also gave a new impetus for setting up new directions in the realm of scientific research.

Since the judicial framework has been set up, it was decided that the Romanian collection must be edited, similarly with other foreign editions, by a joint Commission consisting of diplomats and prominent academics. The leadership of the Commission consisted of a State Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary General of the Romanian Academy, the director of the "Nicolae Iorga" Institute for Universal History and the director of the National Archives. According to the above mentioned law, it was adopted the system of chronological series according to the main phases of the development of the Romanian state; these were to refer to periods starting with the Middle Ages to 1947 – the signing of the Peace Treaty.

¹ See the Governmental Decision no. 563 from 14th of August 1991, published in the Romanian Official Bulletin no 261/21 December 1991.

Simultaneously, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs would have been in charge with the elaboration of a Collection consisting of all treaties and agreements concluded by Romania between 1859 and 1945. At the same time the decision has been taken to publish a series of volumes tackling various topics regarding major events in the history of the Romanian foreign policy and – for the first time in Romania – a series comprising biographies of the prominent figures of the Romanian diplomacy. One of the major accomplishments was represented by the publication in Romanian and English of Nicolae Titulescu's paperwork entitled "The Foreign Policy of Romania".

It has been stipulated that the Commission had to elaborate a certain number of reference materials covering a wide range of major events in the history of the Romanian foreign policy. Among those themes one could cite some of them such as "Romania at the Paris Peace Conference 1919-1920", "Romania and the cooperation in the Balkans" "The regime of the Black Sea Straits", which referred to some specific moments; in addition it was also taken into consideration the realization of some volumes tackling the bilateral relations of Romania and major European international factors such as "The Romanian-French relations during the interwar period" , "The Romanian-British relations during the interwar period", "The Romanian-Italian relations between 1940 – 1944" and similarly "The Romanian-German relations between 1940 – 1944".

Unfortunately, those goals have been fulfilled only to a little extent. Due to major funding cuts, organizational mismanagement, lack of experienced personnel, poor coordination of the various branches of the Commission, the activity slowed gradually down and sooner relied solely on the Diplomatic Archives Department of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had to adapt the whole policy of publication to its own resources, capabilities and requirements. Even so, throughout the last decade the Romanian Diplomatic Archives succeeded to publish some significant volumes covering mainly the bilateral relations between Romania and various countries. In this regard, we could mention the paper-works regarding the Romanian relations with the United States, the Soviet Union², Italy, Vatican, Poland, Greece, Egypt, and Finland. Similarly a significant accent has been placed on biographies and diplomatic memoirs. This meant the publication of volumes regarding some prominent Romanian ministers of foreign affairs such as Grigore Gafencu, Nicolae

² Within the cooperation with the Russian Federation, which is based on a bilateral agreement concluded by the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs in 2000, two volumes were published, covering the relations between Romania and the Soviet Russia since 1917 to 1941; the third volume, which is in the process of preparation, refers to the period 1941-1947.

Titulescu, Constantin Visoianu, or memoirs belonging to a few ambassadors such as Constantin Balaceanu, Noti Constantinide, Petre Gigea Gorun³, Ion Brad.

In addition, under the aegis of the Romanian Diplomatic Archives were also published collections regarding tragic events of the Romanian history such as the fate of the Jewish⁴ population from the Romanian territory. One of the most important paper-works referred to the emigration of the Jewish population from Romania, between 1940 and 1944.

The new perspectives opened up by Romania's endeavours towards the European Union membership brought new ideas and strategies regarding the recommencement of the older project for setting up a national collection of diplomatic documents.

Due to the fact that the previous project became obsolete and the perspectives for Romania to join the EU needed to place a great emphasis on the creation of a well-planned National Collection of Diplomatic documents, the whole design has been reshaped under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic Academy.

Following an intense debate over the conditions for setting up a National Collection of Diplomatic Documents, a final formula has been reached, which was publicly assumed through the Governmental Decision no 1384/2nd of September 2004⁵.

Within this new framework the Romanian Collection of diplomatic documents should have been based on a broader range of documents from different archives, Romanian and foreign ones; naturally, the core of the documents used by this collection would have been selected from the Diplomatic Archives. As preliminary attempt to regulate the activities, a National Commission for Editing the national Collection of Diplomatic Documents was nominated. Subsequently, a Working Office has also been created, which was in charge with all the details required by the editing activities, including research, hiring of staff, payments⁶, setting up the criteria for publication, the liaison with the publishing houses and with the various institutions involved. The main duty of that working office was to recruit senior researchers and academics and to elaborate a long term strategy for editions⁷.

³ The Romanian ambassador to Paris between 1986-1990.

⁴ Besides the direct elaboration and publication of volumes, the Romanian Diplomatic Archives participated in extensive projects alongside other institutions such as the National Archives, the Romanian Military Archives; in this respect, the Archives of the Romanian MFA provided documents for a series of volumes coordinated by the National Archives concerning the minorities from Romania throughout the interwar period, Romania and the armistice with the United Nations, Romania – evolution in time and space. Moreover, they had a major contribution to the issue of the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, which was published in 2005.

⁵ See the *Romanian Official Bulletin* no 831/ 9th of September 2004.

⁶ The whole activity including wages of the researchers is subsidized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁷ The main chronological series of the National Collection of Diplomatic Documents were the following: 1) The Origins, February 1866; 2) February 1866 – July 1878; 3) July 1878 – 1913; 4) 1914 – 1920; 5) 1921 – 1933; 6)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been nominated as the main coordinator of the whole activity for the National Collection of diplomatic documents, alongside with the Romanian Academy, the National Archives and the Archives of the Ministry of Defence.

According to the previously mentioned Governmental Decision, the number of copies will be distributed for free to important libraries, universities, foreign ministries, and other political and scientific circles.

Until now, two volumes were finalized, the first one regarding the period between September and October 1938 tackling mostly the Czechoslovak crisis and the second one concerning the period between 1876 and 1878. Apart from these, other volumes are in the process of finalisation, covering the periods between 1921 – 1934, 1938 – 1939, 1939 – 1944, 1944 – 1947.

The reorganisation of the whole activity of the Commission in charge with the National Collection of Diplomatic Documents has been continued, aiming to a better coordination and a speeding up of the editing activities in order to quicker finalize all the planned volumes.

In this respect, in accordance with a new Governmental Decision, issued on 17 august 2005⁸, the whole activity regarding the edition of diplomatic documents will be placed under the aegis of the newly founded Romanian Diplomatic Institute which, in cooperation with the diplomatic Archives Department from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will have to further publish the National Collection of Diplomatic Documents. This measure represents a significant improvement in terms of resources (increasing the number of researchers, friendly usability of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs library, which was recently transferred to the Romanian Diplomatic Institute) and more opportunities for a better cooperation with the academic circles.

1934 – 1940; 7) 1940 – 1944; 8) 23 August 1944 – 10 February 1947. It was also decided that every volume will be edited in at least 1000 copies.

⁸ Governmental Decision no 880/17 august 2005.