



ORIGINAL PAPER

Regional cooperation with the countries in the area and Romania's participation in international organizations

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Abstract:

Romania's regional cooperation and its current integration into international organizations can be systematized through a differentiation, on the one hand trilateral, and on the other hand multilateral. Trilateral cooperation is a flexible form of sub-regional cooperation, which operates in accordance with the principles and in areas agreed with the participating countries. The objectives, areas of cooperation, mechanisms, legal framework and degree of institutionalization vary according to the interests and practice of the Member States. Given that sub-regional cooperation is considered an essential component in the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and not as an alternative to them - the forms of trilateral cooperation in which Romania participates have a positive effect on the country's integration process into the European Union and in affirming Romania as a factor of stability in the region.

Without going into historical considerations, we can note that Romania participates in the following trilateral cooperation:

1. Romania - Republic of Moldova - Ukraine;
2. Romania - Poland - Ukraine;
3. Romania - Bulgaria - Greece;
4. Romania - Bulgaria - Turkey;
5. Romania - Hungary - Austria;
6. Romania - Bulgaria - Serbia;
7. Romania - Italy - Serbia;
8. Romania - Hungary - Serbia.

I will try below to highlight, in general terms, what is the current cooperation of Romania with these states.

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The main mechanisms and instruments used in Romania's foreign policy with the aim of materializing foreign policy objectives

1. Trilateral Romania - Republic of Moldavia - Ukraine

In July 1997, the collaboration between these countries was signed in Izmail and has as priority objectives, the Upper Prut and Lower Danube regions, intending to develop cooperation between Romanian customs police structures, as a result of the smooth flow of border traffic, combating organized crime and the establishment of an economically free zone in the area of Galați (Romania) - Giurgiulesti (Moldova) - Reni (Ukraine). A multicultural university is also being set up in Chernivtsi and a cooperation project in the field of electricity is underway. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania - Republic of Moldavia – Ukraine, n.d.*).

2. Trilateral Romania-Poland-Ukraine

The main areas of cooperation have been and will remain regional security, which aims to develop the consultation mechanism in activities related to the evolution of the NATO cooperation framework, as well as security and cooperation issues in Europe, in the context of Poland's OSCE presidency in 1998. Economic cooperation focused on infrastructure projects, but joint collaborations in the fight against organized crime, illicit trafficking in illegal substances and illegal migration should also be mentioned. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania-Poland-Ukraine n.d.*).

3 Trilateral Romania - Bulgaria - Greece

This trilateral is a favorable framework for specifying Greece's support for the integration of the two countries into the structures of NATO and the European Union. Priority objectives are:

- ✓ Economic development and infrastructure;
- ✓ Regional security and the fight against illegal emigration, drug trafficking and organized crime. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania - Bulgaria – Greece, n.d.*).

4. Trilateral Romania-Bulgaria-Turkey

Trilateral cooperation focuses primarily on the fight against organized crime and related crime. There are also some infrastructure projects - pan-European corridor number 4. We can also mention the support from Turkey for joining NATO, the two countries, Romania and Bulgaria, respectively. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania-Bulgaria-Turkey, n.d.*).

5. Trilateral Romania - Hungary - Austria

The initiative of this form of cooperation belongs to the Romanian party which proposed to the foreign ministries of the two states the realization of a cooperation based on the implementation of flexible projects that will be considered as important steps in promoting a convention on illegal emigration. The cooperation is also based on the realization of infrastructure and tourism. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania - Hungary – Austria, n.d.*).

6. Trilateral Romania-Bulgaria-Serbia

Trilateral cooperation takes place mainly within the "Danube 21" association. The collaboration in this format aims to solve some common problems facing these areas, the lack of economic infrastructure and transport, dependence on agriculture.

Trilateral meetings:

- ✓ September 24, 2002, Vidin, - organized at the initiative of the Bulgarian side, at the level of the foreign ministers of that period. The objective was to strengthen the cross-border cooperation Romania - Bulgaria - Serbia within the association "Danube 21". On this occasion, a special council was created

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consisting of representatives of local authorities from Vidin, Calafat, Zaicear, as well as a representative from the three foreign ministries;

- ✓ October 23, 2004, Calafat, - organized at the initiative of the Romanian side, at the level of foreign ministers. The aim was to give political impetus and identify new common aspects of collaboration. The meeting ended with the signing of a Joint Declaration encouraging the development of cross-border cooperation. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania-Bulgaria-Serbia, n.d.*).

7. Trilateral Romania-Italy-Serbia

The idea of the trilateral belongs to Romania, on the occasion of the meeting of the heads of government in November 2002. On November 3rd 2002, the first round of negotiations on the line of cooperation in trilateral format takes place. In October 2008, the Romanian and Italian prime ministers agreed to hold a ministerial meeting and a summit in 2009. In February 2009, a meeting was held in Rome to prepare a trilateral meeting of ministers. which took place in Belgrade on June 8, 2009. The aim was to support Serbia's European perspective and promote economic cooperation between the three states by developing people-to-people contacts between the Serbian and Italian communities in Romania. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania-Italy-Serbia, n.d.*).

8. Trilateral Romania-Hungary-Serbia

The trilateral is launched at the initiative of the three foreign ministers of the three states, and the objectives that formed the basis of the cooperation are:

- ✓ transfer of experience and know-how, both at governmental and parliamentary level, as well as at local level;
- ✓ identifying specific aspects of the three countries in border management and control, by initiating joint plans and actions;
- ✓ the realization, through combined efforts, of the common border point from Beba Veche (Triplex Confinium), as a model of cooperation in the field of border control.

Trilateral meetings:

- ✓ May 28th 2005, Szeged - was organized at the initiative of the Hungarian side. The meeting decided to strengthen cooperation in the field of disaster prevention and management, as well as the coordination of disaster response teams.
- ✓ April 19th 2006, Novi Sad, - was organized at the initiative of the Serbian-Montenegrin side. At the end of the meeting, the Agreement between the Government of Romania, the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on the intersection of state borders, marked by the Triplex Confinium border sign, and its maintenance was signed.
- ✓ July 18th 2009, Timișoara - was organized at the initiative of the Romanian side. During the meeting, the support of Romania and Hungary for the European perspective of Serbia was reiterated and the concrete cooperation projects developed within the DCMT Euroregion (cooperation in the field of energy and infrastructure, promotion of people-to-people contacts, etc.) were welcomed. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Trilateral Romania-Hungary-Serbia, n.d.*).

The main mechanisms and instruments used in Romania's foreign policy with the aim of materializing foreign policy objectives

With regard to multilateral cooperation, this is a political process that fundamentally involves the initiation of models of economic, political, cultural, social cooperation, other than the existing one. According to Professor Herlea, the key areas of this type of cooperation are related to the security and stability of a region, its economic development as a whole, the quality of life of nations in that area, the values of democracy and the market economy that characterize European and Euro-Atlantic societies.

The forms of multilateral cooperation in which Romania participates are:

1. European South East Cooperation Initiative (ESECI)
2. Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
3. Central European Initiative (CEI)
4. Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA)

European South East Cooperation Initiative (ESECI)

European South East Cooperation Initiative (ESECI) is a regional structure that encourages cooperation between Member States and facilitates integration into European structures. The cooperation aims to coordinate regional development plans by initiating projects aimed at ensuring a better presence of the private sector in the economic framework of the area and to stimulate the transfer in the realization of investments in the private sector. The member states of this association are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Hungary, the initiative being supported by the European Commission. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *European South East Cooperation Initiative (ESECI)*, n.d.).

Romania has served three terms in the ESECI leadership, from March 1999 to March 2000, April 2004-May 2005, July 2013-June 2014. The cooperation was conceived as a continuation of the meetings between the foreign ministers of the Balkan countries in the area, but which suffered an interruption following the outbreak of the Yugoslav conflict. The conference was attended by: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. Participating States support the need to promote cooperation in the border area, promote trade and investment, develop infrastructure, develop telecommunications, the energy sector, protect the environment, human relations, combat illicit practices, and increase confidence-building measures in the area. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *European South East Cooperation Initiative (ESECI)*, n.d.).

Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

This Black Sea economic cooperation was created as a subregional structure by the heads of state or government of 11 countries bordering or located in the Black Sea Basin area: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. The BSEC has set itself the goal of accelerating the economic development of the participating States with a view to their integration into the European Union, through the geographical proximity of the Member States, with a market of over 350 million consumers. Romania believes that closer cooperation between the EU and the BSEC, by promoting joint initiatives, will help increase Europe's commitment to allocating financial resources to the region. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)*, n.d.)

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Central European Initiative (CEI)

The Central European Initiative is a subregional cooperation structure with great political potential, providing an appropriate framework for political dialogue with Member States. CEI brings together 16 Member States: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy, the Republic of Northern Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Ukraine and Hungary. The objectives are to create a united Europe through the convention of core values through the transfer of expertise in areas such as transport, energy, environmental protection, tourism, agriculture. The main bodies of cooperation are: the Executive Secretariat in Trieste, the Secretariat for Projects, the Committee of National Coordinators and other working bodies. (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)*, n.d.)

Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA)

Since the 1st of July 1997, Romania has become the sixth member country of the Central European Free Trade Agreement, together with Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Hungary. Our participation in such an organization together with other countries associated with the EU is one of the main aims of the national strategy on preparing for membership of the Union.

Romania is also a member of some major international organizations. The main organization is the Council of Europe of which it became a member in 1993. For Romania, a country in Eastern Europe, which after the Second World War came under Soviet influence, the OSCE was the only pan-European forum for political dialogue, an indispensable framework for examining security issues on an equal footing with all other participating states. Romania has officially expressed its intention to hold the presidency in the exercise of the OSCE in 2001 and began the necessary preparations to assume this complex responsibility. Romania's presence in the UN system is a very important one in the conditions of the strong impact of globalization and global liberalization. Thus, Romania uses the framework provided by multilateral diplomacy to complete internal efforts towards integration into North Atlantic structures. Romania's specific contributions to the UN set of activities reflect adequate synchronization with the organization's reform and modernization trends, an important foundation for maintaining international peace and security. The UN is the main framework for the affirmation of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), promoted by the EU and the Romanian diplomacy that tries to get closer to the international organizations, gradually adapting to their values and needs. Within the UN, specific forms have been created in which Romania cooperates with the United States based on numerous technical assistance projects in various sectors of activity with priority in those in the economic field. Also, through the UN - the only organization with a global vocation, Romania can contribute to the extent of its applicability to the process of codifying the law, to international actions and cooperation on a global scale, thus facing major negative phenomena in such as environmental degradation, drug trafficking or terrorism.

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Conclusions

At the beginning of the 21st century, we can say that this century is dominated by a new political strategy, one of strategic partnerships, of regional - trilateral and multilateral cooperation. They are directly proportional to the degree of economic, cultural, social, political and military development, together with the threats, challenges and associated risks. Their purpose is to reduce risks in order to ensure the conditions for crisis and conflict management with the aim of providing stability for society as a whole. It can be clearly noted that the beginning of the 21st century is dominated by the replacement of confrontational strategies with partnership strategies. The general objectives of these partnerships refer mainly to the development of economic exchanges, of trade and cooperation, of technological exchanges, the development of a high-performance technological system so as to facilitate the regionalization process, and also for a more accentuated and non-conflicting outline of national and international entities.

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