

# Foreword

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Lithuania and Romanian lands entered into relations, according to the existing data, since Middle Ages. During that period both states were interested in strengthening their power, in self-determination and in increasing their influence in Europe. Since the 14<sup>th</sup> century there was a strong influence of the Great Duchy of Lithuania and latter on of the Lithuanian – Polish Union over Moldova. In the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were signed treaties between Stefan the Great, head of Moldova, and Cazimir IV, the Great Duke of Lithuania.

After a long period of events, our nations restarted to have diplomatic relations, in the context of a newly declared independent Lithuania (1918). Relations were not simple and transparent and the dialogue remained rather occasional. It was a difficult period for both states, as it was for many other European nations. Both countries started to be diplomatically represented, even if that was done from Prague for Lithuania, by Dovas Zaunis since 1924 and later on, since 1935 until the Soviet occupation, by Edvardas Turauskas, and from Riga in case of Romania, by Constantin Valimarescu, starting with 1935.

The diplomatic relations between Romania and Lithuania were interrupted after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed. Lithuania disappeared from the map of Europe. The Pact determined the course of events in the European history for the following years. On August 23 and September 28, 1939 Nazi Germany and USSR signed two secret protocols that determined Lithuania's fate for the next 50 years. The names of our countries – Romania and Lithuania, were unfortunately included in the short text of the secret Protocol attached to the Treaty. As such, the 1<sup>st</sup> article of the secret protocol mentions that “in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party”. The 3<sup>rd</sup> article mentions that “with regard to South-eastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political lack of interest in these areas”.

Afterwards “our” historians and History kept quiet about the agreement for 50 years until the documents of the Nazi Germany and communist Soviet Union became researchers' fortune. The occupation was officially recognized as a crime and the “disappeared” Lithuania came back on the map of Europe and of the world. Fortunately, the History cannot be forced to keep silent or to tell lies for a long period of time.

There was another 20 years needed for the historians of our countries to “opening forgotten histories” of the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Romania. Thanks to an enthusiastic person, Dr. Silviu Miloiu, attracted by the history and research of the relations of the Nordic and Baltic countries, there was established, along with a group of hard working young Romanian historians, the Romanian Association of Baltic and Nordic Studies. The same group of people organized in May 2010 at the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania called “Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters”.

The papers included into this number of the magazine were presented at the above-mentioned conference. The period referred to in the papers is that comprised between the two world wars, while each author focuses on specific issues, such as, for example, the establishment of the political and diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Romania, as does D. Bukelevičiūtė and F. Anghel, or on Nicolae Titulescu’s new Eastern Policy and Romania’s diplomatic ties with Lithuania, about which writes S. Miloiu. E. Dragomir makes a comparison between Romania and Lithuania and their development characteristics, considering that both states were a periphery of Europe. N. Babinskas looks at the H. Stahl’s conception of Historical Sociology and the Bucharest School of Sociology. The representative of Iasi School of History B. Schipor writes about the Polish-Lithuanian crisis of March 1938. R. Kraujelis deals with Romania and Lithuania as part of the Allied-USSR fateful wartime agreements. I. Cazacu focuses on the situation of the Second Corps of the Romanian Volunteers in Russia and their encounters with their Lithuanian, other Baltic and Czechoslovak fellows. This number of the magazine is especially important because is the first such a collection of research papers about the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Romania.

Going back to the development of the relations between our countries, I would like to mention that on the occasion of the conference a Memorandum of Understanding between the Embassy of Lithuania and “Valahia” University was signed and a similar Memorandum between the Faculty of History of the Vilnius University and the Faculty of Humanities of the “Valahia” University will follow.

During the official visit of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu to Lithuania, that took place on July 14, 2010, it was mentioned that the collaboration of the Lithuanian and Romanian historians should be raised up at a higher level, that of Academies of Science, a dimension that would facilitate common projects. I express the hope in realising that in the nearest future.

For the beginning there were done quite many things. There are planned to be published the first “History of Lithuania” in Romanian language, as well as a volume of Romanian and Lithuanian diplomatic documents.

I question myself what will follow and in the same time I express the confidence that the collaboration will continue.