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**GERMAN-ROMANIAN RELATIONS DURING THE**  
**OSTPOLITIK OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

**(1967-1974)**

**-SUMMARY-**

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The early '60s witnessed a process of East-West approach at international level that turned the Cold War into détente and confrontation into antagonistic cooperation. The convergence of the two superpowers' interests, the USA and the USSR, regarding the German issue in Central Europe was decisive in shaping a new type of regulating the East-West conflict.

Conceived by its thinkers as an instrument of mitigation and of detensioning the structural conflict within the international system, equally incorporating defensive-stabilizing elements, as well as offensive-creative ones, the détente was meant to create a system of mutual dependence among states, by signing certain agreements, treaties and conventions, integrating dimensions related to the political area, the states' security, the economic area, and, last but not least, the cultural and social area. Looking back in history, we can notice that this innovative type of policy managed to modify the character of the ideologic conflict, but did not manage to end the confrontation.

The détente was approached differently in the international system, due to the specific historical origins of the conflicts, which brought about specific priorities, and also due to the existing differences at social order level and at the level of the varied devising of foreign policy strategies. Therefore, besides the détente initiatives formulated by the two superpowers and the multilateral concept of détente developed within the CSCE, the other concept promoted by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) became powerful and it came to be known as *Ostpolitik/ Neue Ostpolitik*.

As a debated détente initiative, that was not promoted by a superpower, but which had a global impact, sometimes in spite of the momentary interests of the USA and of the USSR, Ostpolitik is a case study adequate to illustrate the fact that during the East-West conflict, long perceived as a confrontation between two apparently amorphous antagonistic political-military blocks, some political leaders and the governments led by them constantly exercised their political, economic, moral influence, thus crossing over the borders of the alliances they were part of.

Assigned mainly to the social-liberal government Brandt-Scheel (1969-1974) and holding the emblem of the social-democrat Chancellor Willy Brandt, this policy did not emerge in 1969 only. It capitalized on a number of previous initiatives, against a favourable international climate arising in the 60s. On the other hand, it is no coincidence that the spectacular negotiation of the treaties between the FRG and the East occurred during the social-liberal governance, based on a new paradigm in West Germany's foreign policy. The evolution of Ostpolitik can be compared to a true learning process within which a group of visionary politicians managed to intelligently adapt other détente concepts and to efficiently use, in different phases of participating in power, the configuration of external circumstances of the international system. The Grand Design proposed by Willy Brandt/Egon Bahr was a daring one, as it assumed the risks of postponing for a short/medium term the Germans' supreme objective – the reunification of the two German states – by virtue of institutionalizing a long term dialogue with the party perceived as an adversary. From this viewpoint, Ostpolitik was a policy against fear, with a strong moral component, which was aimed not only at the future of the German nation but also at its traumatizing past and at assuming it. This policy was also possible due to an intellectual osmosis among politicians with a compatible *Weltanschauung*, who managed to counteract and to take advantage of their allies' and adversaries' antipathies.

Germany's division was the most obvious expression of the East-West conflict. Consequently, Ostpolitik was doubled by Deutschlandpolitik, conceived as a policy of dialogue with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and with the final objective of accomplishing German unification. After a crooked evolution, Deutschlandpolitik ended in October 1990. The parallel development of the two concepts was difficult, sometimes overlapping, other times mutually hindering each other. However, Deutschlandpolitik ended the globally sterile and expensive rivalry between the FRG and the GDR.

The objectives of the Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik were to regulate conflicts with Eastern Europe, to create a modus vivendi with the GDR and to diminish the consequences of the German separation with a view to regaining national unity. Considering the climax of Deutschlandpolitik as the unification of Germany, the first concrete successes of Ostpolitik, with deep implications for the international system, as well as for the European conscience, were the treaties signed by Bonn with the governments of Moscow, Warsaw, Prague and Pankow and supported by the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin.

The détente policy promoted by the FRG evolved from Chancellor Adenauer's secret and pragmatic Ostpolitik, passing through the stagetegic phase of realizing the need for a *détente*

by the Erhard/Schröder government and the promotion of the so-called "policies of motion", and then by the "policy of small steps" of the Kiesinger/Brandt government, doubled by the Bahr concept on "transformation through appropriation", only to be finally implemented during the Brandt/Scheel government, by creating a legal framework that regulated the East-West relations.

The final objective of the new course in the West-German foreign policy was the German reunification. However, beginning with 1969, the Ostpolitik would be characterized by pragmatism focused on results, unlike the rigid principle-oriented theory of Adenauer and his political successors. For the latter, any European diplomatic debate was subsequent to solving the "German issue". Therefore, the illegitimacy of the GDR was, for a long period of time, one of the main concerns of West Germany's foreign policy. For those who outlined the structure of the new Ostpolitik, the feasibility of the project did not depend on the resolution and inflexibility of the governing principles, but on the capacity to mentally overcome Yalta, in the sense of normalizing inter-German relations by promoting a „change through reconciliation", the credo of Egon Bahr.

Although the final objective was German reunification, the shift in the West-German leaders' discourse was obvious. The obsessive insistence on GDR's illegitimacy or raising the precondition regarding German reunification on each diplomatic action ceased to be the standard agenda of West German foreign policy. The détente was no longer conditioned by the settlement of the German issue, and it became a goal itself which, in the long run, would enable the reunification of the two German states. The governance of social-democrat chancellor Willy Brandt thus marked the turning point in the evolution of West German Ostpolitik. Starting with this government, the détente occurred in a different framework and at a different pace due to the legal instruments provided by that government and also due to a new vocabulary used in diplomatic relations. Beginning with Brandt and his team, "constructive transformation" replaced the "vocabulary of non-recognition".

The new paradigm in West German foreign policy determined a crucial change in the political climate and contributed actively to the evolution of the détente policy at global level. Similarly, it enabled the development of a détente framework including both sides which had been antagonistic in the past: the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Until the early '80s, when the process of detensioning of relations would be blocked again, the parties proved the viability of the treaties signed, even if only for a short period of time.

Ostpolitik opened the FRG to the East and the East to the FRG, in a long and complicated process carried on intermittently during the '80s. The eastern space had been previously seen only as an area of economic interest, not as a partner with equal rights in the political dialogue. Due to the fact that the FRG gave up the Hallstein doctrine, this openness allowed for the expansion of West Germany's area of actions in the Third World countries too, where cooperation had been quite scarce previously. The FRG thus became the most important commercial and political partner for many countries in the world. The FRG's growing influence within the European Economic Community (EEC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) brought about the respect in the East and its growing weight in the West. This opening towards the East also meant the possibility to enter a *terra incognita*, as well as a change in the way in which the traditional adversary was perceived. The treaties opened the way to cooperation in the cultural, academic field, and the exchanges contributed to a change in the public opinion mentality on both sides.

The Ostpolitik promoted by the FRG was characterized by continuity. Just as Adenauer drew firm lines through his Westpolitik, making sure that his successors would not abandon the link with the West, Brandt imposed an opening towards the East in the German politics, and this line was followed by all the chancellors from then on. The Ostpolitik promoted by Brandt proved to be part of the continuity process, as it did not question the FRG's membership in western organizations, and as it actually came to complete Adenauer's Westpolitik.

The German détente policy had to permanently take into account the pace of the policy promoted by its allies. There were many inconsistencies regarding the pace and the content which irritated the West. However, the German Ostpolitik development proved to have an increased level of independence, thus showing that the FRG's weight within the international system had changed.

Although the treaties signed were interpreted by the parties according to their specific interests, it was generally agreed that the détente in Europe was to be irreversible. Through its détente policy, the USSR pursued first of all an acknowledgement and stabilization of its role in Europe. The FRG was permanently keen on keeping the German issue open from the legal point of view, in order to enable a future reunification within a "European order of peace". While the relations between the FRG and the USSR can be considered as the most important component of Ostpolitik, the German-Polish relation was the most difficult and sensitive part of it. The Poles tried to counterbalance the FRG's political and economic ascent by constantly pointing at Germany's historical guilt. The fact that the situation of German ethnics

in Polish territories was not settled in a satisfactory way proved the limitations of Ostpolitik and the heated debates on this topic characterized the bilateral relations for a long time.

Ostpolitik allowed for the recognition of the GDR at international level and for clearly reducing GDR's dependence on Moscow. On the other hand, the opening towards the West proved to be very risky for the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (German: *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED), because the access of East-German citizens to a different reality contested any attempt to legitimacy. In its relation with East Berlin, Bonn pursued both a policy of maintaining national principles and a policy of improving the situation of the German citizens on the other side of the Wall. That is why there was a dual policy of cooperation but also of isolation.

Berlin was the cause and the scene of the East-West conflict for almost three decades. It was here that the détente policy was put to the most severe test, and it was also here that it gained the strongest confirmation. The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin regulated the very sensitive issues here, in spite of some intended ambiguities or maybe exactly due to them. Moreover, it put an end to the use of Berlin as a blackmail tool.

Accordingly, we can say that, in general, Adenauer's Westpolitik, followed by all German chancellors, enabled the American help and the West Europeans' tolerance, leading to the democratic consolidation of the West German state. Brandt's Ostpolitik, continued by chancellors Schmidt and Kohl made possible the reconciliation with the East and the development of a spirit of trust which facilitated the acceptance of a reunified Germany. It is due to the merits of both types of politics that the second German unification was possible, and unlike the first one, the latter occurred in harmony with the rest of Europe.

Romania played a symbolic role within the Ostpolitik. Resuming diplomatic relations between the FRG and the Socialist Republic of Romania (SRR), on January 31, 1967 represented a landmark in Germany's post-war history as it meant the real beginning of the West German Ostpolitik. The government in Bonn thus initiated a new conceptual phase of its foreign policy, for the first time quitting *de facto* the inflexible Hallstein doctrine, that had prevented any coherent attempt to openness on the part of the FRG. Adjusting to this European initiative of détente, the government in Bucharest played a significant role in the antagonistic manifestation of two doctrines emerging from the German issue. On the one hand, Romania's decision to resume diplomatic relations with the FRG was the first fissure in the legitimacy of the Hallstein doctrine. On the other hand, the diplomatic act of January 1967

caused the emergence on the international scene of the Ulbricht doctrine, forcing the other members of the Warsaw Pact to go back to the rigid discipline of that structure.

In the complex context of the sixth and seventh decades of the last century, against the background of tensions existing in the East-West conflict and the unpredictable evolution of the pressures deriving from the block policy, resuming diplomatic relations with the FRG meant a notable visionary political act in the epoch, as well as a proof of diplomatic perseverance and ability.

Despite Romania's initiatives to dialogue, formulated in the course of a decade (while the politicians in Bucharest pursued constantly their own policy of maintaining autonomy from the Kremlin) and despite the relatively favourable international context, the relations between the FRG and the SRR developed in a gradual and prudent manner. Hence, although the agreement regarding the establishment of trade offices was signed in October 1963, diplomatic relations between Romania and the FRG were established only in January 1967. This moment was delayed by the Hallstein doctrine validity and the devious phase of Deutschlandpolitik, on the one hand, Romania's relations with the GDR, on the other hand, and by the Romanian diplomatic balance within the Warsaw Pact, when Romania was testing its limits with regard to its relations with the "sister states". By promoting an accelerated policy of openness towards the East, with Bucharest as a starting point, the government in Bonn was taking the risk to disturb the relations with Moscow, on which not only the dialogue with the entire eastern block depended but also one of the fundamental objectives of West Germany's foreign policy: German reunification.

Establishing Romanian-West German diplomatic relations was also delayed by the positions of principle of the two countries. The FRG was maintaining its request that Romania had to recognize in writing its monopoly in representing the German people, as well as the fact that West Berlin was part of the FRG. Romania was emphasizing the requirement of respecting its foreign policy principles: developing relations with all the countries irrespective of their social order and the recognition of the post-war status-quo, with a view to ensuring a sustainable peace in Europe. The desire of both states to overcome the obstacles deriving from these diverging principles and not to compromise their firm resolution by a written document was materialized by concluding a *gentlemen's agreement*, a convenient solution to settle some sensitive decisions in verbal form.

This decision of principle appeared as a pragmatic way to advance with the negotiations, so that in 1966, the only government with which a constructive dialogue had taken place was the one in Bucharest. Although there were diverging concepts on certain issues, in all essential issues there was a convergence of interests of the two countries, as well as a desire to respect the counterpart's interest, without giving up their own position. As the relation with Poland, that pressed conditions for resuming the German-Polish dialogue with a programme of maximal requests (recognizing the Oder-Neisse line, recognizing de jure the GDR, renouncing the decision right in the atomic policy) was difficult, and discussions with Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia were incipient, the first successes of Ostpolitik were expected in the relation with Bucharest, but the timeframe when this was to occur could not be specified.

Romania surprised all the parties involved when, starting from the premise that Moscow would tacitly approve the action, announced the resuming of diplomatic relations with the FRG on January 31, 1967, without consulting with any other member of the Warsaw Pact. The done deed policy practised by Bucharest allowed the FRG to modify the Hallstein doctrine, without having the Bonn government explicitly quit it. Both parties officially acknowledged the mutual principle positions, without declaring their agreement in all issues. A procedural precedent was thus created, which was the basis of normalizing the relations of the FRG with all the other East-European states. Once again, foreign policy proved to be a learning process on both sides.

Within such policy, Romania enjoyed a special status, initiating cooperation relations between the two countries, members of adversary political-military blocks. Romanian pioneer actions and their benefits started to become relative as early as 1971, due to the changes in the international system and due to the changes in priorities pursued by the government in Bonn and to the gradual auto-isolation of Romania, following the transformation of the regime in Bucharest into Ceaușescu's personal dictatorship. This state of facts was confirmed in 1974, after establishing diplomatic relations with all the other member states of the Warsaw Pact.

The same historical event was therefore the symbolic beginning of two processes with a later completely opposing evolution. For the FRG, January 31, 1967 clearly marked the articulation of an emancipatory phase in West German foreign policy at international level. Ostpolitik started as a pragmatic and constructive policy and became mature through the system of treaties with the East, turning the FRG into a champion of détente. At an internal level, the new course of foreign policy signalled the emergence of a new type of chancellor democracy, whose distinct signs were social and moral restoration, assertion of a critical

political culture and comprehensive reforms with a strong impact on all areas of the German society.

Resuming the diplomatic relations with the FRG represented a priority for Romania's foreign policy beginning with the late '50s. Romania was the first East-European country that allowed the FRG to implement its innovative policy, thus continuing the emancipatory course of Romanian foreign policy, formulated during the Gheorghiu-Dej governance to the Warsaw Pact and to the Council of Mutual Economic Aid (CAER). For a short time, Romania appeared to be capable of assuming a role as an important political player in the East-West confrontation, as it was the area of prudent-optimistic expectations from the West. Concluding commercial relations first and then diplomatic ones with a western country had a strong psychological impact both at national level and at the level of the Warsaw Pact. Beyond the political potential of this event, Romania took advantage of the Romanian-German relations especially at economic level. Romania was thus losing its entire potential of diplomatic successes recorded during the '60s.

The Ostpolitik conducted by the FRG towards Romania started from the premise that it could encourage the centrifugal tendencies within the Warsaw Pact. Not later than 1968, it was certain that Romania could only be a disturbing factor in the Eastern block and not at all a factor of dissolution. Along with the signing of the Treaties with the East, Romania lost its "advance" gained in 1967, against the other members of the Pact. On the other hand, the West-German government was always very prudent regarding the explicit or implicit encouragement of Romania in its rebellious attitude towards the USSR. The stakes of the bilateral relations focused on improving the situation of the German ethnics in Romania and on humanitarian issues related to family unification. At the same time, the bilateral relations channel was used by the West-German diplomacy in order to inform on the solutions within the Warsaw Pact, and from the Middle East.

Nevertheless, the German party permanently sustained that Romania's quality and temporary advance cannot be forgotten. In 1974, after establishing diplomatic relations with the other countries of the Warsaw Pact, the loss of interest in Romania was obvious. Its internal policy had taken a critical turn, and Romania looked like having missed its chances.

This paper is not intended as an exhaustive empirical study of the Romanian-German bilateral relations in a given period of time. Since the assertion of the post-modern paradigms in history and since the breaking up of the meta-discourse, specific of total history, in numerous

“stories”/ ”histories”, it became obvious that a scanned image of the past cannot be achieved with any type of tools however elaborate they may be. Therefore, based on the set of themes presented above, this paper intends to “re-create” the subject under study in a plausible and consistent way, as it is meant as a useful starting point for future research.

The main objective of this study is to provide a problem-oriented synoptic image of the relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Socialist Republic of Romania in the years 1967-1974, a subject only sidely mentioned in the rich international historiography on the issue of Ostpolitik. Consequently, this paper focused on the sinthesis and the conceptual evolution of the bilateral relations, without explaining in detail all the aspects related to the relations between two countries. On the other hand, Romanian-West German relations represent just a small part of the innovative Grand Design of Ostpolitik. In order to understand their role, it was vital to place them within the global framework of détente, to highlight the previous contacts between the two countries, as well as to point out the continuity and the decisive turning points in shaping their foreign policy.

The 1967-1974 time limits stricto sensu mark the beginning of the post-war diplomatic relations between the two countries, and the beginning of the end of Romania’s “privileged pioneer work“ within the German Ostpolitik. On the other hand, the year 1974 signals the end of the Brandt era and the beginning of his ambitious Ostpolitik decline, along with what his contemporaries called *Kanzlerdämmerung*, as well as along with Romania’s stronger isolation at international level while Ceausescu’s personality cult was deepening as the regime was evolving towards a sultan-like one, which made Romania become a particular case in the Eastern block. In 1974 the German chancellor was unconvincingly managing internal crises, publicly criticized by his political partners for allowing a „process of erosion of the government”, with failures in the foreign policy area too – tired of the position he was supposed to honour. Brandt is a visionary politician, who thinks and acts in perspective and who gives up when he has to impose crisis management adapted to the Realpolitik of his time. To all this we can add the pressure of the public opinion, whose expectations are related to the spectacular successes in the first part of the chancellor’s legislature. On the other hand, there is Nicolae Ceaușescu, who, following his taking over the presidency of the state and following the 11th Congress of the Romanian Comunist Party (PCR) was at the peak of the process of consolidating and concentrating all the power in his hands, a fact symbolically represented in his official image by a golden sceptre and a three-colour strap. Becoming the

President of the SRR meant the final abandon of the principle of collective leadership in communist Romania and marked the true beginning of the „Ceaușescu era/epoch”.

The paper therefore intends to answer the following crucial questions. Why did West Germany choose Romania to start its visible policy towards the East and why was Romania interested and willing at that moment? What were the premises that favoured the resuming of diplomatic relations? How were the diplomatic issues solved regarding the resuming of relations between the two countries? What were the consequences and the impact of this political event on the two countries? Which were the relevant aspects of the bilateral relations and what is their importance in the political discourse of the time? What was the position of the political partners/adversaries of the two governments with regard to the „privileged relation“ between the FRG and the SRR?

This paper was organized in six main chapters, followed by a bibliography and two annexes. The introductory chapter gives a brief review of the evolution of International Relations as a subject matter in the German and Romanian academic sphere; it places the topic of Ostpolitik in the historiography of international relations; it clarifies the major concepts of the paper; and it outlines a guiding model of analysis.

The second chapter analyzes the favourable factors that led to the moment when the diplomatic relations between the two countries were resumed in January 1967, proving that both countries passed through a learning process at international level where pragmatism surpasses ideology.

The following chapter deals with the initiation of diplomatic relations and with the reactions and consequences immediately following the event.

The fourth chapter presents the „years of glory”, 1967-1971, for both countries’ foreign policies and their mutual relations. These are the years when Ostpolitik became known at international level and when it was implemented through the treaties signed with Eastern Europe, the years when the relation with the GDR were regulated. It was the period of Romania’s spectacular pioneer work in the complex East-West relations, of symbolic rebelliousness (August 1968), of economic and moral/symbolic profit in the relations with the FRG and the West.

The fifth chapter analyzes the disturbing factors of the Romanian-German relations. The years 1971-1974 meant a decline for Romania, a fact also seen in the political discourse. As it was not accompanied by a reform at internal level, foreign policy cannot be a sustainable *learning*

*process*, so that Romania was not capable of capitalizing on its diplomatic successes at international level.

The last chapter highlights the main conclusions of the study and signals other possible lines of research for an advanced study of the subject.

The paper is designed to show how the decision-makers in Bonn and Bucharest define and evaluate their interests and the manoeuvre space for promoting the new policy. Secondly, the paper analyzes the major objectives, the conceptual origins and the phases of the new course of foreign policy. Thirdly, the paper presents the internal and international premises for the emergence of the new Ostpolitik and for resuming bilateral relations. In the end, a special attention is given to the process of the new policy implementation and to the results and consequences on the international relations.