

Romania in European and International Context: An Overview of a Century

DR. CRISTINA-MARIA DOGOT¹

Book review of: Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021. ISBN 978-606-062-223-9

The book *Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence* [Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe], coordinated by Maria Costea and Simion Costea², proposes a new vision on the evolution of Europe, the European construction and the history of Romania itself, from the perspective of the complex interdependence, which characterizes the international relations in the contemporary and immediate history. This vision of complex interdependence is illustrated by the collection of fourteen papers organized in two chapters, one related to Romania's domestic and foreign policy issues since the first world war to the seventh decade of the of the XX-th century, and another on geopolitical issues related to some Eastern European states.

The first chapter gathers articles of some recognized Romanian scholars in the fields of history of Romania's international relations: Ion Calafeteanu, Nechita Runcan, Constantin Cheramidoglu, Maria Costea, Nicolae Răzvan Mitu, and Cezar Stanciu. The papers of the above-mentioned authors cover different topics related to the interwar period, as following: the Romanian national consciousness in the context of the First World War and Romania's unification of 1918; the religious freedom of Catholics Romanian citizens in the Constitution of 1923; a reflection in the French press of the time of the German politics at the mouth of the Danube; the role of Romania in European geopolitics according to the view of Belgian diplomats; the situation of Quadrilateral in the last years of belonging to Romania; Romanian reactions and perceptions to the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971.

Some key ideas related to this historical period can be highlighted: the active negotiating role of Romanian liberal politician I.I.C. Brătianu in the decision-making process related to Romania's

¹ PhD, Lecturer at the University of Oradea, Department of International Relations and European Studies. E-mail: cdogot@uoradea.ro.

² Among the other very valuable publications of the two coordinators, we can indicate: Costea, Simion, et Michel Labori, *Le Management des Politiques de l'Union Européenne/ The Management of EU Policies*, PARIS, Prodifmultimedia, 2011. Costea, Simion, *Ideea europeană și interesele statelor/ European Issue and State Interests*, Cluj-Napoca, Napoca Star Publishing House, 2005. Costea, Simion, *România și Proiectul Briand de Uniune Europeană, /„Romania and the Briand Project of European Union”*, Tîrgu-Mureș, Petru Maior University Publishing House, 2004. Costea, Simion (coord.), *Culture, Elites and European Integration, Volume IV – International Relations and European Union Interdisciplinary Studies* (Preface de dr. Nicolae Paun), PARIS, Editions Prodifmultimedia, 2011. Costea, Simion and Maria Costea (coord.), *Integrarea României în UE: provocări și perspective/ Romania's Accession to the EU: Challenges and Perspectives*, Iași, European Institute, 2007. Costea, Simion (coord.), *“For a Stronger and Wider European Union”*, Cluj-Napoca, Napoca Star Publishing House, 2005. Costea, Simion, *The Culture of the European Accession Negotiations*, in vol. *Globalization and intercultural dialogue: multidisciplinary perspectives / ed.: Iulian Boldea - Tîrgu-Mureș : Arhipelag XXI, 2014 p.50-56*. Costea, Maria and Costea Simion, *THE EU-TURKEY SUMMIT IN MARCH 2016*, p.45-56 in vol. *Globalization and National Identity. Studies on the Strategies of Intercultural Dialogue / ed.: Iulian Boldea - Tîrgu-Mureș: Arhipelag XXI, 2016*. Costea, Maria, Costea Simion, *HYBRID WAR, OLIGARCHIC DEMOCRACY AND EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS*, p.44-53, in vol *The Proceedings of the International Conference Globalization, Intercultural Dialogue and National Identity, Volume no. 2, 2015*, ed.: Iulian Boldea - Tîrgu-Mureș: Arhipelag XXI, 2015.

participation in the WWI and in 1919 Paris Peace Conference³ and, besides some other state and religious actors, in the new relations between Romania and Vatican Holy See⁴; the conflicting political and economic interests of Western states in the Danube and Black Sea areas, as they were reflected by the French newspapers of the time⁵; the detailed observations of the Belgian diplomats on Romania's position in its relations with Germany before the beginning of the Second World War and on the development of its relations with France, UK and Poland in this very special historical context⁶; on the sinuous relations between Romania and Bulgaria regarding the Quadrilateral, the geopolitical interests in the Black Sea area both of Germany and Soviet Union, and the difficulties that Romania faced in managing the Quadrilateral issues in its relations with Bulgaria, with its neighbours and its historical western collaborators, France and UK⁷; and, after a consistent time jump, on the particular character of Indo-Romanian relations in the fragile relational framework (despite of ideological affinities) of the Cold War⁸.

More eclectic than the first one, the second chapter focuses on some actual topics at international level: some approaches on diplomatic relations of China, the federal perspectives of the founder fathers of the EU and the current energy challenges of the EU and Ukraine, some geopolitical and security issues for the South-Eastern Europe and even an interesting article on Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In what concern the articles on China, there are two approaches: one related to the economic diplomacy of China in the actual global context and analyses the rise of China as economic power⁹, and another related to diplomatic relations between Serbia and China. It is noteworthy, in the second article, the analysis that the author, a career diplomat, makes on the economic attraction and influence that China exerts on Serbia, the balance of Serbia between the EU and China, and on the fundamentals of China's presence in Central and Eastern Europe¹⁰.

³ Ion Calafeteanu, "Elogiu conștiinței naționale" [Praise to the national conscience], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁴ Nechita Runcan, "Concordatul Sfântului Scaun cu România în raport cu prevederile Constituției din 1923 și cu Legea cultelor din 1928", [Concordat of the Holy See with Romania in relation to the provisions of the Constitution of 1923 and the Law of Cults of 1928], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁵ Constantin Cheramidoglu, "Cum vedeau aliații României politica Germaniei la gurile Dunării, în timpul Primului Război Mondial" [How Romania's allies saw German politics at the mouth of the Danube, during the First World War], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁶ Maria Costea, "Noi considerații privind România în geopolitica europeană sub lupa diplomației Bruxelles-ului (1939)" [New considerations regarding Romania in European geopolitics under the magnifying glass of Brussels diplomacy], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁷ Nicolae Răzvan Mîtu, "Noi mărturii în problema Cadrilaterului din ultima sa perioadă românească (1938-1940)" [New testimonies in the issue of the Quadrilateral from its last Romanian period], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁸ Cezar Stancu, "România și conflictul indo-pakistanez privind Bangladesh-ul, 1971" [Romania and the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Bangladesh, 1971], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

⁹ Nicoleta Vasilcovschi, "Diplomația economică a Chinei – evoluție și adaptare în context global" [China's diplomacy – evolution and adaptation in a global context], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

¹⁰ Mihaela Osorio, "Serbia și China: o prietenie de oțel. Aniversarea a 70 de ani de relații diplomatice sino-sârbe la Belgrad" [Serbia and China: a friendship of steel. 70th anniversary of Sino-Serbian diplomatic relations in Belgrade], in Maria

In the paper on energy security challenges of the EU and Ukraine, the author analyses the strategic effects of the gas pipelines Nord Stream 2 and Turks Stream 2, highlighting the key influencing factors: the cleavages emerged between some of the Member States, based on their different interests, Russia's own strategies concerning both its former satellites and the EU (as a whole or some of EU member states). The author also highlights the US warnings about the possible consequences of EU energy strategies on both EU and Ukraine.¹¹

As previously said, two papers of this chapter refer to some geopolitical and security issues for the South-Eastern Europe. The first one refers to the geopolitical and geostrategic situation of the Black Sea area after the end of Cold War, and the author considers that, despite its troubled history and of the new challenges surrounding it (the economic and some ethnic problems of riparian countries, materialised in some frozen conflicts, as the problems generated by corruption and organised crime), the concerned region will succeed, with the support of the EU and its different foreign policy tools (and the author presents the numerous programmes of cooperation in different fields of interest for riparian states) and of NATO, to overpass its unwieldy condition.¹² In the same register can be considered the article of the Ambassador Paraschiva Bădescu, related to security challenges emerged in the South-Eastern Europe. From the author's perspective, the EU enlargement placed Romania (beside Poland and Baltic states) and Black Sea area in a challenging strategic position for the EU vis-à-vis Russia and some Asiatic states, in terms of security.¹³

As above-mentioned, two articles of the second chapter refer to Ukraine. One of it focuses on Ukrainian Orthodox church, and the author reveals both historical facts and details concerning the structure and the way to organise of Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the changes and challenges of the post-communist period¹⁴. In the other article Ambassador Bădescu, who refers to the situation of Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict from Donetsk and Lugansk, in April 2014, with a focus on the results of negotiations between Ukraine, Russia and some EU member states on the status of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict (the series of Minsk Agreements) and on the EU's and NATO's reactions to the conflict and the outcome of these negotiations.¹⁵

As can be seen, the volume provides an eclectic perspective on Eastern European geopolitics, through the collection of articles it proposes, leaving it to the reader to select those appropriate to his sphere of interest. From different perspectives, these **articles illustrate the book's coherent vision on complex interdependence** between the actors of international relations and their impact on

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¹¹ Aurel Lazăr, "Implicațiile strategice ale gazoductelor Nord Stream 2 și Turkstream 2 asupra securității energetice a Uniunii Europene și Ucrainei" [Strategic implications of Nord Stream 2 and Turkstream 2 gas pipelines on the energy security of the European Union and Ukraine], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

¹² Carmen Irène Atanasiu, "Situția geostrategică și geopolitică a spațiului pontic după încheierea Războiului Rece" [The geostrategic and geopolitical situation of the Pontic space after the end of the Cold War], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

¹³ Paraschiva Bădescu, "Provocări și riscuri de securitate în Sud-stul Europei" [Security challenges and risks in South East Europe], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

¹⁴ Adrian Ignat, "Biserica ortodoxă din Ucraina astăzi" [Ukrainian orthodox church today], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

¹⁵ Paraschiva Bădescu, "Ucraina – între speranțe și noi provocări" [Ukraine – between hopes and new challenges], in Maria Costea, Simion Costea (eds.), *Diplomație și actori geopolitici în epoca interdependenței complexe* [Diplomacy and geopolitical actors in the age of complex interdependence], Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Napoca Star, 2021.

Romania, the European Union and its neighbors, the impact of international relations on the internal policies of states, and conversely, the impact of internal policies and events on international relations, conflicts, diplomacy and international cooperation. The volume represents an important source of information on the Eastern states, and can be useful for both researchers and students in the field of international relations and European studies or in the field of political science, as well as those passionate about the Eastern European reality.

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