

RUSSIA AND THE ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE (1875–1878)

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Abstract: This article analyzes the evolutions of the relations between Romania and Russia in the years 1875–1878. With the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, in order to achieve independence, Romania would pursue a policy of rapprochement with Russia, even if among the political elites in Bucharest there were still old anti-Russian sentiments.

Even if during the collaboration with Russia, Romania gained independence, it still lost part of its national territory. During the a priori period of obtaining independence there were several situations that separated Russia from Romania. Also, Russia's attitude in the Berlin Congress had a particular importance for Romania. The end of the war brought a real success for Romania, given the changes that have taken place over the years.

Keywords: Romania, Russia, Independence War, Congress of Berlin, International Relations.

The installation on the Romanian throne of a foreign lord represented both the desire expressed by the Ad-hoc Assemblies in 1857, but especially the fact that, with the arrival of Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (1866), the Romanian people began to believe in the chances to become a free and independent nation. The foreign prince thus managed to direct the Romanian foreign policy, benefiting from the German support in his efforts¹. The Eastern Crisis, reopened in 1875 by the uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where “a revolt of the Christian population against the absolutist feudal oppression of the Turks broke out”², its main purpose being to abolish colonial relations and declaring national and religious equality, represented for the Tsarist Empire the opportunity to continue its expansion plan in the Balkans. “Outbreak amid the acute internal crisis of the Ottoman Empire, the uprising was a real alarm signal for the entire Balkan Peninsula; from the beginning, the uprisings have been supported by volunteer

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¹ Sorin Liviu Damean, *România și Congresul de Pace de la Berlin*, Bucharest, Mica Valahie Publishing, 2011, p. 13.

² Nicolae Ciachir, *Istoria relațiilor internaționale de la pacea westfalică (1648) până în contemporaneitate (1947)*, Bucharest, Oscar Print Publishing, 1998, p. 173.

detachments from Serbia, Montenegro and elsewhere”³. Followed by the two uprisings, in the autumn of the same year and in 1876 of the Bulgarian people, which were worsened by the entry into the war of both Serbia and Montenegro in June 1876, the fact that Tsarist Empire declared war to the Ottoman Empire in April 1877, war in which Romania took part, the Oriental crisis represents the culmination of the completion desires of the modern Romanian states. The desires were implemented in the relationship that the future Romanian state had with the Tsarist Empire, that had returned from the defeat he had suffered in the Crimean War.

Both Romanian and foreign historians consider that it was not Russia, but Austria-Hungary that caused the uprising in Herzegovina. The great Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga is one of them: “To say that Russia was not the factor that caused the Balkan unrest does not mean to say that it had then left all its memories of the eighteenth century, that it had renounced a political conscience, justified or not, but of which she was deeply gripped, most of the inhabitants of the Empire. I just wanted to say that in 1875, someone else was interested in ordering war in the Balkans”⁴. Also, the Romanian historiography came to the same conclusion: “Confident that Russia will not make it difficult due to its alliance of the three emperors, Austria- Hungary worked in 1875 to reopen the Oriental problem for its territorial expansion in the Balkans”⁵. Before and during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, Romanian-Russian relations had ups and downs, which were cautious at the beginning of the crisis, more collegial during the collaboration during the war, and became explosive when Russia showed its true intentions, those to annex the counties that had been returned to the Romanians after the Peace Congress of Paris in 1856: Ismail, Cahul and Bolgrad.

With the onset of the Oriental Crisis (1875), Romanian decision-makers began to be concerned that the country’s territory should not be caught between the incidents from south of the Danube and the intervention of a guarantor power. This was also highlighted by Vasile Boerescu in the note he sent on August 9, 1875, to the Romanian agent in Constantinople, Iancu Ghica, regarding Romania’s position in case of war we cannot and should not take an active part in all these events. We are only passive spectators, although interested. (...) our interests demand that we pursue a national policy, separate and independent from that of our neighbours on the right bank of the Danube. The same behaviour was adopted by the leaders of the political parties, an attitude that was expressed in Parliament through the message addressed to Prince Carol I in the autumn of the same year, being sent “warm and sincere wishes for the improvement” of the situation of Christian populations, at the same time being “welcomed the decision of the government to

³ Leonid Boicu, Vasile Cristian, Gheorghe Platon (coord.), *România în relațiile internaționale (1699–1939)*, Iași, Junimea Publishing, 1980, p. 256.

⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Politica externă a regelui Carol I (1866–1900)*, Edited by Vicențiu Rădulescu, Bucharest, Glycon Publishing, 1991, p. 125.

⁵ *Istoria României*, vol. IV, coord. P. Constantinescu-Iași, Vasile Maciu, V. Chereșteșiu, Dan Berindei, N.N. Constantinescu, Traian Lungu, Bucharest, Academy Publishing, 1964, p. 581.

take all measures to preserve national dignity and achieve a state of affairs more in line with the general interests of Christians”⁶. In November 1875, the Romanian government was asked what attitude Romania would have in the future oriental crisis⁷, by Ivan Zinoviev, General Consul of Russia in Bucharest. Taking into account the Treaty of Paris of 1856 by which the guarantor powers guaranteed the autonomy of Romania, the Council of Ministers decided to maintain the state of neutrality. Romania’s position of neutrality, adopted at the beginning of the crisis, was welcomed by the guarantor powers, the most interested being Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Great Powers wanted to make the most of the events in south-eastern Europe, so negotiations began internationally and various discussions took place between the delegations of the Great Powers.

While the Ottoman Empire was getting increasingly impatient with guarantor powers on the riots that took place, for Romania became increasingly clear that Russia would be involved in the conflict in south-eastern Europe, which would have resulted in serious consequences following the transformation of the Romanian territory into a field of military operations or the crossing of the country’s territory by tsarist troops, especially since this reason would have been used for the benefit of Russia’s occupation of the three Bessarabian counties⁸.

Prince Carol was increasingly convinced that in the end, the Eastern crisis would lead to an armed conflict and that the great powers – except Russia – would allow things to go unanswered, a fact that was also emphasized in the letter sent to his father. on June 14/25, 1876: “Since I wrote you the last letter, significant events have taken place in the Orient, which is the beginning of a new drama that will take place in the not too distant future. Europe is afraid of resolving the Eastern Question because behind it lies the ghost of war, because neither of the great powers wants to let the other gain any success and predominant influence in the East. But Europe believes that a postponed issue is also unresolved. The same danger seeks to avoid today will later exist, to a greater extent, accompanied by fanaticism and a completely cruel lust for revenge. Then there will be no power to stop this catastrophe, the final part of which cannot be foreseen and which can result in a general war ... The crisis will last, in the most favourable case, until the Ottoman Empire, if it does not collapse, at least be shaken from its foundations. After that, smaller states will be formed, which will sooner or later gain their life force”⁹.

Thus, with the coming to power of Ion C. Brătianu, in July 1876, he began testing the ground regarding rumours that Russia would intensify to annex southern Bessarabia. Statements that would be denied by the Russian consul in Bucharest,

⁶ Adrian Bogdan Ceobanu, *Politică și Diplomatie la Sfârșitul secolului XIX. Din istoria relațiilor româno-ruse (1878–1899)*, Iași, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Publishing, 2017, p. 45.

⁷ Titu Maiorescu, *Istoria Contemporană a României (1866–1900)*, Bucharest, 1925, p. 82.

⁸ Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁹ Stelian Neagoe, *Memoriile Regelui Carol I al României. De un Martor Ocular*, vol. III (1869–1875), Bucharest, Scripta Publishing, 1993, pp. 42–43.

following a discussion with the prime minister, but an official denial requested by Ion C. Brătianu was forgotten by the tsarist government and was no longer offered.

Believing that Russia and Austria-Hungary had agreed on a solution to the oriental crisis, I.C. Brătianu considered the visit to Sibiu of Emperor Francis Joseph to be an opportunity to agree with the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary, therefore together with The Minister of Justice, Eugen Stătescu, went there to greet him and to try to find out his intentions in case of a possible Russian-Turkish war, but also to assure him of a good neighbourhood of Romania¹⁰.

In order to have the whole picture with the intentions of Austria-Hungary and Russia regarding the war, on September 25, 1876, a delegation formed by I.C. Brătianu, the Minister of War Gheorghe Slăniceanu, Theodor Văcărescu who was the marshal of the Royal Court and a good aide, connoisseur of the Russian language, was sent by Carol I to Livadia to discuss a possible agreement with Romania.

During the talks from Livadia, the fact that Russia was expecting a war with Turkey was presented by General Gorchakov and that it would burst at the latest in spring or as soon as possible to the end of the year, while stating the fact that he wanted support from Romania. Even if I.C. Brătianu's response was one of supporting the Christian peoples and having good intentions in the relationship with the Tsarist Empire, he stressed that Romania's international policy was guaranteed by the European powers, without having a written document and without a military convention, Russian armies could not cross the country's territory. As they had expressed their intention of annexing Southern Bessarabia, at Reichstadt, neither the Tsar nor Gorchakov were enthusiastic to sign a political treaty with Romania, emphasizing that Romania was not an independent state, and in case of refusal not to require conditions for the free passage of the Russian army on the territory of the country, Russia would consider Moldova and Muntenia part of the Ottoman Empire, according to international treaties and "will occupy these countries without any formality"¹¹. Even if Gorceakov threatened to crush the Romanian troops in case they opposed, the minister I.C. Brătianu replied: "I have no doubt that you will crush us, but, nevertheless, we will oppose and see if it will suit Russia, which is going to liberate Eastern Christianity to crush the first Christians it encounters in its path"¹². Overall, the discussions in Livadia, even if not officially drafted, facilitated an agreement between the two states in case of a war with the Porte. Thus, the foundations of the negotiations being laid in Livadia, in the following months, concrete discussions took place in secret, in Bucharest, to give a definitive form of a Romanian-Russian convention.

¹⁰ Ion I.C. Brătianu, *România și chestiunea Orientului*, in vol. *Războiul neatârării (1877–1878)*, Bucharest, 1927, p. 80.

¹¹ D.A. Sturdza, *Domnia regelui Carol I*, tom I 1866–1876, Bucharest, 1906, p. 819.

¹² Ion I. C. Brătianu, *op. cit.*, p. 88; A.D. Xenopol, *Războaiele dintre ruși și turci*, vol. II, Iași, 1880, pp. 329–330; Nicolae Iorga, *Războiul pentru independența României*, Bucharest, 1929, p. 58.

Apologizing for that he could not come to carry out the discussions with I. C. Brătianu, General Ignatiev delegated Count Al. Nelidov and Colonel M. Cantacuzino, who arrived in Bucharest in secret, using a detour route under changed identities, to carry out the necessary discussions. In the building of the Ministry of Finance, I.C. Brătianu, without the knowledge of N. Ionescu, discussed with Nelidov the content of the convention, and by November 29 they had agreed on the main articles of the draft convention.

In the Balkans, the situation became more complicated and although the convention's project was almost completed, both Russia and Romania did not insist on signing it, both countries waiting to learn the outcome of the conference in Constantinople, which took place at the urging of Britain after the battle of Djunis, where the Ottoman army destroyed the Serbian army, for which Russia imposed a 48-hour ultimatum to the Porte, only after having the support of Germany and Austria-Hungary. While negotiations between the two states continued, at the international level, in early January 1877, the Russian-Austro-Hungarian agreement was signed in Budapest, which confirmed Russia's intentions over southern Bessarabia, and after the London Protocol of March, of the same year, negotiations between Russia and Romania intensified.

Using the London Protocol (March 31, 1877) as a pretext, Russia took part in the eastern conflict as a "representative of Europe"¹³. Carol I, intuiting the course of events, shared with his father the desire according to which¹⁴ "Romania's political situation required us to go with the strong one"¹⁵.

That is why the Crown Council convened on April 2/14 sought the best option that the Romanian state could have. After the resignation of Foreign Minister Nicolae Ionescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu received the power to be the signatory of the agreement with Russia, even if he had expressed his concern about the rumours, that the Russian Empire would annex southern Bessarabia to create a slavic state on the Danube.

To have a better picture of Russia's intentions regarding the relationship with Romania at that time, we can also refer to a document issued by Count Nelidov which was intended for the highest circles in Russian politics at that time and, of course, the emperor, Alexander II, in which he reported that "during preliminary talks on Romania's participation in the war over the Danube, Mr Brătianu received the promise that at the end of war Romania's interests and its participation in joint actions would be considered. Romania's cooperation, with all our efforts and all our conviction, did not happen. Speaking, we could not have promised anything to Romania. But, for the time being, we have to compensate for that part of Bessarabia that must be returned to Russia, then it is clear that our point of view on

¹³ Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și crizele internaționale (1853–1913)*, Iași, Foundation Axis Publishing, 1997, p. 236.

¹⁴ Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁵ Stelian Neagoe *op. cit.*, p. 105.

this issue must be exemplified. Last autumn, at Livadia, the issue of the transfer to Romania of Dobrogea and the Danube Delta arose. From a strategic point of view, we should maintain direct communication with Bulgaria so that we do not have to go through the territory of Romania in the case of a new campaign on the Danube, which will become independent and less benevolent towards us, when we have less to expect from our favours. For this reason, Dobrogea must not be broken (separated) from Bulgaria. But the annexation of the Delta islands to Bulgaria and the surrender of the discharge channels in its hands can bring political complications. Presumably, in such a case, strong opposition will emerge from England and Austria-Hungary (...). Therefore, considering that by mastering one of the branches, Chilia, we ensure our interests on the Danube, there would be no inconvenience if the Delta were granted to Romania, which would acquire a maritime post, which it needs so much. Similarly, to supplement the compensation, it should now be granted the territory between the Danube, Serbia and the course of the Lom River, together with the Vidin fortress. Under this plan, we must maintain the greatest freedom of action, without making early commitments either to the conditions of the future peace or to the framework of military operations”¹⁶.

On April 4/16, 1877, the Romanian-Russian convention was signed by M. Kogălniceanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and from Russia by the General Consul of the Tsarist Empire in Bucharest, Baron Stuart. It contained four articles. An analysis of the four articles highlights what it meant for the Romanian state, which even though it was still under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, became a participant in the anti-Ottoman war, following the signing of a document with Russia on equal terms. From the beginning of the convention, it was stated that “all expenses that may be occasional to the needs of the Russian army naturally fall to the Imperial Government”¹⁷.

Article II of the convention stipulated the political guarantees to be granted to our country by Russia: so that no inconvenience or danger results for Romania from the passage of Russian troops on its territory, the Government of His Majesty, the Emperor of all Russia undertakes to maintain and enforce the political rights of the Romanian state, as it results from existing domestic laws and treaties, as well as to maintain and defend the current integrity of Romania.

According to Article III, the issues of detail regarding the passage of the tsarist troops as well as their relationship with the Romanian state authorities were recorded in a special convention that included 26 articles.

Thus, the first article of the special convention referred to the use of river and rail means of transport as well as the use of telecommunications, mail, as well as the use of material resources in the country. Regarding the relationship with

¹⁶ *Arhiv Vnesnei Politiki Imperii (Arhiva de Politică externă a Imperiului Rus)*, Fond Arhiva Principală, G. 187, Opus 2, Delo 1, pp. 97–98 (The original in Russian).

¹⁷ Vasile Maciu, *Tratatule pentru încheierea convenției româno-ruse din 4/16 aprilie 1877*, in “Muzeul Național”, IV, 1978, p. 21.

military leaders of the tsarist empire, it was specified in Article II of the Convention, that the Russian military authorities intercourse with local authorities will be made using Romanian Commissioners appointed to this end. A Romanian general commissioner will be delegated to the commander-in-chief of the Russian troops for the entire duration of their passage through Romania.

The modalities of transporting troops and materials on the Romanian territory were contained in eleven articles (VII–XVII), and the obligations regarding the observance of the political rights of our state and the integrity of our country, assumed by the Russian government, arising from article III of the convention, were found in the content of article XVIII of the special convention: A line and points of stages will be established behind the Russian army, except for the city of Bucharest, where there will be no Russian troops. It is understood that the troops will stop only where they will be forced by the needs of rest or by obstacles independent of their will and only for the time strictly necessary towards this end.

The two conventions were ratified on April 21, 1877, by Mihail Kogălniceanu, and on May 7, 1877, Baron Stuart communicated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania that the Chancellor of the Empire ratified the two conventions regarding the passage of Russian troops through Romania. Also, in May, Romania would confirm its attitude towards the situation in the Balkans towards the guaranteeing powers through the Declaration of Independence dated 9/21.

By voting for withdrawal, to the Porte, of the tribute in value of 914 000 lei, additional and extraordinary credits were opened, in the amounts of 19,833,131 lei, and the amounts were transferred in the budget for the Ministry of War, which will be subsequently covered with treasury bills¹⁸.

Due to the mobilizations made since the beginning of April 1877, the strength of the Romanian army amounted to approximately 120,000 people. Constituted in four divisions, the army covered the part of the Danube between Drobeta Turnu Severin and Barbosi, in the first instance with the mission to defend the Danube line from the Ottomans, but also to protect the Tsarist troops on their way to the Balkans, where they would be giving the main fights. Because the Danube represented an important “line of defence that covered the strategic deployment of the Russian army”¹⁹, the activity of the Romanian army facilitated the occupation of enemy devices on the left bank of the river as well as the march of the Russian army. In order not to move the theatre of operations on the territory of the country and to prevent a possible incursion, it was time for a large part of the troops to be centralized in the area of Calafat and Bucharest, representing the cities most threatened by Ottoman troops. The action of the Romanian army to protect

¹⁸ Nichita Adăniloie, *Parlamentul și războiul de independență*, in “Istoria Parlamentului și a vieții parlamentare din România”, Bucharest, Academy Publishing, 1983, p. 243.

¹⁹ Nichita Adăniloie, *Cooperarea militară româno-rusă în războiul din 1877–1878*, in “Revista Carpica”, Bacău, 1977, p. 92.

the bank of the Danube restored the people's confidence in its capabilities and separated the country's territory from the theatre of military operations.

Even if between Romania and Russia there was no proper military cooperation treaty, since the beginning of the war against Turkey until its end, the two armies have collaborated beneficial and this is visible not only in defending the banks of the Danube as well as in the battles fought on the territory on the right bank of the river.

The main crossing of the Danube took place on the night of June 14/15, 1877. Russian troops crossed the river at Zimnicea and Șistov and units of the Romanian army were brought to the Danube line in this area. After this passage, the Russian army began the offensive to the south, arriving on July 14 beyond the Balkans, at Stara Zagora.

After the fall of Pleven, the Russian army advanced towards Adrianople, and the Romanian army carried out war actions in the areas of Vidin – Belogradcik, Smârdan. Romanian troops were to form garrisons for the security of Nicopolis and Rahova and participate in escorting Turkish prisoners across the Danube²⁰.

Romania's participation in the war waged against oppressors Ottomans had serious consequences, so in addition to the injured and the fallen on the battlefield, our country also suffered economically and would bear the cost necessary to supply the armies during the war.

Following the occupation of Adrianople by Russian troops and their threat to the Ottoman capital, on February 19 / March 3, 1878, a peace treaty was signed in San Stefano between the main actors in the war, Russia and Turkey. Although Romania was the main contributor, both human and material in the Russo-Turkish war, it was not allowed to participate in the negotiations or to sign the treaty.

The treaty recognizing the independence of Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and outlining the great autonomous principality of Bulgaria, had 29 articles. It had been signed by General Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev and Alexander Ivanovich Nelidov, on behalf of the Russian Empire, and behalf of the Ottoman Empire by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Savfet Pasha.

Following the treaty, the dissatisfaction of the Romanian state started from the fact that the clause by which Russia won the three Bessarabian counties violated what had been established by the bilateral convention of April 4/16, 1877, by which Russia had committed itself to Romania to ensure and respect territorial integrity.

That is why, for the voice of our country to be heard internationally, the Romanian diplomatic agents were asked, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, by a circular note dated March 16/28, 1878, to protest to the governments where they

²⁰ Ștefan Pascu, Dan Berindei (coord.), *Independența României*, Bucharest, 1979; Nicolae Ciachir, *Războiul pentru independență ...*, pp. 199–200; Ion Stanciu, Iulian Oncescu, *Istoria modernă a Românilor*, vol. II, Târgoviște, Macarie Publishing, 2002, pp. 103–104; Nicolae Ciachir, *Istoria popoarelor din sud-estul Europei ...*, Ediția a III-a, Târgoviște, Cetatea de Scaun Publishing, 2011, p. 200.

had been accredited, against the peace treaty specifying that having us, without us and against us, the government and the nation declared treaty out of place devoid of any binding value for the country. Another provision of the treaty that displeased the Romanian state as well as the other European powers was the clause in article no. 8, by which Russia, as long as it occupies Bulgaria, reserves the right of free passage of its troops on the territory of Romania. Against the background of the Romanian state's protest against the San Stefano treaty, tensions between Romania and Russia have increased. Following this situation, General Ghica, who was Romania's representative in Petersburg, was summoned by AM Gorceakov on March 20 / April 8, 1878, in the audience. He was suggested that the Romanian army would be disarmed and the Tsar would occupy Romania if the Romanian government opposed the clauses mentioned in article no. 8. Replying to him, General Ghica stated that Turkey has nothing to decide on Romania, and on the provisions of the article, Russia should have agreed with Romania, pointing that the rights and sovereignty of the country are violated by that article.

Given the fact that a new congress was expected in which it was wanted to redraw the political situation of the continent and the spheres of influence by reshaping the decisions taken by the San Stefano treaty, the tensions in the Romanian-Russian relations were alleviated. As their control of navigation in the Black Sea and the Danube was damaged, the European powers wanted to re-examine the treaty between the Russians and the Turks, this being done in a European Congress.

Today it is known that this step was taken by Austria-Hungary and that the planning of a European diplomatic forum was requested on February 22, 1878, by Iulius Andrassy, Chancellor of Austria-Hungary. The main reason why Austria-Hungary requested this forum was the non-observance of the secret agreement established in Budapest in January 1877, between Russia and Austria-Hungary, by the Tsarist Empire. Besides, the emergence of a fairly large Slavic state in south-eastern Europe would have disturbed the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in that region.

In addition to the outrage of Viennese diplomacy, French diplomacy also expressed its dissatisfaction with the decisions established by the Treaty of San Stefano, because it changed everything that had been established by the Congress of Paris in 1856, where France had acted as arbitrator.

Russia was also under pressure from the British government, headed by Lord Beaconsfield, which gave the impression of an armed conflict between the two powers. The big problem for England was the accentuation of Russia's position on the Black Sea and the creation of a new Bulgarian state. Following the cessation of tensions between England and Russia, a bilateral agreement was signed between the two countries on May 30/12, 1878.

With the aim of "the subject work of San Stefano treaty signatory free discussion cabinets from 1856 and 1871 to ensure peace through mutual

understanding and based on new guarantees”²¹, on 1/13 June 1878, the Berlin Congress began, chaired by German Chancellor Otto von Bismark. Here too, the presence of the Romanian representatives, I.C. Brătianu and Mihail Kogălniceanu would be quite difficult to admit. The German and Russian chancellors considered that the presence of the two Romanians would only “complicate” the situation. Only with the help of the other powers, England, Italy and even France and Austria-Hungary, the presence of the Romanians at the proceedings of the Congress in Berlin would win²².

Following the requests made, the Romanian delegation received a response from the congress organizers that it would be allowed to support its point of view by reading the Memorandum on Romania’s Rights, but it was emphasized that it would be heard but not listened to. The reading of the memorandum was to take place during the meeting of July 1, 1878, by Mihail Kogălniceanu, who was to argue before the European dignitaries present the legitimate, historical and national character of Romania’s rights.

Appealing to historical arguments and to the obligations of Russia, promised by the Convention of 4/16 April 1877, to the Romanian military participation in the war, through the statement read, Mihail Kogălniceanu stated that Romania was entitled to claim to the Congress the following:

- “the prohibition of the right of passage on the Romanian territory of the Russian troops withdrawing from Bulgaria, following to use for this purpose only the sea route;
- full possession of the islands and Danube’s channels, including Snake Island, as originally planned in 1856;
- war compensation commensurate with the military staff involved in the conflict and the damage suffered as a result of it;
- final recognition of independence and guarantee of neutrality”²³.

Ion C. Brătianu would add, to what Mihail Kogălniceanu said, that the lack of a part of the Romanian state territory “would not only be a deep pain for the Romanian nation, but it would destroy in its bosom any confidence in the strength of the treaties and the holy guard, both of the principles of absolute justice and written rights”²⁴.

According to Lord Beaconsfield cynicism is real in politics, at the Berlin Congress, with its position on a former ally in the 1877 war against the Ottomans, Russia reinforced that “in politics, ingratitude is often the greatest reward services”²⁵. Italy adopted a favourable position for Romania, claiming through its

²¹ Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

²² Romulus Neagu, I. Voicu, Unele aspecte diplomatice ale independenței naționale a României și Congresul de la Berlin, in vol. “Diplomația română în slujba independenței”, Bucharest, Politic Publishing, 1977, pp. 213–214.

²³ Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

²⁴ See Protocolul nr. 10, 19 iunie/ 1 iulie 1878, în Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–251.

²⁵ Dan Berindei, *Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891)*, in “Diplomați iluștri”, Bucharest, Politic Publishing, 1969, vol. II, p. 247; Romulus Neagu, I. Voicu, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–221.

representative that “it is not appropriate to condition its independence on adherence to the stipulations (Russian-n.n.) that concern it”²⁶.

In exchange for the three counties, Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail in southern Bessarabia, Russia agreed to give up Dobrogea in favour of Romania, at the same time agreeing with the request of England, that the Snake Island be annexed to the territory of Romania.

Even if during the Berlin Congress, the Romanian requirements were not taken into account, it brought to Romania the recognition of independence. Even so, Romania’s recognition as an independent state was made by the Great Powers gradually: The Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and Russia in the fall of 1878, and at the end of 1879, Italy did the same²⁷. It was on February 8/10, 1880 that Romania’s independence was recognized by England, France and Germany, but after a long series of negotiations on Article 7 of the country’s Constitution from 1866.

²⁶ Romulus Neagu, I. Voicu, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

²⁷ Rudolf Dinu, Ion Bulei, *35 de ani de relații italo-române (1879–1914). Documente diplomatice italiene*, Bucharest, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing, 2001, pp. 216–231.