



Notes on the Beginning of Romanian – Portuguese Diplomatic Relations (1880-1922)

Mircea Iliescu¹

Abstract: In 1880, the first special Romanian mission was sent to Lisbon with the objective of acknowledging Romania's independence and establishing diplomatic relations between the two states. For almost 40 years, the diplomatic project could not be realized. Only in 1919 and 1920 was it possible to open legations in Bucharest and Lisbon. At the consular level, there are two honorary consulates of Romania in Portugal (1896 and 1906) and one of Portugal in Romania (1912). The Portuguese initiative from 1909 should also be mentioned. In conclusion, we cannot speak of a continued Romanian diplomatic presence in Lisbon before 1928.

Keywords: special mission; honorary consulate; diplomatic initiative; legation; Romania; Portugal

Introduction

For almost four decades (1881-1919), Romanian-Portuguese political and diplomatic relations, which began in 1880, were marked by silence, hesitations, hasty decisions, imbalances and discontinuities. Although Portugal opened its legation in Bucharest in 1919, appointing a minister who remained in office until 1933², as far as Romania is concerned, we believe that one cannot speak of full diplomatic representation before 1920.

¹ PhD, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, Institute of History Nicolae Iorga", Romania, Address: Aviatorilor Boulevard, no. 1, Bucharest, sector 1, Romania; Corresponding author: mircea.iliescu77@gmail.com.

² This is Martinho Maria Teixeira Homem de Brederode (Lisbon, 15.4.1866 – Bucharest, 17.8.1952).

It is necessary, therefore, to make a brief review of this period of honest attempts and failures, mainly due to low interest, adverse political contexts and not necessarily to the lack of mutual affinities or sympathy¹.

After the end of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, in which the Romanian army participated on the side of Russia, Romania obtained legal acknowledgment of its independence. As it had been decided at the Berlin Congress (June-July 1878), acknowledgment was conditional upon the fulfillment of the terms of the Treaty.

They had in mind: the re-annexation of the south of Bessarabia – of three counties, Cahul, Ismail and Cetatea Albă, known by the generic name of Bugeac – by Russia; the reception of Dobrudja, including the Danube Delta and Snake Island; the delimitation of the Romanian-Bulgarian border (the Silistra incident being resolved only in June 1881 through the ratification of the borders by Turkey); the amendment of Article 7 of the Romanian Constitution of 1866, in order to grant citizenship rights to non-Orthodox, especially Jews, whose immigration had increased significantly since the 18th century. Finally, outside the Treaty, “the satisfaction of the claims of the German shareholders in the issue of the redemption of the railways” (Damean, 2011, p. 10).

The issue of acknowledging independence was, for two years, the absolute priority of Bucharest’s political agenda. Thus, independence was acknowledged *de jure* in 1878 by Russia and Turkey, in 1879 by Austria-Hungary and Italy, and on 20 February 1880², on the same day, by France, the United Kingdom and Germany, obtaining the full agreement of the Great Powers.

As early as 1879, Carol I and the Brătianu Government had in mind the expansion of Romania’s relations in the West, attempting a diplomatic *rapprochement* with countries that, although Colonial Powers (Spain, Portugal), were not part of the Great Powers group and had never interfered in Balkan affairs.

We can consider as auspicious, if not really an argument in the history of Romania’s relations with Portugal, the family unions that were established, in the

¹ The only summary published so far: Dan Caragea (coord.), *ROMÂNIA – PORTUGALIA: 100 de ani de la stabilirea relațiilor diplomatice româno-portugheze / ROMÉLIA – PORTUGAL: 100 anos desde o estabelecimento das relações diplomáticas romeno-portuguesas*, București, Dynasty Books, 2017.

² All calendar dates in this article were given according to the new style (Gregorian calendar), to avoid the discrepancies that sometimes appear between Romanian and foreign sources.

middle of the 19th century, between the Prussian house of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and the Braganza dynasty through two marriages between these families: in 1858, King Peter V (D. Pedro V) married Princess Stefania of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen¹ and three years later, in 1861, Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen married Infanta Antonia, sister of Peter V. Their children Louis (D. Luís) and John (D. João), brothers of the Portuguese king and the bride, accompanied the couple and Prince Carol (brother of Leopold and the one who would become lord of the Principality) on their post-wedding trip to Germany. On their return to Paris, they learn the sad news of the death of another of their brothers and the agony of King Peter V (Godinho, 1990, pp. 17-18). Unexpectedly, Louis ascended the throne, being proclaimed King on 11 November 1861². Therefore, since 1858, since Stefania's marriage, Carol of Hohenzollern had become a familiar figure at the Portuguese Court. Regarding kinship, Prince Carol and King Luís I (D. Luís I) were brothers-in-law.

The beginning of political and diplomatic relations took place on 30 March 1880. Prince Carol sent Alexandru Plagino and Dumitru Bărcănescu, on a special mission to Spain and Portugal, to notify the Courts of Madrid and Lisbon about Romania's independence. Al. Plagino was received in the Portuguese capital at the Palace of Ajuda, in a private audience, in the presence of the President of the Council of Ministers and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anselmo José de Braamcamp, and handed King Louis I the letters of accreditation from the ruler of Romania, as well as the insignia of the Order of the Star of Romania. For his part, King Louis awarded Prince Carol the Ribbon of the Two Orders (the Order of Christ and the Order of Avis), offered, since 1823, to foreign princes. In the letter sent by Carol, there was talk of "relations of close harmony" (*apud* Caragea, 2017, p. 18) between the two countries, a sign that the mission aimed at diplomatic representation by opening permanent legations. A month later, King Louis I announced to Carol the official acknowledgement of Romania's independence (Mocanu, 2009, p. 16), but Portugal did not follow the example of Spain in opening a legation in Bucharest.

¹ A detailed presentation in Vilhena, Júlio de. (1922). *Cartas Inéditas da Rainha D. Estefânia*, prefaced and commented by. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, pp. 36 ff.

² Louis I (D. Luís I) was king of Portugal between 1861 and 1889.

In March 1881, the country's Chambers proclaimed the kingdom, and on 10/22 May the coronation of King Carol I and Queen Elizabeth (Elisabeta) took place. Carol received a symbolic steel crown, made from a cannon captured at Plevna.

One year after the creation of the Triple Alliance (1882), on 30 October 1883, Romania signed a secret treaty with Austria-Hungary in Vienna. Germany also acceded to this treaty on the same day. The approach towards the Central Powers came after the disappointment in the relations with Turkey and Russia and, above all, after the loss of the three counties in the south of Bessarabia, considered "Romanian land".

In 1888, Ferdinand, the second son of Leopold of Hohenzollern and Antonia of Braganza, was named Crown Prince to the throne of Romania. He came to the country and married, in 1893, Mary (Maria) of Edinburgh, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II, thus securing the succession.

In the 1890s, Romania had made notable progress: in agriculture (Cuza's reform, however, was far from being able to solve the problems of the peasantry), in industry (albeit incipient), in trade. A considerable number of infrastructure works, sumptuous public edifices were inaugurated in this decade, especially in the big cities. The journalistic, literary and artistic life was dominated by a generation with unprecedented achievements in modernity.

During the reign of King Carlos I (D. Carlos I) of Portugal (1889-1908), Romania opened two honorary consulates of the second category: one in Lisbon, on 24 December 1896, appointing Carlos Ferreira dos Santos Silva as consul, and the other in Porto, on 11 October 1906, Joaquim Pinto de Fonseca being appointed consul. Baron Ferreira dos Santos was a banker and lived at that time in the family palace in 14 Príncipe Real Square, Lisbon, where until recently the House of Braganza Foundation operated. Carlos Ferreira dos Santos Silva (1859-1923) was the son of another Carlos Ferreira dos Santos Silva (1828-1885) who had founded, together with António Pinto da Fonseca (1814-1880), Joaquim Pinto da Fonseca (1816-1897) and Francisco Isidoro Viana (1822-1900), the "Fonsecas, Santos & Viana" Bank in 1861, later known as "Fonsecas & Burnay". The second honorary consul, in Porto, Joaquim Pinto da Fonseca (1859-1920) was also the son of the co-founder with the same name of the aforementioned bank (Caragea, 2007, p. 26). Thus, two prominent bankers, second generation at the head of a banking institution that had extended its influence in finance and industry, had been appointed honorary consuls.

Despite the anti-monarchist movement and a party supporting the republican cause, the event that changed the course of Portuguese history at the turn of the century was an assassination by a group of *carbonari* with no apparent connection to the republicans. On 1 February 1908, King Charles I (D. Carlos I) and Crown Prince Louis Philippe (Luís Filipe) were assassinated while the royal family was passing through Praça do Comércio in an open carriage. The regicide, the only one in the history of the country, meant the prelude to the collapse, after almost eight centuries, of the Portuguese monarchy.

Repulsive as it may have been to the Portuguese spirit, the regicide of 1908 indisputably marked a path of no return. The young and inexperienced King Emmanuel II (D. Manuel II) succeeded to the throne for almost two years, but was unable to fix the situation.

Already in times of crisis, the Government of Venceslau de Lima (14.5.1909-22.12.1909) expressed its interest in opening a diplomatic representation in Bucharest (Caragea, 2017, p. 28). The negotiations between the two governments, Romanian and Portuguese, were conducted, as usual, through the respective legations in Paris.

From a note dated 7 September 1909¹, sent from Paris, by *Chargé d'affaires* Carol Mitilieu, to the President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ion I. C. Brătianu, regarding the discussion held with António Carlos de Sousa dos Santos Bandeira, the private secretary of Colonel Carlos Roma du Bocage, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, we learn that the latter wanted to know whether the Romanian Government would be willing to accept a non-resident plenipotentiary minister in Romania and, in a “personal and confidential” manner, whether the authorities would have any preference, since the Portuguese Government would have wanted to accredit either the diplomatic representative from Saint Petersburg or the one from Vienna².

In the response received, the Romanian Government expressed its satisfaction with the opening of a diplomatic representation of Portugal in Bucharest. At the same time, it showed its preference for the minister accredited to Vienna. Unfortunately,

¹ AMAE, Report no. 1405 of 7.9.1909 of the Paris Legation.

² AMAE, - dosar 82/1909 P.4 Schimb de note privind: Înființarea unei misiuni diplomatice a Portugaliei la București, filele 16-18/file 82/1909 P.4 *Exchange of notes regarding: Establishment of a diplomatic mission of Portugal in Bucharest*, pages 16-18.

it is stated that “for special budgetary reasons”, the Romanian Government is not yet in a position to reciprocate by opening a legation in Lisbon.

In a new note, dated 29 November 1909¹, Carol Mitilineu informs that Minister du Bocage, on a short visit to Paris, renewed his government’s desire to open a legation in Bucharest, at the same time showing interest in signing a commercial convention. It is suggested in the note that the convention signed by Portugal with Germany in 1908 could be considered.

Unfortunately, on 22 December the government chaired by Wenceslau de Lima resigned, which is why the initiative planned for 1910 was shelved.

In 1912, the recently proclaimed Portuguese Republic will open an honorary consulate in Brăila (Caragea, 2017, p. 30).

On 21 April, Titu Maiorescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, communicated to his Portuguese counterpart, Augusto de Vasconcelos, that, as of 3 April 1912, the *exequatur* of usage had been granted to Achille Litzica, a citizen of Greek origin, in his capacity as honorary consul of Portugal in Romania². He will temporarily interrupt his mission, due to the Balkan war, resuming it on 28 October 1913³.

The summer of 1917 finds both states engaged in war on the side of the Entente. Southern Romania was under the occupation of the Central Powers. The Government, the Royal House, the Parliament, various central institutions and a good part of the population had been forced, since December 1916, to retreat to Jassy. Immediately after the withdrawal, in the desire to increase his political support, Brătianu attracted Take Ionescu and his Conservative Democratic Party to the Government. On the front, the Russian-Romanian troops, recovered after the disaster of the previous year, managed, after an important victory at Mărăști, to thwart the German-Austro-Hungarian offensive at Mărășești and Oituz. For the moment, on the Romanian side, the front had been stabilized. The revolution in Russia, the abdication of the Tsar and the propagation of socialist and Bolshevik ideas among the Russian army, however, became a cause of serious concern for the Romanian authorities. Some, like Titu Maiorescu, even predicted Russia’s exit

¹ AMAE, idem, files 21-22.

² ADMNE, *Consulado de Portugal em Brăila (1912-1924)*, CX 773, Seria B, nr.12/ *Consulado de Portugal em Brăila (1912-1924)*, CX 773, Series B, no. 12.

³ *Diário da República*, nr. 293, 16.12.1913, p. 4735.

from the war and a separate peace with the Central Powers, which was going to happen in a few months.

Ion I. C. Brătianu, the President of the Council of Ministers, and especially Take Ionescu believed that, regardless of how the war would end, Romania had to remain with the Entente until the end. In this sense, Brătianu and King Ferdinand I agreed that Romania should immediately intensify its foreign policy actions, sending representatives to all allied countries engaged in the conflict, “to win through diplomacy what could have been lost on the battlefield” (Caragea, 2017, p. 30).

In this sense, on 25 July, the Government reshuffles the diplomatic missions: Dr. Constantin Angelescu is appointed minister plenipotentiary in Washington; in Rome, Al. Lahovari is appointed minister; in Paris, Victor Antonescu (he replaced Al. Lahovari). At the same time, Victor Ionescu, Take Ionescu’s brother, is sent to Lisbon, and Nicolae D. Xenopol, to Tokyo (Caragea, 2017, p. 30).

In the “Victor Ionescu” file in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMAE) of Romania there is a note dated 25 August 1917, probably hastily drafted by Ion I. C. Brătianu and addressed to “the minister plenipotentiary of Portugal in Jassy [sic!]”. The mention of the city of Jassy would imply that, on that date, alongside the representatives of other diplomatic missions, such as Spain, for example, there was also a special envoy of the Portuguese Government. If that were the case, his presence would have preceded Victor Ionescu’s mission. It was also assumed that the mission would have ended as soon as Marghiloman signed peace with the Central Powers in Bucharest, in 1918¹. However, no supporting documents were found either in the archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or in the Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Lisbon: “This note led to erroneous interpretations regarding either the start date of the mission, or the hypothesis of the presence of a Portuguese diplomatic representative in Jassy. The second hypothesis is indisputably false. We even considered a possible visit to Jassy by the Portuguese minister from Saint-Petersburg, but the assumption was not confirmed. Therefore, the addressee in Romanian, with the mention “Jassy” can only be a slip. Consequently, it is a notification to the Portuguese ministry sent later (“*vient d’envoyer*” substituted by “*a envoyé*”), as, on 2 September, Victor Ionescu’s appointment had already been

¹ According to the Report entitled “Relațiile României cu Portugalia”, referring to the period of the beginnings until the third decade of the last century. The text is unsigned and undated.

communicated to Lisbon (see the letter of Sidónio Pais, who refers to this date) (Caragea, 2017, p. 32)”.

In the same file we find the copy of the letter of King Ferdinand I addressed to the President of the Portuguese Republic, Bernardino Machado, by which he informed the latter of the appointment of Victor Ionescu as extraordinary envoy to the Portuguese Government. So, the appointment was made on 13 September 1917¹. In 2017, both countries agreed that this should be officially considered the date of the start of diplomatic relations between Romania and Portugal².

Two days later, on 15 September, Ion Trăsnea Greceanu, the Romanian consul in Odessa, informed the Romanian Prime Minister that he had given Victor Ionescu the ciphered dictionary intended for the Lisbon legation³.

We also learn, indirectly, that on 24 September, the letters of credit were sent to Victor Ionescu through Dr. Constantin Angelescu, our envoy to Washington (1917-1918), whose mission, like that of Victor Ionescu, will end with the signing of the Bucharest peace (March 1918).

From the research done, we can say that in those troubled times the opening of a Romanian legation was still not possible. On 24 January, Sidónio Pais, the new President of the Republic (since 27 December), who also held the positions of President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of War (since 11 December), sent Brătianu a note, through the Romanian Legation from Madrid (another proof that there was no representative of the Portuguese Government in Jassy), showing that he had already had a meeting with Victor Ionescu, without specifying the date. Certainly, the meeting took place in January, on the day or days before the note. Victor Ionescu was received as “sent on a special mission to the Government of the Portuguese Republic”, and it was a strictly protocol meeting. “Victor Ionescu’s mission had been thought for those republicans devoted to the Allies, but who had just been removed, in December 1917, from the political scene. (Caragea, 2017, p. 34)” Unfortunately, we have no information regarding

¹ AMAE, Scrisoarea din 13 septembrie 1917, dosar „Victor Ionescu”/ The letter of September 13, 1917, “Victor Ionescu” file.

² MAE, *Mesaj comun al Miniștrilor Afacerilor Externe ai României și ai Republicii Portugheze cu ocazia sărbătoririi a 100 de ani de la stabilirea relațiilor diplomatice*, 13.9.2017/ Joint message of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Romania and the Portuguese Republic on the occasion of the celebration of 100 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, 13.9.2017. <https://www.mae.ro/node/43188>, consulted on 6.9.2023.

³ AMAE, Nota din 15 septembrie 1917, dosar “Victor Ionescu”/ Note from September 15, 1917, “Victor Ionescu” file.

the meetings of the Romanian diplomat during the period when Bernardino Machado was President of the Republic, deposed, like Prime Minister Afonso Costa, by Sidónio Pais, through the coup of 11 December.

On 7 April 1918, under the conditions of peace with the Central Powers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs C. C. Arion (in the Government chaired by Al. Marghiloman) called Victor Ionescu to the country, asking him to hand over to Paris the cipher and archives of the mission¹.

On 13 April 1918, King Ferdinand informed the President of the Portuguese Republic of the termination of Victor Ionescu's mission. In the copy preserved in the archive, however, Bernardino Machado's name appears by slip. At that time, however, the president was Sidónio Pais².

“With all the difficulties of this troubled period, Victor Ionescu made a good impression in the diplomatic circles in Lisbon. *Ilustração Portuguesa*, the weekly supplement of the newspaper *O Século*, from 1 April 1918, paints an effusive portrait of the Romanian representative:

*“The Minister of Romania. Portugal had the honour of receiving in Lisbon, as a representative of Romania, one of the most notable intellectual capacities of that poor country, a victim of the deceit of the detestable Germans. This is Mr. Victor Ionescu, fluent orator, distinguished journalist, diplomat of rare value and, above all, an enthusiastic patriot, friend of the Allies, who prefers his homeland to die broken down to pieces by the merciless Teutons, than to sign a separate peace, which would be suicide for that glorious nation. Now, a man of such quality, intelligent, with a particularly distinguished education, could not fail to be well received in Portugal, a country, like his, small, but embracing the same idea that today unites all the Allies in one effort - to fight against the enemies of Civilization. His coming together with the Portuguese Government represents for us a great reward that honours us so much”*³.

For Romania, however, the situation will change radically at the end of the war. At the last moment, on the advice of France, Romania re-entered the war with the

¹ AMAE, Scrisoarea din 29 martie (8 aprilie) 1918, dosar “Victor Ionescu”/ Letter of March 29 (April 8) 1918, “Victor Ionescu” file.

² AMAE, Scrisoarea din 31 martie (13 aprilie) 1918, dosar “Victor Ionescu”/ Letter of March 31 (April 13) 1918, “Victor Ionescu” file.

³ *Ilustração Portuguesa*, seria a II-a, nr. 632, 1.IV.1918. apud Dan Caragea (coord.), *op.cit.*, p. 36, who also translated the document.

Allies, on 10 November 1918. Despite the end of hostilities with the Central Powers, due to the behaviour of the Hungarian army in Transylvania, Romania engaged in a war with Bolshevik Hungary, defeating it and occupying Budapest for several months. The peace treaties, especially the Trianon one, will allow it to annex some regions considered "old Romanian territories": Bessarabia (Moldova between the rivers Prut and Dnister), Bucovina (Upper Moldova), Transylvania. Also, through the defeat of Bulgaria, the Quadrilateral, obtained in 1913, was preserved. This is how Greater Romania is formed, with a new destiny in Europe and the Balkans, and whose peak of political, economic and cultural development was reached at the end of the 20s.

In this completely new context, on 10 May 1919, Portugal's first "Second Class Consular Legation" was established in the region¹. Later, on 25 June, it was established that this legation would have its headquarters in Bucharest, the head of the mission being also accredited to the Courts of Belgrade and Athens². At the head of the new legation was appointed Martinho Teixeira Homem de Brederode³, who will take up his post a few months later. On 7 December 1919, Brederode was received at the Palace by King Ferdinand, to deliver the letters of accreditation to the sovereign⁴. Brederode was, by all accounts, an exceptional diplomat.

On 5 December 1930, the *Agreement on Trade and Navigation* between Portugal and Romania was signed in Bucharest, the first commercial agreement between the two countries. G. G. Mironescu, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed on behalf of Romania, and Martinho de Brederode, Minister Plenipotentiary in Bucharest, on behalf of Portugal⁵.

So, the first legation in the full sense and according to all diplomatic protocol usage was opened in Bucharest in 1919, at the initiative of Portugal. According to the principle of reciprocity, on 13 April⁶, King Ferdinand I appointed Ion Trăsnea Greceanu, as of 1 September 1920, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister

¹ Decretul nr. 5741 din 10 mai 1919, al Ministerului portughez al Afacerilor Străine. V. *Diário da República* (Lisabona), seria I, nr. 98, 10.3.1919, p. 1164.

² *Diário da República* (Lisabona), seria I, nr. 122, 25.VI.1919, p. 1656.

³ O abordare extinsă: Alina Stoica, *Relații diplomatice romano-portugheze (1919-1933): Martinho de Brederode – ambasador la București*, Oradea, Editura Universității din Oradea, 2011.

⁴ AMAE, Scrisoarea din 5.12.1919, dosar „Martinho de Brederode”.

⁵ AMAE, Acordul din 5 decembrie 1930, dosar „Martinho de Brederode”.

⁶ Based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs report, the Minister of Foreign Affairs being at that time Duiliu Zamfirescu.

Plenipotentiary to the Government of the Portuguese Republic¹. The Royal Legation of Romania was finally opening in Lisbon, in the new post-war context.

At the start of the mission, a remarkable personality was at the head of Romanian diplomacy: Take Ionescu. He peremptorily states:

“A war does not end with the signing of peace treaties. It continues even in the souls of peoples, and the duty of statesmen is to create and maintain a state of things that will convince those who would seek to overthrow the newly established order of the senselessness and even the danger of such an attempt” (Buzatu & Cîrstea, 2007, p. 37).

We refer to his involvement in the construction of the Little Entente, which should have included the victorious states, from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean Sea: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece. Thus, before the Aix-les-Bains Conference, Take Ionescu declared to the press that the alliance was to form “a block of eighty million inhabitants and ten million soldiers”². Take Ionescu’s project aimed to create a “sanitary cordon” against a possible attack from Bolshevik Russia, which had become a potential enemy of the free world. An alliance of such dimensions would have taken the place of Russia from the former Entente. In the end, the Little Entente included only three states: Czechoslovakia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Romania, but also having the support of Greece and being, obviously, a wall against Hungarian revisionism.

According to the protocol, on 16 November 1920, Trăsnea Greceanu was received at the Belém Palace, to deliver the letters of accreditation to the President of the Portuguese Republic, António José de Almeida, in the presence of the President of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of War³.

In his speech, Trăsnea Greceanu expressed his satisfaction at being appointed diplomatic representative in Portugal, as his predecessor, Victor Ionescu, “could not, due to the circumstances and his premature death, complete the mission that had been entrusted to him”⁴. The Romanian minister showed that two sister nations (the idea of common Latinity was invoked) and allies during the war, could finally develop natural relations, as an expression of their common will.

¹ AMAE, Decretul regal din 13 august 1920, dosar „Ion Trăsnea Greceanu”.

² *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, anul 132, nr. 254, 14.9.1920, p. 1.

³ *A Capital* (Lisabona), anul XI, nr. 3698, 16.11.1920, p. 2.

⁴ It is another indirect proof that during his stay in Portugal (1917-1918), Victor Ionescu could not, in that extremely tense context, open a Romanian legation in Lisbon.

For his part, the Portuguese President expressed his desire for both countries to maintain “*close and continued relations*”¹.

Unfortunately, Trăsnea Greceanu’s mission ended abruptly on 1 April 1922, when the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to suppress the legations in Portugal, Holland, Spain, Norway, Finland, Japan, as well as the agency in Egypt, for reasons of budget reduction.

This concludes the first act of a project initiated in 1879. Starting 1928, two personalities will balance, from a cultural and political point of view, the presence in Romania of a remarkable diplomat and man of culture: Martinho de Brederode. These two Romanian personalities, the initiators of a new stage in Romanian-Portuguese cultural and diplomatic relations, were Nicolae Iorga and Nicolae Titulescu.

Conclusion

Almost a month after France, the United Kingdom and Germany acknowledged, on the same day, the full independence of Romania, considering the conditions stipulated in the Treaty of Berlin fulfilled, Prince Carol and the Brătianu Government sent a diplomatic mission to the Courts of Madrid and Lisbon (13 March, respectively 30 March 1880). The special mission had a double purpose: the acknowledgement by the Iberian countries of Romania’s independence and the strengthening of relations by opening permanent legations.

We can state that, despite the fact that there was a kinship between Carol and King Louis I of Portugal, only the mission to Spain achieved full success. Al. Plagino found support in the government policy of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo and in King Alfonso XII. Thus, on 23 June 1881, the Legation of the Kingdom of Spain was established in Bucharest, led by Juan Pedro Aladro y Kastriota, in Charge of Affairs, then Resident Minister (Dragomir, 2018, pp. 16-21).

Regarding Romania’s relation with Portugal, we could say that beyond the relatively low economic and commercial interest, what is relevant as a differentiating political element is the fact that the two countries were part of

¹ AMAE, Răspunsul din 16 septembrie 1920, dosar „Ion Trăsnea Greceanu”. The Portuguese President was delicately targeting the problem of “continuity”, a chronic dysfunction in our diplomacy, solved only in 1929. Between 1928 and 1947 we can speak of a continued representation in Lisbon.

different alliances since 1883. Romania, disappointed by Russia in 1878, pragmatically got closer to Austria-Hungary and Germany (remember the close relation between Prince Carol and Chancellor Bismarck), placing itself under their protection, through a secret treaty, as the imperial and benevolent France of Napoleon III had disappeared. As to Portugal, whose foreign policy orientation differed from that of Spain, it would stand by the United Kingdom, its old ally, and by France.

The end of the World War I, with both allied countries, and the creation of Greater Romania were two decisive moments in the opening of permanent diplomatic representations in Bucharest and Lisbon.

References

- Buzatu, Gh. & Cîrstea, Marusia (2007). *Europa în balanța forțelor/ Europe in the balance of forces*. Bucharest: Mica Valahie Publishing House.
- Caragea, Dan (coord.). (2017) *România – Portugalia: 100 de ani de la stabilirea relațiilor diplomatice româno-portugheze / ROMÉLIA – PORTUGAL: 100 anos desde o estabelecimento das relações diplomáticas romeno-portuguesas/ Romania – Portugal: 100 years since the establishment of Romanian-Portuguese diplomatic relations*. Bucharest: Dynasty Books.
- Damean, Sorin Liviu (2011). *România și Congresul de pace de la Berlin (1878)/ Romania and the Berlin Peace Congress (1878)*. Bucharest: Mica Valahie Publishing House.
- Diaconescu, Emil (1937). *România și marile puteri după Congresul de la Berlin până la 1914. / Romania and the great powers after the Berlin Congress until 1914*. Iasi: Presa Bună.
- Dragomir, Denisa Victoria (2018). Aspects of the Romanian-Spanish relations between 1881-1885. *International Relations and Security Studies Review*, no. 1. Stockton, California: Global Research Publishing House.
- Godinho, Isabel da Silveira (coord.). (1990). *D. Luís I, Duque do Porto e Rei de Portugal*. Lisboa: Palatul Național din Ajuda.
- Iorga, Nicolae (1923). *Politica externă a regelui Carol I./ The foreign policy of King Carol I*. Bucharest: Institute of Graphic Arts "Luceafărul".
- Iorga, Nicolae (1927). *Războiul pentru independența României/ The war for Romania's independence*. Bucharest: National Culture.
- Mocanu, Pavel (2009). *Martinho de Brederode – povestea unui ambasador portughez îndrăgit de România./ Martinho de Brederode - the story of a Portuguese ambassador in love with Romania*. Bucharest: S.C. Lumina TIPO.

Stoica, Alina (2011). *Relații diplomatice romano-portugheze (1919-1933): Martinho de Brederode – ambasador la București/ Romanian-Portuguese diplomatic relations (1919-1933): Martinho de Brederode – ambassador in Bucharest*. Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea.

Vilhena, Júlio de (1922). *Cartas Inéditas da Rainha D. Estefânia./ Cartas Inéditas da Rainha D. Estefânia*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade.