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*Romanian political elite and the romanian-russian relations
between 1991-2007*

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Keywords: Romanian-Soviet/Russian relations, Romanian political elite, universe of contrasts, burdening historical legacy, the configuration of the immediate Romanian-Russian rapports, the 1991-2007 period

Summary

Captivated by the dimension of some bilateral rapports that have been distinguished over time in the international relations portative, through a *universe of contrasts* and an eminently problematic historical ambiance, but also by the complexity of the difficulties implied by various strategies taken by the *Romanian political elite* to identify a synergistic terrain of action in its Eastern proximity, in the present doctoral thesis we have undertaken the bold engagement to examine the manner in which the relation with Russia has been reconsidered, redefined, remodeled, from the action angle of the main actors of the Romanian state, thus attempting to illustrate an utmost exact image of the manner in which the governing elite has fathomed to calibrate the relations with the Eastern neighbour, between 1991-2007. Having thus in view that the present research attempt places in its analysis nodal center the issue of the immediate Romanian-Russian binome from the comprehension, as well as action, horizon of the Romanian political elite, and also taking into consideration the fact that it is impossible for any scientific attempt to ignore its fundamental aspects, we will first try to present certain considerations of a notional order regarding that particular social segment (elite), on whose coordinates the constellation of the bilateral rapports has acquired, after the collapse of the comunism, an eminently different and distinct configuration. Hence, within the most simple acception and definition, the term of „elite” points toward and represents „the persons considered to be the best or the most remarkable in a certain group, but also the persons who, from one perspective or another, occupy the first place in a given ensemble, in both cases thus existing a relatively narrow category of individuals that distinguish themselves in a certain way from all the others that are not part of the elite, and that, by comparison, represent the masses”¹.

¹ For the various definitions given to the elite concept, see Jacques Coenen-Huther, *Sociologia Elitelor*, Iași, Polirom, 2007, p.7; Marius Tudor, Adrian Gavrilă, *Democrația la pachet. Elită politică în România postcomunistă*, București, Compania, 2002, p.28; Constantin V. Lucien, *Elitele și statutul lor în societate*, București, Oscar Print, 2003, p.166; Adrian Dinu Rachieru, *Elitism și postmodernism. Postmodernismul românesc și circulația elitelor*, Chișinău, Garuda-art, 2000, p.161; Michael Hartmann, *The Sociology of elites*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006, p.2.

Therefore and in these conditions, if the aspect according to which the term of elite bears, as a first significance, an eminently different reality, constituted of a preeminent social segment that dissociates itself from the rest of the individuals through a set of exceptional features, is unanimously acknowledged, it is also true that the notion of elite implies „the reality of a dimension of an obvious asymmetry, signaled at the level of the governors/governees tandem, tandem which gravitates ineluctably around power”². In other words, the notion of elite refers from the very beginning to the reality of a clear dichotomy, of a dichotomy between a dominant minority and a dominated majority, minority that otherwise presents itself as the political class, the governing class, ruling elite, governing elite, and even power elite. Actually, it is precisely this minority that appears as an authentic political class, and that is situated simultaneously in a position that confers the right but also obliges it to take grand decisions, that represent the object of our main investigation filter. Otherwise put, the present scientific attempt places in its axial analysis center the Romanian political elites, elites that are comprised of: 1). Romania’s presidents that have exercised their mandate between 1991-2007; 2). The prime-ministers that have exercised their leadership functions in the above mentioned interval; 3). The government ministers that have contributed to elaborating the decisional act on the whole of the mentioned period; 4). The parties and main political formations that have contributed to the functioning of the political activity in Romania between 1991-2007, to be more exact, the entire governmental machine that has otherwise imprinted an eminently different cadence to the bilateral repertoire, during the whole of the interval mentioned.

At the same time it is not less significant that besides the fact that we propose to examine the exact manner in which this entire governmental structure has decided to act with regards to the arithmetic of the bilateral game, we will try to highlight both the configuration of the Romanian-Russian bilateral mechanism in the *immediate or recent history*³ section, and the trends that has individualized the evolution of the bilateral tandem between 1991-2007. Therewith, we will focus our investigation interest on the dimension of the political rapports, however without in-depth and profoundly examining the register of the cultural and economic rapports, specific to the bilateral frame. Complementary, the conclusions we have

² Mihai Milca, *Geneza teoriei elitelor. Provocarea neomachiavellienilor*, București, Economică, 2001, p.9.

³ The immediate or recent history represents the history that has as an object of study the „terminal segment of contemporary history and its main feature is that is experienced by the historian”. For further information on this topic the following can be consulted: Jean- Francois Soulet, *Immediate History*, București, Corint, 2010.

reached and that we propose to highlight, intend to convey an ampler horizon for the radiographed issue, at the same time conferring a concrete landmark in marking new directions and strategies of approach for the target subject.

Starting from the complexity of the objectives we propose to achieve along with the motivation of this undertaking, but also from the reality of the bibliographical instruments we have at hand, we have attempted to confer a unique structure to this paper, a structure that renders with clarity, the quintessence of the targeted theme, respectively the one of the new landscape crystallized in the bilateral rapports dimension under the zodiac of the postdecember political elite. To this objective, we have configured the paper on the basis of chapters and subchapters that follow the logical and diachronic thread of the factual reality, attempting, by means of such a configuration, to enable the highlight of this paper's nodal vein.

Before entering the substance of the targeted theme, we must make a mention from the beginning of the fact that at present there is no complex study, of an eminent documentary quality, that could stance the manner in which the Romanian political class has decided to steer the evolution and route of the Romanian-Russian bilateral tandem along the 1991-2007 period, situation that otherwise concurs to the assessment that the historiography of the targeted subject is, at present, in a eminently incipient and embrionic stage. Nevertheless, the examination of the present issue, submitted to the investigative grid, has occupied a privileged place within certain works and specialty literature⁴, as well as inside various

⁴ A considerable and substantive approach, attributed to the issue of Romanian-Russian bilateral relations, from the point of view of Romanian political elite, can be signaled within the following work and specialized studies: Florin Abraham, *Transformarea României 1989-2006. Rolul factorilor externi*, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, București, 2006; Serban Filip Cioculescu, *Terra incognita. Repere pentru cartografierea haosului din relațiile internaționale contemporane*, Militară, București, 2010; Idem, "Putting an end to the „dialogue of the deaf” between Romania and Russia? Struggling with the past, reshaping the future", In *Journal of East-European and Asian Studies*, vol.1, nr. 30, mai 2010; Vasile Buga, "Relațiile româno-ruse: Stadiu și perspective", In *Casa Nato Occasional Papers*, București, 2003; Iulian Chifu, "Lungul drum de la dialog la cooperare", In *Casa Nato Occasional Papers*, București, 2003; Armand Goșu, "Politica răsăriteană a României:1990-2005", In *Contrafort*, nr. 1 (135), ianuarie 2006; Carol Hărșan, "România-Rusia încotro?", In *România Liberă*, 26 noiembrie 2007; Ruxandra Ivan, "L'ombre de L'empire. Les Rapports de la Roumanie a la Russie 1991-2006", In *Romanian Political Science Review*, vol. VIII, nr.3, 2008; Cosmin Popa, "Sub semnul contratimpului istoric. O încercare de evaluare a relațiilor dintre România-URSS/Rusia", In *Sfera Politicii*, an XI, nr. 95-96, septembrie 2001; Theodor Tudoroiu, "From Spheres of Influence to Energy Wars", In *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, nr.3, septembrie 2008; Constantin Hlihor, "România și vecinătatea

memorialistic works from the most important political actors of the Romanian stage⁵, actors that have considerably contributed to the chromatic of the bilateral register. Naturally and as expected, this corollary of emblematic and referential sources, that weigthens the historiography of the theme, has constituted the basic foundation of the present doctoral thesis, foundation strengthened by an extremely solid methodological basis. Therefore, beyond this fan of bibliographic sources that has constituted the foundation of our research attempt, the present doctoral thesis has had at its basis an extremely articulate methodological instrument, to be more exact, an instrument characteristic to the immediate historiographic typology. Thus and in such conditions, under which we have assumed the temerarious engagement to introduce in the scientific debate a subject that is included in the category of the so-called *immediate or recent history*, we must mention from the very beginning that such a research – as the one we are proposing – is not and can not be built on archive documents, for objective reasons pertaining mainly to the restrictive information character employed by the Law of National Archives, thus pertaining implicitly to the context of impossibility of access and consultation of eminently primary sources, situation encountered in the case of diplomatic archives as well. However, this distinct kind of historic research presents other advantages than the ones derived from the knowledge based on usage of archives. Thus, alternatively, our research was based on consultation of specialty literature, to which, based

sa după încheierea Războiului Rece”, In *Analele Universității Creștine Dimitrie Cantemir*, Seria Istorie-Serie Nouă, an.1, nr.1, 2010; Ionel Nicu Sava, ”Romanian-Russian Relations in the Context of the Euro-Atlantic Integration Process”, In *Conflict Studies*, septembrie 2001.

⁵ A remarkable place within this theme’s historiography is occupied by the following memorialistic works : Ion Iliescu, *Momente de Istorie II. Documente, Alocuțiuni, Comentarii, iunie 1990-septembrie 1991*, Enciclopedică, București, 1996; Idem, *Fragmente de viață și de istorie trăită*, Litera, București, 2011; Emil Constantinescu, *Timpul dărâmării, timpul zidirii. Volumul IV*, Universalia, București, 2002; Adrian Năstase, *România după Malta. 875 de zile la Externe. Volumul 4, 5,6, 8, 9*, Fundația Europeană Titulescu, București, 2007/2011; Idem, *România și Noua Arhitectură Mondială*, Regia Autonomă Monitorul Oficial, București, 1996; Petre Roman, *Libertatea ca datorie*, Fundația Pro, București, 2006; Arachelian, Vartan, *Față în față cu Petre Roman. 9 convorbiri cu Vartan Arachelian*, Cartea Românească, București, 1996; Adrian Severin, *Lacrimile Dimineții. Slăbiciunile Guvernului Roman*, Scripta, București, 1995; Gabriel Andreescu, Adrian Severin, *Locurile unde se construiește Europa*, Polirom, Iași, 2000; Mircea Geoană, *Politica externă a României la începutul secolului XXI. Drumul spre Europa și lumea transatlantică*, Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005; Ion Diaconescu, *După revoluție*, Nemira, București, 2003; Idem, *După Temniță*, Nemira, București, 2003; Ioan Mircea Pascu, *Jurnal de... Front*, Rao, București, 2010; Sabin Ivan, *Radiografii parlamentare. De vorbă cu Alexandru Bărlădeanu*, ExPonto, Constanța, 1998.

on an *interpretative analysis*, we have impartially assigned hypotheses, essential to the comprehension of the topic discussed. Secondly, on the basis of a comparative method, we have examined several studies and reference material, juxtaposing them to reveal the validity of the information. Last but not least, approaching the examined issue has required adopting a diachronic technique, given that the debated phenomenon is a progressive one, an extremely important one, generator of considerable effects. Finally, appealing to the methodology specific to oral history -, *structured individual interview*-, interview for which the questions and their order are established from the very beginning, and the research objective is contiguous and still ongoing”⁶, we have followed the reconstitution of this complex subject, with the assistance of the participants and eye-witnesses testimonies, in our case both political decision-makers and representatives of the diplomatic body. Thus, on the basis of the structured individual interview that has taken into account „the open-ended questions exercise, more exactly the type of questionnaire that that has allowed freedom of thinking and of expression for the interviewed persons”⁷, and that has paid considerable attention to the benchmarking process, process whereby political actors were selected, especially the ones that have held the most important functions and that have been directly involved in the evolution frame of these relations, as well as officials of the diplomatic body, that through the positions held, have been familiarized with the mechanisms and the fine tunes of the targeted phenomenon, during the period January 2011 – March 2012, 13 persons have been interviewed among which we can nominate the two former Presidents of Romania (Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu), former Prime-ministers (Petre Roman, Adrian Năstase), former Foreign Affairs Ministers (Sergiu Celac, Teodor Meleșcanu, Adrian Severin, Adrian Cioroianu), the former Minister of Defence (Ioan Mircea Pașcu), the President of the Romanian Delegation at the Parliamentary Gathering of European (Gyorgy Frunda), and last but not least, representatives of the diplomatic body and ambassadors (Vasile Buga, Ion Porojan, and Mioara Porojan). Naturally and as expected, the information acquired on the basis of the undertaken interviews have been used for the construction of our argumentation, thus becoming an efficient work instrument but also a significant documentation source on the radiographed phenomenon. Therefore, having as a basis for our work some extremely well defined and articulated bibliographical and methodological instruments, we have committed in the first instance to radiograph the bilateral Romanian-Soviet epic, specific to

⁶ Traian Rotariu, Petre Iluț, *Ancheta sociologică și sondajul de opinie*, Iași, Polirom, 1997, p.63.

⁷ Septimiu Chelcea, *Tehnici de cercetare sociologică*, București, SNSPA, 2001, pp.75-85.

the communist period, trying to reveal the exact format under which the communist political elite sought to articulate and to milestone the trajectory of bilateral relations. Aligned to the conviction that any substantive approach, afferent to the physiognomy of the present rapports, can not ignore the historical panorama of bilateral relations, we have tried to examine the avatars of the Romanian-Soviet bilateral thopos, from the perspective of the governing communist elite. With this purpose, we have resorted to a clear delimitation between the two emblematic periods, significant for the communist zodiac, *the period 1945-1964* and respectively, *the period 1964-1989*, thus trying to reveal the evolution trend specific to the bilateral mechanism, as well as the bilateral feature, characteristic to each stage, with the deliberate desire to offer a strong basis for the comprehension of the immediate horizon of the bilateral relations. Thus, with the occasion of the first period, co-substantial to the soviet communism zodiac, (1945-1953), period that otherwise consecrates Romania's gearing on the Moscow orbit, (after the armed soviet occupation and the percentage agreement), but also legitimizes the coming at the leadership of the Romanian state of a satellite government, imposed by the ultimatum and the blackmail exercised on behalf of the Moscow leadership (Dr. Petru Groza's large national concentration government), the Romanian-Soviet bilateral relations ecuation is reconfigured in comparison with the asymmetric grid that the relation, in terms of power, devolves upon. Practically, this is the reason that „as long as the Romanian state belonged to a camp, figuratively and literally, and was under soviet occupation, the sentence was ultimate: the occupant arrogated itself the right to decide what happens in an occupied country”⁸. Actually, complete subordination of the Romanian external policy and its aligment to the Soviet occupant's interests, that has materialized through local elites serving Moscow, and has revealed their predilection to servitude, conformism and bondage, by rapport to the Kremlin homologous, thus implicitly the condition of faithful ally to Moscow was patented in the first phase of Prime Secretary General of P.M.R., Gheorghe-Gheorghiu Dej's leadership, in whose perception, the strong and unconditional friendship with the Soviet Union has represented an axiomatic constant, extremely visible at a judicial level (through the signing of the Treaty of Collaboration, Amity, and Mutual Assistance between the Romanian Popular Republic and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics), as well as economically (through the creation of Romanian-

⁸ Mircea Malita, Dinu C.Giurescu, *Zid de pace, turnuri de frăție. Deceniul deschiderii:1962-1972*, București, Compania, 2011, p.39.

Soviet mixt societies – The Sovroms-), but also at a political level (through Romania's vertiginous connection to the position adopted by Moscow within the conflict with Jugoslavia).

However, in the context of effective disappearance of the political character that personified the Soviet dominance avatar (Stalin), but also under the disavowal of the exaggerated cult and of the stalinist crimes, the Bucharest political elite, engaging in a new adventure and experimenting with the option of a pure Romanian communism – run on a specific national dialect – has achieved the performance of a gradual delimitation from the soviet line, delimitation that would shortly translate into a salutary emancipation strategy from Moscow's aphyxiating guardianship. Thus, based on the specific Romanian turn, the political elite led by Gheorghiu-Dej, managed, in less than five years, to transform the Romanian state, from the most loyal satellite of the Soviet Union into a rebel ally, even disturbing, thus bringing a considerable input on the establishment of a glaciated atmosphere bilaterally.

Hence, if it is unanimously recognized the fact that promoting national communism has constituted a determined resort in undermining the interferential frame with Moscow, it is as true that the process of detachment from the suffocating Moscow guardianship was achieved with small, but constant steps, and the moment the Romanian external policy slid away from the path of full obedience towards the one of relative independence has materialized based on well established algorithms, as follows: the refuse for economic specialization and the conflicts within C.A.E.R, Romania's position both towards the Soviet-Chinese conflict and towards the Cuban missile crisis, openness towards the West and last, but not least, the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence of April 1964. In addition, a supplementary factor that has considerably impacted the bilateral relations register, was represented by the takeover of Romania's political leadership by Nicolae Ceaușescu, respectively by the foremost representative of the political elite, that had placed his targets much farther compared to his predecessor, in the landscape of steps taken for insubordination, emancipation, and especially removal from Moscow. Practically, this explains why, if in his very first visit to Moscow (3-11 September 1965), where he had to inform on a series of issues, inherent to the bilateral frame, but also to examine the sharp aspects specific to the bilateral frame, Ceaușescu had astounded the Soviet leadership, through the coolness of his demands: restitution of the thesaurus, of the party's archive, and contesting the role of the Moscow ruler in the ensemble of relations with communist parties,

a year later, Nicolae Ceaușescu, champion of rebellious attitude, had chosen from the corollary of initiatives meant to irritate Moscow, but also the option of contesting the military structure of the Warsaw pact. Additionally, the defiance acts in relation with Moscow have escalated through two crucial demarches that have propelled Romania in the international spectrum, individualizing it in the communist block: the refuse to break the diplomatic relations with Israel after the third Arab-Israel war (The Six Day War of June 1967) and the recognition, but mostly the initiation of embassy relations with the German Federal Republic, step that had subsequently allowed the visit of chancellor Willy Brandt in Romania. However, the height of Romania's defiance acts in relation to Moscow was represented by the Czechoslovakia invasion episode, when Romania, through the voice of its foremost representative has not only refused to participate in the invasion, but has also firmly condemned such an action. Thus, predictably and as expected, such a state of mind would persistently be maintained at the end of the communist regime, when the bilateral register was to be found in a context of cold vicinity, a context otherwise encumbered by a historic ballast and an extremely burdened contentious litigation.

Thus, if in the previous chapter we have tried to highlight the historical background of the bilateral rapports, paying considerable attention to the parameters that stood as a basis for the actions of the communist political elite in the bilateral spectrum, within the next chapter we have assumed the audacious task to reveal the immediate chromatics of the Romanian-Russian bilateral relations, but also the configuration of the different perceptual and actionable phases of Romania's political elite related to Russia. Practically, in this eminently referential and emblematic chapter we have proposed to reveal the unusual symphony of immediate Romanian-Russian relations, under the careful orchestration of the main political actors that have stood at the leadership between 1990-2000 (National Salvation Front, Romanian Social Democracy Party, Romanian Democratic Convention) thus analyzing in a synthetic and punctual manner, the train of the main bilateral events, co-substantial to such a reality. However, such an audacious attempt as the one that proposes to highlight the particular rhapsody of the immediate Romanian-Russian relations from the perspective of the Romanian political leadership, that has ruled the Romanian state between 1990-2000, wouldn't have been possible without an initial presentation of the radical and ample mutations induced on the Soviet Union, as well as on the entire socialist block, under the political constellation of the Soviet leader, Mihail Gorbaciov. In this sense, the chapter begins on the basis of the need to present the strong reverberations that the Soviet leader's attempt to

renovate communism has generated on a regional scale and not only, as to subsequently pay considerable attention to the obvious and irreconcilable dissensions that have monopolized the agenda of the high level dialogue between the foremost representative of the Romanian political elite of communist-stalinist character, Nicolae Ceausescu, and the leader of the Soviet Union, Mihail Gorbaciov. Next, in a diachronic logic of factual reality, we have focused our attention on the impact that the arithmetic of Romanian „decembriada” has generated at the level of immediate Romanian-Soviet relations equation. Thus, we have observed that the Romanian Revolution of December 1989 has represented a nodal trademark for the establishment of a new type of relations between Romania and URSS. De facto, the changes in December 1989 have imposed, at the level of the new Romanian political elite, and at the level of the temporary political formation entitled „National Salvation Front” respectively, the necessity for crystallizing an eminently distinct frame of approach towards the rapports with the Eastern neighbor, more exactly, a frame within which a philosophy of normal rapports with the Soviet Union is primordial. Actually, within this strategy of inherent corrections, tributary to the bilateral spectrum, strategy that pleaded for the restoration and reestablishment of a „modus vivendi” at a bilateral level, but also for blurring until extinction the remains of the old regime, has been inscribed both the policy of rapid start, characterized by an exceptional dynamics of the contacts established between the two countries in 1990, and the attempt to reconfigure the judicial physiognomy of the bilateral rapports, attempt that was ultimately doomed to fail.

However, this preliminary dialectics on the basis of which the governing elite has acted with the view to reconsider the type of relations existing at that present time between the two countries, couldn't ignore the dimension of certain episodes that proved to be true moments of difficulty for the bilateral rapports zodiac, but also the most difficult to surpass exams at a bilateral level. Thus, events such as the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the retrograde putsch in Moscow, beyond the fact that they have directly affected the Romanian state, they couldn't ignore the bilateral rapports spectrum, placing an implacable print on the following evolution of the bilateral itinerary. Actually, for the governmental formation whose foremost representative was President Ion Iliescu, the most difficult test was to elaborate a strategy, susceptible to ignoring and abandoning the crucial implications that the dimension of such episodes could have induced at the level of bilateral relations mechanism. Naturally and predictably, in the absence of an intuitive political spirit, and under the skirts of an inconsistent approach and vision, for the governmental structure whose undeniable leader

was President Ion Iliescu, such a test was insurmountable from the beginning. This is precisely why it is not surprising that towards the end of 1991, but especially under the political reign of the „fesenist” structure, there have been no substantial changes nor notable advances in the bilateral relations dimension, the political formation that took over leadership of Romania after December 1989 thus succeeding the performance to leave the relationship with URSS uncultivated, but also to contribute to the situation in which the bilateral relations have registered a considerable and visible impasse. Besides, the context created by the „de facto” disappearance of the Soviet Union and by the takeover of main prerogatives by the Russian Federation, had not induced spectacular mutations at the bilateral register level either. Although it should have represented the nodal event in which the Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports dimension was about to be inscribed on the alignment of inherent normality and political evolution, the episode occasioned by the official death of URSS had proved to be the exact opposite, the collapse of the Soviet giant leaving thus behind both a bilateral cleavage and an almost void space in what concerns the relations with its main successor, Russia. In addition, not even the event occasioned by the affiliation of the Romanian state to the Euroatlantic structures hadn't generated background mutations at the bilateral thopos level, and hadn't fundamentally changed the decorum of relations with the Russian Federation. Quite the contrary, in the context where the objective of re-coupling the Romanian state to the Euroatlantic constellation prevailed, the governing elite had no longer manifested a special appetite for establishing a substantive dialogue, compensating for the Eastern proximity. Moreover, the epic of reinserting the Romanian State on the institutionalized Europe coordinates has contributed to foreshadowing the two interludes (the cleavage interlude and the bilateral cooling), interludes that have reinstated in the most eloquent manner the true frame of mind that has characterized the bilateral register at that time. Thus, if on the occasion of the bilateral cleavage interlude - on which the government of the Romanian Social Democracy Party (President Ion Iliescu's party) had placed an undeniable print – the zodiac of Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports was characterized by a definitive rupture, strengthened by the differences of opinion within both parties with regards to problematic aspects, with the occasion of the bilateral cooling interlude (1996-2000) – draped under the skirts of President's Emil Constantinescu Romanian Democrat Convention policy -, the Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports itinerary was strongly encumbered by the deliberate will from both sides to maintain the constellation of the bilateral relations under such a completely blocked and ill climate.

Consequently and in these conditions, the ensemble image taken from the evoked chapter is the one that highlights that under the coordinates of the 3 leaders (FSN, PDSR, CDR), the configuration of the Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports has held a syncope texture, and the evolution of the bilateral tandem has oscillated between a short episode of advance on a bilateral level (1990) and the perpetual moments of inflexion and recoil characteristic to the bilateral spectrum, the portraiture of immediate relations thus being strongly embossed both by the communist halo and by the burden of a burdensome historical litigation.

Therefore and in this optics, if within the previous chapter we have tried to reveal how the main political actors that stood at Romania's leadership between 1990-2000 have chosen to shape and outline the landscape of the immediate Romanian-Russian relations, within the next chapter, the final one, we have tried to see how the film of Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports is calibrated, under the montage of PSD and DA Alliance government, that have held the political reigns between 2000-2007. In this sense and from an explicit desire to highlight the coloring specific to the bilateral dimension for each individual government, we have resorted to a clear delimitation between the two periods, referential for the configuration of the immediate binomial, the period 2001-2004 and 2005-2007, respectively. Naturally and as expected, we have observed, on the basis of an integrated optics, that the above mentioned periods has clearly portrayed a picture that sums the perennial moments of flux and reflux, characteristic to the bilateral zodiac. This is practically why, if with the occasion of the first period, but also under the leadership of a social-democratic political elite – elite that has otherwise assumed the audacious task to fundamentally re-think the nature of some eminently blocked and vitiated rapports, and to also bring them to an incentive level – there have been recorded a series of notable advancements on a bilateral level, that have culminated with the episode of signing the Romanian-Russian basic political Treaty in July 2003, on the occasion of the second stage and implicitly under the coordinates of a liberal-democratic political elite, the course of Romanian-Russian bilateral relations that had initially started under the best of auspices, has shortly met the valences of enhanced global cooling, extremely difficult to re-climatize. We refer thus to a first period on the occasion of which the social-democratic political elite, that had positioned itself as an active factor in the relations with the Russian Federation, has pointed its strategic and tactical instruments towards restoring the dialogue with Russia in the foreground, as well as towards re-engaging the bilateral mechanism in all possible ways. A more than eloquent proof to this has been certified by the obvious ascending

and progressive trend registered by the bilateral course ever since 2001 on the basis of a policy, grinded on deepening the high level dialogue , and has met its height through signing of the Treaty for amity and cooperation between Romania and the Russian Federation on 4 July 2003, respectively through signing the judicial instrument, susceptible to revitalizing the bilateral frame, but also to eliminating historic and psychological barriers that had obstructed until that moment, a natural and normal bilateral evolution. Thus, if the entire period of 2001-2004 stood under the mark of the social-democratic political elite's will to confer substance and essence to the Romanian-Russian bilateral relations configuration, the probing testimony of this will being certified by the progressive current of the bilateral course ever since 2001, persistently maintained until 2004, the period 2005-2007 stood under a zodiac of capital changes in the rapports with the Russian Federation. Thus, although for the new liberal-democratic political elite sponsored by President Traian Băsescu the relations with the Russian Federation were of great interest in terms of a range of factors, as soon as possible, however, this vision involved a radical change of optics. This is practically why, if in 2005, under the dome of President Traian Băsescu's lines of action, the relations with the Russian Federation were commencing in a thoroughly enthusiastic and promising logic, announcing a natural and normal itinerary at a bilateral level, at the end of the year, on the basis of an eminently intransigent account – seasoned with unfriendly and belicose declarations towards Russia -, President Traian Băsescu was succeeding, slowly but surely, the performance to freeze and to cripple any bridge of communication with the Russian Federation. Actually, such a frondist policy, seasoned with elements of strident language towards Russia, had represented both an immutable constant, and the main characteristic that embossed the evolution of the bilateral tandem over the following years as well. In addition, the situation was not going to record notable changes not even in 2007, when it was perfectly clear that at the bilateral relations frame level, a clearly revolutionary tone was to prevail, and it was evident that the future perspectives of the bilateral repertoire were not anticipating pleasant elements, thus continuing to predict a bilateral route strongly impregnated by the feature, and the game that President Traian Băsescu chose to attribute to the bilateral dimension.

In conclusion, one can appreciate that the image subtracted from this landscape of eclectic formulas on the basis of which the main political decision makers have chosen to approach the bilateral context, is the one that highlights the fact that besides the passenger episode whose protagonists were the Social-Democrat Party leaders, leaders that have focused their entire strategic and tactical interest towards conferring a new course to bilateral relations,

with the occasion of all the other governments, the paradigm of approach, tributary to the bilateral ethos, was separated through a lack of substance and consistency, thus evidently lacking a clear and coherent strategy of managing and implicitly developing the relations with Russia. Practically, with the exception of the PSD government interlude, at the level of all other governing formations there has not been seen a direction of action susceptible of articulating an active, autonomous policy, adapted to the nature of complexity, exceptional and specific character of the bilateral thopos. In other words, there has not been a doctrine of Romanian external policy specifically stalled on the reality of bilateral space.

Therefore, if it is perfectly valid the aspect according to which a clear, linear, and substantive direction of action could not be identified at a majority level of the governing elite, thus implicitly there has not been a strategy with a specific coloring of the bilateral zodiac, but also a strategy that truly induces a major and in-depth change on bilateral relations, it is as true that under such conditions, neither the configuration of immediate Romanian-Russian relations has held a different chromatics. De facto, with the occasion of this immediate historiographic register, the balance picture, afferent to the bilateral zodiac, had highlighted a universe of contrasts, taped with short episodes of bilateral expansion, but most of all with perennial moments of inflexion and recoil characteristic to the bilateral thopos. In other words, under the constellation of immediate history, the Romanian-Russian bilateral dimension has revealed an atypical, discontinuous, and mostly syncope configuration, evolving mostly on the basis of a sinuous and rough grid, rather than on the basis of linear, precise, and constant evolution parameters. At the same time, it is not less significant that in this section of immediate history, the Romanian-Russian bilateral rapports register could not ignore the historical ambiance, co-substantial to the bilateral frame, rearranging and reconfiguring itself in relation to the communist period and implicitly to the burdensome bilateral legacy. In addition, beyond the perennial, thorny aspects, co-substantial to the bilateral register, with the occasion of the immediate interlude, the Romanian-Russian bilateral agenda had added an extra set of subjects and hot topics that have caused considerable issues for the bilateral dialogue.

Thus, if it is true that the portraiture of immediate Romanian-Russian rapports was highlighted by a syncope dimension, and has revealed a chromatics of bilateral contrasts, reconfiguring itself in relation to the weight of an obsessive past, it is as true that the dimension of Romanian-Russian political relations dimension has registered, with the occasion of the immediate interlude, an extremely low level of development, below the level of expectations

and existing potential. In few words, in the immediate history section, the Romanian-Russian political relations physiognomy was eminently „rigid and blocked, with certain moments that have otherwise been true exceptions, thus implicitly under the skirts of immediate interlude, neither Romania nor Russia have had an existential stake in building a fundamentally normal political relation”⁹.

Subsequently and in this optics, respectively in the context where the immediate Romanian-Russian episode can be diagnosed as an episode of burdensome and sinuous features, inducing a recurrent *deja-vu* sensation with regards to the bilateral choreography, specific to the previous interlude, but also taking into account the conjuncture in which the political dimension of bilateral relations can be considered void of pragmatism, of debate, but mostly of content, an heuristic approach of the bilateral dimension is imposed, an approach susceptible to eliminating the deficit at a bilateral level. From a palette of pivotal reasoning, of an economic, political, cultural, scientific, security order, the Romanian state, through the voice of its governing elite can not afford the luxury to manage the relations with Moscow in a conjuncture and fundamentally deprived of content, manner. Ultimately, the Bucharest decision makers must take into account that Romania can not build trenches in its Eastern proximity, quite the contrary, the Romanian state, through the voice of its legit political representatives, needs to approach responsibly and with maximum interest the dimension of Romanian-Russian bilateral relations, to build substantive realities at a bilateral level, to find a common action language through which it can accelerate the collaboration in all areas of mutual interest, in short, to restore the bilateral rapports constellation to its true parameters of normality and political evolution.

⁹ Dan Dungaciu, Gabriela Tănăsescu, *România și Rusia după 20 de ani. Percepții, realități, perspective*, București, Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2013, pp.6-7.