

# The role of consulates in the protection of consciences and the cultural patrimony in historical communities

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## Abstract

We live in a global society where increased mobility redefines the way in which the state and its citizens are linked. The main motivation, which unequivocally supports the choice of such a research theme, is the need to address the moral duty to support the Romanian historical communities or minorities belonging to the Romanian ethnic and cultural phenomenon, especially those in the country's neighborhood. We are close to the 100th anniversary of the Great Union, a moment of crossroads, but also a solemn opportunity to renew the country project that brings us together, to rebuild solidarity among the Romanians. There is a deep ethnic community, language, history and culture between the Republic of Moldova and Romania. The symbols of communion are spread throughout the Republic of Moldova, from the archeological strings of the Cucuteni culture, the Geto-Dacian vestiges and the Traian's Waves, to the churches and monasteries founded by the voivodes or the busts of the Romanian writers from the Classical Alley of the Public Garden Stephen the Great from Chisinau. The consular institution has historically emerged as a result of the development of trade between states and travels across national boundaries, originally caused primarily by the needs of trade. The Christian merchant communities organized, choosing among them, as a leader, a consul. The Consul defends the interests of the community he represents and resolves disputes between the members of the respective community by applying the law of the state they belong to. Now, it is impossible not to observe a principled distinction between the old trade institutions and the current consular service, which has borrowed from the old institutions only the idea of defending the rights and interests of compatriots beyond the borders of the country of residence. The evolution of society from the perspective of all its aspects, from economic, social, cultural, historical, political, etc. determined the reconfiguration of the consular institution in the accreditation countries and especially in the historical communities of Romanians belonging to the Romanian ethnic and cultural sphere, especially those in the vicinity of the country.

**Keywords:** heritage, history, historical communities, diplomatic missions.

## 1. Introduction

Mapping the today presence of the Romanians, we will discover with surprise, enthusiasm and a profound joy that along the state borders, there are many Romanian communities remaining outside the present frontiers, isolated according to various historical circumstances. They are historical captive communities that occurred in such countries as Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albany, Macedonia and Croatia, and who have preserved firmly and dignified their cultural and national identity. Romanian communities live compact and they proudly have kept their traditions, customs and language in spaces where history treated them with hostility, where ongoing modifications of different time periods have tried to assimilate them in the borders of actual states they make part.

## 2. Content

### 2.1. Romanians from the Republic of Moldova

In the middle of the 14th century, the Tartars were driven away and the Hungarian expansion was blocked. In this context, groups of people who moved from the northwestern Romania, the Maramureş region, formed the first state between the Eastern Carpathians and the Nistru River<sup>2</sup>, the northern part of the present Republic of Moldova, the mouth of the Danube River, and the Black Sea shore.

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2 Ion Hîncu, Who are the ancestors of Moldovans, Chişinău, 1990, p 35.

The Nistru River and the Oriental Carpathians we meet two rulers: Petru Musat and Costea Musat, that proves the existence of two separate countries. A little while later, Roman I took Țara de Jos within the borders of Moldova.<sup>3</sup> In 1484 Ștefan cel Mare lost Chilia and Cetatea Albă, as a result of Sultan Baiazid II lightning-speed campaign. These are the first two lost territories of what are considered to be the historical lands of the Republic of Moldova.

Then, Petru Rareș was defeated by the Ottoman-Tatar coalition and Tighina was lost and was renamed Bender. This led to the colonization of Bugeac by the Nogai Tatars.<sup>4</sup> The beginning of the 18th century ripped off Hotin Fortress from the historic perimeter of Moldova and attributed it to Turks who later, after 1812, gave it to Russia.<sup>5</sup> The signed Peace act in București led to the annexation of the territory to the East of the Prut River by Russia, who administratively incorporated it within the Russian Empire, first as a region, then as a province.

Throughout this period, the greater part of population consisted of Romanians, fact that was attested by the documents either under the name of Moldovan or Romanian. After the annexation of the region between the Nistru and Prut Rivers, Sankt-Petersburg named the region Bassarabia, which meant not only the territory of Bassarabia located at the mouth of Danube River, but also the entire province within the Prut and Nistru Rivers. This title of the region was kept by the Romanian public consciousness even during the time when it was incorporated within the borders of the Romanian Kingdom (1918-1940).<sup>6</sup>

Being part of the Kingdom of Romania for twenty-two years, for a population, that had only 45% of "book readers"<sup>7</sup>, was a very short period, in order to build a Romanian national consciousness, which is no wonder that today prevails the memory of belonging to the territory of the historic Moldova and not Romania.<sup>8</sup>

In 1940 Hitler Germany and Stalinist Russia artificially separated Romania from the Republic of Moldova under the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. The Soviet occupation was followed by decades of cultural and identity damage. In 1991, Moldova would affirm its belonging to Romanian space and proclaim its independence from Moscow. This act refers to the uninterrupted statehood of the Romanians from the East of Prut and devotes for this space the official names of Romanian for the language and for the people.

According to the data of the latest population census, realized by the authorities from Chisinau in 2014, from the total of 2 804 801 of Moldavian citizens, 192 800 declared themselves as Romanian (7%), and 2 068 058 (75,1%) declared themselves as Moldovan. Other national minorities, such as Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauz, and Bulgarians<sup>9</sup> made the percentage difference of 17.09%.

On historic, curricular, linguistic, historiographical and political section of the Bassarabian space, shattered by wars and diverse political influences, where it took almost 27 years after the collapse of the USSR to make it possible to emerge a new country on the map of the world, the Republic of Moldova "is still searching for its identity profile".<sup>10</sup>

3 Daniel Cain, Armand Gosu, Cornel Sigmirean, Annemarie Sorescu-Marincovik, Romanians near us, Bucuresti, 2003, p.93.

4 Ibidem.

5 Constantin Mihaescu Gruiu, Moldova 1359-1859: Spikes from the history of an independent state, Bucuresti, 1998, pp. 56-57.

6 Daniel Cain, Armand Gosu, Cornel Sigmirean, Annemarie Sorescu-Marinkovic, Romanians near us, Bucuresti, 2003, pp. 102-104.

7 Book readers, at the respective period of time having the meaning of people who have finished primary education where they were taught to write and read.

8 Nicolae Surugiu, The development of the public education in Bessarabia during the interwar period (1918-1940), article published on

[http://www.istoria.md/articol/200/Dezvoltarea\\_%C3%AEnv%C4%83%C5%A3%C4%om%C3%AEntului\\_public\\_%C3%AEn\\_Basarabia\\_C3%AEn\\_perioada\\_interbelic%C4%83](http://www.istoria.md/articol/200/Dezvoltarea_%C3%AEnv%C4%83%C5%A3%C4%om%C3%AEntului_public_%C3%AEn_Basarabia_C3%AEn_perioada_interbelic%C4%83).

9 National Statistic Bureau of Republic of Moldova, 2014 Population census, Chisinau, 2014, Published statistics on the address: <http://recensamint.statistica.md/ro>.

10 Dan Dungaciu, Who are we? Chronicles from the East to West, Cartier Publishing house, 2009, p. 139.

## 2.2. The consular institution in the Romanian communities

The interstate relationships, with a bilateral character, exercised with the purpose to protect the nationals that are on the territories outside their state, was defined in 1963 as Consular Relations.<sup>11</sup> From a historic point of view, the consular institution appeared long time ago before the definition of the concept of Consular Relations, since the beginning of the times when people have started to visit other countries first provoked by the trading necessities.<sup>12</sup> The development of the trade exchanges has led to the necessity of the need to designate a leader that would defend the interest of that exact community, through the law appliance of the state they belonged to. Thus, the traders’ communities identified among them a representative that had to be the precursor of the actual consul, for the first time defined in 1963.

Bilateral relationships among the states are established from the date when the act through which the agreement was reached or from any date fixed by the parties and provides the exercise of the consular functions by their specialized external bodies, in order to protect the nationals when they are abroad.<sup>13</sup> In the virtue of Vienna Convention, the national Romanian the Consulates represent state extensions, that exert some of the most various missions<sup>14</sup>, starting from macro level of national interest, and reaching to the level of the human component, where the subject is the Romanian citizen.

**Civil protection** of the nationals represents the entirety of the processes that come in the support of the Romanian citizens in any of their activity fields: commercial, economic, notary, executory, security, civil status, audit, maritime, travel documents, legal assistance and other functions that are not prohibited by the Law and Regulations of the residential state.<sup>15</sup> The significance of the exercise of the citizens’ protection in the actual context, amplifies and diversifies the role of the consul, who acquires in its turn new connotations. Normative acknowledgement, development of the juridical tools, especially the awareness of the citizens’ personal rights, represent the process that generates accelerated evolutions of the role of the consul which will have a major influence in shaping future perspectives in exercising this function.

From a cultural point of view, the liability of the Romania Consulates is the consolidation of the **Romanian cultural values** through the preservation of the historical and religious monuments<sup>16</sup> from the outside of the borders of the country, as well as the support of the representative cultural organizations and associations of the Romanians from everywhere. **The National Patrimony** is the most important factor in preserving the identity of national cultural values. Taking into consideration the risk of the damage or the loss of the Romanian cultural elements, due to both the time and the society progress, the quick social and economic changes of the recent years, it is necessary to identify some directions of cooperation between the Romanian cultural institutions and the accredited states. “Culture is the binder that brings the nations together, unites people and states. Through culture, with sensitivity, delicacy and talent, you can transmit values.” (The Ambassador of Romania in Republic of Moldova, Daniel Ionita, 2017)

Romanian historical communities represent a special case. For instance, there is a deep ethnic connection between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Romanian symbols, language, history and culture are spread all over the Republic of Moldova (archaeological sites, Romanian writers, Geto-Dacian vestiges, Basarabian Metropolitan Church - part of the Romanian Orthodox

11 Viena Convention on Consular relationships, adopted in April 24, 1963 and come into force in 1967. Romania has ratified the Convention through the State Council Decree no. 481/1971, published in the Official Monitor no. 10/28.01.1972.

12 Biswanath Sen, A diplomat’s handbook of International Law and Practice, Hague, 1965, p. 201 - 207

13 Viena Convention on Consular relationships, adopted in April 24, 1963 and come into force in 1967.

14 Ibidem

15 Ibidem

16 Regulations on the organization and the functionality of the Ministry for Romanians from Everywhere, accessed at the address: <http://www.dprp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Regulament-de-organizare-%5%9Fi-func%C5%A3ionre.pdf>

Church etc.). The magazines in the Republic of Moldova contribute to the consolidation of a unique literary space, and the relations between the Romanian Academy and the Academy of Science of Moldova are fraternal, the collaboration between the two institutions contributing to the process of European integration of the Republic of Moldova<sup>17</sup>, including in the field of scientific research.

The Romanian Consulates in the Republic of Moldova act as a catalyst and incentive for the promotion of cultural exchanges between the two sides of the Prut River, focusing on encouragement and support of the Romanian cultural events in the country of accreditation. In this regard, great attention is paid to the promotion and preservation of Romanian traditions and customs in the territory of Bessarabia with a dual purpose: to preserve this culture in the Republic of Moldova and to learn the realities of the traditional Romanian culture for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

Romania's largest and most successful project for the Republic of Moldova consisted in repairing a historical injustice with the adoption by the Romanian Parliament of the Romanian Citizenship Law<sup>18</sup>, which automatically enabled the citizens of Bessarabia and the descendants to restore their Romanian citizenship that they lost without their consent. In this sense, the Romanian Consulates support all those who wish to reaffirm their belonging to the Romanian cultural identity by regaining Romanian citizenship. "Building a common communal space tributary to the identity and interests of Romanians on the two sides of the Prut"<sup>19</sup> is a successful project through which the cooperation between journalists, press institutions, non-governmental media organizations and governmental institutions with attributions in domain of the two states, for the promotion of the Romanian-language media is strengthen. The annual program of summer camps for pupils and students<sup>20</sup> from the historical communities comprises about 2000 participants from the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, and consolidates the Romanian cultural heritage in the national consciousness of Romanians living abroad.

### 3. Conclusions and final recommendations

In the *Centenary year, at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Union*, we have the opportunity to renew the country project that rebuilds solidarity among Romanians.

Beyond the included desiderata in the centenary project, such as building monuments to remember the time of the Union beyond the calculations and figures, celebration and anniversary, the centenary of the Great Union implies involvement and responsibility of each of us.

In order to continue to exist, to make full use of its potential, the Romanian historical communities need the support and collaboration of Romania to preserve the language, to carry on the traditions and culture, and "to be able to pray in the mother tongue."<sup>21</sup>

In this sense, Romania has to redefine the relationship strategy between the Romanians from abroad, the diaspora and the most important, historic communities of Romanians that are in the vicinity of its borders that will reflect the new model of the society organization. We witness the replacement of the social interactions of pyramid type with the function of network type. As a result, it is ascertained the necessity of the transition from the passive approach, towards a participatory model in which the organizations, associations and people from historic communities and the diaspora are partners of the governmental institutions in the definition of public politics, mostly those regarding the Romania diaspora.

17 [www.mae.ro](http://www.mae.ro)

18 Law no. 21/1991 on the modifications and ulterior completions, in effect since April 5, 1991, republished in the Official Monitor, Part I, no. 576 as of August 13, 2010

19 Implemented by the Conflict Prevention Center and Early Warning from Bucuresti and Public Policies Institute from Chisinau, in partnership with other organizations of the civil society from Republic of Moldova, among which NATO Information and Documentation Center from Chisinau, the Audiovisual Coordinative Council

20 <http://www.mpro.gov.ro/web/anunt-privind-organizarea-programului-de-tabere-arc-2018-editia-de-vara/>

21 ibidem

Taking into consideration that the transposition of the national society into a global society, the mobility in its full ascension and those almost 4 million of Romanians established abroad, I believe that it is necessary to create opportunities for returning home for those who want to return to their native country and to harness their acquired abilities abroad. Romania has the duty to support further education and the professional training as well as the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad.

The current political context in the eastern proximity of Romania imposes the need to preserve the Romanian cultural values through non-reimbursable funding and the extension of the programs and projects of Romanian language teaching, the cultural projects, media and mass –media publications of the mass communication means of Romanian in the historic communities.

The mobility of the population, the East influences and global mass-media bring along with them their own identity elements in the historical Romanian communities, harming the Romanian language, national customs and traditions. This is the reason why it is needed a greater attention of the communication strategy capacity development of the Romanian language in the historical communities, especially in the Republic of Moldova.

Last but not the least, it is essential to preserve the national values, and to extend the network of foreign affiliates of the Romanian Cultural Institute. They support the promotion of modern, contemporary and patrimonial Romanian culture. By organizing large events, and cultural projects, the diplomatic and consular extensions of Romania abroad will be able to the image bearers of every Romanian living outside the national borders. These are coming in the promotion support of the modern, contemporary and patrimony culture.

With no doubts, we can conclude the present material by highlighting the acute necessity that the Romanian state to be present within the Romanian communities living abroad, for the care of the nationals as wells as for the preservation of all the elements that define our Romanian identity. Regardless of the place they live, Romanians that are far from the country must feel that their country is not far from them.

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