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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**Romania Land Cessions in  
1940 and the Following Period**

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**Abstract:** Every border delimits the national space, determines the formation, affirmation, living, development and promotion of a state within international relations. Thus, the borders should totally ascertain the sanctuary, the hearth of the formation of the peoples in history. In reality, borders are a given thing of history, more precisely a “gift”, a sign of the goodwill of the Great Powers for the designation of the territories of the world states. The territory of a state can always be the object of the claims of neighbours or distant states, international actors who have the necessary power. Territorial claims against states are permanent, but the activation and implementation of the annexation phenomena are possible in international contexts favourable to the aggressor, when the target state has a modest potential to counteract a possible aggression or is isolated. Romania was the object of such a suite of territorial annexations in 1940 and the following period.

**Keywords:** borders; ultimatum; territorial annexations; ultimatum note; ethnic outsiders; maximal river depth; divergences; neighbours; treaty

## **1. Historical Background**

We estimate that the starting point of this analysis must be located in terms of national security, the own possibilities of assertion of the international actor, internally and the relations between states. Security is well-known as being a prerequisite for the existence of the nation and the rule of law, based on national values, interests and objectives. National security is directly the guarantor of the country’s independence and sovereignty, territorial integrity, rule of law and unrestricted assertion of its own system of values at international level (Bădălan & Bogdan, 2016, pp. 28-29).

In the historical process of enhancing national security, the creation in 1918 of the unitary national state was a major impetus for future national destinies. It meant the reunion of the provinces inhabited by the Romanian nation: Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania, Banat and the Old Kingdom. The event is a remarkable moment in the multi-millennial history of the Romanian people, increasing Romania’s prestige in the world and economic and military potential. Following the Great Union, Romania was placed among medium-sized European states with significant political and historical relevance (Academia Română, 2003, p. IX). But the remarkable historical fact decisively displeased the neighbours and the powers of the time.

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In the period before and at the beginning of the Second World War, the historical events in Europe took place extremely fast and turbulently. The decisions of the dominant states in the European space affected very strongly, in a destructive sense, the integrity of the Romanian space and the sovereignty of the modern Romanian state. The German attack and the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, followed by the similar involvement of the Soviet Union on 17 September 1939 against the Polish state, caused Poland to disappear from the map of Europe. The case of Poland is just one of the direct consequences of the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact on 23 August 1939, by Germany and the Soviet Union. The special impact produced by the capitulation of France on the confidence and balance of Europe, an event that occurred on 22 June 1940, must be emphasised. Through the changes occurred in the European environment, the political events had a negative impact and made extremely difficult the situation of the young Romanian state. Romania was isolated from the potential British support, the French support disappearing. In these conditions, the unrestricted manifestation of the political and military pressures coming from Moscow, which worsened with the passage of time, was unleashed (Giurcă, 2000, p. 59). In the situation of lack of support from the West, following the example from the East, the intentions of other neighbours of Romania were activated, as they wanted to take advantage of the unfavourable state of the Romanian state and break a territorial fragment from the body of the target state (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 78-79).

Romania's possibilities of response to the wishes of the neighbouring states, the intentions produced openly or with the support of the military powers of the time, were reduced. In 1940, Romania was the last European state to be dismembered by force, due to the involvement of the two powers of the continent, the Soviet Union and Germany. If the USSR acted directly for its own benefit, Germany was involved in meeting the territorial claims of Hungary and Bulgaria. There was and worked a coordinating link between Moscow and Berlin in satisfying Soviet territorial claims (Giurcă, 2000, pp. 5; 59).

## **2. Eastern Land Cessions**

Romania's situation was particularly difficult in 1940. German troops were already on our northern and western borders. To the east, the Soviet government, which had not recognised the Union of Basarabia with Bucovina, was preparing to break away from the motherland the Romanian area between the Prut and the Nistru Rivers, as well as northern Bucovina (Boambă & et al, 2007, p. 44). It is known from the past that the works of the Romanian-Soviet Conference in Vienna from 27 March to 2 April 1924 did not have the expected outcome, due to Moscow's refusal to recognise the union of Basarabia with Romania. In addition, the Political Bureau of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the USSR adopted the decision stipulating the creation of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (within the SRR Ukraine), which was drawing the western border of the Soviet republic on the Prut River. The intention of the Soviet government was clear, only the favourable political moment was expected for practical materialisation. Obviously, Moscow orchestrated other measures too, successively directed towards the mentioned intention (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, pp. 8-9).

According to documents in the archives, on 22 June 1940 at 22.00, Soviet Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov sent the final note to the Romanian Minister accredited to Moscow, Gheorghe Davidescu, requesting the following from the Royal Government of Bucharest: "*1) to return Basarabia at any cost to the Soviet Union; 2) to give the northern part of Bucovina, with its borders to the Soviet Union*", according to an ad hoc presented map (Academia Română, 2003, pp. 569). The transfer of the northern

part of Bucovina to the USSR was considered by Moscow as a right, as well as compensation to the Soviet state for the fact that Romania ruled over Basarabia for 28 years (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, p. 22). Gheorghe Davidescu tried to argue about the historical law of Romania in the territories claimed by the Soviet side, but without any chance of success. He was not listened to by the Soviets, being handed the map with the route of the “new border” (Bogdan, 2019, pp. 89-91). The Romanian dignitary refused, demonstrating courage and dignity. The reality was that “*If the affirmative answer does not arrive in time, the attack will be launched the following evening*” (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, pp. 22-25).

The first reaction of the Romanian politico-military decision-makers was to reject the ultimatum. N. Iorga dramatically expressed the situation of the country (“*We fight, we will be cursed if we don’t fight*”). Two Crown Councils were convened on 27 June. The military analyses and contacts undertaken quickly to explore the position of the military powers of the moment resulted in the total lack of support, the isolation of Romania. Berlin’s “*Accept*” response was contagious for neighbouring states that were consulted as a matter of urgency (Constantiniu, 2010, pp. 364-365). The year of 1940 was probably the most painful period in recent history, the national territory being severely shaken. From the relatively round shape of the Romanian space of that period, initially the national territory was reduced from Nistru to Prut, thus paving the way for other subsequent and painful territorial cuts, occurred in cascade (Marinescu, 2005, pp. 99-102).

Based on the clarifications received in Bucharest, the Romanian army complied with the ultimatum of power in the East. Thus, between 28 June and 3 July 1940, the withdrawal of the Romanian army and administration was carried out, under the pressure of the time and of the occupier. Soviet troops crossed the border through several points, causing difficulties for the Romanian army’s disposition for retreat, capturing materials and goods ready for evacuation. Throughout the withdrawal area, the Romanian army was humiliated by communities of other radicalised ethnic groups, being pressured and provoked harshly and repeatedly by Soviet troops (Giurcă, 2000, pp. 63-100). On 29 June, the Soviets built bridges over the Nistru. On the night of 28/29 June, parachute units were launched in the area of Cahul, Ismail and Reni, with missions to take over the key facilities and stations, as well as to make it difficult for the Romanian army to withdraw (Vac & et. al., 2012, pp. 32-33).



**Figure 1. Romania’s East Land Cessions in 1940**

Source: (*Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării: Studiu geografic/ Euroregions of cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin: Geographical study (Radu Săgeată coord.)2014, figure 5. p. 53*)

Therefore, within six days of receiving the ultimatum of 26 June, Romania had to cede to the Soviet Union the territory of Basarabia with an area of 44,500 sq km (Bogdan, 2019, pp. 95-97).

The border was drawn on a 1: 800,000 scale map with a dull red pencil. An inaccurate track was made, covering a space about 7 miles wide (over 11 km). The inaccuracy of the delimitation of the Parties caused confusion on the exact positioning of the allocations on one side or the other of the arbitrary border, generating major consequences and serious incidents in the territories occupied by force (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, pp. 24-25). According to official data, the value of foreign public goods was 125.4 billion lei, the damages of the agricultural sector amounted to 161 billion lei, and the economic sector was affected in the total amount of 26.4 trillion lei (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, p. 100).

### 3. Northern Land Cessions

At the northern border, the territorial annexations took place in the context of the document of 26 June 1940, signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov. It was desired that the northern part of Bucovina was given to the Soviet power (Bogdan, 2019, pp. 96-97, pp. 96-97). In essence, non-acceptance of the ultimatum led to the mandatory enforcement of a state of war. The Crown Council tried an amicable solution, agreed through negotiations, an aspect promptly rejected by Moscow. Within just 12 hours, the Romanian government had to choose one of the options: ceding territory or war with the Soviet Union. Under pressure, the Romanian authorities were forced to accept the surrender of the imposed territory (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, pp. 24-31). The crossing of the border was carried out by Soviet motorised structures on 28 June 1940, starting with 06.30. The central effort was directed towards Cernăuți, the city being occupied until 14.00 (Vac & et. al., 2012, pp. 31-33).

**Bucovina.** By the second Final Note, sent on 28 June, the northern part of Bucovina was broken, the territory being annexed to the Soviet state. The annexed area, Northern Bucovina, had an area of 5,242 sq km.

After the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991, Northern Bukovina was incorporated into Ukrainian territory. The area under Romanian jurisdiction (Southern Bukovina) covered an area of 5,200 sq km (Academia Română, 2003, pp. 111-113).

**Herța Region.** Ancient Romanian territory, the Herța Region became part of the Soviet Union on 29 June 1940, by the same Ultimate Note, similar to Bucovina. Mention should be made that the territory of the Herța Region was not stipulated in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Herța Region has an area of 304 sq km, with 9 communes and 32 villages (one Ukrainian village, Ukrainian Mamornița). In 1989, out of the total of 29,611 inhabitants, 27,517 were Romanians. In 2001, out of the number of 32,316 people, 29,554 (91.5%) were Romanians (Academia Română, 2003, pp. 114-115).

The official value of the assets alienated to the North from the national wealth were of 31.72 billion lei, the damages of the agricultural sector represented the amount of 5.578 billion lei and the economic sector was affected in the total amount of 2.276 billion lei. In fact, the losses were huge (Scurtu & Hlihor, 1992, pp. 100-101).

The historians' perspective is that the political class in Bucharest, *Camarila Regală* (the name given to the group of people who were King Carol II's closest friends and most influential people in Romania at that time), panicked and did not understand Germany's strategic interests, the importance oil had for Hitler's interests in the East, the need for stability and German control over Bucharest, Romania's strategic role regarding the launch of the future attack on the USSR. It is estimated that if Romania had

decided to oppose Moscow's claims by force of arms, Germany would not have allowed the USSR to cross the Prut River. The presence of Russian forces only 30-50 km from the Ploiești oil field could not be a comfortable situation for Berlin. The disgraceful solution of abandoning the national territory without a fight would be paid dearly, for generations (Constantiniu, 2010, pp. 367; 369). The difficulty of analysing the events of 1940 is real and remains so.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union on 26 December 1991, with the revival of Ukrainian nationalism, the tensions in the Romanian-occupied areas intensified (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 83-85).

#### **4. Western Land Cessions**

The high-impact political events generated in Europe by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact are well known and have been presented previously. The invasion of the Polish state and the dissolution of Poland, the ultimate notes of V.M. Molotov, completed with the annexation of Basarabia and Bucovina, were factors that favoured and triggered future annexations. Romania's neighbouring states took advantage of the critical situation the Romanian state was in, showing audacity and greediness (Boambă & et al, 2007, p. 45).

The Hungarian revisionist policy towards Romania was a continuous presence, that was not a secret. The ratification of the Peace Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920) did not mean accepting the inclusion of Transylvania in Romania, but on the contrary. That date was declared a day of national mourning, a mentality that manifests itself rigorously even today. The revisionist objective proclaimed by Horthy defined Romania as being the number 1 enemy of Hungary. Therefore, as far as the state located in the east is concerned, Budapest had the highest territorial claims, Romania also being its strongest neighbour. Consistent with the objective, all the actions taken were supported by propaganda, sabotage and terrorism (Giurcă, 2000, pp. 103-105).

After April 1940, Hungary began official talks with Germany on satisfying the territorial claims of the East, through a joint armed effort. The positions of the Romanian officials regarding the German requests for inquiring about this issue were not constructive or constant. Military concerns were a priority in the eastern and northern sectors, where the annexations in Moscow's favour had taken place, with the army mobilised and deployed at the border under pressure from Soviet forces. The economic concessions made to Berlin, combined with the overbidding of Hungary's vital support for Germany's domination of the Carpathians and the erosion of Eastern influence, as well as constant diplomatic efforts, determined Hitler to force Romania to negotiate with Hungary and Bulgaria to solve the territorial disputes (Giurcă, 2000, pp.106-119). Thus, on 16 August 1940, the Romanian-Hungarian negotiations at Turnu Severin were launched. The negotiations started from the desire of the Hungarian side to solve the consistent territorial claims, for its own benefit. The head of the Hungarian delegation, Andrei de Hary, ordered Romania to cede 68,000 sq km, almost half of the territory of Transylvania (a total of 3,900,000 inhabitants, of which 2,200,000 Romanians). The Romanian side flatly rejected the Hungarian partner's claims. Hitler's personal intervention was immediate, harsh and decisive in avoiding an armed conflict. Romania had double strategic requirements for Germany, being a source of oil and a starting point for the future offensive to the East (Constantiniu, 2010, pp. 367-369). On 27 August 1940, he personally established the outline of the "new border" between Romania and Hungary. The Crown Council, pressured by the extremely harsh political event, convened as a matter of urgency, decided to accept the arbitration (there were 21 votes in favour, 10 against and one abstention). The communiqué issued revealed the ultimate character imposed by the German and Italian governments regarding the cession of the territory, Romania accepting the arbitration of the Axis powers regarding

the Romanian-Hungarian negotiations. Obviously, the relentless definition of the real ultimate character irritated the Axis (Vac & et. al., 2012, p. 88).

Romania lost an area of 43,492 sq km, an inhabited area of 2,667,007 inhabitants, the Romanians being the majority (50.1%). The ceded territory was below the minimum threshold of 50,000 sq km requested by Budapest, the maximum taking into account the area of 78,000 sq km. It could possibly be the reason why Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki could have considered himself “soul-crushed” (Constantiniu, 2010, p. 368). Subsequently, the act of the German dictator was disapproved even by his own historians (Hillgruber, 2007; Boambă & et. al, 2007). In essence, the border imposed by Hitler ensured the German side the achievement of robust politico-military (control of the ridges of the Eastern Carpathians) and economic (proximity to the industrial space of Braşov and the oil of Prahova Valley) goals (Giurcă, 2000, pp. 127-129). Details in figure 2.



**Figure 2. Hungary and Bulgaria's Land Annexations**

Source: (Milton, 1989, p. 5)

Without official requests from the *Parties*, Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano summoned the representatives of Romania and Hungary to Vienna. Through the involvement of the two officials, on 30 August 1940, the odious Vienna Award was signed separately (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 84-85). Moscow officially protested that it was not consulted by Berlin on the issue of the surrender of Transylvania to Hungary, an objection raised in violation of Article 3 of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty (Giurcă, 2000, p. 146).

The Vienna Award imposed the surrender of a large area of the country's body, the deadline being 14 days. The atrocities committed by Horthy's troops were catastrophic, materialised by crimes, pogroms, robberies, rapes, excessive violence (Vac & et al., 2012, pp. 90-91).

Even under the conditions of the liberation of the territory abducted by the Vienna Award, carried out on 25 October 1944, the space remained under Soviet administration until 9 March 1945. At that time, the territory returned to the motherland, being mitigated only part of The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact (Pascu, 1989, p. 468). The border with Hungary was restored, according to the Treaty of Trianon. However, there were diabolical attempts by the Hungarian delegation to obtain some territories. The Hungarian side strongly claimed that the Treaty of Trianon disadvantaged the defeated Hungary,

including the fact that Romania requested arbitration in Vienna. Thus, the Hungarian representative Ianos Gyöngyössi requested a “*small rectification*” of 22,000 sq km from the Romanian territory. As a possible last step, Paul Auer, the Hungarian minister accredited in Paris, requested on 31 August 1946 a Romanian territory of at least 4,000 km. In reply, Romania’s representative, Gheorghe Tătărescu, informed that on the territory of the 4,000 sq km requested, out of the 483,000 inhabitants, only 67,000 are Hungarian citizens, i.e. approximately 13% of the total population. Obviously, the Hungarian demands were rejected (Boambă & et. al, 2007, p. 50).

## **5. Southern Land Cessions**

The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and subsequent events were promptly and carelessly used by the neighbouring southern state of Bulgaria. As a result, Sofia took advantage of German and Soviet support to claim and obtain Romanian territories.

On 31 July 1940, the German authorities notified the Romanian government regarding Hitler’s decision that Romania should give the Quadrilateral to Bulgaria (with Durostor and Caliacra counties), the border between the states being the one prior to 1913. Romania asked Bulgaria to agree that the city of Silistra remained in Romania (2,000 sq km, with 37,500 Romanians and 14,500 Bulgarians). The Bulgarian side flatly refused. In these conditions, in Craiova on 7 September 1940, a suitable bilateral treaty was signed which stipulated that the Quadrilateral was given to Bulgaria. Thus, a territory of 6,921 km was alienated. Between 20 September and 1 October 1940, the Romanian population withdrew from the area ceded to Bulgaria. The border route included the Chiciu-Ostrov alignment, exclusively Silistra, 15 km south of Adamclisi, Vama Veche (Buzatu, 1995, p. 17).

After 22 years of existence, in September 1940, Greater Romania had ceased to exist (Constantiniu, 2010, p. 369. Romania’s entry into the whirlwind of the Second World War, on 22 June 1941, together with the Axis Powers, in Operation Barbarossa, pursued the politico-strategic goal of the reunification of the national territory. The involvement in the world war took into account taking over the geographical area between the Prut and the Dniester, Transilvania and, later, other territories (Pascu, 1989, p. 385).

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the PCR (the Romanian Communist Party 20-25 November 1989), Nicolae Ceaușescu condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty (without naming it), requesting the liquidation of its consequences. Ceaușescu intervened in an indirect way, claiming the territories taken over in 1940 by the USSR. In reply, M. Gorbachev immediately replied that the changes envisaged on the European continent could be successful only by maintaining European stability, without reviving old territorial claims or producing new ones. Therefore, it was necessary to keep the “Pandora’s Box” closed in terms of claiming back lost territories (Constantiniu, 2010 pp. 528-529).

## **6. Maritime Zone Cessions**

Between the two world wars, the Romanian border at the Black Sea had a length of 500,224 km (including the 80 km around Snake Island) (Boambă & et. al, 2007, p. 49). To the northeast, the border was set by the Dniester Estuary (Bugazu locality), the Bugeac Coast, the current state border of Romania, the Quadrilateral (including Caliacra Cape and the Silver Coast), to Ecrina (located north of Varna, Bulgaria) (Săgeată, 2014, p. 299).

In disagreement with the provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty (10 February 1947), a bilateral protocol between the Soviet Union and Romania was concluded in Moscow on 4 February 1948, obviously under pressure from the USSR. In this protocol, the initial route of the border was moved from the Starâi Stambol canal to the Musura canal. As a result, the Snake Island and the adjacent continental shelf became part of the Soviet Union (Culegere de Tratatate privind frontierele de stat ale Republicii Socialiste România, 1971, p. 315). The extent of 12 nautical miles of the territorial sea (22,224 km) was decided in 1950, with other consequent decrees with additional details. By Decree no. 142 of 26 April 1986, Romania established an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles (Boambă & et al, 2007, p. 49).

At present, Romania's state maritime border ranges on 193.5 km, being bordered on the northeast by the Musura Gulf and on the southwest by Vama Veche (Săgeată, 2014, p. 299).

One must be aware of the efforts made through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague to demarcate the Black Sea continental shelf. The location of oilrigs and oil deposits has increased the pressure on the territorial rights of Ukraine and Romania. An area of 12,000 km was disputed by both riparian states in the disputed area (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 101-104).

### **6.1. The Snake Island Status**

The Paris Peace Treaty (1947) stipulated that the Snake Island (a rocky area of 0.17 sq km, on which there were many snakes), without a permanent population, is the territory of Romania. Romania's border with the USSR was stipulated to the north of the island. The norms of international law specify that the borders of the states follow the riverbed of the river or the riverbed of the main arm (in situations of multiple arms). Thus, the delimitation of the border was made on the Chilia Arm.

Starting in 1948, the USSR pressured into changing the border in the area, with by incorporating the Snake Island into Soviet territory. Obviously, the Soviet side, victorious in World War II, was making and enforcing the law. In order to impose control of the area, it decided to establish the border along the Musura Canal, the right side arm of the Chilia Arm. By that decision, the islands Tătarul Mic, Dalerul Mare, Dalerul Mic and the isthmus at the mouth of the Chilia Arm were given to Moscow. The most important gain consisted in the fact that the imaginary extension of the border from the Musura arm and bay passed south of the Snake Island, through the respective approach the island being considered as belonging to the Soviet Union (Bogdan, 2019, pp. 181-183).

There were no conditions for international negotiations, as the Soviet side did not want diplomatic negotiations. To achieve the goals, under pressure from Moscow, a Protocol was hastily signed between Molotov (USSR Foreign Minister) and Petru Groza (President of the Romanian Government). The protocol modified Romania's border with the USSR, passing the Snake Island to the USSR. In reply, the Soviet state undertook to secure Romania's maritime border. On 23 May 1948, Snake Island was handed over to the USSR on the basis of a report signed by Nicolae Pavlovici Sutov (First Secretary at the USSR Embassy in Bucharest) and Eduard Mezincescu (Secretary General at the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Through another report, Romania's border with the USSR was established on the route of the Musura-Musuna Canal. In February 1961, through the *"Treaty on the Regime of the Romanian-Soviet border, the cooperation and the mutual assistance"*, the Snake island was included as part of the Soviet territory.

On Snake Island, the Soviet Union established an advanced electronic surveillance military base (SIGINT). Electronic equipment controlled the surrounding maritime and airspace, the mouth of the



Danube, the Dobrogea area, the Black Sea area, the entire Balkans and the Mediterranean Sea, as far as North Africa (Libya).

## **6.2. The Delimitation of the North-West Pontic Platform**

Because Snake Island belonged to the USSR, the Soviets provided circular control over the 12 nautical miles. In addition, the Soviet Union raised claims to the exclusive economic zone in the Black Sea. The Soviet side claimed that the delimitation of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone followed an imaginary route between the Snake Island and the Romanian coast. The Soviet approach violated the fundamental agreements on the law of the sea, the principles of the Geneva Convention (1958) and Montego Bay (1982), respectively (Bogdan, 2019, pp. 183-185).

Although the Romanian side made repeated official efforts to delimit the continental maritime platform in the Snake Island area, the Soviet side was constantly inflexible. In 1987, the Soviets proposed to give Romania 4,000 sq km of the 6,000 sq km in dispute, but the Romanian side refused. After the disintegration of the USSR (1991), the Snake Island went to Ukraine, with its own SIGINT stations, heliport, mini-port for military use, storage facilities, pharmacy etc. Basically there was a garrison of about 100 people (military men and families) (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 102-104).

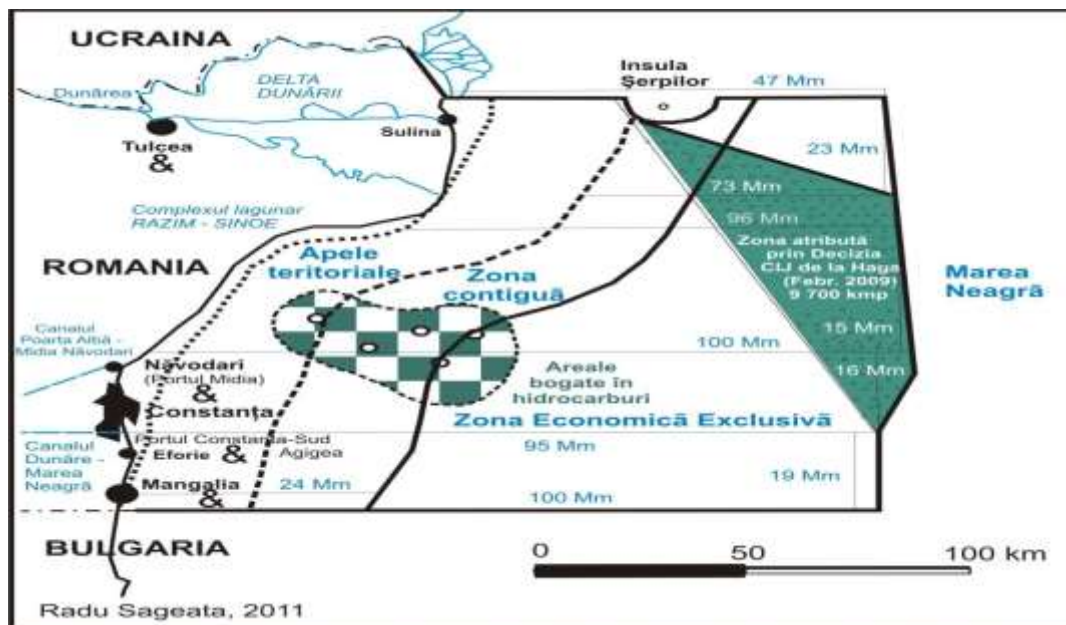
Romania's intention to join the European Union came under political and time pressures. In 1997, treaties on the borders with Ukraine and Russia were quickly agreed upon and signed. In the stated conditions, the border was recognised as deriving from the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty, the possible divergences having to be resolved later by the international actors through peaceful means.

The Romanian-Ukrainian treaty of 1997 specified that Snake Island is a demilitarised zone. As a result, the military garrison and SIGINT equipment were withdrawn, and the remaining infrastructure was transferred to the civilian authorities. In the absence of water on the island, the vital liquid was brought by air (helicopters) or naval (ships). In 2002, a quay was built for ships with drafts under 8 m, and in 2003 a research team from the University of Odessa was taken there.

To increase the benefits and assign a 20 km continental shelf to Snake Island, the Ukrainian side tried to prove that the island was inhabited. On 5 July 2006, the decree of the Odessa Regional Parliament for permanent residence of the island was signed. The location of a hotel (without sewerage) and a medical office was officially registered (Săgeată, 2014, p. 302)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Academia Română, Institutul de Geografie, *op.cit.*, p. 302.



**Figure 3. Romania's North-West Black Sea continental platform, as agreed upon by the International Justice Court in The Hague on 3 February 2009**

*Source: (Săgeată (coord.), 2014, Figure 127, p. 300)*

On 16 September 2004, the dispute over the delimitation of the continental shelf was referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. On 15 August 2005, Romania presented a memorandum on the status of Snake Island, the delimitation of the Pontic continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone. The Romanian side officially claimed that the island was uninhabited, rocky, had no water resources and was not of socio-economic importance. Under these conditions, the island could not be allocated an adjacent plateau and economic zone (Bogdan & Marinescu, 2019, pp. 103-104).

The ICJ decision was officially pronounced on 3 February 2009. The Ukrainian party was assigned the six islands and islets in dispute (Snake Island, Dalerul Mare, Dalerul Mic, Maican, Tataru Mic and Limba) and 2,500 sq km of space around Snake Island. The Romanian side was given 9,700 sq km from the territorial waters (Săgeată, 2014, p. 303). See more details in figure 3.

The NATO (2004) and the European Union (2007) membership must be accepted as a new beginning, the integration into Euro-Atlantic and European structures must be accepted as a long-term process. The ruling class in Bucharest, under the pressure of time, wanted to sign treaties with the neighbouring states on territorial issues, prior to the Madrid Summit. The treaties with Hungary (1996) and Ukraine (1997) were negotiated without the support of the collective awareness and outside the historical truth. Despite no ultimate notes, the Romanians in Ukraine were abandoned, Ukraine being granted sovereignty over some territories that it never ruled. The signing of the treaty with Ukraine in Neptune, on 2 June 1997, is a painful historical event in Romania's recent history. The exceptional gravity consisted in the fact that the historical-territorial patrimony of the Romanian nation was abandoned voluntarily and under no pressure from any aggressor state (Constantiniu, 2010, pp. 536-537).

According to what everybody already knows, at the Madrid Summit (8-9 July 1997), Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic were invited to join the Alliance, but not Romania.

## **7. Conclusions**

It is a proven fact the borders have always been established by the temporal powers worldwide. The drawing of the borders was aimed at satisfying the interests of the powerful ones and the satellites, to the detriment of the modest ones. Rarely have small states enjoyed the respect for historical law, ethnic principle, national law or the principles of international law. The desire of the powerful one has always prevailed.

Romania is a Latin island, located in a Slavic sea. In the last century of existence, Romania went through significant amputations of its territory, by the will of the powerful ones. In the fateful year 1940 there were some very hard cessions taking place, certain historical events of maximum political gravity falling wildly over the Carpathian-Danube-Pontic space, with reverberations even after 1947. During the periods of dismemberment of territorial integrity, Romania had a low level of economic and military potential, being isolated internationally.

In the period we are going through, the potential of the economic, demographic and military fields is at an extremely modest level, Romania being surrounded by openly promoted adversities. If in the known history the military effort knew symmetrical forms of manifestation, currently there have been activated certain asymmetrical, hybrid and other masked belligerent manifestations, derived from the need to impose hegemonic power in the areas of interest. The current international framework, conducive to hybrid manifestations, is clearly unfavourable to weak states, which may be victims of the domination interests of the current world powers.

In the transition period, Romania needs the revitalisation of the national consciousness, the generation of robust landmarks of the national interest and the national awareness, it needs to get rid of the serious shortcomings induced by corruption and incompetence, occurred in the post-December period. It is necessary to promote the change of mentality, both at the level of the political class and the wider society. It will have to outline the radical change of thinking, habits and behaviours, with the correct understanding of freedom, in the action-constructive plan, as opposed to the current state of doing nothing. The examples of the extraordinary recovery of Japan and Germany, which occurred after the Second World War, must also be an impetus for the Romanian space in the future. Romanians must and can strengthen their national awareness and earn their rightful place in future history, through their own efforts (Constantiniu, 2010, p. 535). This approach is possible by reforming the political class, education and the energetic involvement of new generations.

In order to ensure independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the supporting elements must be found in the strength and stability of the political and economic framework, the social and demographic balance, together providing the basis for the solid edification of the status of a sovereign democratic country. In the practice of international relations, what is important is not one's own self-esteem as a state, the propagandistic message generated, but the way in which each international actor is perceived by the countries of the world, what matters most being the vision, appreciations and attitude of neighbours.

Romania is currently a member state of two organisations, NATO and the European Union. The quality of member cannot be valued as a universal panacea in the field of national security, as alliances are political commitments with an indefinite duration. The impossibility of receiving French and British support in 1940 must be a serious lesson to be learned from recent history. For each international actor, it is important to identify and pursue the national interest, increase the prestige in international relations, increase the economic-technological capacity and the military potential and build multiple stability in own territory.

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