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SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The thesis entitled "Communication in diplomacy" tackles an extremely topical and important issue. I am talking about communication in diplomacy, having the diplomatic milieu as the sender of a diplomatic message and/or as a recipient of this kind of messages. As this field is not very frequently mentioned in specialized literature, we intend to highlight the similarities and also the differences between communication in diplomacy and traditional communication, underlining what, how much, when, who and the way that the message will be sent in the communicational process.

Romania's complex security situation generated by the security challenges in its immediate neighbourhood based on the accumulation of multiple tensions at international level as well as the ingravescence of the issues that the European Union is facing, requires urgent, practical answers, that would overcome the strictly theoretical component, pertaining to approaches to doctrine. Taking all this into account, this thesis aims to give answers and solutions that may be immediately implemented.

As I have mentioned before, we are taking into consideration the range and the complexity of the conflicts, be it manifest or latent, which may generate chain conflicts whose settlement would imply both huge costs and risks: uncertainty; lack of predictability; instability in Europe and in other hot spots around the world. That's why we firmly argue in favor of something which at present is called the diplomatic solution of communication, more exactly: the negotiation approach in order to settle, cease or prevent conflicts, approach that will generate stability, mutual trust, understanding between states and groups of states. To be more concise: I plead for strategic diplomatic communication, in the spirit and the letter of international law provisions.

Given the complexity of practical, applied factors that bring into attention the discussion over the specific areas, the own channels and overall goals and milestones of diplomatic communication, I have focused, since the beginning of this demarche, on the selection of the analytical approach methodology and the achievement of a viable and operational project summarizing this thesis's potential added value.

The main methods that I used writing this thesis are: the statistical method, the opinion survey based on questionnaires, case studies and the bibliographic method, to which I added the comparative, the typological and the direct-operation method. Obviously, an approach of such complexity and significance, required two sources of documentation: a) written/edited documents: diplomatic documents per se, memoirs and analysis and history of

diplomacy studies; and b) oral history documents, i.e. data, assessments and analysis suggestions collected from the discussions I had with Romanian diplomats, diplomacy historians and diplomatic history analysts. Naturally, with all due respect for the investigated subjects, I tried to remain objective, unbiased, without affecting the quality and importance of the information and assessments presented by my distinguished interlocutors.

The paper is divided into six main chapters, with related subchapters, three case studies and conclusions, as follows: 1) The role and importance of communication in the diplomatic milieu; 2) The typical features of communication in diplomacy; 3) Diplomatic communication from the Communist times up to the first decades of the 21st Century; 4) Communication in crisis situations; 5) Redefining the image of Romania abroad; 6) Necessary mechanisms and resources to ensure the strategic coherence of the messages and means of action - arguments in favor of a national communication strategy, a diplomatic communication strategy.

The herein case studies present an analysis of Romania's communication in its relation with the European Union, include a guide for public communication in crisis situations and last but not least, they highlight the views of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Romania in office from 1989 to 2016, on diplomatic communication, on the importance granted to communication during their term of office, on the developments of diplomatic communication during the past 25 years and on the need to develop a National Communication Strategy and, hence, a Diplomatic Communication Strategy.

This thesis's main goal is to determine which are in today's world circumstances the scope and content of the two key concepts: diplomacy and communication. Starting from this point we have tried to determine other specific goals arising from the analysis of the way that the essential data, defining for the two entities, is found and expressed in those two notions.

In the first stage, meaning in Chapter I, the introductory chapter, I approached the major topics, the main issues of this demarche. Among them I can mention those that are related to "The role and importance of communication in the diplomatic milieu."

That is why I chose the rigorous, comprehensive and nuanced definition of the notion of "diplomatic communication", of its scope and content, its derivatives and typical differences in the broader and richer sense of communication sciences. To summarize very illustratively, I would say that maybe today, more than ever, communication is not a mere means to diplomatic activity, but it is the means that ensures the relation between parties engaged in a diplomatic rapport.

Starting from here, I highlighted some of the considerations specific to the theme of diplomatic communication for the Romanian diplomatic démarches and I have based my efforts on the dense and rigorous considerations and analyses that were made available to me by my distinguished interlocutors who, in different times and in different geo-political contexts, were in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These approaches provided us some suggestions of outstanding value which enabled me to outline some possible guidelines to streamline Romania's diplomatic communication. They are taking into account both the political, economic, legal or social component of the collective reality, and the subjective, psychosocial factors, starting from the motivational element up to the analysis of the diplomatic language and the negotiation techniques.

This way, I opened the path for the distinct issue of "The typical features of communication in diplomacy," which is the topic of Chapter 2 of the thesis. I would like to mention here, taking into account the value as specific landmark of this discussion, the appreciation expressed by the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lazăr Comănescu, containing a set of differences which may help in better relating of the diplomatic communication processes based on unquestionable benchmarks. To be more precise, from all the judgments formulated, I have chosen the following: "communication between diplomats themselves is one thing, and it has its own specificities, from direct discussions, notes, letters and so on, and communication about diplomacy is another thing, and in its turn it is transparent, obviously - of course, taking into account the type of activity - and especially conveying the message which means one always tries to understand to what extent the message is perceived by its recipient, as this is a key element. This is, of course, very much related to knowing the typical features of the recipient and the aim of the message."¹.

I consider these aspects as decisive for a successful diplomatic communication perceived as a distinct type, but integrated into the modern and efficient communication processes meaning the thorough knowledge of the interlocutor and implicitly, the message adjustment for the intended recipient.

A realistic point of view, which focuses more on the pragmatic side of the topic of this discussion, and clearly phrased, was also given by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu. In his opinion, the field of diplomatic communication "must be an integral part of the training and of the diplomatic action of each and every diplomat, without exception." From his point of view "we must know both what to say and, more importantly,

¹ Interview with Lazăr Comănescu, in the annex of the paper

how to say it." "Therefore – according to Aurescu – a diplomat's training package must include a consistent set of notions in this field, and a set of public communication practical exercises."²

A relevant fact, that we can and must be taken into consideration in this paper, is highlighting the shortcomings or malfunctions identified at different stages or levels in the diplomatic milieu which, if not tackled nor solved by substantive, meaningful and applicable solutions, may generate serious damage to the diplomatic communication or especially to it. Thus, referring directly to the challenges that European Union is facing and, implicitly, the contribution that Romania can bring to the community bodies and to the difference between the Romanian communication style as compared to that of other Member States, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Titus Corlăţean, pointed out a number of amendments as far as regards a "typical element, at least in terms of Romania's experience, particularly in the years after joining the European Union and NATO. " "Romanian diplomatic communication - his Excellency says - and I am referring to all that are engaged in it, from the lowest to the highest level, is still too conservative, too cautious, too careful and too reserved. Nowadays diplomats up to the senior level, especially diplomats from middle to senior level, prefer to communicate directly, and I'm not referring to partners or allies, interests are discussed directly and very pragmatically and mutual understanding and support are achieved directly. But we are caught in this obsolete ballet of diplomatic communication at a fast pace, and when you talk to a partner or an ally you can talk directly about certain issues and I think that we should do this on all diplomatic levels – we are not referring to the Minister level, a Minister is something different - but we should do a step forward in this respect."³

From the above, I would like to underline the idea of the need for an "on-site" adaptation of the diplomatic communication flux to the new elements that come up on the way and, I consider that this is a strong argument in favor of this project aiming to streamline this field, a project that I will outline as a by-product of the analyses in the thesis.

Following this set of stages, I continued the examination of the diplomatic communication, having as main landmark the conditions in which the communication passes from principles and rules to sociological impact. In order to do this, I took into account aspects which in my view have not been discussed too much so far and which regard the diplomatic language, seen as a distinct typology of specialized language (to this end I mainly analyzed the diplomatic vocabulary, which I consider an essential element of successful

² Interview with Bogdan Aurescu, in the annex of the paper

³ Interview with Titus Corlăţean, in the annex of the paper

diplomatic communication), so that I started an analysis of the typical elements of diplomatic negotiations which we see as a genuine validity and efficiency test for diplomatic communication as such.

In this respect, the studies by eminent diplomat and scholar Mircea Malița, member of the Romanian Academy, have been greatly useful, as have the studies by Professor Liviu Zăpârțan on negotiation techniques, as well as the 20th century diplomacy history syntheses written by professor and diplomat Constantin Vlad. Making this reference to Mircea Malița, and to Constantin Vlad, I thought it necessary to exclude from this analysis the superficial, negativistic approaches based on the pretext of a system analysis of the 1944-1989 interval, which put a veil on the huge efforts of Romanian diplomats who ensured Romania's survival and affirmation through diplomacy during the Cold War (as it is proven by the impressive collection edited and coordinated by Ambassador Nicolae Ecobescu).

That is why I have dedicated a separate chapter, Chapter 3 of the paper, to the topic of "Diplomatic communication from the Communist period until the first decades of the 21st century." In this spirit, I made a suggestive delimitation, which is supported by sound arguments and evidence of factual reality, and according to which in the period generically defined as *Communism* there were several distinct phases that we could delineate as follows: the 1948-1964 period and the 1964/1965-1989 period. The first period started with the Act of 23rd of August 1944, after which our country entered the Soviet Union's power scope and ends in 1964 with the adoption of the "Declaration of April 1964 of the Central Committee (CC) of the Romanian Labor Party (PMR)" seen as a genuine *breach into the Iron Curtain* through which our country, and implicitly Romanian diplomacy, categorically and firmly distanced itself from Kremlin's sovereignty. The "Declaration – according to historians Florian Bratu and Liviu Țăranu in a paper dedicated to this event – most surely marked the end of a belief, a belief in Moscow infallibility as the *beacon* of the Communist world."⁴

The second period begins with the arrival of Nicolae Ceaușescu at the helm of the single party and of the state and it ends with the fall of his regime, in December 1989.

In the logical order of the same nuanced approaches, not hindered by ideological criteria and considerations, I highlighted the fact that, during each of these two stages, there were peak moments in which Romania and its diplomacy were at the height of the historical command posts and were widely recognized around the world.

⁴ Bratu Florin, Țăranu Liviu "Aprilie 1964, Primăvara de la București" (*April 1964, the Bucharest Spring*) Editura Enciclopedică, 2004, p.VII

The most significant episode occurred on 21st of August 1968, when Romania was the only country of the world wide socialist system to publicly and firmly opposed to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the five member states of the Warsaw Treaty, as there were also moments when the internal and external political factor prevailed or tried to impose topics and priorities on the diplomatic agenda.

By these delimitations, I intended to emphasize something which unfortunately is not talked about as much as it should, namely the fact that the element that enabled "Romania's survival and affirmation through diplomacy during the Cold War" was the relative independence of diplomacy, which also means the relative independence of diplomatic communication, from the political factor, the single party regime.⁵

As I carefully watched the sequence of historical events, it was only natural to pay special attention (when I tackled the issue of the typical features and of the goals of diplomatic communication after 1989) to the firm and tireless efforts made in view of our country's accession to NATO and to the European Union, focusing on the Romanian contribution to the assertion of European identity and of Romanian identity, these efforts being preceded by those of Nicolae Titulescu, the brilliant diplomat, politician and patriot who made it his quest to "bring Romania in Europe and Europe in Romania." These themes motivated me and I believe they conferred consistency to the Case study on the topic, „Romania's diplomatic communication with the European Union."

Against the background of such a complex dynamics as during the pre-accession period, I have focused more on the main elements representing the goals, strategies and reasons of diplomatic communication and of negotiations from the point of view of what we may call the convergence of achieving the National Interest and the European Union's aspirations. In this analysis I took into account a few key elements of negotiations carried out by Romanian diplomats in order for our country to be admitted to the European Union, among which, I must recall, the historical premise of the idea of European unity and the evolution of this project after the Second World War up to the present. This analysis was greatly important to me in that it helped me defining Romania's contribution to the assertion of the idea of European unity, which was manifested in the realist visions proposed to the public opinion by eminent scholars and patriots such as Aurel C. Popovici, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Nicolae Iorga, Octavian Tăslăuanu and, in an utterly outstanding manner, by Nicolae Titulescu.

⁵ Nicolae Ecobescu, "Cuvânt înainte" (Foreword) to, "România, Supraviețuire.." (Romania, Survival..), vol 1, ed. cit. p. 15 et seq.

This way I wanted to highlight a major idea, a background idea, which I consider as the main conclusion of the Case study analysis in that chapter, namely, the two-sided determinant relationship between Romania and European Union. Starting from the indisputable truth that our country's integration in the great European structure was an objective need, I wanted to emphasize the idea that Romania belongs to the European area not only because of its geographical position and, above all, because of its geo-strategic interests determined by its location, but because of its historical traditions and the ethos of this nation, as well as due to its ability to bring added value and to contribute to the progress and stability of the region and of the continent. This is what I had in mind when examining the strategic communication elements used by the Romanian diplomacy in the process of preparation and negotiation of the final positive decision.

The derivative issue which I consider natural and necessary to emphasize is the presence of a double restraint: on one hand, there is Romania's wish to be a distinct and active presence in the European Union institutions, and, on the other hand, there is the awareness and consistent observance of the key condition by all stakeholders, this condition being the capacity as EU member state which entitles Romania to full and equal rights as any other member states, but also implies a set of obligations and duties.

I have looked close at this concept of *equal rights and equal duties just as all the other member states of the European Union*, considering the fact that both the success and the failure of Romania's diplomatic communication in the EU communication system are determined by giving up on any kind of inferiority complex, such as "second-rate member state" and by adopting a bold and cooperative attitude, an active participation to all the situations where our diplomacy is involved.

The reason for this is the fact that, in certain structures and at certain levels of EU institutions there are discriminatory concepts used to describe a so-called "main core" of member states, followed by those states whose obligation status is "on standby", Romania included. In this case it is absolutely compulsory that Romania's communication strategy should operate a clear-cut and definitive separation between the positive evolutions and transformations of the history of the European project on one hand, and distorted, tendentious and even dangerous approaches, which might jeopardize the very stability and credibility of the European Union on the other hand. We, therefore, believe that now more than ever, diplomatic communication must position itself in an uncompromising manner with respect to a daunting reality, that shows that unlike the previous manner of presenting and approaching the problem prior and up to our country's EU accession, certain *mutations* have occurred, so

to say, which are very discouraging. These were the result of the inadequate response of the Union's decision-makers while managing new challenges. As a result, the European Union today is confronted with a series of tensions and contrasting geostrategic tendencies that seriously endanger its stability and credibility, and even its future prospects.

Despite the persistent and mostly pessimistic predictions, the prestigious diplomats I have talked to while writing this thesis remain optimistic. Of course, theirs is a prudent optimism, highlighting the re-launch of a functional communication system at the level of all EU Member States, as well as the need for a serious political leadership that should generate a political vision for the whole of the EU as the best desirable options right now.

Although at first glance these statements might produce an emotional response, make the reader reluctant or even push him to dismiss them altogether, they must be taken under advisement, as they represent an opinion that is gaining momentum and gathering considerable support in the political and diplomatic sectors. The result of this is a specific, inevitable and, we believe, necessary change in diplomatic communication, namely the ability to accurately assess interlocutors, communication partners and to interact with them, a *sine qua non* prerequisite to the consistency and success of any diplomatic endeavour.

Coming back to the pre-accession phase, we would like to focus particularly on a topic that has been overlooked, oversimplified and deeply misinterpreted, if not altogether discarded. More specifically, we refer to counteracting and offsetting, by means of instruments typical of diplomatic communication, the predominantly negative and ultimately untruthful image of Romania and the realities in this country, which certain press agencies, and unfortunately, some diplomatic communities too, choose to manipulate and disseminate.

In order to grasp the full complexity of this phenomenon in a fair and balanced manner, and with a view to having an unbiased estimate of the objectives and stakes of diplomatic communication in this context, which unfortunately is neither isolated nor fleeting, we chose to provide the necessary examples by means of a diplomatic actor who is directly involved, Lazăr Comănescu. He is one of the people who, back in 2004, when various decision-makers had a big say with respect to Romania's accession to the European Union, had a crucial contribution to surpassing a critical deadlock. For this reason we will focus on his view on permanently adjusting the tone and the actions of a diplomat in his relations with his interlocutors: "Whenever engaging in a dialogue on sensitive issues, the openness with which you approach the topic is of utmost importance, in addition to the integrity of the topic in question and the integrity of your interlocutor as well. This is the key element! Displaying repugnance to a dialogue that concerns some delicate elements as well,

is one of the most determinant courses of action (...) Therefore, I would insist on the following: your credibility increases if you engage in a consistent, constructive dialogue that may yield results and become effective precisely when the premises of the two parties diverge. Only then can you reach a compromise solution, because the essence of diplomatic activity is linked with reaching compromise solutions”.

The increasingly tense context in Europe and other hot zones around the world, while varying in intensity and frequency (particularly the dangerous developments in the Middle East and North Africa, which has raised the question of immigrants fleeing to European countries), brings to the fore of this study the question of “Diplomatic communication in crisis situations”, a topic which I have tackled in Chapter 4 of the present thesis.

Considering the inevitability of the best strategies for finding a solution, by means of the traditional channels of diplomatic communication, we chose to first provide a clear definition of the term *crisis*, in accordance to W. Timothy Coombs, who sees the crisis being a significant threat for certain operations that have the potential of producing negative consequences unless properly managed. Against this backdrop, I propose to redefine the concept of crisis at the level of diplomatic relations, so that, when approaching the delicate issue of the management of crisis situations, we should have a coherent and operational approach for key concepts. The category of these key concepts includes: identifying sources, prevention, mediation, and the amicable settlement, through talks, of local or regional conflicts.

We have provided several examples and arguments when approaching the diplomatic communication strategies in crisis situations, which we have taken from analyses of very particular and controversial “hot topics” which have been much debated and disputed.

As an example, the analysis of the Romanian diplomacy’s stand and undertakings in the mediation of the conflict in Vietnam might configure the role, the scope, the possibilities of diplomatic communication, and diplomatic mediation in particular, in the unequal competition with the military factor. Equally we wanted to highlight the viability of the fact that diplomatic communication in a second - or even third - tier country, can underline its negotiating assets in a conflict of such scale and with a high threat level.

Moreover, even though it is no a crisis per se, the heated debates and the controversies it stirred as part of the “world wide socialist system”, more particularly among the leadership in Moscow, can prompt us to reasonably give, as example, the ground-breaking initiative of Romanian diplomacy to establish bilateral relations with the German Federal Republic. Diplomatic documents published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have underscored a

reality pointing to both states belonging to economic, military and political systems that were irretrievably at odds. In another move, despite its firmly asserted independence from Moscow, Romania still remains, to a certain extent, within the sphere of influence of the USSR, as an entity stipulated in the Warsaw Treaty and in the COMECON. In this context, any disobedience of the proper conduct might entail consequences of utmost gravity, which is exactly what happened in the case of Czechoslovakia only a year later. On the other hand, the German Federal Republic was fully aware that, in the political strategies adopted and applied to the states in the Eastern bloc, it had to keep in mind the particularities of each socialist country, as well as Moscow's position as an *omega point* in the process of Germany's reunification. However, at the end of complex and sinuous diplomatic efforts, where the negotiation/communication factor played a key role, the agreement regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations between Romania and the German Federal Republic was successfully finalized. Set against the background of growing tensions between the East and the West and even more so the pressure resulting from Romania's open-doors policy in the diplomatic, economic and cultural sectors, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries remains "a crucial actions, displaying remarkable political vision, courage, ability and determination, in the overall efforts to shape a new, positive course for international relations."⁶

Taking on an entirely different approach as compared to our previous efforts, we have also focused on the stages and diplomatic controversies associated with the much-debated "missile crisis", which brought USSR-USA relations to their most fiery point. This time as well we sought to reveal the constructive character of diplomatic communication, of the negotiation mechanism, as part of defusing a conflict of such gravity. In this context, I have highlighted of high-risk manner that the political, military and diplomatic factors can clash, with unequal force and with arguments that are not always lawful, but simply forceful.

A special case in point, which bears special significance for the logistics of our study, is the unquestionable and resounding success that Romania reported by means of the efforts of Romania's Agent at the European Court of Justice, Bogdan Aureescu, in the court case against Ukraine, regarding the Black Sea Shelf. This effort clearly emphasizes the functionality of mechanisms specifically used by diplomatic communication based on strategy, and the positive impact that any, well-documented and grounded undertaking can have on the image of a country, Romania in this case, despite the many particular political

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Romania-Federal Republic of Germany. The beginning of diplomatic relations 1966-1967" Enciclopedică Publishing House, 2009, pp .XXXI-XXXII and XLIII

undertones of the file, the many biases at the level of the perception and the authorities and the public.

We can, therefore, engage in a comparative analysis of the best possible options of diplomatic communication in crisis situations, based on which we have conducted a case study that provides a potential response model for communication in crisis situations. The model is designed at several levels, as follows: the early identification of a crisis situation and the risk factors that may generate the crisis; the early identification of the useful methods and contacts for the proper management of the crisis; ensuring the prevalence of interior communications over exterior communications – public communications; ensuring the discipline and precaution of communication; the circumstances describing the enforcement of a temporary restriction of public communication; the careful and accurate monitoring of messages sent via the mass-media, and on this basis, the adjustment and quick, persuasive counteraction of false and tendentious messages; finalising the process of managing the crisis and communication the outcome.

The phases we have covered so far have provided us with the major premises for approaching the topic “Reshaping the image of Romania abroad” by means of diplomatic communication, which will be the main focus of Chapter 5. I have grounded by approach on the realistic and forthright discovery of a reality that cannot be overlooked, namely that 9 years after Romania’s European Union accession, our country is facing a deficit of image and knowledge abroad, a phenomenon that has been amplified by the lack of consistency in the actions to promote Romania’s image at all levels. This situation has been unfortunately worsened by scenarios on a “two-gear” Europe, the most frequent example of which is a document provided by the Strategikon Think Tank⁷, which has been recently made public. A Europe with two or several gears should make Romania more perspective of the current context, and of the fact that it is one of the countries expected to execute the decisions of the “core” of the European Union, and consequently that it needs to elaborate, support and foster its own interests.

Among the elements that have caused the emergence, persistence and, in an equal manner, the public credibility of such incomplete or distorted presentations of Romanian reality, I have included the following: integration/adaptation issues for Romanian citizens, particularly those of Roma origin, in community states; acts of corruption at top level and

⁷ Strategikon is Romanian English-speaking think tank aimed at approaching European topics, particularly those that are not debated at national level: <http://www.caleaeuropeana.ro/think-tank-ul-strategikon-primul-raport-despre-o-europa-cu-doua-viteze-ioan-mircea-pascu-crizu-nu-doar-ca-a-adancit-falia-dintre-est-si-vest-dar-a-dus-la-aparitia-alteia-noi-cea-dintre-nord-si/>

defacing the investment sector; cases of small-time crime presented and speculated indiscriminately and jointly with serious crimes committed by Romanian citizens abroad; the manner of presenting some of the difficulties Romania has faced in fulfilling criteria for joining the Schengen Area. Consequently, the idea that Romania “is a transit country” or that it “joined the European Union too early” has seriously marred the image of Romania abroad, damaging our national interest.

To the abovementioned arguments I would add tendentious topics that over the years have been much discussed, such as: the existence of secret detention facilities on our territory over the years, unfairly depicting Romania as a transit country for cross-border organized crime networks or drug cartels; the lacking allocation of the necessary funds for institutionalised children and other underprivileged categories; the discourse of the media and of the political and diplomatic sectors regarding the changes that occurred in the Romanian public sphere at an accelerated pace, due to acts of corruption preceding and thus causing them.

All these arguments can and must raise the question of a reset of Romanian diplomatic communication by re-assessing Romania’s main image boosters abroad, which can primarily be achieved by means of the following channels: Romanian communities abroad, public diplomacy, the academic and university sector, re-launching cultural diplomacy, Romania’s active participation in peacekeeping military operations, particularly those conducted by NATO and the EU, positioning our country at the helm of an effort to promote individual projects or projects run jointly with international organizations, capitalizing as best as possible on the benefits of our geostrategic position.

Special importance for the fulfilment of the objectives of this positive approach has been given to the interviews I have conducted, by Foreign Ministers of Romania after the radical change of the political regime in December 1989 and up to 2016. These have been extremely useful for the purpose of this thesis, and we believe, for future similar endeavours. Sergiu Celac, Adrian Năstase, Teodor Meleșcanu, Andrei Pleșu, Petre Roman, Mircea Geoană, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, Adrian Cioroianu, Cristian Diaconescu, Teodor Baconschi, Andrei Marga, Titus Corlățean, Bogdan Aurescu and Lazăr Comănescu were kind enough to answer our questions.

The natural and arguably the necessary outcome of these analyses on the specificity and inherent value of diplomatic communication, which resulted both from conceptual analyses and from talks with leading diplomats that were at the helm of the Foreign Ministry after December 1989, was the opportunity and the great advantage of elaborating and

implementing the National Strategy for Diplomatic Communication, an idea supported (with only one exception) by all the abovementioned interlocutors.

To this end, I have grounded my approach that all diplomatic activities must exist and operate within a certain code that should give meaning, coherence, consistency and finality to the communication, so as to have clear, precise and persuasive messages. We consider that a holistic approach of all the elements that make up the underlying structures of diplomatic communication must be reflected and expressed by means of a specific definition of the main phases for implementing the strategy, usually on the short, medium and long term, which can and must be able to build landmarks and vectors addressing a well-identified and widely diversified public, by means of clear-cut categories of receivers, and which should address, by means of customized categories and messages, the diplomatic, political, economic and business sector, academics and cultural personalities, as well as Romanian communities abroad.

Out of an urge for rigour and accuracy when outlining the identity and purpose of this study, at no rate will such as Strategy be a restrictive one, and even less so a prohibitive one. On the contrary, we believe it will serve as an effective lobby factor, which should convey and spread a reliable and genuine message in the diplomatic area, as well as in the public sphere, with a view to promoting Romania's vital interests, as an independent, united and indivisible state.

Furthermore, considering the hypotheses and suggestions laid forth by the distinguished diplomats I have approached at various stages when drafting this thesis, we have carried over and we are supporting the idea that the initiative of kicking off the process of elaborating a National Communication Strategy, and by extension, a Diplomatic Communication Strategy, might be the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can and must also involve the diplomatic, political, academic and university sectors, as well as organisations representing civil society, in a large-scope constructive effort, so that the final document should be the expression of a nationwide consensus, similar to the one supporting the Declaration of Snagov for supporting Romania's national interests (its NATO and EU accession).

Given the exceptional importance of this strategy, we expect that parliamentary factions should join forces and capitalize on their own expertise, all the more so as the Strategy is and must remain a broad and long-term project, thus exceeding the duration of a single election cycle.

We are particularly adamant about the idea that the National Diplomatic Communication Strategy is an integral and immutable part of a wider, more comprehensive National Communication Strategy. This project must enjoy the contribution of the political, academic, economic and business sectors, of the Romanian elites, irrespective of their ideological standpoint and affiliations. Such a project, ambitious as it may appear, yet fully viable, must send a concrete, reliable and persuasive message to our partners in the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, as well as to all the actors of major contemporary organizations, by means of which Romania should be perceived as an active, dynamic and strong presence.

It is our belief that first of all, when preparing the National Communication Strategy, and implicitly, the National Diplomatic Communication Strategy, a series of distinct phases must be covered, given the involvement of institutes with specialized expertise in performing an objective assessment of Romania's current image, highlighting its strengths and its vulnerabilities, its flaws or less known and exploited assets. Moreover, we consider that an accurate and well-articulated synthesis of the way in which Romanian society is perceived by the public mindset must also be conducted, in order to do away with mental clichés and prejudiced views that unfortunately seriously affect the process of promoting and defending Romania's national interest.

In the next phase, by comparing these analytical efforts, we can move on, at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which holds legal responsibility in this matter) to drafting the National Communication Strategy (which will also include a National Diplomatic Communication Strategy). In the best possible conditions that should emphasize and capitalize on the added value Romania brings within NATO and EU structures, the role our country plays at regional, European or global level, dwelling on using the economic, cultural and geostrategic potential of our country, as well as on its prospects for development on the medium and long term.

The National Communication Strategy, together with the Diplomatic Communication Strategy, must lay out the main lines of action, paving the way for the positive impact of two important landmarks on the public image of Romania and the Romanian people: marking 100 years since the Great Union of 1918, and holding the rotating presidency of the European Union in 2019.

After their elaboration in a single project, the National Communication Strategy and the Diplomatic Communication Strategy will be submitted to all the ministries, as well as to entities representing the political, academic and entrepreneurial sectors. The Ministry of

Foreign Affairs must then integrate all the observations and recommendations in the two documents before submitting them for public debate in their final version. After all the phases are completed, the two Strategies will be transmitted to the presidency for consultations, and to Parliament for debate. Finally, the two strategies will be debated and adopted by the Government.

Bearing in mind, with considerate attention and insight, the lessons and conclusions stemming from this applied analysis, we believe they can provide an openness and point of view well beyond the limited scope of the present study. For this reason we believe that any suggestions and reviews might be carried further and included in a new, separate approach.

We want our undertaking to confirm and echo the famous concept *opera aperta* coined by the renowned philosopher and essayist Umberto Eco, thus gaining new effective and valuable meanings, also in the area of Romanian diplomatic communication, which we honestly and hopefully wish to gain in recognition and prestige from a European and global perspective.